

STAR TREK VANGUARD

A NOVELISTS' BIBLE FOR AN ORIGINAL
CONTINUING SERIES IN THE TOS ERA

CONCEPT

VANGUARD is an epic-scale, limited-run *Star Trek* adventure, set circa the time of Kirk's original five-year mission (2264-2269). It's the story of **Starbase Vanguard**, a major Starfleet outpost, just outside Federation territory, whose official mission is to oversee the exploration and colonization of a vast region of space known as the **Taurus Reach**, more than 200 light-years from Earth. It's also the story of the starships that are detailed to the region, as Vanguard's exploratory eyes and ears.

In the course of this mission, the Vanguard team chases down an ancient mystery and unearths evidence of a fallen civilization. These discoveries subsequently encourage the Federation's push into the region. The mystery will be explained in broad strokes during the first story, and its effect on local politics and our characters' lives will be ongoing.

SERIES TONE & ONGOING THEMES

VANGUARD is about the adventure (and dangers) of exploration, and about the work it takes to go into a frontier and make something out of it. To take on a job this demanding requires extraordinary people, both Starfleet and civilian — people of courage and optimism, who stand for principles as well as for duty, who seek out new worlds and civilizations as well as the truth. This is a time of optimism, not of cynicism.

The going won't be easy. There will be adversaries and competitors, and natural perils will abound. The challenges of the Taurus Reach will at first be daunting, like the Horta in "Devil in the Dark," the First Federation sphere in "The Corbomite Maneuver," or V'ger in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. But as in those stories, our heroes will discover that when one faces one's fears and moves beyond them, what initially seems to be a cause for alarm can become a source of wonder.

As our heroes piece together far-flung clues in the Taurus Reach and unearth the region's ancient past, the chilling secrets of a long-dead civilization will offer them insights about a current adversary — and serve as an unkind mirror for the Federation, reminding our heroes of the dangers that come with traveling a road paved with good intentions.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TAURUS REACH

What first draws the interest of the Federation to the Taurus Reach, so far from the UFP, is a report filed in 2264 by Matt Decker of the *U.S.S. Constellation*, the first ship to explore the region. After visiting and collecting samples from five different planets in different star systems several light-years apart, their analysis revealed something unexpected: Certain biosamples (some animal, some vegetable) contained extraordinarily complex genomes—DNA far more data-rich than natural selection would seem to account for.

Unlike a human genome (which has 46 chromosomes), the DNA of a random flower from one of the planets and a viral life-form from another both have **several million** chromosomes of genetic information. This immediately suggests two possibilities: Either these life-forms represent a new and previously unknown type of natural evolution, or they are evidence of a super-advanced bioengineering effort, the likes of which humanity has never seen before.

Whichever answer proves more correct, Starfleet decides that this is a matter deserving of a full investigation. Unlocking the potential of such complex genetic structures could improve science's understanding of life itself. And if these organisms were created by a higher intelligence, such an entity could be a powerful ally—or a dangerous foe. Either way, the Federation decides to track down the origins of these life-forms before one of its rivals does.

This leads to a massive exploration and research effort in the Taurus Reach. Starfleet commits a large contingent of personnel, materiel, and ships to rapidly constructing a command center—Starbase Vanguard. From here, colony groups fan out into the region. Although the colonies are completely legitimate, they are, in fact, being used by Starfleet as a justification for its massive research effort. As one might expect, such a massive effort does not go unnoticed. (More about this in a later section, **Links to TOS Continuity**.)

What our heroes will learn about the super-genomes over the course of the saga is that, in each life-form they find, only a small part of each genetic megastrand is active. Separating the active DNA from the rest of the genome are "barriers" of acids and proteins. Unlike Earth DNA, which can be modeled with simple GATC markers, a triple alphabet (involving uppercase and lowercase characters and numerals) is needed to map the new ultragenome. It contains an enormous number of biochemical safeguards, like a complex cypher with tens of thousands of check digits, to prevent errors in replication.

Other clues perplex our heroes: All the super-genomes are found embedded in very simple lower-order life-forms, never in complex higher-order forms. They find them in bacteria, viruses, and simple plants such as algae or mold. In fact, as the Starfleeters soon discover, the presence of the super-genome in an ecosystem actually tends to suppress the development of higher-order life-forms, in particular those with sentience.

It is not until after massive amounts of research have been completed that the Federation scientists realize that none of the life-forms they found carries the same super-genome string. Each one has a wholly unique chain of information. That's when someone makes the leap of logic: These are, almost literally, puzzle pieces—chains of data to be connected, if only you can find them all and put them in the right order. Of course, that raises a new question: What happens then? Do we unravel the secrets of life and death? Will we be resurrecting some kind of ancient life-form of unimaginable ability?

When Federation scientists (including Dr. Carol Marcus), working in secret, assemble enough pieces of the super-genome code, they will have in their possession a sort of "skeleton key" for the manipulation of organic matter, energy, and subatomic particles. Indeed, the Taurus Reach civilization that created it had mastered the art of producing "life from lifelessness." (Marcus's realization of its potential will reference her experiences in S.D. Perry's upcoming novel *Inceptions*.) When the Federation scientists try to use it, however, its power outstrips their understanding; it's like a primitive human trying to light a campfire by setting off a napalm explosive. But in the ashes of catastrophe (again recalling the Mars fiasco Marcus endured) are planted the seeds of future insight—and the beginning of a path of inquiry that decades later will help Dr. Carol Marcus perfect the Genesis Wave.

Another possible continuity link that might be explored would be to connect the super-genome with the Yrythny of Heather Jarman's *This Gray Spirit*.

Other advances will be spurred by what will be code-named the Taurus Key: Increases in the speed of boosted subspace radio; improvements in medical science; and refinements of warp drive technology. And along the way, our heroes will face new challenges, establish new colonies, encounter new hazards, and revel in wonders both ancient and new.

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SHEDAI

Adding to the mystery of the Taurus Reach is the discovery, over the run of the VANGUARD saga, of several nearly identical ancient structures on dozens of remote worlds. They are found in all types of environments, including one on a moon that has no atmosphere. At first our heroes mistake the structures for religious architecture. But as they study small artifacts recovered on different worlds, and unearth other clues, they learn that 100,000 years ago these were places of power, known as **Conduits**, through which the **Shedai** (roughly translated, "The Almighty") once spoke to the tens of trillions whom they ruled.

The Conduits were artificial environments that protected their inhabitants, the **Kollotuul**, a semisentient race of arthropods who evolved on a Venus-like planet. The Kollotuul possessed a rudimentary telepathic ability to "commune" with one another in a shared "thoughtspace" (sort of like people today communicating online in chat rooms). The Shedai genetically "improved" the Kollotuul and used their awesome technologies to "amplify" the thoughtspace "frequency," thereby enabling the Kollotuul to share information across vast interstellar distances all but instantaneously. Using the not-quite-sentient Kollotuul as their avatars, the Shedai rarely had any need to leave the safety of their fortified homeworld. Peoples and planets that tried to secede from or defy the Shedai were punished by the Conduits, which were fortified and linked into everything from weapons to communications.

The Shedai (a word that can be used to describe the ancient race as well as the interstellar alliance they brought into being) were the architects of an ancient hegemony that spanned the Taurus Reach. At first it had some similarities to the Federation; membership in The Shedai was voluntary. The advantages of joining were mutual defense with many other worlds, access to technology and raw knowledge, and genetic "improvement." The Shedai were capable of extending lifespans to near-immortal lengths. They wiped out disease.

Its chief shortcoming was that, though ostensibly democratic in nature, a simple majority was all that was required to give a Shedai edict the force of law. The Shedai themselves were very skilled at manipulating opinion (thanks to their monopoly on interstellar communication via the Conduits); consequently, new members of the Shedai hegemony soon found themselves hopelessly subordinate to a "tyranny of the majority." In time, their civilization, though peaceful, became monolithic—homogenized to the point of oppression.

For several dozen millennia, the Shedai expanded their sphere of control throughout the Taurus reach. Then their hegemony met a swift, cataclysmic end. The catalyst for collapse was that, in a flash of collective awakening, the Kollotuul achieved sentience and revolted.

Almost instantaneously, the Shedai found their Conduits turned against them; these vital links in the Shedai's command-and-control apparatus united into open rebellion and lashed out, exterminating a great majority of the ancient race. At first, it seemed that the Kollotuul might simply usurp control of the Shedai's empire. But the Kollotuul, despite having awakened with a vast wealth of knowledge, were unprepared to rule an empire. They quickly lost control of world after world, often because they were too heavy-handed. Facing a rising tide of revolutions, the Kollotuul abandoned their Conduit shelters and took to the stars. In so doing, they sacrificed the technology that had enabled their interstellar thoughtspace, and now found themselves limited to short-range mind-gatherings. After they rendezvoused at an agreed-upon set of coordinates, the Kollotuul fled the Taurus Reach for an uninhabited corner of the galaxy, to find a new homeworld, and shape their new destiny. Last but not least, they cast off the species name Kollotuul, given to them by the Shedai, and adopted a new collective identity: THOLIANS.

In the millennia that followed the exodus of the Tholians from the Taurus Reach, the many worlds of the hegemony collapsed into civil wars and old rivalries. Many plunged themselves back into dark ages, some fought each other to mutual extinction. A few old species still remain, slowly struggling to reclaim the lost wonders of eons past. Most of them have no memory of the Tholians, but many still honor myths and religions that worship the Shedai. A few groups of near-immortal Shedai still survive in the Taurus Reach. Some are in stasis, waiting for a chance to rule again; others rule over benighted worlds; some wander, insane after endless eons of loneliness. Many of them will be a danger to our heroes.

The Tholians, 100,000 years divorced from their past, no longer remember the truth of their origin. They know only that, as they have expanded the Tholian Assembly across space, they have moved away from the Taurus Reach. A dim, ominous racial memory warns them that the Taurus Reach means danger, fear, darkness. On an unconscious level, the similarities between the politics of the Shedai and those of the UFP fuel the Tholians' seemingly irrational distrust of, and hostility toward, the Federation. Consequently, when the Federation suddenly initiates a sizable exploration and colonization effort in the Taurus Reach, the Tholians won't know exactly why it enrages and terrifies them, but it will.

THE STORY ARC

The VANGUARD saga is to be epic in scale. While our starship crews have adventures in the Taurus Reach, the crew of Starbase Vanguard becomes a target for the ire of the Klingons, Romulans, Tholians and renegade Orions. At the same time, we'll explore how events in the Taurus Reach influence political dealings on distant worlds. The adventure will at times be glimpsed through the eyes of spies, saboteurs, and nonhuman aliens.

The saga's primary arc will be told in six books, interspersed with standalone volumes. It will span six years of TOS continuity. Each of the novels will have a self-contained primary narrative, but will also advance the overall saga of the VANGUARD mission and its effect on the politics of the TOS era. In addition, there is crossover potential with the crew of the S.C.E. vessel *U.S.S. Lovell*, established in the *Star Trek: S.C.E.* book *Foundations*.

What follows are generalized notes about the six major stories of the saga's principal arc. The specific narrative of each book will be developed by its respective author, and will be tailored to include these "big picture" elements. Standalone tales will occur between them.

One: We kick off the saga and establish the principal characters, the ongoing conflicts, and the mystery of the Taurus Reach. Action on Starbase Vanguard will constitute the A-story, the story of our starship crews will be the B-story, and events throughout the rest of the *Star Trek* TOS universe will be referenced or depicted as necessary.

Some of the *Enterprise* crew will be part of the A-story on Starbase Vanguard, after they put in for upgrades and shore leave after their four-month return journey from Delta Vega ("Where No Man Has Gone Before"). The Vanguard team walks a tightrope placating the Tholians and the Klingons while coordinating the exploration and colonization of the region. Starfleet Intelligence runs a covert operation to disinform its rivals as to Starfleet's true mission here, but the effort fails when it is accidentally compromised by an unwitting civilian, and the *Starship Bombay* is destroyed with all hands as a result. Meanwhile, a shady Orion trader sets up his new business headquarters on the station.

The "Easter egg hunt" for the Shedai super-genome takes Starfleet all over the Taurus Reach, and leads to the discovery of one of the Shedai Conduits. Vanguard's A&A Officer leaves to investigate the find in person. Realizing that the Conduit must have been only one of many, Starfleet's mission expands to include a new goal: Locate more of these Conduits, and determine who made them and why.

Two: We bring the S.C.E. into the mix, when the *Starship Lovell* and her team of specialists are detailed to the Taurus Reach, because of the loss of the *Starship Bombay* and her crew in Book One. The S.C.E. takes the lead in the investigation of the Shedai Conduits.

When the Klingons push into the region (with covert Romulan aid), the Tholians turn their hostility toward the Klingon Empire as well as the Federation. It seems that their opposition isn't to Federation expansion along their border, but to anyone exploring the Taurus Reach. The Klingons' approach to exploring the region is fast and brutal; they don't bother with careful surveying before claiming worlds, they simply hop from star to star, planting their flags and warning buoys, subduing indigenous peoples, and moving on. This recklessly aggressive tactic threatens to ignite the entire region into war, as Tholians move to repel the Klingon threat. It falls to the Federation to exercise diplomacy on Starbase Vanguard, covert tactics throughout the region, and shows of force at key locations, to clip the fuse of this political time-bomb and stop the Klingon advance.

Meanwhile, unnoticed in all the *sturm und drang*, an ancient Shedai Wanderer (who appears as a nondescript humanoid alien) travels from world to world, killing small research teams (Starfleet and Klingon alike) who are seeking out the secrets of the super-genome. The murders of these teams further inflame the already tense political milieu, which only begins to calm down when word reaches Starbase Vanguard of the Federation-Klingon mutual acceptance of the Organian Peace Treaty (TOS, "Errand of Mercy").

Three: We explore the Klingon/Romulan perspective on the Taurus Reach Mystery. From Klingon starship crews and politicians on Qo'noS, to the Klingon Ambassador to Earth and the secret Klingon spy inside the diplomatic team on Starbase Vanguard, this story will focus on the widely varied reactions within the Klingon Empire to the Organian Peace Treaty, and to the unnerving discoveries made in the Taurus Reach. Dealings with the crew of Starbase Vanguard, the three Federation starships in the region, and the Tholians will be filtered through the Klingons' eyes, as we'll see first-hand the first falterings of the Klingons' manipulative and ultimately doomed partnership with the Romulan Star Empire to undermine the Federation's colonization of the Taurus Reach.

The Klingons, we will learn, have made their own discoveries regarding the Shedai hegemony, not the least of which is that they've stumbled upon the Shedai homeworld. The ancient civilization lies in ruins, swept away more than 100 millennia ago. The Klingons possess only part of the picture, however; they know only of the Shedai as a master race, and of the Conduits through which they ruled over the Taurus Reach. They hope to master

the Conduit technology as a means of greatly expanding the reach of their own empire.

What ultimately undoes their mission, however, is their spy on Starbase Vanguard. When a carefully planned sneak attack against the Tholians (designed to look as if it were committed by the Federation) is thwarted by the crew of Starbase Vanguard and the starships *Endeavour*, *Sagittarius*, and *Lovell*, they conclude their spy has been found out.

In fact, the spy (who will be established in Books One and Two), has not been flushed out — she has actually been a double agent all along. After her cover is blown by the defeat of the Klingon attack, our heroes fake the spy's death and smuggle her away to safety, with a new face and a new name, on some less-traveled world inside the Federation. Now armed with vital clues regarding the location of the Shedai homeworld, the Vanguard team sends its starships to track down this new lead in the Taurus Reach mystery.

Four: We detail the slow burn of tensions between the Federation the Tholians. After the Klingons antagonize the Tholians, the crew of Vanguard worry that intervening to halt the Klingon-Tholian conflict will provoke the Klingons to abrogate the Organian Peace Treaty. As the situation heats up, Starfleet shifts its efforts to defend its base of operations.

The Tholians secretly destroy the unguarded Klingon civilian colony of Traelus II, located inside the Taurus Reach, near the Tholian border. The mission is a partial success — the Tholians' new weapon worked, but too slowly to be of any real tactical use against the Federation or Klingon militaries. The Tholian attackers flee when they detect the approach of the *Starship Defiant*.

Also taking advantage of the tense situation, the Romulans succeed in starting construction on their own starbase, on the other side of the Taurus Reach. It then falls to an unlikely alliance of Starfleet Intelligence, Orion privateers, and the crew of the *Starship Sagittarius* to covertly destroy the enemy station. The Orion pirates, meanwhile, take advantage of their temporary alliance with Starfleet to aggressively stamp out a competitor.

Meanwhile, the teams seeking out the Shedai homeworld unearth more Conduits, encounter species that used to live under the yoke of the Shedai — and encounter a "god-king" who just might be a member of the ancient Shedai race itself.

Five: We chronicle the history of the Taurus Reach from the perspective of the Shedai Wanderer, who murdered the research teams seeking the super-genome in Book Two. Her point of view is almost condescending; she speaks in dismissive terms of these "brief flickers of life" who dare to plumb the mysteries of her people. From her POV, in flashback, we get glimpses of the Shedai hegemony at the height of its power, and we see firsthand

how its noble intentions were dulled by complacency and corrupted by absolute power. The enslavement of the Kollotuul was rationalized by the fact that, when the Shedai first found the crystalline arthropods living on a hothouse planet, they were "mere animals," insects wandering an inferno, wasting their precious genetic gift of "thoughtspace." The Shedai "improved" them, used technology to "amplify" their talents, and gave them the "honor" of speaking with the Voice the Shedai.

But after the Revolt of the Kollotuul, the few Shedai who survived the uprisings and the incineration of their homeworld scattered. Some established themselves as immortal god-kings on backward worlds, some undertook journeys to distant galaxies that short-lived species would find interminable, and some, like this one (captured by our heroes on the Shedai homeworld when she tries to kill them) became interstellar nomads.

Meanwhile, back at Starbase Vanguard, rumors of the Federation's discovery of the Shedai Homeworld have reached the Tholian Assembly, whose response is to mass an invasion fleet along the border of the Taurus Reach. It takes all our heroes' cunning and diplomacy to avert the outbreak of a major interstellar war.

At the end of the story, the Shedai Wanderer is rescued from her Starfleet captors by an ancient cabal of Shedai, who, after more than a hundred millennia, have finally reunited to expel the invaders from their space...and to reign once more over the Taurus Reach.

Six: The *Starship Enterprise* returns to the Taurus Reach, months after the end of final TOS episode. This tale will conclude the major continuing story arcs, including the clandestine affair between Reyes and Desai; Ganz's indentured servitude of Quinn — and Quinn's service to T'Prynn; M'Benga's return after three years away to take Fisher's place so the elder physician can finally retire; and Terrell takes an overdue promotion to captain.

To preserve the political stability of the region (and protect the Federation colonies therein), T'Prynn and Quinn execute a daring undercover operation inside Klingon space that sabotages the Romulan-Klingon détente. This time, instead of being a dupe for propaganda, Pennington breaches his own journalistic objectivity to help disinform the enemy and undermine the Klingon-Romulan alliance; it's a decision that will haunt him.

We'll reveal that the Kollotuul became the Tholians, who in the tale's climax squelch further investigation of the Shedai Mystery by vaporizing all the worlds on which lie the remaining links of the super-genome, and by exterminating the Shedai Cabal.

As an epilogue, deep inside the Federation, the secrets of the Shedai super-genome baffle the Federation's greatest scientists...all except for Dr. Carol Marcus, who sees in it the potential to reshape the future in a bold new way, as she invents Project Genesis.

LINKS TO TOS CONTINUITY

FEDERATION: The Shedai super-genome will be linked to Project Genesis, a technology that seemed to be ages ahead of its time. In addition, "guest-star" appearances by the crew of the *Enterprise* in the first and last volumes; the *U.S.S. Lovell* (S.C.E. *Foundations*) starting in Book Two; and the presence of such Starfleet personnel as Clark Terrell (*ST II: TWOK*), Dr. M'Benga, a cameo by Ambassador Sarek, and the crew of the *U.S.S. Constellation* will root the series firmly in the continuity of classic *Star Trek*. In addition, it will be linked to latter-day *Star Trek* novels by the presence of such characters as T'Pol (from *Lesser Evil*) and Stephen Klisiewicz (from *The Genesis Wave*, Book 1).

THOLIANS: In addition to the Tholians' link to the Taurus Reach and the history of the Shedai, the Federation's push into the Taurus Reach will be posited as one of many instigating factors that escalated tension between the Klingons and the Tholian Assembly, culminating in the Tholian attack on the Klingon colony of Traelus II (S.C.E. *Interphase*).

KLINGONS: The Klingon Empire will perceive the Federation's push into the Taurus Reach as an attempt to encircle the empire's territory, most likely as a precursor to an invasion. They place a spy inside the diplomatic corps assigned to Starbase Vanguard, and will make forays into the region, in a race to lay claim to territory. This game of one-upmanship will exacerbate the already tense relationship between the Federation and the Klingon Empire.

ROMULANS: Though the Federation and the Klingon Empire separate the Romulan Star Empire from the Taurus Reach, the Romulans shrewdly reason that Starfleet's commitment of personnel and starships in the Taurus Reach must be significant. The result of their "test" of the Federation's resolve in "Balance of Terror" spurs the Romulans to make diplomatic overtures to the Klingon Empire, leading to a period of détente and the exchange of ship designs and cloaking technology. In VANGUARD, the Klingons and Romulans will join forces to pursue a shared goal—the destabilization of Starfleet's mission in the Taurus Reach.

ORIONS: In an effort to capitalize on the relative lawlessness of the region, a number of independent Orion privateers and mercenaries will ply their trade in the Taurus Reach. When their activities bring them into conflict with rival organizations and interstellar powers such as the Federation and Klingon Empire, they will be forced to start conspiring for mutual profit and collective survival.

WHAT MAKES VANGUARD UNIQUE

At first glance, VANGUARD might seem like "*Deep Space Nine* for the TOS era." In fact, its emphasis will be fundamentally different. First, there is Starfleet's ongoing exploration of the Taurus Reach, aboard three different starships. Second, VANGUARD will emphasize nontraditional *Star Trek* roles. Though on the three starships we will see the familiar crew configuration (C.O., first officer, science officer, C.M.O., chief engineer, etc.), aboard Starbase Vanguard we will focus instead on characters who have different responsibilities:

BASE COMMANDER	A&A OFFICER
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER	DIPLOMAT
JAG OFFICER	SOLDIER-OF-FORTUNE
INTELLIGENCE OFFICER	REPORTER

These different areas of specialization will open the way for stories that fall outside the usual *Star Trek* paradigms, as well as requiring authors to develop new ideas for characterization and interpersonal relationships.

VANGUARD will utilize different authors for different stories, like the post-finale DS9 novels. All the stories will be part of the serialized arcs, but will contain standalone elements.

Another important element of VANGUARD will be its sense of humor. By turns dry or acerbic, it will echo the lighthearted quips of Jim Kirk, the droll witicisms of Spock, the overwrought outbursts of McCoy ... but in voices uniquely its own. Just as TOS could tell stories as diverse as "Balance of Terror" and "The Trouble with Tribbles," or "Who Mourns for Adonais?" and "I, Mudd," VANGUARD will reflect TOS's comedy as well as its drama.

Although VANGUARD will be more complex in its moral and ethical depictions than TOS was in the 1960s, it will remain true to the hopeful spirit of TOS — to the idea that honesty, peace, and wisdom can build a better future than mistrust, aggression, or fear.

THE STATION

Starbase Vanguard is a Starfleet deep-space station on the edge of the Taurus Reach. It's the command base for all Starfleet activity in the sector, and is equipped to supervise and service Federation starships in the region. Three starships are permanently assigned to the station: *Endeavour*, *Sagittarius*, and *Bombay*. (*Bombay* is replaced in Book 2 by the *Lovell*.)

The station is manned by 1,200 Starfleet personnel (400 per shift) and a small number of civilians. It can accommodate a maximum of 400 visitors for shore leave and can shelter as many as four *Constitution*-class starships inside its spacedock, and support a large number of smaller vessels on its external docks.

In order to both facilitate and conceal its secret mission, Starbase Vanguard is open to civilian and non-Federation traffic, subject to circumstances. Apart from its drydock facilities, it's equipped to lend support to Federation colonies in the Taurus Reach, and to analyze a variety of information and materials gathered by the ships exploring the region. Industrial vehicles and equipment are kept handy.

The starbase itself is well-armed and heavily shielded. It is designed to be able to defend itself against a sizable threat, and to be self-sufficient for up to a decade without resupply. However, its stores of food and medicine and its caches of weapons and munitions make it a tempting target for criminals and enemies alike.

Because starbase infirmaries are larger and better-equipped than starship sickbays, they require more staff, including specialists and support personnel. The medical corps aboard Starbase Vanguard numbers 120-plus people, working in three shifts. Each shift has an attending physician/surgeon, residents, interns, students, nurses, medical technicians, and laboratory chemists. Also on staff are various specialists, including a psychiatrist, a pharmacist, a chiropractor, a dentist, a coroner, and an obstetrician/gynecologist. There is also a handful of medical-research experts, in fields ranging from genetics to epidemiology to xenobiology.

The station can offer shore leave in the form of temporary lodgings, a large arboretum, sports facilities and swimming pools, a cabaret, a theater/concert hall, an aquarium, and a zero-gravity recreation area. Visiting alien vessels frequently offer other, less wholesome

recreational options — then depart before anyone can file charges. (See notes on **Orion Merchant Prince** in the **Principal Characters** section.)

Each novel will be preceded by a star map that will depict the Taurus Reach as it's known during the time of that particular story. As the novels progress, the map will evolve to reveal more about the region as it becomes known to the characters and show how the astropolitical landscape is altered by the spread of the Federation. Early stories will show the position of the station and a few nearby systems, while later ones will show the establishment of colonies, the routes of ships, and the locations of newly encountered alien civilizations and life-forms.

THE STARSHIPS

The ***Sagittarius*** is a small, lightly equipped *Archer*-class (named for Jonathan Archer) scout ship with a crew of less than two dozen people. Because the *Sagittarius* can land, it has only a single transporter pad, for emergencies. Its C.O., **Captain Nassir**, is a laid-back, older commanding officer. He has little use for formalities; often, he and his crew are attired in utility jumpsuits with no rank insignia (such as TOS technicians were often seen wearing). Life aboard the *Sagittarius* is casual, but never dull. Officers and enlisted men come along as friends without concern for rank — until a crisis happens. Then their Starfleet training and discipline take over, and they're as sharp as any larger crew ever was.

The ***Bombay*** is a *Miranda*-class frigate. Its principal duties in the Taurus Reach are support missions for colonization, starmapping, and tactical operations. **Captain Hallie Gannon** runs a tight ship, because she has to — the *Bombay* is insanely busy almost around the clock, every day. It's always in a hurry to make the next cargo delivery, pick up a new colony shipment, investigate another border disturbance, check a grid reference for Vanguard, respond to another request for follow-up by the *Sagittarius*, or back up the *Endeavour*. There's always a shortage of something on board — fresh food, dilithium crystals, widgets, etc. The only thing never in short supply are Starfleet priority orders.

Life aboard the ***Endeavour***, a *Constitution*-class heavy cruiser, is strictly regimented; **Captain Zhao Sheng**, a forty-year Starfleet veteran who has been in the captain's chair for almost two decades, insists on strict protocol, by-the-book operations, discipline and "captain on the deck" formality. The zeitgeist on this ship is noble, proud, brave, eager. This is one of Starfleet's finest vessels; it's in top condition, and so is its crew.

ANTAGONISTS

The Federation's *en masse* arrival in the region immediately draws the attention of its rival powers: the violently territorial Tholians, the Klingon Empire, and the Romulan Star Empire, who all are suspicious of the Federation's interest in the Taurus Reach. This sparks a race to claim and control the region as quickly as possible, complicating the base's true mission.

The Tholians will be depicted in a manner consistent with the **Lost Era** novel *The Sundered*. They can be counted upon to be aggressive, openly confrontational, and tactically cunning.

The Romulans and the Klingons, meanwhile, are sending scout ships into the region, and at least one of them has a spy in place aboard the station by the time our saga begins. As the stakes escalate over the course of the series, the Klingons will assert their claim to the region and the Romulans can be counted on to engage in sabotage against several parties, either for their own gain or to provoke suspicion and conflict among their rivals.

Because the Taurus Reach is officially unclaimed neutral territory, other parties could conceivably stage forays into the region, bringing them into contact (and conflict) with the Vanguard team. In the later books of the series, the Gorn and the Tzenkethi might make appearances.

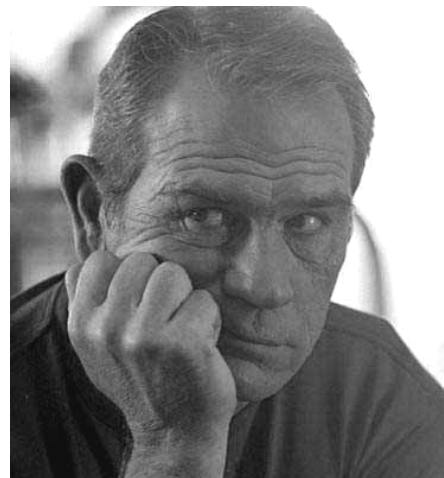
Further complicating the picture, Orion privateers and black marketeers are going to see this region as ripe for piracy, grifting, smuggling, and slaving.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS — STARBASE VANGUARD

• BASE COMMANDER

Commodore Diego Reyes (actor template: Tommy Lee Jones) is a fifty-something human officer. He is divorced, with no children. His ancestry is Chilean, but he was born and raised in the Lunar settlement of New Berlin.

Reyes is a rough-hewn but amiable C.O., comfortable in his authority and somewhat intimidating, with an appreciation for irony and dark humor. As a thirty-year Starfleet veteran, he's experienced enough not to be easily surprised, but he's still intrigued by the unknown and the mysteries of the universe. His command style is smooth and decisive, seldom hesitant, and can come in quick bursts. His crew has learned to anticipate his orders and stay half a step ahead of him. In return, he cuts them a lot of slack and gives them the freedom to do their jobs in their own way, and he always gives them the benefit of the doubt when things go wrong. He also makes their safety a top priority. He's a skilled administrator and well-suited to his job, but he misses commanding a starship.

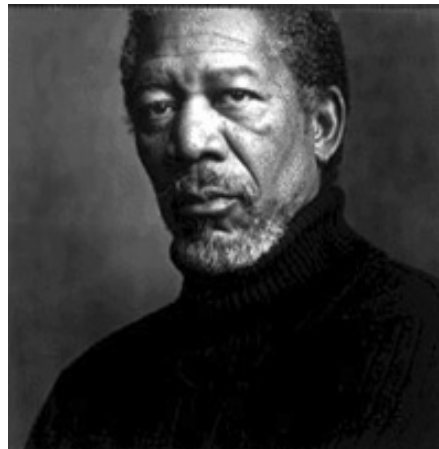


Despite his friendly disposition, he maintains more emotional distance from his crew than most *Trek* C.O.'s we've seen. He hides his strongest feelings, is stoic about pain, and limits his mirth to a lockjawed grin. Part of Reyes's closed-off manner is the result of his bitter divorce from his ex-wife, **Jeanne**, which has made it difficult for him to trust anyone or form close relationships. Though he won't admit it aloud (and maybe not even to himself), he really wishes he had children. When he deals with kids, he never talks down to them.

Reyes has few close friends. He gets along well enough with his C.M.O., **Zeke Fisher**, who can read Reyes like a book and doesn't allow the commodore to intimidate him. Reyes is discreetly dating the station's JAG officer, **Captain Rana Desai**. (Publicly, they are cordial. In private their interactions are more intense. Even when they disagree, they share a bond of trust.) He enjoys **T'Prynn**'s dry wit and quiet company; and he enjoys flexing his mental muscles by talking politics and philosophy with the erudite **Ambassador Jetanien**. In time, Reyes will relax and will eventually learn to call these comrades his friends.

● THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Dr. Ezekiel (Zeke) Fisher (actor template: Morgan Freeman) is the "old man" among the crew. Been around, seen it all, and wise enough to know there's no perfect solution to any problem — only solutions with degrees of imperfection. He knows Starfleet and the Federation have their flaws, as does every species and political system, and he isn't afraid to tell it like it is. He has little patience for pretense, and usually sees right through people's façades. Although he is a brilliant man, he speaks simply. He keeps his statements uncluttered (unlike his desk, which he hasn't seen in years).



Fisher is in his eighties, and after more than fifty years "in the service" is weary of Starfleet life. He plans to retire in a few years and return home to Mars. While he works as C.M.O. on Starbase Vanguard, he's training his replacement, attending physician **Dr. M'Benga**. What he doesn't realize is that young M'Benga is unhappy with starbase duty and wants to see the galaxy aboard a starship. When M'Benga leaves Vanguard to work on the *Enterprise*, Fisher's carefully laid retirement plans are thrown into disarray.

The elderly surgeon's favorite recreational diversion aboard Starbase Vanguard is watching live sports — anything competitive will do. He never cheers, voices no preference for one player or team over another, but he can watch for hours.

His wife, Sarah, passed away of natural causes a few years ago; his sons Ely and Noah live far away, on Deneva and Alpha Centauri. Neither followed him into medicine, unlike his daughter, Jane, who runs a family practice back on Mars. All three of his children have kids of their own. Whenever his duties allow, he can usually be found writing letters home to one of them. The loss of his wife has left him nostalgic and reminded him how much of life we take for granted, which is part of why he has lately been counseling people to remember to enjoy life as it comes. At heart, he's a sentimental optimist who believes in the power of hope, and who is confident that the Federation, whatever its faults might be, stands for something good and embodies ideals that are worth promoting and defending.

• THE JAG OFFICER

Captain Rana Desai (actor template: Parminder Nagra), early 40s, is a specialist in interstellar law. She has a mind like a steel trap. Though she's quick to point out when Reyes and others are bending or breaking rules and regulations, she also understands that the unpredictable nature of life on the frontier requires a certain flexibility. Also, this is new territory, with rules of its own: It's her job to figure out what those rules are as Starfleet probes deeper into the Taurus Reach, and what they may mean for the Federation. It's also her responsibility to make sure their people understand and respect that as much as they adhere to Federation law or Starfleet regs. Given the complex issues that often come up, this can be a difficult balancing act.



Desai is a talented investigator and trial lawyer. Before joining the JAG Corps nine years ago, the London native spent fourteen years in Starfleet Security's Criminal Investigation Division (C.I.D.). She is prim and proper in private, and a barracuda in court. One thing that will always bring out her inner tigress is seeing innocent people get hurt or taken advantage of. She hates to see the underdog lose, and she will face threats against her life in order to mete out real justice.

Desai keeps her romance with **Commodore Reyes** low-key. In public, the two present a united front. They share deep convictions about idealism, law, and justice. What they often disagree on is how best to serve these ideals. In private, they trust one another enough to act as one another's sounding boards; they play devil's advocate for each other, challenge each other, sometimes heatedly. They make each other crazy sometimes. But they trust each other. And they *are* in love, even if their emotionally reserved natures conceal it.

Desai's story issues will focus on the limitations of the rule of law, her frustration at taking the high road when her foes are free to use dirty tricks, and her sense of helplessness as she falls for Reyes, who she finds utterly infuriating, oddly charming, and a bit mysterious. A deep source of tension between them is that she intuits his desire for children before he is willing to admit it to himself; the idea of parenthood frightens her, but she can sense that Diego's unspoken desire for a family will force her to make a difficult choice someday soon.

• THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Lieutenant Commander T'Prynn (actor template: Bridget Moynahan) is a relatively young (70s), tall (5'10"), and strikingly beautiful Vulcan woman. She keeps a low profile aboard the station, specializing in information gathering and analysis, threat assessment, and, when necessary, covert ops. (T'Prynn was introduced and killed in the DS9 novel *Lesser Evil*, in a flashback set in 2347, approximately 80 years after the timeframe of this series.)



Of particular vexation to her is the persistent inquisitiveness of **Tim Pennington**, a young civilian journalist living aboard the station. T'Prynn will, during one extreme crisis, trick Pennington into disseminating, via the news service, misinformation that helps her outflank a foreign rival. She also coerces wandering soldier-of-fortune **Cervantes Quinn** into serving as one of her covert assets in the Taurus Reach. He's only the latest in a long line of criminals who, having drifted into her sphere of control, have become her pawns.

She speaks in roundabout, qualified statements. Sometimes she sounds more like a lawyer than Desai does. Her wit is dry, her sarcasm sharp, her voice smokey-sweet. Off-duty, T'Prynn sometimes plays piano in the starbase cabaret. In contrast to her cool Vulcan behavior, her music is passionate and eloquent. Her performances lead some of her associates to wonder if it's her way of circumventing the strict Vulcan dictums of logic in order to express her turbulent inner state of mind.

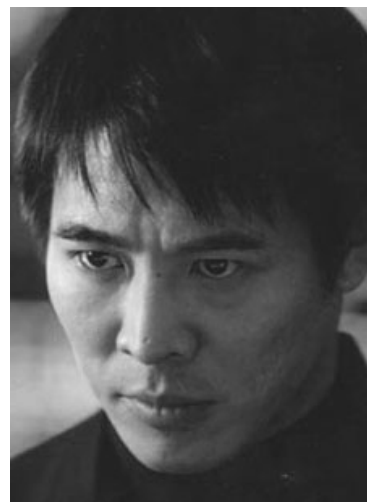
Her innate Vulcan talents for mind-melding, nerve pinches, healing trances, etc., are well-developed. Like many other Vulcans, during childhood she was pledged to a mate, **Stenn**. Upon reaching adulthood, she spurned him and declared her independence. Stenn refused T'Prynn's demand for separation, so she slew him in the *kun-ut-kal-if-fee* and emancipated herself. In order to ease the psychological and physical stresses of forgoing the *Pon Farr* ritual every seven years, T'Prynn uses music as a kind of emotional "pressure valve."

T'Prynn embodies the inner struggle to balance passion and reason, and the professional conflict between her duty to Starfleet and the harsh realities of intelligence work.

• THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY (A&A) OFFICER

Lieutenant Ming Xiong (actor template: Jet Li) is a young (31) human officer. If called the "A&A officer," he'll say that, properly, he should be called the "double-X officer" (Xenoanthropology and Xenoarchaeology). He loves learning for its own sake — languages, art, literature, you name it.

Xiong is not just a brilliant researcher. He is trained in a variety of skills, including piloting, scuba diving and underwater vehicles (never know where an alien ruin might be), and general engineering (if you're alone in a remote corner of the galaxy, you'd better know how to fix things). Despite all his skills, however, he's not likely to advance in rank. Why?



His temper. He has a lot of suppressed anger and can be hostile toward authority figures. He says things in meetings that he shouldn't. He's young enough to be an idealist and old enough to be disappointed by the galaxy's cynicism. His superiors respect his talents but fear that his volatility will embarrass them, spark a war, or be aimed at them. Because of Xiong's expertise and security clearance regarding the Taurus Reach mystery, Reyes and Jetanien cut Xiong a lot more slack than they do to other officers — but there will be a limit.

Part of Xiong's anger stems from loneliness. Relationships aren't his forte. His parents fought throughout his childhood in Kunming, China. His father's trump card for every argument was "Maybe we should get a divorce, then!" By joining Starfleet, Ming defied his parents' plan for him to be an architect, causing a lingering emotional rift with his dad.

What really bothers Xiong is that he wants more openness in the exploration of the Taurus Reach mystery; he sees a chance for the open exchange of scientific ideas to build bridges to the Klingons and the Romulans, but he's been ordered to keep his findings quiet. As long as he plays by the rules, he'll continue serving detached duty aboard the three starships.

Like many idealists before him, he rails against injustice and defends underdogs, even when it puts the Federation in politically awkward binds. Experience has not yet dimmed his belief in justice; Xiong joined Starfleet not just to see the galaxy, but to help it.

• THE DIPLOMAT

Ambassador Jetanien is on permanent assignment to the Federation Embassy on Starbase Vanguard, along with a small staff of attachés and aides, to deal with the full spectrum of diplomatic issues that come up in their region of space.

Jetanien is a Rigellian **Chelon**, a species glimpsed among the background aliens during *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. The Chelon are amphibious bipeds, tall, broad, with a tough armored hide where their turtle-like ancestors once had a carapace. They are fairly strong and are capable of regrowing lost digits, appendages, limbs and certain soft tissues (including eyes) if necessary. If accosted violently, they secrete an odorless, flavorless poison from their skin, which most carbon-based species will absorb by touch — to fatal effect, usually within a few minutes. They strongly dislike extreme cold, and if exposed to it for more than a few minutes become unconscious. Their skin tones range from greenish to blue and yellow, and, rarely, black. Their eyes are large and see well in darkness. Their clawed digits are deceptively nimble. They eat vegetation and bugs. They live much longer than humans, and reach maturity more slowly (thirty years).



Jetanien is the Jeb Bartlett of our cast: a wise and learned statesman with a firm belief in the ideals of the United Federation of Planets, a wry sense of humor, and an appreciation for unpredictable twists of diplomacy. When need arises, however, he can be a passionate orator and a tough negotiator. His knowledge of history is detailed and highly nuanced.

Jetanien is the last of the four people on the station aware of the secret aspect of the Federation's mission into the Taurus Reach. His role is to expand Federation control in the region through political alliance and expansion of colonial holdings.

• THE SOLDIER-OF-FORTUNE

Cervantes Quinn (actor template: Billy Bob Thornton) is a solitary, semi-legit soldier of fortune always trying to stay one step ahead of Starfleet. He's smart and can be dangerous, but usually he's in way over his head. He owns the *Rocinante*, a small cargo ship for hire, trafficks in goods both legal and not, does some prospecting and some smuggling, gets into lots of trouble, and commits the occasional good deed.



Early in the first story, Quinn will inadvertently compromise one of **T'Prynn's** operations, leading her to press him into a covert op in order to fix it. This leads to his indentured servitude to her as a reluctant agent. T'Prynn will occasionally use him for his connections and his ability to get on and off of different worlds easily. He hates this kind of work, but she has an unbreakable hold over him: her file on his less-than-legal activities for **Ganz**. In contrast to our noble Starfleet cast-members, Quinn inhabits the ethically gray areas of this series, always weighing his self-interest vs. his conscience. He is aware of his value to T'Prynn as a proxy, as someone who can do what she cannot.

Quinn always expects the worst while hoping for the best. He's been married four times, each one worse than the last — but still he hears love's siren call. He's been arrested more times than he can count, but never convicted (technicalities, you see), and so he continues to tempt fate. He is a provocateur; he loves to sow chaos, then sit back to watch the fun. He cracks wise, is a master of ironic understatement, and loves to push people's buttons. He plays all sides against each other and gives tips to **Tim Pennington**. If all else fails, he's pretty good at throwing sucker-punches. He's not without a conscience, though — he won't knowingly let someone be hurt by his schemes, and he won't profit from others' suffering.

On some level, Quinn knows his days are numbered. He's nearing 50 and losing his hair almost as fast as he's gaining weight. For all his blustering, scheming, and star-hopping, he has nothing to show. He wants just one of his crazy schemes to work out, just once. Deep down, he admires the Starfleeters and wants to be a hero. But if he knew the role he's about to play in Federation history, he'd power up the *Rocinante* and go home now....

• THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

Frontier correspondent for the Federation News Service, **Tim Pennington** (actor template: Ewan McGregor) is a smart, young (27), brash and persistent all-around pain-in-the-ass journalist covering the Federation's activities in Starbase Vanguard's particular corner of the galaxy.

Pennington (for whom the Pennington School of *DS9* fame will one day be named) is VANGUARD's twist on the "Outsider" character. In this context, he is the voice of the common man among the Starfleeters and diplomats, questioning everything from the POV of the "little guy."



But even a reporter can have something to hide. Pennington is a married man who has been having an affair with **Oriana**, a married woman who serves aboard the *U.S.S. Bombay*, which will be lost midway through the first story. (Another ship is later deployed as its replacement.) Shortly before this tragedy, Tim's wife, **Lora**, joins him on the station. Tim is devastated by Oriana's death but can't mourn openly in front of Lora (or Oriana's shattered husband). To keep the affair a secret, he does some shitty things, rationalizing all the way. He thinks he's covered his tracks — only to learn that **T'Prynn** knows everything.

Pennington deflects criticism with humor, and he's never at a loss for a glib remark. He views the power players on the station as obstacles to "the truth," and he bends the law as far as he can to get information, access, evidence. But his zeal can work against him, as he learns when T'Prynn dupes him into spreading disinformation. Once he gets done cursing her and feeling sorry for himself, he'll only be more resolved to seek out the truth.

Tim's work serves to keep everyone honest out here, far from the center of civilization. But he doesn't always look for bad news; when Starfleet makes contact with a new people, or finds a new life-form, or discovers new phenomena, he reports those stories with equal enthusiasm. He strives to remain objective and non-partisan, but he knows that truly objective reporting means more than parroting both sides of a polarized issue. He is shrewd, insightful, and understands people as well as politics. His greatest struggle is to practice the same high standards of ethics in his personal life as he does in the professional arena.

● THE ORION MERCHANT PRINCE

Ganz (actor template: a green Ving Rhames) is the type of Orion black-marketeer glimpsed during one of Pike's illusions in "The Cage". A self-styled mogul, he has been lured by the Federation's interest in the Taurus Reach into seeking new markets for his illicit trade, which ranges from narcotic substances to weapons smuggling and sexual commerce. As a general rule, he forbids his employees from doing business with Starfleet personnel; besides the risk of getting caught in a sting operation, Starfleet personnel are subject to arbitrary drug screening (**Dr. Fisher** watches out for this kind of thing).



Cervantes Quinn is one of Ganz's reluctant employees. Ganz is unaware that Quinn has also been co-opted by **T'Prynn**.

Ganz is honorable, to a point; reneging on deals is bad for business. He is utterly ruthless and not above using intimidation or outright violence to get his way. Regardless, he knows his limitations; he won't let his people pick fights with Starfleet or openly antagonize the Federation. He can even be an ally, under the right circumstances; if the Federation goes to war in the Taurus Reach, Ganz will be the first one to sabotage Starfleet's enemies (to protect his investments and possibly win favors from **Reyes** and **T'Prynn**).

Ganz maintains a stranglehold on private shipping leaving the Taurus Reach for the Federation. He finds it difficult to exert the same control over shipping to the Tholian Assembly or the Klingon Empire; further complicating his affairs is the sudden appearance of a rival criminal organization that is trying to steal his business. This struggle will prompt Ganz to unite a loose affiliation of Orion smugglers and buccaneers into a formidable cartel. Though at first this will seem to undercut the security of Vanguard's mission, this band of ne'er-do-wells will actually prove handy—provided T'Prynn and Desai are willing to look the other way on a few matters of questionable legality....

Unlike such "roguish" personas as Quark or Neelix, Ganz is not lovable. There's nothing cuddly about him; you wouldn't underestimate him. He exudes lethality and seriousness. Cold-blooded? This guy has liquid nitrogen in his veins. He may speak quietly, but no one ever misses a word he says.

SECONDARY CHARACTERS — STARSHIP CAPTAINS & SENIOR OFFICERS**U.S.S. ENDEAVOUR****Captain Zhao Sheng**, *commanding officer*

A quiet Chinese taskmaster, a perfectionist, a stoic pain in the ass, a brilliant tactician. Favorite exercises are kung-fu and distance running. A decorated officer, his 40th anniversary in Starfleet is quickly drawing near. He used to serve with Commodore Reyes when they both were junior officers. Sheng is in his mid-fifties, rock-ribbed and clear-eyed.

(Actor template: Chow Yun Fat)

**Commander Atish Khatami**, *first officer*

Slender, late-thirtyish woman of Iranian ancestry. Stickler for details, efficient, has a laugh that can warm up any room. Muslim but not pious. Leads *Endeavour's* away missions. Calm, exhausts diplomatic options before she permits her crew to use force. Civilian husband Kenji Kanashima lives on Deneva with their daughter, Parveen.

(Actor template: Charlotte Lewis)

**Dr. Anthony Leone, M.D.**, *chief medical officer*

A forty-something New Yorker, this foul-tempered physician has a nasal voice and carries himself with a weary, "please kill me now" attitude. He has a knack for seeing the ironic side of any situation, and he seems to lack an internal editing mechanism for his more biting observations. When casualties come into his sickbay or there's a medical emergency, he's all business. Lean and wiry, he's a better brawler than most docs.

(Actor template: Steve Buscemi)

**Lt. Commander Bersh glov Mog**, *chief engineer*

The most unusual **Tellarite** you'll ever meet. Loves jazz. Never met a tabasco he didn't like. Exudes warmth and bonhomie. It's easy to get to know him, easy to like him, easy to talk to him. Mog's a really good engineer and a patient teacher. Speaks several languages. He likes to tell people that in his "younger days," he was a wrestling champion.

(Actor template: a graybeard Tellarite)



Ensign Stephen Klisiewicz, *science officer*

Established in *The Genesis Wave*, Book 1, as a Starfleet Intelligence technology expert in 2286, 20 years after VANGUARD. Young, fresh out of the Academy, bright, full of ideas. First to volunteer for any away mission. Chief Engineer Mog and Klisiewicz are becoming fast friends. Klisiewicz's chief hobby is model-building.

(Actor template: a young Liev Schreiber)

**U.S.S. BOMBAY****Captain Hallie Gannon**, *commanding officer*

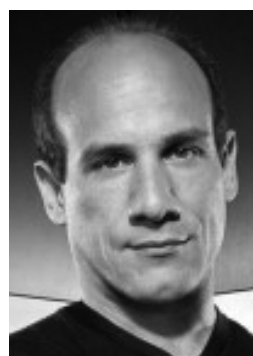
Long-suffering, good-natured. Pile on more work, she'll accept it with a smile and say "Thanks." She delegates easily, but also knows when to be hands-on. Like certain other notable Starfleet captains, she likes to lead her own away missions, thereby vexing her first officer. She likes anything related to the wilderness: Hiking, canoeing, archery, etc.

(Actor template: Amanda Tapping)

**Commander Vondas Milonakis**, *first officer*

A wheeler-dealer. Whether it's engine parts or three-week furloughs, he finds what can't be found. You'd think he knows someone on every ship in the fleet; maybe he does. Everyone owes him a favor, or an I.O.U., or another round. He speaks fluent Greek, and is always inviting people to try his moussaka. It's really good.

(Actor template: Paul Ben-Victor)

**Dr. Hua Sun Lee, M.D.**, *chief medical officer*

This 50-ish Korean woman could make a Jewish mother feel guilty. Dr. Lee is a great diagnostician, a competent surgeon, and a fair to middling dentist and othodontist. Her true gift is for making patients feel like they should have come in days, weeks, or even months ago.

(Actor template: Emily Kuroda)



Lieutenant Kevin Judge, *chief engineer*

Nothing in this Liverpudlian's engine room ever works quite the way the manuals specify. It's all been modified, "upgraded," or repaired with spit and good intentions. He doesn't so much work miracles as exorcise curses. He's terminally flustered, exasperated, at wit's end, on the edge of a breakdown — unless you ask for a status report. Then he smiles and insists everything's going "perfectly, couldn't be better."

(Actor template: Callum Blue)

**Lieutenant (j.g.) Thanashal ch'Sonnas**, *science officer*

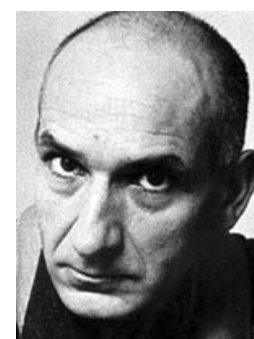
Andorian. He prefers scientific research to human interaction. People defy easy codification or simple measurement, and that disturbs him. He's a personable individual; you'd never take him for a misanthrope. He just finds other people to be so intimidating that it's easier to spend his off-duty hours alone, "catching up on the latest journals."

(Actor template: a blue, antennae'd Jude Law)

**U.S.S. SAGITTARIUS****Captain Nassir**, *commanding officer*

Deltan male. Middle-aged, past his "pheromone prime." Very laid-back. Not hung up on protocol. Lets his crew call him "skipper." Vegetarian. Works well under pressure. Improvisation is his forte. To him every new planet is a paradise, every meal a banquet, every day a celebration — and his upbeat attitude inspires the rest of his crew.

(Actor template: Sir Ben Kingsley)

**Commander Clark Terrell**, *first officer*

The only one on the ship who can call the captain "Nass." He shakes the bulkheads when he laughs, and he trembles the decks when he roars (which isn't often). Terrell was established (and killed) in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (19 years after VANGUARD's time).

(Actor template: a young Paul Winfield)



Dr. Lisa Babitz, M.D., *chief medical officer*

Neurotic. High energy. Nervous about anything and everything. Can be a bit of a nag. Is obsessed with disinfecting things all over the ship. Talks faster than anyone the rest of the crew has ever met. When she slows down for a minute, she's really a sweetheart. During a medical emergency, she's a phenomenal emergency surgeon and pathologist.

(Actor template: Portia de Rossi)

**Master Chief Petty Officer Mike "Mad Man" Ilucci,** *chief engineer*

Strong believer in "percussive maintenance" (hit it until it works again). Knows how to curse in five non-human languages (Klingon, Romulan, Tellarite, Andorian, and Orion). Can start a bar fight even with people whose language he doesn't know. Has a rant about almost any topic one can think of. Call him "Master Chief." Or else. No, seriously.

(Actor template: Jack Black)

**Ensign Vanessa Theriault,** *science officer*

Martian. Kooky. Catalogs samples and files logs in the most non-intuitive ways imaginable. Cruelly witty, droll, sarcastic. So cute that personnel from other ships who meet her on Starbase Vanguard sometimes ask if she's Capt. Nassir's "yeoman." That's when she bats her eyelashes at Ilucci and tells him to start another barfight.

(Actor template: Alyson Hannigan)



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS — STARBASE VANGUARD

- **Exploratory Operations Officer – Lt. Commander Raymond Cannella**

Directing ship deployment for stellar cartography, planetary surveys, investigation of deep space phenomena, and long-term follow-up studies. Ray is a big guy, doesn't get a lot of exercise. Spends most of his time in his office, playing music and shuffling paperwork.

- **Colonial Administrator – Commander Aole ("OW-lay") Miller**

Coordinates the founding of new Federation settlements on class-M planets in the region, oversees terraforming missions, acts as Starfleet liaison with those colonies, and allocates resources for those purposes. Aole is an extrovert to the *n*th degree. Usually wears a huge smile, full of enthusiasm and optimism. Black male, gay.

- **Operations Personnel**

- Executive Officer: Commander **Jon Cooper**. Quiet, efficient; married, one son.
- Engineering Officer: Lieutenant **Isaiah Farber**. Starfleet weight-lifting champion.
- Communications Officer: Lieutenant (j.g.) **Judy Dunbar**. Photographic memory.
- Security/Tactical Officer: Lieutenant **Haniff Jackson**. Never loses a bet.
- Attending Physician: **Dr. M'Benga**, M.D. (Fisher's protégé, soon going to the *Enterprise*)
- Diplomatic Attachés: **Sovik** (Vulcan; Jetanien's number-one "yes man"); **Dietrich Meyer** (never met a drink he didn't like); **Akeylah Karume** (openly covets Jetanien's job); and **Anna Sandesjo** (secret spy for the Klingons).

- **Cabaret Owner/Chanteuse**

Manón is an exotic alien (species: Silgov) female, possible love interest for one of our regulars. Very much the classic "Lady in Red" of the Lauren Bacall variety.

INTER-CHARACTER DYNAMICS — VANGUARD PRINCIPALS

Reyes & Fisher: Old friends, easy camaraderie, plainspoken honesty, fraternal.

Reyes & Desai: Professional allies in public, they love to spar verbally in private.

Reyes & T'Pol: He wonders if she's holding out on him; she is cautious of him.

Reyes & Xiong: Two stubborn guys, muchos tension. Xiong oblivious of thin ice.

Reyes & Jetanien: Meeting of equals, lines clearly drawn, concise dialogue.

Reyes & Quinn: Quinn hedges, Reyes cuts to the chase, rinse, repeat.

Reyes & Pennington: Tim pesters, Reyes deflects, Tim pushes, Reyes closes door.

Reyes & Ganz: Lots of insincere courtesy, both wary of provoking the other.

Fisher & Desai: He offers paternal advice, she spurns it, will grow to respect it.

Fisher & T'Pol: Both understand each other perfectly, avoid each other.

Fisher & Xiong: Old man tries to counsel a young turk too proud to take help.

Fisher & Jetanien: Doc sees simplicity, diplomat sees complexity, both are right.

Fisher & Quinn: Doc's got no use for con men; Quinn's got no use for doctors.

Fisher & Pennington: The doctor loves a free press — just not in his hospital.

Fisher & Ganz: Doc sees a public-health threat; thug sees a legal liability.

Desai & T'Pol: Sparks fly as a lawyer butts heads with an extralegal operative.

Desai & Xiong: She worries he'll vitiate a treaty; he fears she'll court-martial him.

Desai & Jetanien: Colleagues and allies, they bridge the Starfleet/Diplomatic gap.

Desai & Quinn: Cat-and-mouse, he's a petty annoyance; he flirts to tick her off.

Desai & Pennington: Both seek the truth. But he risks her wrath if he finds it first.

Desai & Ganz: Cold animosity, cobra-mongoose; taking him down will be costly.

T'Pol & Xiong: She resents but admires him. He's drawn to her mystery & looks.

T'Pol & Jetanien: They see each other as tools to be used to achieve their goals.

T'Pol & Quinn: Queen & Pawn. She needs his access. He uses her for protection.

T'Pol & Pennington: Secrecy vs. openness. She gives him one-word answers.

T'Pol & Ganz: She sees a blunt instrument; he sees only a pretty girl...for now.

Xiong & Jetanien: Diplomat is strict with Xiong, who resents heavyhandedness.

Xiong & Quinn: Friends, allies. Mutual appreciation for directness, getting results.

Xiong & Pennington: Friends, they share a distrust of "higher-ups," secrecy.

Xiong & Ganz: Xiong rejects job offer, resents smuggling of antiquities, etc.

Jetanien & Quinn: Strange bedfellows; Quinn swaps recon intel for rich claims.

Jetanien & Pennington: The young reporter promotes UFP successes for scoops.

Jetanien & Ganz: Thug tries to bully Diplomat, learns Jetanien plays rough, too.

Quinn & Pennington: Quinn gives Pennington tips; Pennington covers for Quinn.

Quinn & Ganz: Thane and Lord. Ganz's boot is on Quinn's neck...but not forever.

Pennington & Ganz: Reporter knows not to dig too deep...but he won't be silenced.