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BABYLON 5™

OGL

The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition

The Rim

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THE RIM

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INTRODUCTION

The universe is a very large place. It is so impossibly large that some philosophers and astrophysicists have gone quite mad trying to discover its secrets. In the *Babylon 5* genre, there is a place to which no one goes until there is nothing left in the galaxy for them: beyond the Rim.

The Rim is the galactic equivalent of the outermost edge of known territory. Jump routes are not mapped. Systems are recorded as 'theoretical.' Entire civilisations come and go without so much as even the Minbari turning their eye toward them. The galaxy just seems to *end* for most travel-based purposes, and even hyperspace seems to draw inward against the Rim's edge, which is like the greased walls of some cosmological pit-trap. It takes a special kind of bravery to go out and move beyond that edge and see what lies outside the galaxy.

Many different galactic governments have supported programs to venture beyond the edge of known space. Centuries before the Third Age, it was thought that the Earth was alone. Then they pushed beyond the stratosphere and found the moon. Then they found Mars. And so on. The sentient species of thousands of worlds have sought to push the boundaries and find new territory. Even though the laws of physics and space push against them from all angles, they still push forward to discover new jump routes, planets and even life beyond the reaches of the galaxy.

There is so much to explore outside of the defined limits of the galaxy that some governments dedicate tens of billions – even trillions – of credits to exploration programs designed specifically to venture to the Rim and leap back and forth over it, daring fate and destiny to show them these new worlds… or risking becoming lost forever in the chaotic swirl of unmapped hyperspace. It is a dangerous game, but every bit of information gleaned from the unknown places could be worth a lifetime of risks.

No one really knows what can be found beyond the Rim. Travel there could be a fool's errand that tempts powerful enemies, like the old naval maps that warned 'here there be monsters,' or it could be the hypothetical road to the heavens itself. A path to immortality? The key to the magic of each race's ancient mythos? There is no way to know what lies beyond… except to go there and see first hand.

The Rim offers a new style of game for most *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* fans. It gives Games Masters a broad horizon on strange and wonderful things to develop and enjoy with their players. It provides players with a puzzling and splendid trip through uncharted worlds, perhaps giving them a chance to make first contact for their species, company or government. We hope that *The Rim* will cause every player, reader and fan of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* to wrinkle his brow and really think about what else might be beyond the scope of the Third Age.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Rim is a guide to setting up the exploration of the Rim and beyond. It should give Games Masters everything they need to design, populate and flesh out unexplored systems and planets for their campaigns to push toward. Using mysterious signals, gravitic signatures and just plain luck their Player Characters can find an assortment of interesting and unique experiences beyond known space.

The book begins with a helpful collection of facts and hints for the would-be explorer. It explains how to locate and arrange for a vessel capable of traversing the Rim's powerful hyperspace tides and constantly shifting gravitic waves. It shows readers how best to get along during the long months – sometimes years –the crew must live together in an explorer craft. Explorers must know how to locate a 'Rim Ping,' and recognise how best to deal with what they find. Of course, the most important thing to any explorer is how to get back home again – laden with new information or not.

The book then moves on to show the many different things that may possibly be found out in the void beyond the Rim. Rogue planets, derelict spacecraft, entire systems and other mysteries wait in the darkness. By using unstable jump routes and beaconless travel patterns to find whatever may be out there, explorers are forever playing a game of chance with what they might discover. This chapter gives rules as to choosing exactly what sort of mystery the explorers have located – and how to randomly create the particulars of it. Using the tables and information we provide, Games Masters can 'whip up' a new Rim event in just a few minutes if they wish to, should their campaigns call for it.

New life forms can be a very big deal to anyone exploring beyond known space. This book dedicates an entire chapter to the discovery and creation of new life forms. Games Masters can use the chapter to create their own random aliens for regular use, or perhaps to design a new breed of algae that produces a hundred times more oxygen than its Earthly cousins.

The Rim also covers a handful of pre-designed planets created for our readers' use. Due to how the areas outside known space work, these planets are never *exactly* where they were the last time, and can be used by Games Masters as plot devices or quick stand-ins for the random planets discussed in the previous chapter.

The next section is devoted specifically to new life found beyond the Rim, who found it and what it means to the rest of the galaxy. There is a host of possibilities, and we have drawn up a few good examples of what explorers might find on their travels and how they could interact with the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game*. Also covered in this chapter are a number of useful devices and items that Rim explorers use, plus a few interesting things that have turned up out there.

To wrap up the book properly, we added a section that describes a number of exploration vessels from multiple galactic territories. The Earthers are not the only race to have sent Explorer-class ships out to the Rim. Using some of the ships in this section might require a pretty serious arrangement with the governments or companies that own them, but this could make for a wonderful backdrop on which a campaign might be set.

The Rim is a type of 'Guide Beyond the Stars,' where travellers buy their tickets and see what the tour guide has to show them. It promises to be one hell of a show, and we want you to buckle up and enjoy the ride.

Now that you have made the decision to pour on the thrust, lock your beacons onto whatever object is giving off the Rim Ping your sensors are picking up, and get ready to see a side of the *Babylon 5* universe few have ever laid eyes on. This is the Rim, and you never know what you will find – or what will find you.

A Note to Games Masters

This book offers a host of new and interesting information and resources that might seem a bit unbalancing to the common eye. Simply allowing the common *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* campaign to have access to them is not only likely to be problematic to the story, but also to the power-level of the game as a whole. *The Rim* is designed to be a guide and sourcebook for those campaigns that want to stray from the written and conventional Babylon 5 genre and seek out completely new ideas – several of which the Games Masters themselves can come up with.

EXPLORING THE VOID

There is a lot to be said about the exploration of the Rim and the areas beyond, which is covered in specific sections throughout this chapter. From the definition as to why the Rim is what it is, to the types of stellar events that can be located beyond its boundaries; these are what this chapter will help describe.

It takes a very courageous soul to travel off the galactic map and see what lies out there. In the following sections, readers will be able to see why that is and how to hopefully overcome the obstacles that can make these missions far deadlier than any wartime fleet action or raider attack.

What is the Rim?

The 'Rim' is the term used for the last edges of space around the galaxy's 'arms,' where the gravitational pull of the Core gives way to the sweeping revolution of space itself. In effect, the Rim is the edge of space. Due to the lack of strong gravitational attraction, the area outside of the galaxy's arms is theoretically a void of empty space between one and the next galaxy– nicknamed the *Greater Void*. It is for this reason that going beyond the Rim is considered dangerous to say the least.

The Rim is the edge of the map, the covers of the greater galactic encyclopaedia, and the definition of 'last chance to turn back'. Few would ever dare try to cross into the nothing after it, and with just cause. It is unknown how many vessels have gone out past the Rim and never returned, and joining those mysteriously lost is rarely on any captain's wish list.

What Makes the Rim so Dangerous?

The galaxy, some might say the entire universe, is revolving around a theoretical 'Zero Point' somewhere in existence that gives all things a gravitational pull. Each galaxy revolves within that greater revolution; the systems revolve around their stars, and so on. This series of spinning stellar bodies and collections of bodies is held together by their own generated force of gravity. Gravity, like any other form of energy, has its limitations, creating a palpable barrier where one pull ends and another begins.

The Rim represents where this galaxy's gravitational pull ends and the next galaxy's pull begins. Like the water caught between tidal pools, that area of space is turbulent and chaotic. It creates pockets of gathered asteroids and debris that might stand still for a few years before pulling apart and becoming a veritable minefield of deadly projectiles. It knocks wayward planetoids off their orbits. It makes a mockery of galactic maps. It is very much a purgatory of space travel.

Based on what space researchers in this galaxy have learned, hyperspace is directly tied to the gravitational pulls of realspace in some, mysterious and strange way. While the gravitational turn of the galaxy is easily mapped and calculated within the confines of the galaxy's hyperspace routes, the rules are drastically changed beyond the Rim.

Without the measurable constant of the galaxy's turn, the chaotic nature of the Greater Void means that astrophysical calculations will only hold true for a few months at a time for most races (Earthers, Narn), a decade for the more advanced (Minbari, Drakh) and several decades for the truly technologically supreme (Techno-Mages, Vorlons). Without a proper hyperspace beacon homing a ship's course to its target, hyperspace travel is random, dangerous and ultimately suicidal.

Some races have gone beyond the Rim with a hyperspace transponder beacon in tow, hoping to set it up for others to follow; this is only a limited solution. With the exception of those races or societies that have mastered hyperspace mapping, a science reserved for Techno-Mages and First Ones in the 23rd Century, jump route homing beacons are only strong enough to make a certain distance before becoming twisted by the revolution of the galaxy.

This is why a ship cannot simply enter hyperspace at Vinzin and travel straight to Elitria (systems that are on opposite sides of the galaxy); the route must be segmented with *dozens* of additional stops. These stops are not only politically and socially necessary, but scientifically they have to happen to re-align the route for the next set of beacons lest they become lost and essentially swallowed up by hyperspace. Like a string between two points, jump route beacons simply cannot be *too* long or twisted.

That is the problem with setting up a hyperspace beacon in the Greater Void to link with anything within the confines of the Rim. As the galaxy spins normally, the beacon point is slowly left behind, pulling the beacon and its corresponding jump route tighter and tighter until it eventually snaps. It would leave those who have gone to the Rim stranded, likely never to be found again.

Route navigation is not only the hyperspace hazard beyond the Rim. Hyperspace is somewhat 'readable' around large gravitational masses in realspace. Gas giants, suns, black hole anomalies and the like leave large enough gravitational mass shadows that hyperspace ebbs and flows in a specific pattern near them. While this does not at all make hyperspace predictable or safe, it means that it at least can be *assumed* to act in a certain way within the confines of the galaxy. In the Greater Void beyond the Rim, where gravitational pull is not constant or stable at all, hyperspace is even more treacherous. Drastic changes to the flow of hyperspace tides could knock a ship off beacon or batter vessels with very dangerous concentrations of radiation or force. Only the specially designed vessels with powerful engines and thick hulls used by the Younger Races can hope to travel outside the Rim with a good chance of survival at all.

Simply put, travel outside the galaxy is extremely dangerous because all of the most import rules of space travel immediately change once a vessel breaks free of the galactic revolutions. Not being able to find anything of worth in the Greater Void seems like a vastly lesser complaint when ships are up against such odds. Coming home empty handed still means making it home, which should *always* be the priority in Rim exploration.

The Science of 'Rim Pinging'

Considering that any sort of galactic or spatial mapping of the Greater Void is wrong the second after it is drawn , trying to lay any sort of course to follow in Rim exploration has always been thought of as more or less impossible. Early journeys to the Rim were similar to the ancient Earth naval explorations – ships pointed their noses toward the horizon and hoped for the best. These jaunts were multi-billion credit gambles with a hundred or so lives at stake each time.

Then a researcher of theoretical astrophysics named Jarl Grieger came forward with an idea that he later called 'rim pinging' – which was almost instantly swept up, purchased and patented by Interplanetary Expeditions. He claimed that even though the galaxy was turning, making the mapping of outside locations difficult to say the least, his 'hyperspace echo location' (HEL) system could narrow down hyperspace coordinates to an 80%

certainty. Willing to risk lives to test Grieger's equipment and theory, IPX put together the first of the HEL systems and hired a scouting crew to use it.

The HEL system essentially broadcasts a powerful tachyon signal through hyperspace. There it strikes a target and returns like the sonar call of a bat, basically telling the HEL system the estimated size, shape and density of the target – and how far away it is. The strike of the tachyon signal is called a rim ping. Using the HEL system like a sort of homing tether to an object, the ship simply ignores all outside stimuli and draws itself along the tether like a lifeline in a storm (for more on the HEL system and how it functions in game terms, see page 85).

With the first tests of the HEL system returned with several accounts of finding wayward moons that had slipped their orbits and become floating obstacles, a few new planets and even a derelict alien spacecraft – IPX was satisfied and began to sell the science behind the HEL system to other explorers.

Rim-pinging is considered the foremost science behind finding anything beyond the Rim, but does not help in finding something more than once. Unless a steady stream of expensive explorer vessels can be sent to and from the destination constantly, using the last ship to guide the next, anything found is likely lost to the turn of the galaxy and the swirl of the Greater Void.

The Military HEL-Track System

The hyper-space echo-location system in its purest form is used from within hyper-space to track mass-shadows and the like through hyper-space. As the exploration-based science was placed in the hands of different governments, IPX was satisfied that no galactic power would be able to use the technology for warfare purposes with any more efficiency than current systems provided – otherwise they would have charged more.

The EarthForce secret project that combined Shadowtech and Earther science, the *Nemesis*, augmented the existing HEL system with powerful Shadowtech hyper-space drive-cells. While the bio-mechanic organelles allowed the horrible cruisers to come and go as they pleased, they were not powerful enough to pull the entire cruiser between spaces in the same manner. However, they *were* powerful enough to force the HEL's tracking beam through hyper-space and back again... even if the *Nemesis* was in real-space! This powerful adjustment allowed for real-time tracking of enemy vessels at extreme ranges during combat, essentially ignoring the jamming and ECM suites of other vessels altogether.

How to Rim Ping

Any ship with a tachyon-capable communications relay, advanced sensor suite or HEL system can attempt to line up a solid rim ping when about to venture past the Rim. This requires an Operations (Sensors) skill test (DC 30) initially, which attains the first contact to the otherwise unknown object. Once acquired, it takes only an Operations (Sensors) skill test (DC 15) every eight hours to keep the active ping as the destination/target.

Should the signal ever be lost momentarily, it takes an Operations (Sensors) skill test (DC 25) to re-attain the target. If that roll is failed, the signal is lost and likely so is the vessel. Further rim pings will only have a 5% chance of finding the same target.

How Long Will it Take?

Travelling past the edge of known space, following a tachyon tether to an unknown object in a chaotic swirl of hyperspace eddies – there is no way of knowing how long an exploration could take. This is why most long-range exploration vessels are enormous craft with dozens of crew and nearly limitless food and water supplies. Many even keep gardens and moisture collectors, constantly re-stocking these resources during the trip and giving the crew something to do to pass the time.

To know exactly how long a trip to a given rim ping will take, roll 2D20 and consult the following table.

Rim Exploration Travel Time to Destination

2D20 Result	Travel Time to Rim Ping
2	1D2 years
3-5	3D6 months
6-9	2D8 months
10-12	2D6 months
13-17	1D6+1 months
18-20	1D4+1 months
21-24	1D3 months
25-27	1D2 months
28-29	2D10 weeks
30-31	2D8 weeks
32-33	2D6 weeks
34-35	2D4 weeks
36-37	1D8 weeks
38-39	1D6 weeks
40	1D4 weeks

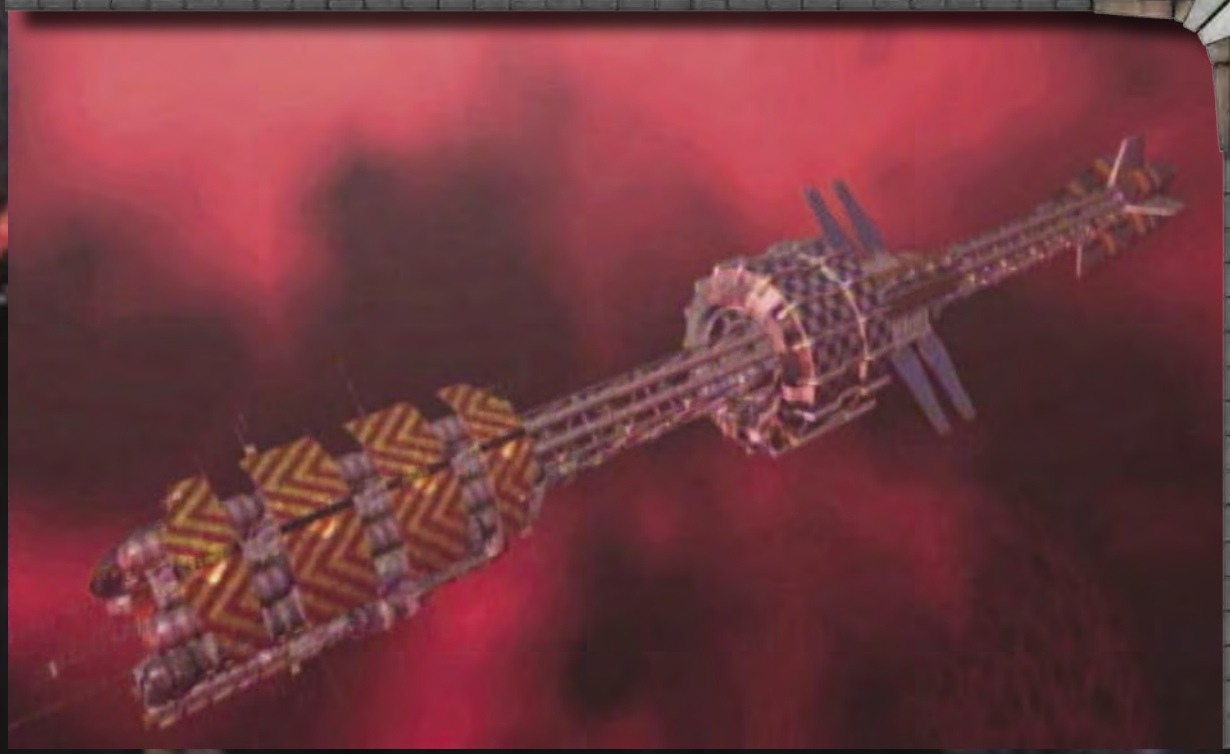
What To Do On Long Trips

Since these Rim explorations have the possibility to take months or even years, it is a smart captain that keeps his ship filled with interesting things to do in the interim between stops. Without a good avenue to spend their free time, a ship's crew is likely to descend into base pleasures and eventually turn on one another as 'cabin fever' sets in over time. It is essential for a mission organiser and ship captain to have a great many options to keep their crews' morale up. Some of these options are listed below.

Large Library – A ship with a large database of fiction, non-fiction and resource data crystals can be assured that the crew will peruse the database whenever things get slow on the journey. A library will not be that attractive of an option to some, but if it is well-stocked enough to cover most of the literary options for possible readers, it can absorb a great deal of spare time.

Recreational Centre – Most exploration vessels are extremely large, and can easily fit a small gymnasium, arcade or workout spa into their expanses. When combined with command-sponsored events like a 'pilots versus dockworkers' basketball league, or special privileges to the best deadlifter or fastest sprinter, these areas can be of huge relief to crews cooped up on a starship for so long.

Personal Journal Logs – Every crew member should have a video journal that he can access and add to at all times, preferably based in his quarters or some other similarly private area. This gives crew members some form of expression that they will not be ridiculed over



or need to feel remorse over, and gives them a verbal way to blow off some steam – without actually hurting anyone.

Ration Events – The command staff of an exploration mission must decide ahead of time how best to ration out the events and resources the crew will have available to them at any give time. If a journey is planned to take two years the crew's recreation options should change every so often. This helps keep things 'fresh' and 'new' and ensures that activities do not stagnate. If the cycle of events and resources repeats too often however, event rationing could actually backfire and simply make the crew even more unruly.

Allow for Families – Some cultures and governments do not have any problem with a long-range explorer bringing his family with him, or perhaps creating a family during the trip itself. Crew members get married frequently after spending so much time with one another, and family activity helps to breed pleasantry on board a ship. Either letting a crewman take his family or allowing fraternisation between crew members can be dangerous if passions rise or situations occur that test relationships, but it is ultimately up to the mission organiser and the command staff to take that risk.

Alternate Crew – Although not exactly a method to stop low morale *during* a trip, mission organisers must always be sure to alternate their crew choices for long trips. A pilot that just came back to his home after a year and a half of being in the Greater Void will not take kindly to being re-assigned to another trip of the same length soon after. It is best to use those that just came back from a Rim exploration as headquarters staff and local assets, sending those who were in those positions on the next exploration. Of course there are exceptions, like the EarthForce military Explorer vessels, which have a tour they must complete – no matter how many 'back and forth' trips they may need to accomplish.

Galactic Opinions of Rim Exploration

There is a great deal of argument and contention between the various cultures, religions and governments of the *Babylon 5* galaxy when talk of exploring beyond the Rim rises. For whatever reasons, the topic tends to bring out heated debates and questionable comments about the explorers' skill, faith and overall sanity.

Before making the choice to go beyond and fly past the Rim into the unknown, explorers must decide if they *should* do it. Will they be heralded as heroes or scorned as fools? These trips are not cheap, so explorers might need to find the right government or company to provide funding, even if they may be paying it off for the rest of their lives should they not find anything. Of course, there is always the chance that they never return at all.

The following is a collection of quotes from various upper-echelon members of the mainstay galactic governments, each one giving a bit of insight concerning the speaker's views on Rim exploration.

Abbai Matriarchate: *Well, not to sound sarcastic, but we are already on the Rim. The Great Mother sees it fit to keep our systems and our jump routes from pulling apart with the turn of the galaxy, and we do all we can to keep the people of this galaxy from doing the same. Sure, we have sent ships beyond our space, but it rarely ends well and we have discovered that it might be best to focus our efforts to find all that is within our galaxy before looking outside for other mysteries.*

Brakiri Syndicracy: *Who knows what wonders lie beyond the grasp of the Core? We have been researching gravitational pull for so long now that we are extremely confident that we could, in fact, hold a jump route to anyplace of worth that we found open and stable. There could be untold treasures to be found in the sea of nothing out there, and we say that we should be the ones to tap into those wonders. If others want to follow in our footsteps, so be it, but they should not ever tell us that this initiative is wrong!*

Centauri Republic: *When we were young and strong, we chose to move Coreward in our campaigns of conquest. If we had not, many of the races that now form the League of Non-Aligned Worlds would never have even known the galaxy existed. And do not get me started on the Narn! Regardless,*

The Centauri Exploration Effort, post 2262

After the Drakh took control of the Centauri, a very expensive and powerful effort to go beyond the Rim in search of where the Shadows had gone was undertaken. Three massive common commercial explorer chassis were fitted with a host of Drakh and Centauri equipment before entering hyper-space at Coriana VI – never to be heard from again.

it was our ingenuity that gave birth to most of our galactic peoples… we feel no different about the outlying places. Perhaps this time, when we find new horizons, the galaxy will applaud us for our efforts instead of crying 'tyrants!'

Drakh Entire: *The Masters went beyond the Rim, and we would do well to find them and tell them of our successes here. They will be proud of what we do, and they will reward us like they used to in the age before. Damned be the children of the Third Age, all of them, for making us have to go so far to fulfil our destiny.*

Drazi Freehold: *We believe looking in dark places for the unknown is a foolish venture. Every time someone disturbs the zaccha nest, someone gets stung. Nothing that has emerged from beyond has been anything but trouble, and while we enjoy the challenge and the good test of our abilities there are enough enemies within the rim for us to stay busy.*

Earth Alliance: *The Explorer-class vessels that we created cost us many billions of credits a piece, and we would never spend such funds for nothing. It is our duty as spacefaring races to find out who else might be out there. Maybe they are also looking for us! What lies outside of known space could be the answer to all our prayers, and we must see if it is so. We have the capability to do so; it is our duty to the galaxy as a whole to make sure we use it!*

Gaim Intelligence: *The High Queens do not have any use for the illogical prattling of mammalian curiosity. We will send our scouts if it suits the Great Plan, and never before.*

Interplanetary Expeditions (IPX): *Are you kidding? Who do you think owns half the patents for what has already been reeled in from those outer Rim mysteries? We may have well showed the whole galaxy how to use the rim ping. So yes…we are fully invested and interested in outer Rim research.*

Interstellar Alliance (ISA): *While we would never claim to impose our opinions on our member governments, we do encourage others to at least consider looking beyond our own boundaries. The Rangers are very busy within the galactic routes and we cannot spare the manpower to go beyond. We hope that others will, and that they will bring back information for all of us in the Alliance.*

Minbari Federation: *We learned from the Vorlons that the Rim was a deadly void of powerful foes that they had already banished from this galaxy to protect us, but we also learned from the last Shadow War that the Vorlons may have been wrong. What we must first do is decide where truth lies, and then discuss the matters beyond the Rim.*

Narn Regime: *There was a time when we would have said that only evil can lie in the darkness of the Rim, but now that we have been forced to rebuild from almost nothing, we see a use for looking beyond. New resources, unclaimed territory and even hope of a future for Homeworld might exist out in the unknown. We know that it is a chance in a million, but what else can we do but take chances with the lives we are gifted?*

Pak'ma'ra Civility: *The Great Maker and the Holiest of Words have never spoken of that which lies beyond the Rim. Our librarian researchers covet any sort of information that could be learned from beyond, but our priests argue it could be heresy. The Council of Deliberations has debated the matter for many years' worth of session. When we make the final decision to go or not, we will enforce it mightily. For now, we cannot do so…officially…*

Vree Conglomerate: *It is a large expense to break the pull of the galactic core, and it imposes a 24.997% chance of perilous encountering of stellar events each time a vessel uses hyperspace to do so. We would rather not ever play such odds in most circumstances, but we have noticed that the number is reduced by .033% each time we send a scouting vessel to the same location. Therefore, if we fund 758 more scouting trips we will achieve a constant success rate to that point.*

Getting a Rim Exploration Started

Once a government or company has decided to undertake an exploration journey to the Rim, beyond and back again, they still have a lot to prepare. Such a journey is a terribly expensive ordeal that only the most influential collections of resources could hope to organise without going bankrupt, and not one that just any collection of investors is willing to sign their names over to. There are several steps involved, which we have broken down below.

Obtain Funding
For such an expensive endeavour, the first step in Rim exploration is to make sure that the project is well-funded and ready to accept a *massive* amount of debt if necessary. The assets necessary to put together even a single short trip can reach the billions, which is why exploration is generally only undertaken by massive conglomerates that give that much away each year in taxes alone, or by powerful governments that can excuse the cost as a part of their space industry budgets.

There have been instances where a particular scientist or research team have persuaded these larger funding sources to back their explorations, but these are extremely rare. Most companies or governments that would fund such an independent project would much rather hire the people involved instead – keeping all the profit for themselves.

The goal is to make sure that any additional costs are *also* covered as the program continues. Obtaining a substantial grant from the Abbai in order to only later have to come begging from them for more is not only ill conceived, but it also can result in the beleaguering of the entire project.

Acquire a Ship
Exploration vessels are not simply expensive, they are also difficult to maintain and house. Often too large to use standard docking or orbital protocols, these vessels can be very costly to care for in the weeks or months *before* a mission is even launched. They require thousands of credits of upkeep each week and at least a skeleton crew of technicians to make sure all of the proper equipment is ready to use when the time comes.

An exploration ship should have all of the following: gravity of some form, hydroponic atmospheric refreshers, living quarters for every crew member, a fully functional jump engine and the best sensor suite money can buy. It is not essential to have all of the above, but most explorer craft used in the 23rd Century do.

Ships of this calibre cost upwards of a hundred million credits – for the smaller ones. The truly immense ships that almost qualify as travelling cities can multiply that cost by ten or twenty easily. This is why it is so important to make sure that the ship acquired is exactly what the mission requires. Too small and it could be lost, damaged or worse; too large and it could cost too much compared to the mission's profitability.

Hire the Command Crew
A Rim exploration mission cannot be made up of collegiate scientists alone. Few scholars of theoretical astrophysics know the best way to handle half-a-kilometre of hurtling alloy through the chaotic nature of hyperspace. Every mission requires a talented and experienced command crew. A captain and commander, sensor officer, science officer, chief physician, industrial foreman and pilot co-ordinator are all must-haves on any Rim exploration. Each position is detailed as follows:

Captain – the ship's lead officer. There has to be a pecking order, even if an exploration vessel is not a military vessel. The captain also serves as the best connection between the command staff and the common crew.

Commander – the ship's military officer. In case of emergency from external sources or internal issues, the ship must have some form of military protection. Be it security agents, soldiers or electronic defences, this officer is in charge of them all.

Sensor Officer – the ship's communications and navigational controller. This officer and his subordinates make sure that the ship stays on its rim ping target, stays in touch with any dropped beacon transponders and continues to have a chance to get back across the Rim to the galaxy again. It is a stressful and thankless job, but tends to be one of the best paid in the industry.

Science Officer – the chief officer in charge of research and experimentation. The Rim offers many new and strange opportunities for an exploration mission, but some are too volatile or hostile to be brought back. It is up to the science officer and his team to collect, study and research whatever can be found during the exploration. It is also oftentimes the role of the science officer to serve as or hire a linguist/first contact specialist when meeting alien life forms.

Chief Physician – the ship's lead doctor. With so many crew travelling for so long, so far away from any sort of space station or docking– medical issues can be deadly on a Rim exploration. A simple sneeze could send dozens of able men to the med bay, so the chief physician leads a team of capable doctors and nurses to take care of the health of the ship's crew.

Industrial Foreman – the ship's labour manager. There is often a large number of skilled labourers hired onto exploration ship crews just for their ability to turn a spanner or spot-weld a hull breach. This command officer is a direct link to the teams of common crew members under him, and is directly responsible for their work and behaviour.

Pilot Co-ordinator – the ship's auxiliary craft controller. Exploration vessels tend to have a number of escort fighters, landing and cargo shuttles at their disposal. Rather than putting more weight on the shoulders of the sensor operators, most ships keep a dedicated co-ordinator on the bridge to make sure these craft do not run into one another, break mandatory quarantines or possibly get left behind before jumping back to hyperspace.

The officers described above make a fantastic command staff for a Rim exploration, but are not all essential if the mission organisers do not believe them to be. Of course, the mission that needs one of the above officers when it does not have one available is likely to be a failed mission – and disastrously so.

Hire Remaining Crew
Once the command staff is in place the rest of the ship's crew must be hired. It is often left to the individual command staff members to choose their subordinates, but some mission organisers want a great deal more control over their crew selection – if only to help keep down corporate or governmental spying or sabotage.

A Rim exploration crew will need an assortment of different crew members that bring different skills to the ship in order to earn their keep. From common dockworkers that will keep landing shuttles in working order to combat-trained defence marines who will keep unwanted guests pacified on board, the crew must be filled out.

It is best to try and hire a maximum capacity crew. Some will likely renege on their contract in light of the long trip to the Rim; others might run into accidents and mishaps during the trip itself. Losing key crew members immediately before or during the mission launch could cause the exploration to fail. This makes having enough skilled crew and redundant crew that can perform the same skills essential to the success of the greater mission.

Obtain Travel Permissions
Moving the fully crewed exploration vessel from wherever it was acquired and crewed to its point of exit at the Rim can be a treacherous task if performed without talking to the numerous governmental territories the ship is likely to travel through. Unless it is originating from one of the rimward governments (Abbai, Hyach, Centauri and so on), the ship is probably going to be passing through occupied space. Bringing a hulking exploration vessel through another government's jump gates could look like a warship attack at first sensor-glance, and some governments might simply blast the encroaching vessel rather than waste time talking to it.

The other option of course is to travel strictly through neutral territories. This carries even more risk than angering one's galactic neighbours. Raiders abound in neutral space, and the chance of taking on and capturing an exploration vessel is like finding an empty shopping centre. These exploration vessels are packed with advanced equipment, resources and more materials than a hundred trader ships could provide. Exploration vessels are rarely much for combat, and getting caught by a sizeable raider fleet is nearly always the end of an exploration mission.

The best solution is to simply pay the tariffs and travelling fees (if any) to arrange for a designated jump route through friendly governments' space. These governments should prepare their gates for the ship, give escort whenever possible and give no hassles. This solution can be expensive, but it is also far safer for the project – which should always come first.

Set a Goal/Maximum Time Limit
Telling an investor that he might not see any return on the Rim exploration for two to three years, if at all, can be far easier than trying to explain to three hundred mutinous crew members why a six-month trip has reached its two-year anniversary. Mission organisers *must*

set a specific goal or time limit for their trips or they will never be able to hire new crews after the first time they go beyond their expectations.

If the mission is to 'to find new life and bring it back for study' then the first time the ship finds a new life form and manages to get enough of a sample to study, it should turn back as promised. If the mission statement is 'eighteen months of Rim exploration,' then a crew knows that they will not be out there for any longer. It really is not that hard to set such expectations, but any mission that has made and broken them knows the harsh reality of how tough the unions can be in a courtroom as well as in the court of public opinion.

Not setting a goal or limit is even worse than breaking expectations. Not having some kind of concrete end in sight will spawn feelings of being lost or cause the crew to think they are on a one-way trip –a common fear of Rim explorations. Expectations must be noted and adhered to as best as possible in any crew contract. Barring technical or outside difficulties, there is no reason to be deceptive with the people who will be responsible for a company's terribly expensive project.

Prepare Contingency Plan

Mission organisers must be prepared for the worst when dealing with a Rim exploration. Nothing is certain out there, and bad things can and do happen. When they do, there must be a plan in place. Families must be informed, investors must hear the bad news and travel records need to know approximately where the vessel was last heard from. Whether dealing with raider attack, ship malfunction or simply disappearance, the mission's organisers must be ready for any situation.

Depending on the veracity of the company or government involved, the loss of a Rim exploration vessel can be covered up by a dozen different plans or plots used to lay blame elsewhere or keep crew members' family from causing further problems. Bribes and false information are the tools of some; insurance money and gag orders are also common. Some failed explorations undertaken by corrupt and powerful forces are simply *forgotten*. Everyone and anyone who might bring up the missing vessel are silenced in some manner, and all records of the mission are erased. Even though it took place, the galaxy will be none the wiser – or so the organisers hope.

However they choose to deal with disaster, there must be some kind of plan in place or everyone involved falls apart and looks horribly at fault. There is nothing that will ruin the chances for further investing or future permission faster than a poorly-planned or failed mission that can not be explained or cleaned-up after.

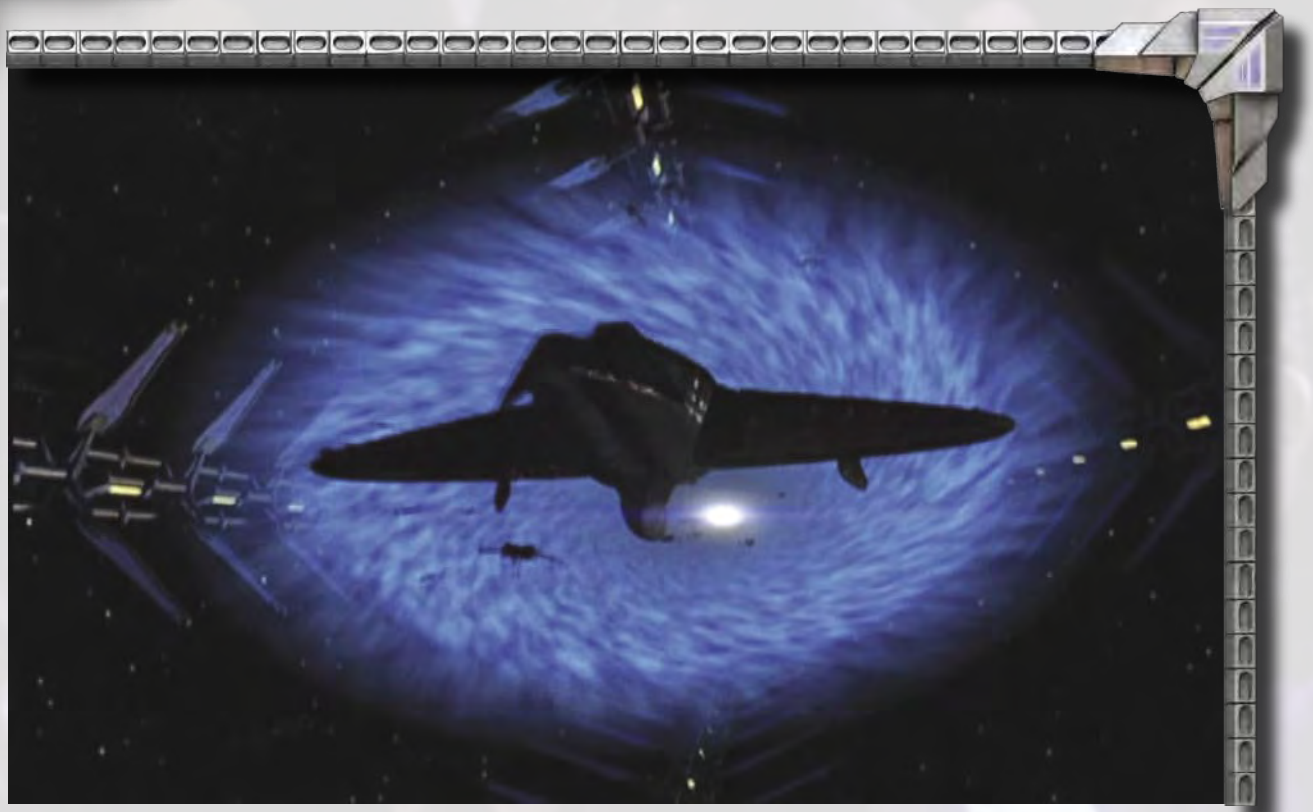
What to Look For

From profitability's point of view, there are four things that can be brought back from the unknown that make the mission a successful venture. While anything that returns from the Rim makes for a success in the most general of terms, investors are looking for these specific things to make an exploration a financial success as well.

New Technology
The primary source for any Rim exploration's profit tends to be newfound technology. Previously unknown to this galaxy, the most minor of technologies can be a true windfall for investors. Whether it is an interesting new way to focus light for household use, or the galaxy's first gravitational cheese slicer – new technology is worth a fortune to the right buyer. Obviously certain technologies are more precious than others, but it has been proven in the past that *any* new technology that comes from the Greater Void is a commodity in the research and reverse engineering fields.

New Life
Any vessel that returns from the Rim with a new form of life to study, from the smallest bacterium to complex animals, can expect to make a small fortune in medical and xenobiological research. Even though bringing new life forms into the ecologies of our galaxy carries with it an inherent amount of risk, most exploration crews know how best to deal with quarantines and life form research. So long as the life form is not a deadly virus that will kill planets, the investors will likely make a significant amount of profit from its discovery. For the right buyers, even a virus could be a cash crop…

New Chemical Compounds
Although there seems to be a limited supply of base elements and minerals in the galaxy, there is no telling what strange and unknown conditions lie beyond the Rim. Should an exploration yield a supply of new chemical compounds, minerals or a base element – it can be sure of a swell in the investors' pockets. Reverse engineering and recreation of said chemicals could be expensive, but being able to claim the first stake in their applications to industry and science guarantees a huge leap in one's credentials and influence inside those fields.



Unregistered Planetoid Information
Although it is nearly impossible to map a lasting route to any planetoid found outside the Rim, an exploration vessel can take tomes of information and research data of any planet to study. So long as the information brought back is not a duplicate of another mission's data (an extremely unlikely occurrence), the files on a new planetoid can be worth millions to historians, ecologists and even other explorer groups. These planetoids are often named by the discoverers, or their superiors, and are considered to be the providence of the company or government that discovered them.

As science grows and eventually develops the ability to map the Rim and Greater Void for the common races, these planetoid data files will become extremely important to commonplace travellers and eventual colonists – making them vastly more costly as well.

What to Avoid

In the unknown regions past the Rim, there are also a few things that should specifically be avoided for the safety of the crew and vessel – not to mention the possible financial ramifications on the mission organisers. These items and instances could still make for exciting missions, and data from encountering them could be useful or profitable as well, but it is not advised that they become the target of any exploration.

Unstable Stellar Phenomenon
Exploring the Rim and beyond is already dangerous enough without specifically looking to make it more so. Any sort of fluctuating rim ping could indicate a serious well of gravitational energies due to an assortment of unstable events. Comets that are caught in a cyclical orbit, distressed moons that have broken their orbit and roar through the Greater Void like gigantic asteroids or even small pocket anomalies that could easily crush a ship like a tin of dehydrated food could await the explorers.

While the recording of a star collapsing or a comet falling in on itself would likely sell for a sizeable amount, the dangers involved are not worth the risk. What good does a rare recording do for a mission if it is swallowed up by a black hole or perforated by a crumbling planetoid?

Biologically Dead Planetoids
It takes a massive event to actually *kill* an entire planet of its organic inhabitants. Normally rampant viruses, climate fluctuation or external stimuli are the only keys to utterly kill a planet. Although orbital records

of a world destroyed by one of these would be helpful, going down to the planet's surface (standard explorer protocol) is not the best idea in some circumstances.

Unless the planet has been thoroughly tested for dormant biological weaponry, diseases or other extinction-level-events, it is best not to risk bringing back any sort of contaminant from the surface. With the planet being unknown and uncharted in an area of the universe where not all the laws of science react as they do within the confines of the galaxy – the tests cannot always be trusted. It is best to leave dead planets to surface scanning and recordings, lest the explorers bring back the cause of that death to their own planet.

Groups of Sentient Life

Although this has yet to truly occur in any *official* format, Rim exploration missions could possibly discover cultures and societies of previously unknown sentient life. Taking a single sample for study is one thing, but attracting the attentions of larger groups could be vastly detrimental to a mission.

Language barriers notwithstanding, groups of sentient aliens that can manage to exist in the Greater Void could be vastly more technologically advanced or primitive enough to not even be aware of the spatial dangers their planetoid careens through. Either way, unless a vessel has a very talented first contact specialist, large groups of sentients should be monitored and perhaps studied – but never informed of the galaxy. Curiosity often breeds frustration, disdain or conquest.

Ending the Mission & Getting Home

Whether it is due to overwhelming homesickness from the crew, the mission reaching its allotted goal or time limitations, or even just a technical difficulty that needs something special to be repaired – missions end and explorer ships return. Because of the nature of the Greater Void, heading home is not as simple as just turning around and setting course.

Because there is no good way to track exactly which direction an exploration vessel has been travelling beyond the Rim (no Coreward gravitational pull for axis, nor revolution spin for arc), turning around to re-trace a flight path is impossible. It would be like trying to back track and walk backwards out of a house of mirrors – with one eye closed.

The exploration ship cannot even use the HEL system to combat this disorientation. Firing the HEL beam toward the galaxy would report exactly the same way as it would if it struck any other strong gravitational force. It might

'Redhelm' Coincidence?

Six months before the dangerous and violent 'Redhelms' came streaming into the galaxy from the Rim near the Ipsha Baronies, a Hyach-sponsored explorer ship crossed beyond on almost the exact vector that the Redhelms attacked from. The explorer craft was never heard from again after it vanished into the Greater Void, and many believe that the craft may have found the Redhelms and somehow angered them to the point of re-tracing the ship's path.

Why they were so violent and immediately hostile, no one can know, but if true this incident is a testament for not stirring up trouble with advanced races beyond the Rim.

Return Vector Modifier

Length of Exploration	Result of Knowledge (Astrophysics) Skill Roll								
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	40+
1-3 weeks	1D6+2	2D4	1D6	1D4+1	1D4	2D3–1	1D3	1D2	1
1-2 months	2D6	1D6+2	2D4	1D6	1D4+1	1D4	2D3–1	1D3	1D2
3-6 months	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2	2D4	1D6	1D4+1	1D4	2D3–1	1D3
6-8 months	2D8	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2	2D4	1D6	1D4+1	1D4	2D3–1
9-11 months	2D8+1	2D8	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2	2D4	1D6	1D4+1	1D4
1 year	2D10	2D8+1	2D8	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2	2D4	1D6	1D4+1
14-18 months	2D10+1	2D10	2D8+1	2D8	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2	2D4	1D6
19-23 months	3D6+1	2D10+1	2D10	2D8+1	2D8	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2	2D4
2 years +	4D6	3D6+1	2D10+1	2D10	2D8+1	2D8	2D6+1	2D6	1D6+2

Beacon Chaining Statistics

Length of Exploration	Number of Jump Beacons Needed	Chance of Beacon Chain Breakage	Operations (Sensors) DC to Repair Beacon Chain	Chance of Finding Rim without working Beacon Chain
1-3 weeks	1	5%	16	45%
1-2 months	1D6	10%	18	40%
3-6 months	1D6 x2	15%	20	35%
6-8 months	2D4 x2	20%	22	30%
9-11 months	2D8 x2	25%	24	25%
1 year	2D6 x4	30%	26	20%
14-18 months	2D8 x4	35%	28	15%
19-23 months	2D10 x4	45%	30	10%
2 years	3D8 x5	50%	32	5%
…additional 6 months	…additional x1 multiplier	+5%	+2	0%

report a black hole as the spin of the Rim's edge. This is a dangerous gamble for any vessel, let alone one that might be carrying hundreds of tired crew members and millions of credits' worth of information.

The best way for the common galactic races to find their way home is to always bring an open broadcasting jump route beacon transponder – a two million credit device – with them. As the ship moves farther and farther past the Rim they continue to monitor whatever jump beacon signals they can for as long as they can. When the signal gets too weak for normal sensors to pick it up, the jump route beacon is dropped into local space and activated. This means that for at least a few hundred thousand light years of territory, the exploration vessel should still be able to hold onto that signal in order to trace it back. Some ships will bring dozens of these beacons with them to form a sort of lifeline back to the Rim. The process is called 'beacon chaining'.

Beacon chaining is not perfect, and the longer the chain the greater chance that a beacon will be displaced by gravitational anomalies or stellar events enough to break the chain. The exploration ship will need to follow whatever signal they had when this chain breaks, constantly broadcasting a collecting signal to hopefully find the original point-of-breakage. It is a dangerous game, but it is the most popular method of finding the way home.

The Beacon Chaining Statistics table shows the number of beacons needed to stay in a Rim exploration for the designated period of time, the chance of the chain being broken, the Operations skill DC needed to re-attain the chain's signal and the percentage chance of getting home without the chain's signal.

Getting back to the Rim is the hard part, but once it is accomplished the journey home is not exactly over. Depending on how long the mission was outside the revolution of the galaxy, their return vector will be different from that of their exit. This can be compared to swimming out of a whirlpool for a little while and then trying to re-enter it at the same point – the current has already left the swimmer behind.

The aptitude of the navigation staff and the sheer length of the exploration outside the gravitational revolutions will affect the distance exact which the vessel has been left behind. This is not always a difficult situation, as most galactic territories understand these circumstances and will gladly escort the vessel back on course. There are some however, that cherish their territoriality and will just as gladly attack such a trespasser. As it is their territory, they have that right, even if it might cause galactic scandal or tension – if anyone ever even finds out about the ship's return at all.

To find out where a vessel returns to the galactic jump map, the navigational staff of the vessel first rolls their Knowledge (Astrophysics) skill and compares the result to the Return Vector Modifier table, using the length of the mission as a qualifier, the resulting modifier.

Once the modifier has been rolled that number is then applied to the Galactic Rim Exit/Entrance Points table below. The table lists all of the most common places on the galactic jump route map where a Rim exploration ship would leave or enter the galaxy. Starting on the table where the Rim exploration mission *left* the galaxy, the Games Master counts down a number of entrance/exit points equal to the modifier rolled above (returning to the first if the modifier carries to the bottom with steps

to spare). The resulting system is the general jump route location to which the Rim exploration will return.

Galactic Rim Exit/Entrance Points

Name of Rimward System	Territory Controller
L-213	Neutral
Ikarra	Neutral
Thrakalla	Thrakallan Hive Oligarchy
Praxis	Neutral (Raider Cells) [1]
Zander	Neutral
Uthum	Tikar Social Rule
Oleng	Kor-Lyan Kingdoms
Trokata	Yolu Theocracy
Eklor	Ipsha Baronies[1]
Elitria	Ipsha Baronies[1]
Shri-Shraba	Hyach Gerontocracy
Utriel	Abbai Matriarchate
Rohric	Dilgar Imperium(pre-2237) [1]/Neutral
Wahant	Dilgar Imperium(pre-2237) [1]/Neutral
Rem-Kal'ta	Tal-Kona'sha Virtuality
Ohran'khi	Tal-Kona'sha Virtuality[1]
Andromа	Llurr Republic[1]
Gromahk	Grome Autocracy
Bricarn	Neutral
Lumat	Lumati Dominion[1]
Anasi	Antarean Oligarchy
Golia	Golian Assembly[1]
Kokkar	Neutral
Vinzin	Neutral
Vorlon Homeworld	Vorlon Empire (pre-2261) [1]
Sorpigal	Minbari Federation[1]
Tir	Minbari Federation[1]
Moga	Minbari Federation[1]
Z'ha'dum	Shadows/Drakh (pre-2261) [1]

[1] These 'governments' do not take well to unexpected intruders from outside the Rim, and will likely attack an unexpected vessel. Whether or not they actually destroy, capture or force retreat is up to each individual governing faction – and the Games Master.

Example: The IPX-sponsored exploration of the Rim near the Zander System hopes to yield information about how the Shadows hid the Death Cloud that destroyed the planet in 2261. The craft leaves the Zander system and heads toward the Rim and beyond.

Following their expensive jump beacons back to the Rim after a prolonged year of research, the navigation staff prepares the coordinates and roll a respectable 22 on their Knowledge (Astrophysics) skill check. Looking at the one year row, the Games Master rolls their deduced modifier of 2D6 and scores a rather high 10.

Looking at the next table, finding Zander and counting down the 10 systems, the Games Master grins with sadistic glee as he explains that the Rim gives way and the ship enters the galaxy once more – in the Rem-Kal'ta System of the Tal-Kona'sha Virtuality! Just as the players get a chance to gulp in dismay, the Games Master fills the communications arrays with bio-feedback static – and asks them to roll for initiative…

Why Take the Chance?

All of this information might seem a bit daunting for the would-be Rim explorer; and it should be. If everyone with a ship could simply bounce out past the Rim, take a look around and gather up some priceless uncharted alien artefacts and return by dinner time – it would not be called *the Rim*. The Rim is a treacherous area for novices, a suicide mission for the foolish and likely the territory of powerful government projects and corporate ventures that have billions of credits to back to their programs.

This should not discourage someone who really wants to see what lies beyond. Just like the Earth explorers that saw the edge of the world and wanted to discover 'what if?' so too can any spacer with the right skills and influences to get them on board one of these Rim explorations make the journey.

Very little works like the common galaxy out there, and once a mission crosses the Rim all the rules seem to change daily. If spending a year or more on a single vessel with only a glimpse of hope of finding anything other than space debris sounds like the perfect adventure – then seeing past the edge of the galaxy is a worthy goal.

Scenario Introduction – 'You Cannot Say No'

Perhaps one of the best instances where the Player Characters can get involved in a Rim Exploration is when they are really not given any choice at all. This Scenario Introduction is designed to introduce the players to Rim Exploration whether they like it or not.

The Set-Up

Best used when the Player Characters owe someone something, or if they have made a powerful non-violent enemy in their travels, this scene can unfold in a variety of places and settings. We have chosen a busy bar for this particular version, but the Games Master can alter it to fit the type of setting he requires for his own game.

As you are sitting, enjoying your drink and the pleasant music streaming in from the electronic player in the corner, a well-dressed man with far too expensive a suit comes strolling up to your table. Without so much as asking permission he grabs a nearby chair and swings it up to the table edge, sitting down firmly and setting his attaché case on the table in front of him.

'Hello,' he says in a too-friendly tone for a complete stranger, 'my name is Francis Edmonds. I'm your legal representative for your upcoming contractual liability with Interplanetary Expeditions.'

The lawyer has been sent by IPX to help all of the Player Characters prepare all of their specific insurances and the like for their 'impending exploration', which will likely be the first time they have heard anything about it. Francis (Mister Edmonds to the Player Characters, if they get snippy with him) will explain that someone in the upper management of whatever company/guild/raider cell that they recently did something 'bad' to has arranged for them to join a short Rim exploration with the IPX-442, for which they will be paid handsomely and all 'past debts' will be forgotten.

Whether or not the Player Characters have any debts with the individual that hired Francis or not, he is an intergalactic lawyer licensed on all of their homeworlds and has the legal documentation (copies of course) from his firm that expresses his abilities to enforce the contract the Player Characters never actually signed up for. Using his powerful legalese, he will explain the following points in perfect clarity:

- All direct assets of the contracted parties will be confiscated by IPX should they not arrive on time to board the IPXS-442; in twelve hours and thirty minutes.
- Physical defiance or violent reaction to this contract is legally punishable by seizure of assets and up to twenty-six weeks in a local penitentiary.
- The trip should only take 6 weeks, but has a pending maximum of one year if anything of worth is located.
- All contracted parties are allowed to take 75 pounds of additional possessions on board with them; uniforms and equipment will be provided.
- 800 Credits a week is standard pay, 80% of which is deposited in an electronic 'on-hold' account by IPX for the contracted parties' return. The other 20% is actually given as cash to the contracted parties on the ship for recreational purposes.

If Francis is met with physical intimidation or threats, he will simply place the above facts in memo form on the table and leave without saying anything other than 'bay seventeen. Be there in twelve and a half hours to report to duty, or security will be notified. It's all there in the contracts. Good day'.

The Plot Thickens

The real meat of this scenario idea is not just the random nature of being selected to go on a Rim Exploration by one's enemy; it is the possibility of other hirelings on the mission crew – including hitmen, saboteurs, terrorists, etc. Depending on which former foe of the Player Characters the Games Master chooses to be the mastermind behind this devious scheme, he may have seeded the crew with people looking to cause harm to the Player Characters. A well-placed accident or environmental suit malfunction at the right time and they could be out of the enemy's hair forever, and no one could possibly blame him for something that happened all the way out on the Rim.

Of course, there is a high degree of danger for the Player Characters on the exploration mission itself, depending on what is generated as the mission targets and the events that occur throughout the trip. They could find new and dangerous life forms, or have near misses by expanding stars. Perhaps they are chosen to perform duties on a planetoid survey that they are not trained to do, even though their personnel files erroneously say otherwise.

Whatever the exact reason or goal, the Player Characters are in for a long and interesting trip they never even signed up for…

EXPANDING THE MAP

There are a lot of possibilities out in the Greater Void that a Rim exploration can discover, many of which are minor and barely worth recording. Some are not so insignificant, with interesting scientific data to be recorded and samples to be taken back to the 'brain trusts' in common galactic space. Others are once-in-a-lifetime chances to see the unimaginable or partake in the rare and wonderful.

The following chapter describes how to determine where a given rim ping will lead an exploration, and what it will find when it arrives. It gives detailed information on how to discover stellar anomalies, derelict spacecraft and even previously undiscovered planetoids. With the information we have collected here, Games Masters can plan out interesting plotted courses in their Rim missions – or take a few minutes to roll them randomly as a surprise to both themselves *and* their Player Characters!

GENERATE THE TARGET DESTINATION

After an exploration vessel has acquired its target through either a rim ping, some kind of ultra-advanced science (Techno-Mage Findware, for instance) or just dumb luck… the Games Master must generate the particulars of the destination.

While some Games Masters may wish to have every facet of their games pre-planned and drawn up from scratch, others might enjoy the freedom of rolling randomly for facts about a destination – leaving it up to chance to steer their intrepid explorers.

The Rim Destinations table represents the possible targets a Rim exploration could find at the end of a leg within their journey. When the destination needs to be determined, the Games Master rolls 1D100 and consults the Rim Destinations table.

[1] These results supersede the normal rules for finding life on a planetoid, and replace the Complexity of Life table found on page 44.

Once the target destination has been rolled on the above table, see the related section below for details on how to fully flesh out the Rim activity involved with the result.

Debris Field (01-20)

This result means that a ship has located an area of space that has collected a number of large, natural stellar debris. Either due to a gravitational attraction or lack of mass to break free of the chaotic whirl of the Void, the objects have created an asteroid field of sorts, with most of the objects bouncing off of one another dangerously within the area.

In game terms, the next five Operations (Piloting) or Pilot skill checks that are made within the Debris Field are at a random penalty equal to 2D6, rolled each time a check is needed. A failure inflicts 1D3 automatic Construction Spaces of damage, ignoring armour.

For the purposes of determining what exactly the fields are made up of, roll a D20 and consult the Tyoe of Debris table .

Sedentary Stone – This is really just raw rock that is worth very little, and is extremely common in every corner of space. *Price: 10 credits a ton*

Rim Destinations

D100 Result	Destination
01-20	Debris Field
21-30	Debris Cluster
31-40	Mobile Stellar Body
41-50	Binary Star System
51-55	Trinary Star System
56-60	Energic Anomaly
61-65	Destroyed Spacecraft
66-70	Derelict Spacecraft
71-75	Functioning Spacecraft
76-80	Signs of Conflict
81-85	Planetoid
86-90	w/ Basic Life[1]
91-95	w/ Simple Life[1]
96-98	w/ Complex Life[1]
99	w/ Sentient Life[1]
00	Unique Experience

Type of Debris

D20 Result	Type of Debris	Total Amount Salvageable in Field	Example
1-8	Sedentary Stone	5D10 x100 tons	Granite, shale
9-12	Heat-formed Stone	3D10 x 100 tons	Obsidian, Onyx
13-14	Ore	3D10 x 50 tons	Iron or Copper-laden stone
15-16	Metal	2D10 x 50 tons	Raw Iron
17	Precious Metal	1D6 x 10 tons	Gold, Silver
18	Rare Substance	2D4 tons	Diamond, Quantium-40
19	Unknown (mineral)	1D4 –1 tons	—
20	Unknown (metal)	1D3–1 tons	—

Heat-formed Stone – This material is a little more rare than normal stone, and is often glassy or smooth to the touch and very dense. It chips when struck properly and can be very resistant to laser technology. *Price: 50 credits a ton*

Ore – This is the rough-hewn rock that contains heavy portions of a metal used commonly in the galaxy. It is heavy and takes up a great deal of cargo space, but sells for much more than other stone types. *Price: 100 credits a ton*

Metal – These are either naturally formed hunks of metal that have been battered and bashed out of their ore state, or simply chunks of something larger made of metal. They can be collected and molten down into ingots rather easily, making them easy to transport for sale. *Price: 1,000 credits a ton*

Precious Metal – These are not formed of the same kind of purity that merchants are used to seeing, but instead are hunks of rock that contain large veins of precious metal within them. They can be broken down and smelted into bouillon with some effort, but are a find nonetheless. *Price: 10,000 to 50,000 credits a ton*

Rare Substance – This is a field that contains debris heavy in one of the galaxy's more precious – and expensive – materials. This is a true find and a very good way to fund an entire Rim exploration's worth of expenses. *Price: 100,000 to 1,000,000 credits a ton*

Unknown (mineral) – There are pieces of debris in this field that baffle sensor scans and chemical analysis. They contain a solid mineral or substance that does not match any existing record in the database, and are likely worth a fortune to the scientific community. *Price: 1,000,000 to 10,000,000 credits a ton*

Unknown (metal) – The field contains nearly pure samples of a previously unknown metal that can withstand the rigours of the Greater Void. It could be a huge boon to the scientific and shipbuilding industries, and might make the exploration the key to a new age in either field. *Price: 1,000,000 to 10,000,000 credits a ton*

Debris Cluster (21-30)

Similar to a debris field, the cluster is a tightly packed collection of space debris. Through a mutual magnetic attraction or gravitational impulses, chunks of debris are held fast against one another into a single large mass. While this does make it drastically easier to avoid as a pilot, it stores a huge amount of potential energy against its many segments. Eventually – hopefully when the explorer vessel is very far away – the gravitational or magnetic attraction will be reversed by the chaos of the Rim and the many chunks will be hurtled outward like some kind of asteroid-based bomb.

Determine the make-up of a debris cluster in the same way as a debris field using the Type of Debris table, but double the amount of salvageable tons. Debris clusters also do not impose any sort of Pilot or Operations (Piloting) penalties.

Mobile Stellar Body (31-40)

The target is one of a handful of transitory stellar bodies that could possibly pose a danger to any ship that draws too near. As they will likely have a very strong gravitational force of their own that is not inhibited by a stronger outlying force, explorers must be careful when dealing with these target destinations – even if well-equipped to do so.

To determine what sort of mobile stellar body explorers are dealing with, roll on the following chart and consult the descriptions thereafter.

Type of Mobile Stellar Body

D20 Result	Stellar Body
1	Fluctuating Star
2-3	Stable Star
4-6	Exhausted Star
7-10	Superheated Comet
11-14	Traditional Comet
15-17	Slipped Moon
18-19	Meteor Storm
20	Roll Twice

Fluctuating Star

This is a very dangerous stellar body, and could spell the end of a Rim exploration in an instant if the piloting crew is not fast and skilled enough. This destination is actually a large and powerful star that has been hurtling through the Greater Void, possibly devouring small moons and planets in its passing due to its intense gravitational pull and limitless energy supplies. With each stellar mass that it devoured it became even more unstable, like a fire that has been fed too much fuel, and now threatens the exploration vessel not only with its gravitational pull or wake – but also with its numerous and constant flares and bursts. The appearance of a fluctuating star should put an entire crew on red alert instantly, and prayers become more common than spoken words everywhere except for the command bridge.

In game terms, there are three dangers to overcome when dealing with a fluctuating star: pull, wash and energic events. To determine what individual dangers a ship will need to deal with, the Games Master rolls a secret 2D6. This is the number of dangerous situations he will need to submit his players to. For each of the situations, the Games Master rolls a 1D3; 1: gravitational pull, 2: gravitational wash, 3: energic event. The players must deal with these situations in rapid succession as detailed below as their ship is torn apart by the massive stellar body rolling a few hundred million kilometres away!

Gravitational Pull
The ship is drawn powerfully toward the star, threatening it with intense heat and crushing force. Unless the ship's crew can pass a Piloting or Operations (Piloting) skill test (DC 20), the ship suffers 2D6 Construction Spaces worth of damage automatically and will suffer a –2 (cumulative) penalty to further tests against Gravitational Pull situations.

Gravitational Wash
The ship is buffeted by the gravitational wake of the passing star, and is rubbed by two powerful forces like an insect rolled between two fingers. Unless the ship's piloting crew can pass a Piloting or Operations (Piloting) skill test (DC 18), the ship automatically suffers 2D8 Construction Spaces worth of damage.

Energic Event
The star releases a cloud of superheated gas and radiation that lashes out against the ship, melting armour and literally baking the atmosphere of the vessel. Unless the ship's command crew can pass a Operations (Systems) skill test (DC 20) to divert gasses and close radiation shielded bulkheads, the ship automatically suffers 1D6 Construction Spaces worth of damage directly to Crew Spaces. Also, the ship loses 1D2 points of its Armour rating automatically, regardless of the result of the skill check.

Once the Games Master has run the frantic Player Characters through the dangerous situations, the star has moved outside of range and the crew can breathe easy once again. This rarely happens out in the Greater Void, and few ship crews live to ever talk about it.

Stable Star

Not unlike any of the normal stars found in the galaxy's many systems, the exploration has uncovered a slowly moving star that has long since lost its planets, if it had any to begin with. It is likely blue or red in hue, and can make piloting difficult in its passing gravitational wake (–2 to skill checks), but is otherwise a very beautiful and solemn object in the vast blackness found beyond the Rim.

Exhausted Star

This is a star that was recently (10,000,000 years or so) a fluctuating star until it likely drew too near to a larger star or black hole, which ripped away most of its mass and energy. Now it is actually just an ultra-dense core or latticework of cooled plasma, like a piece of metallic or stone artwork a few million kilometres in diameter. The gravity and magnetic attraction near something like this is extremely localised, but is strong enough to liquefy deckplate alloy in seconds. Should someone *actually* be able to survive long enough to try and sample the material it is made from, he would find it far denser than anything this galaxy has known – and would discover that it is nearly indestructible.

In game terms, there is not a race or technology anywhere in the *Babylon 5* universe short of the First Ones themselves that could explore or even draw near to an exhausted star. Anyone else who would do so is committing suicide and Games Masters should use a crushed probe or absorbed scanner to demonstrate this fact before liquefying his Player Characters.

Superheated Comet

Similar to a stable star in its make-up, but drastically smaller in size, a superheated comet bears a field of plasma and gases that sometimes extends tens of millions of kilometres in all directions. Unlike a comet that has been drawn into a stellar system, comets in the Void do not have tails. Tails are caused by the 'solar wind' of a local star, so unless there also happens to be a star nearby to give the comet a tail – it is just a swirling sphere of liquid plasma and gases.

In its passing, however, exploration ships can almost always find interesting re-condensed materials depending on what form of gases the comet is made up of. Roll 3D6 once on the Type of Debris table to decide what sort of materials can be found in the comet's wake – which will only ever be 1D4 tons in salvageable chunks.

Getting near a superheated comet is not the smartest choice for a vessel, and should have a 50% chance of suffering an Energic Event (see Fluctuating Star above) as a result.

Traditional Comet

This is a commonplace comet made up of gases, ice and rock hurtling through space. Like the superheated comet it likely does not have a tail, and it does not leave behind nearly the same type of materials as the other variety.

Everything about a traditional comet is the same as a superheated comet, save for that the Games Master only rolls a 2D8 on the Type of Debris table, but generates 1D6 tons of the material rolled.

Slipped Moon

Occasionally in the gravity storm outside the Rim a moon is torn free from its orbit of a larger planetoid, creating what astrophysicists call 'slipped moons.' These bodies tend to be irregularly shaped from losing bits of their surfaces from minor impacts, and few carry any atmosphere at all. Due to a slipped moon's lack of revolution (no longer having a planetoid to revolve around), it has very strong gravity to its forward side and almost no gravity at all in its rearmost pole.

Brakiri and Comets

The Brakiri revere comets as a sign of death and despair the majority of the time, only putting that fear aside for one day every two-hundred years on their 'Day of the Dead'. This means that ever coming into close contact with a comet, especially in the blackness of the Great Void, could be a powerful emotional experience for any Brakiri.

A Brakiri that witnesses or knows about a comet in the general vicinity of a Rim exploration he is a part of will need to immediately pass a DC 20 Will save or pass out from sheer fright. This save will need to be repeated any time the comet is brought up in conversation or imagery.

There is a good reason why many Brakiri expeditions hire non-Brakiri secondary pilots and navigators – just in case the entire ship faint at the sight of a comet!

Along the moon's centre sections, explorers could easily land shuttles or fighters in which to take samples, record and investigate. There is a great deal that can be found on these slipped moons from time to time, and Rim explorers often consider them to be a great find.

To determine exactly the statistical qualities of a slipped moon, roll 1D4 and consult both the Planetoid Moon table (see page 40), following all of the rules listed there.

Meteor Storm

For whatever reason, a cloud of space debris similar to that found in the debris field entry (see earlier in this chapter) has become extremely volatile and moves at great speed. Like a school of deadly fish the 'storm' moves through space, battering anything that gets in its way to create new bits and pieces to join the cloud, making it a self-sustaining hazard.

Meteor storms are created by the same process as debris fields, except that meteor storms automatically require the listed skill checks at the listed penalties each turn the exploration is within the meteor storm's area or path or the damage inflicted is actually doubled (2D3 Construction Spaces)! So long as a ship's captain does not linger within the storm for too long or try to chase it, it should pass in 3D4 turns.

Danger has its rewards, however, as meteors that strike a ship can later be pried from the hull and salvaged for their materials. For every turn that the meteor inflicts damage on the ship, 1D2–1 tons of the type of debris material can be later salvaged (up to the maximum present).

Binary Star System (41-50)

This result finds a pair of similarly-sized stars using one another as gravitational counterbalances to stay in an orbit, moving slowly through the cosmos like a pair of waltzing dancers. If there are full stellar systems (planets, moons and so on)in the Greater Void, they can most likely be found around these powerful pairs.

If this result is rolled, the Games Master should immediately roll a D10 and a D6. The result of the D10 is reduced by the result of the D6, indicating the number of planets the 'system' has at the moment if the final result is a positive number. Each planet must be generated separately using the rules found on page 30.

No matter as to whether or not the binary pair has any planets at all, the whole area is actually rather stable and can be used as a good rallying point or stable orbit for as long as the ship wishes. The massive gravity generated by the turning stars makes it possible for a capable piloting crew to hold a stable orbit indefinitely with a successful Operations (piloting) check (DC 15). They are very useful for ship repairs, rim ping calculating and any other sort of ship-based duty that being in a sea of gravitational currents would have unwanted effects upon. Any sort of Technical or Operations skill checks taken while in a stable orbit around a binary pair of stars can be taken with a +3 miscellaneous bonus; the newfound stability boosts morale and work productivity.

Because the system is moving as a large mass across the Great Void it could throw return paths off dramatically the longer a ship chooses to remain in its stable orbit around it. If the binary system is the last stop before a ship sets a course back for the Rim and the home galaxy, the final Knowledge (astrophysics) skill roll is taken at a –5 penalty.

Trinary Star System (51-55)

Even more stable than a binary system as far as planetary attractors go in the Great Void, this system is actually two smaller stars revolving around a central larger one. The resulting gravitational force can hold several planets in orbit at once, even in the sea of currents beyond the Rim. A ship is much more likely to find planets clinging to a trinary system out here, even if such an instance is rare.

Treat this result as a Binary Star System, except the roll to determine if there are any planets is taken on a D10 and a D4 (D10 –D4). Otherwise, the two results are identical for all other purposes.

Energic Anomaly (56-60)

This result means that the exploration vessel has discovered one of the rarest instances in the galaxy proper, but seems to happen from time to time out in the Greater Void. Called 'energic anomalies' by astrophysicists and research scientists, they are masses of different types of energy that are concentrated far beyond normal levels – creating a wondrous and terrible point in the cosmos.

There are actually five different types of anomalies that occur in the swirls of emptiness past the Rim: black holes, nullification points, radiation cycles, hyperspace tears and time/space rifts. To decide what manner of anomaly the explorers have found, roll on the following table.

Energic Anomalies

D100	Type of Anomaly
01-45	Black Hole
46-75	Nullification Point
76-95	Radiation Cycle
96-99	Hyperspace Tear
00	Time/Space Rift

Black Hole

An anomaly created by such a potent and focussed gravitational implosion that *nothing* escapes its maw – not even light – a black hole is a beautiful and deadly point in space that will devour a ship in seconds. Upon entering the general vicinity of a black hole, it takes an Operations (Piloting) or Pilot skill check (DC 20) each minute to keep from being drawn closer to the event horizon of the crushing anomaly. A failed roll means that the rest are taken with +2 DC, and three consecutive successes are required in order to escape the grasp of a black hole. If a ship manages to fail three checks at DC 30 or higher, it has been forced into the black hole and has been irrevocably crushed by the forces there.

For obvious reasons, Games Masters should think twice about using black holes lightly; they can bring a game to a screeching halt simply with a series of bad rolls.

Nullification Point

Actually sort of the opposite of normal energic anomaly, a nullification point is when multiple opposing forces all keep each other at bay, essentially creating a small pocket of space of true emptiness. Now able to hold a stable orbit without moving, the ship can make repairs and the like with great ease while in the nullification point. Like a ship in the eye of a hurricane, a nullification point is a welcome anomaly to haggard Rim exploration crews.

Just like the ship in a hurricane though, there is some danger that the winds will shift and the eye 'blink'. A nullification point is held together by the equalisation of all forces on all sides, which could be disturbed millions of miles away by a mobile star or jump point opening. Every hour there is a 5% (non-cumulative) chance that the forces that are creating the nullification point fluctuate, causing the safety and calm within to be smashed by the strongest of the forces almost instantly. Should this occur, anything caught in the nullification point will suffer 3D8 Construction Points worth of damage (3D20 hit points for anyone unfortunately outside a craft at that time) from the thrashing forces.

Radiation Cycle

Energy cannot be destroyed. This is a basic law of the universe, and one that can cause problems for Rim exploration vessels that happen upon this type of anomaly. A radiation cycle is a tiny pocket of space that somehow trapped a portion of radiation-laden solar gases from a wayward star or solar flare, churning them into a 'bubble' of superheated plasma floating through the Void. The anomaly feeds and reacts to itself and anything it happens to run into, making it similar to a perpetual fusion reaction. So much matter gets consumed over the life of the cycle that it bears an exponential density that tends to occasionally fool rim pinging systems – making this anomaly a real danger to Rim exploration vessels.

A ship that draws near to a radiation cycle will need to make an Operations (sensors) skill check (DC 20) to discover the small pocket before it splashes against the hull of the vessel. If the crew is successful in locating the tiny bubble of fusion energy, they will get a single

Operations (piloting) or Pilot skill check (DC 20) to turn the ship enough to make sure the anomaly does not impact it. If the ship fails in either of these tasks, it will automatically be struck by the roughly fighter-sized bubble of deadly energy and will suffer an attack equal to that of an advanced plasma weapon (Offence 50, Reduces Armour by 1D4 permanently).

Hyp--_p-- T--_

Jump gates and jump engines basically use a focused beam of energy to pull apart the boundaries between hyperspace and realspace, shutting down the energy beam and simply allowing the normal forces of the two to close the portal once a ship has passed. Beyond the Rim, where the forces are sometimes much stronger than normal, jump points have been known to remain open. Theorists call this phenomenon a 'hyperspace tear.' Hyperspace tears are only known to happen in very strong gravitational swells in the Greater Void. Basically, the pull of the external gravity is too much for the passive collapse of a portal. What this means to travellers is that there is a dangerously unstable jump point accessible at all times from realspace to hyperspace, allowing transit into hyperspace at all times – so long as the portal remains open.

There is a slight chance that every time something passes through a portal it could muster enough passive attraction to finally collapse. When a ship uses a tear, there is a percentage chance equal to 1/20 of the Construction Spaces of the passing vessel that the portal will close immediately behind it. This will not cause any harm to the ship itself, but could cause serious damage to any vessels that might have been following closely behind.

Ti--/Sp-- Rif-

Extremely rare in any circumstance, concentrations of tachyon and neutrino emissions that actually somehow warp the fabric of space and time just enough to allow for two eras to sort of *blend* in the middle can exist. This was documented in Sector 14, near Babylon 5, where reports of the return of the once-vanished Babylon 4 were witnessed. Although not common by any stretch of the imagination, it stands to reason that the Rim would not cease these pocket anomalies, but none have been documented out there either.

It is truly up to the Games Master as to what a time rift could mean, or where it would send a vessel – and what might happen to it should it ever return. This creates many plot possibilities for explorers, and could make for a very unique Rim exploration experience for everyone involved.

Spacecraft – Destroyed, Derelict & Functioning (61-75)

It is *very* unlikely that a Rim exploration vessel would ever simply happen upon another vessel out in the expanse of nothingness beyond the Rim. Even so, with the materials that vessels are made of and the amount of energy they sometimes emit they can, and do, end up getting tracked by sensors as larger objects to be investigated. A needle in a haystack to be sure, but in the chance that the 'needle' is from an undiscovered race many Rim explorers take the time to check it out.

When a rim ping results in any of the three spacecraft options below, the Games Master must then decipher what sort of vessel it is/was, where it came from and the further details for its invariable study and exploration. As the first step in doing so, roll on the following table.

Size of Discovered Craft

D6 Result	Size of Craft	Example
1	Small	Light Shuttle, Large Fighter
2	Medium	Cargo Shuttle
3	Large	Freighter, Escort Cruiser
4	Huge	Space Liner, Average Military Ship
5	Gargantuan	Warship
6	Colossal	EA Explorer, Flotilla

Once the size of the vessel has been determined, the Games Master must then roll on the following table to figure out where the vessel came from (what species built it).

Origins of Discovered Craft

D6 Result	Craft Origins
1	Unknown Alien Design
2	Alien Design (Galactic)
3	Domestic Design (Galactic)
4	Neutral Galactic Design (Exploration)
5	Neutral Design (Commercial)
6	Same Allegiance as Finder

Unknown Alien Design – The vessel does not match any descriptions or schematics in data records, and is likely the first of its kind to be seen by anyone in the galaxy. The Redhelms once fit into this category before they attacked, and theory would state that there are many, many more vessels of unknown alien design out beyond the Rim – including the First Ones.

Alien Design (Galactic) – The vessel is crafted by one of the many alien races of the galaxy other than the predominant one of the exploration mission, and is very likely to have been a part of a different Rim exploration. A Knowledge (Galactic Lore) or Knowledge (Military) skill roll (DC 15) can tell a Player Character what sort of vessel he has encountered at a glance, so long as the vessel is not part of some form of classified program.

Domestic Design (Galactic) - The vessel is crafted by the predominant race of the exploration mission, and is a common chassis for them to use in this capacity. A Knowledge (Galactic Lore) or Knowledge (Military) skill roll (DC 15) can tell a Player Character what sort of vessel he has encountered at a glance, so long as the vessel is not part of some form of classified program.

Neutral Galactic Design (Exploration) – The vessel is a dedicated exploration craft built and manned by one of the galaxy's corporate or neutral parties. Funded not by a government, but by some third party organisation, the vessel is rather generic in its construction and usability. A Knowledge (Galactic Lore) skill roll (DC 15) can tell a Player Character what sort of vessel he has encountered at a glance, so long as the vessel is not part of some form of classified program.

Neutral Design (Commercial) – This vessel is one of thousands just like it, created and dedicated to the transport of economic resources and goods. It could have been on a mission to take goods and supplies to a short-lived Rim colony, or perhaps it was knocked off course by raiders and ended up in its current situation. A Knowledge (Galactic Lore) or Knowledge (Commerce) skill roll (DC 15) can tell a Player Character what sort of vessel he has encountered at a glance, so long as the vessel is not part of some form of classified program.

Same Allegiance as Finder – The vessel is working for the *exact* same people as the Rim exploration team. An IPX explorer will find another IPX-sponsored craft; an Abbai scientific scout will find another Abbai scientific vessel and so on. This could pose a number of questions for the group, and might even lead to interesting plot points between the two ships.

Once the Games Master has decided what sort and how large a vessel is, he can then add specific information about what condition it is in…

Destroyed Spacecraft

The 'craft' is not so much a craft anymore as many sizeable chunks of debris that are floating close enough to one another that it is apparent they were once whole. The exploration vessel might be able to glean a bit of information as to what happened to the craft with a successful Operations (Sensors) skill check (DC 15), allowing for the Games Master to roll on the *Aggressor* and *Time Passed Since Conflict* columns of the Signs of Conflict table (see page 29) to explain what happened to the craft, and when.

No matter what actually took place, or what the explorers believe took place, it will be an interesting scene to witness and will peak the interests of many of the ship's crew. They have found a *destroyed* ship, after all – a fate that they all risk in their current mission, and are graphically reminded of that by the chunks of ship before them.

Derelict Spacecraft

For whatever reason, the vessel found by the Rim exploration mission is just floating in space. It has likely suffered a bit of damage from either an earlier conflict or being battered around by the occasional asteroid, but is otherwise intact. Ships like this, especially if collected from some unknown or advanced source, are a huge find for an exploration team. Bringing back a nearly complete vessel from a previously unknown race could be all a government or company needs to spring years ahead in the industry. Even finding a lost vessel of another government or corporate sponsor could earn vast rewards for the ship, not to mention the galactic prestige of being so philanthropic!

Derelict Spacecraft Situation

D20 Result	State of Vessel's Internals	Chance of Sentient Life on Board[1]
1	Near Perfect	50%
2-4	Strained and Damaged	35%
5-7	Heavily Damaged	25%
8-9	Dangerous	10%
10-11	Toxic	5%
12-17	Vacant	—
18-19	Demolished	—
20	Mysterious Circumstance	—

[1] Assume the life is Sentient from the proper alien species for this type of spacecraft.

When a derelict spacecraft has been found, savvy explorers will no doubt send shuttles and investigators to see what state it is in. The Games Master will want to roll on the table below to know the state of the vessel's internals – and whether or not there are surprises around.

Near Perfect – The ship has 95% of its hull and atmosphere still intact, and is likely only considered a derelict due to its lack of power, crew or functional engines. This means that the life forms that operate (or took over) the vessel are possibly still on board and might have something to say about explorers coming over to investigate *their* ship!

Strained and Damaged – The ship has suffered enough damage to be at 80% of its hull and has vented a portion of its atmosphere, making it hard to do anything on board without becoming exhausted (if it is a compatible atmosphere). Also, many of the internal systems are no longer functioning, giving a –5 penalty to any Operations and Technical skill checks involving systems and devices of the vessel.

Heavily Damaged – The ship either was in a bad battle or must have floated through a debris field, as it is in rather bad shape. It is at 60% of its hull and has very small pockets of atmosphere tucked away behind bulkheads here and there. Most of the ships' systems are offline or beyond repair, giving a –10 penalty to any Operations and Technical skill checks involving the vessel's systems and devices.

Dangerous – The ship sustained a massive blow to its internal fusion core or jump engines, flooding most of the ship with flame, radiation or acidic coolant. The ship itself is damaged to 75% of its hull, and some decks and sealable rooms are still safe. Even so, anyone moving throughout the vessel will suffer one unpreventable point of damage per hour of investigation. Also, many of the internal systems are no longer functioning, giving a –5 penalty to any Operations and Technical skill checks involving the vessel's systems and devices.

Toxic – The ship's atmospheric processors, cess tanks or similarly important life-support systems are damaged beyond repair and the entire vessel has since flooded itself with deadly chemicals and toxic agents. Anyone caught inside the derelict without some form of environmental protection will suffer 1D2 points of Con loss every minute until they die at zero. There may be 'safe zones' in sealed rooms, but this is not likely. Also, some of the internal systems are likely to be corroded and a bit twitchy, giving a –2 penalty to any Operations and Technical skill checks involving the vessel's systems and devices.

Vacant – The ship took a massive blow to its hull, leaving it with 90% of its value, but enough to vent enough of its atmosphere that the crew – those that survived – were forced to abandon ship. There is no life left on the vessel, and it cannot be explored or investigated without space suits and fully enclosed environmental suits. Otherwise, the ship seems in good shape and unharmed.

Demolished – The ship withstood a terrible onslaught of enemy fire or the worst the Void had to offer, leaving only 15% of its hull remaining. It is held together by exposed cabling and infrastructure, and a solid hit or bump could cause the whole thing to fall apart. It is very nearly classified as a destroyed vessel, but has still a spark of life left. Nearly all of the ships' systems are destroyed or damaged beyond any hope of repair, giving a –15 penalty to any Operations and Technical skill checks involving systems and devices of the vessel.

Mysterious Circumstance – The ship is a derelict due to its complete and total lack of crew. It is undamaged and fully powered, yet it still sits stationary in space. It is a complete mystery as to why it has been abandoned, or why it seems like the ship was only recently left to be found by the explorers. It is quite a find for a Rim exploration team, but such an enigmatic prize must come with some sort of cost…which will likely rear its head when the Player Characters are the least expecting it.

F[illegible]ig Sp[illegible]f

It is a rare enough circumstance that a travelling vessel in a Rim exploration mission pick up on and track down a stationary ship in the Greater Void, but the odds against finding another functioning vessel are staggering. Even so, it does occur, and hopefully for the explorers involved…whoever they find are not hostile. Accidentally finding a military convoy of an unexpected alien armada outside our galaxy could go very badly for a ponderous exploration craft.

Depending on what the Games Master rolls for the type and size of the spacecraft, the initial meeting could be anywhere from interesting dialogue between mutually-pleased explorers to deadly encounters with ancient warmongers looking to protect territory that the mission crew had no chance of even knowing about!

If the Games Master does not already have a good reason in his plans for why the vessel is here at this time, he can roll on the Random Vessel Situation table. Otherwise, we encourage the Games Master to use these random vessels to suit his own ends and campaign.

Random Vessel Situation

D6 Result	Vessel is…
1	Fleeing from a hostile force…which they think might be right behind them.
2	Terribly lost, trying to find its route home.
3	Suffering from navigational/engine technical malfunctions.
4	Very happy to find anyone at all out here!
5	Almost out of supplies and need help.
6	Attacking explorers' vessel for no reason!

Depending what is rolled on the above table, the Games Master can expand on the ideas in any number of interesting ways. This is an excellent place to test the Player Characters' morals and loyalty to their galactic fellows, and could be the cause of some fantastic roleplaying opportunities between Player Characters.

Signs of Conflict (76-80)

The Rim exploration has found an area where starships or other spacecraft were destroyed by some other force or event, leaving behind chunks of their hulls, weapon systems and perhaps even frozen bodies (depending on how long it has been). This can be a salvager's dream, but it is also often an explorer's greatest hope and fear. It brings the Rim exploration mission directly to the sight of some great battle or collection of battle detritus, which might have taken place an hour or a century before…no one can know. For xenoarcheologists, this could be a massive find of the scraps of other civilisations or even the remnants of a ship that met its end in a meteor storm. No matter the cause or resulting pieces, it is a find for the explorers to study later.

Salvaging the Wreckage of Ships

A good salvage or sample-collecting team could easily drag in several pieces of blasted craft (or cut up derelict ones!) for study or resource sales, depending on how much is still left to salvage. It is a good rule of thumb that there be a number of tons of useful salvage at a conflict site equal to the number of ships or other craft found, with each ton forcing a Technical (mechanical) skill check (DC 15) for the salvagers to cut off what pieces they can without harming the useful bits. Salvage of this type could be sold for nearly any cost to the right buyer, but has a market average of 1D6 x 10,000 credits a ton. This amount is doubled for anything salvaged this way from a derelict rather than destroyed vessel, but most explorers would rather try to tow a derelict back whole than cut it up for scrap and trade.

Of course, with the right haggling and the right customer, that amount could go far, far higher…

The ***Signs of Conflict*** table allows the Games Master to randomly roll a *D6 for each column* to discover what happened, between what forces and how long ago (re-

Signs of Conflict

D6 Result	Conflict Type (# of destroyed ships)	Aggressor	Defender Ship(s)	Time Passed Since Conflict
1	Fleet Crushed (15+)	Unknown	Unknown Alien Design	1,000+ years
2	Battle Engagement (5-7)	First Ones/Ancients	Alien Design (Galactic)	100 years
3	Ambush (1)	Unknown Species (Rim)	Domestic Design (Galactic)	10 years
4	Group Skirmish (7-12 fighters)	Known Species (Galactic)	Neutral Galactic Design (Exploration)	1 years
5	Single Fighter/Shuttle Skirmish (1 fighter/shuttle)	Technical Malfunction	Neutral Design (Commercial)	6 months
6	Single Probe or Satellite Wrecked	Stellar Event[1]	Same Allegiance as Finder	Recent[2]

[1] This means that some form of Stellar Event destroyed the ship(s) rolled.
[2] the Rim exploration vessel snooping around (Games Master's discretion).

roll any combination that does not make sense; like an Earth Explorer finding a Fleet of their own design crushed 1,000+ years ago!).

Planetoid (81-99)

A 'planetoid' is defined by galactic astrophysicists as any planet-sized stellar object that has created its own undefined orbit, rather than follow any orbit designated by a greater stellar system. Due to the overall lack of true systems in the Greater Void, almost all objects there are therefore classified as planetoids. They do not follow any particular orbit, and some do not even revolve around *any* object, let alone enough to create seasons or stable weather patterns.

Planetoids are the most important find for most Rim explorations. They grant access to new resources, important information and the occasional life form that can be studied to great length. While extremely uncommon, there have even been sightings and records of sentient civilisations being discovered trying to eke out their livings on these chaotic planetoids.

When a Planetoid is rolled on the rim ping table, the Games Master must look to see if it is automatically considered to have life upon it due to higher results on that table (86-99). If it does, the planetoid can be generated in this section before moving on to generate the designated life forms. Even if a life form is not *automatically* designated here, there is always a chance of finding life of some kind on a Rim planetoid (as described in the planetoid's entry). Rules for using that number to decide if life exists are fully covered in the Discovering New Life chapter.

Life or no life, the Games Master can generate the planetoid's statistical information from the following tables.

Type & Size

Planetoids in the Greater Void tend to be small enough to be affected by the gravitational tides, with a leaning on rocky terrestrial worlds that are easily pulled from existing orbits or star systems. Gas giants are unheard of out here; the gravitational pull that they generate sets them on collision courses for wayward stars or keeps them from being pulled away in the first place. Planetoids are typically Large-sized or smaller on the galactic scale.

What about the first edition *Galactic Guide*?

Much of the information on planetoids is *extremely* similar to the information on planet creation that we covered in our first edition sourcebook – *Galactic Guide*. Although it might look at first glance that the following section on planetoids if just a review of what readers already learned in the *Galactic Guide*, it is different in many minor ways to take into consideration the fact that free-roaming planetoids can be much different than stable-orbit planets within the confines of the galaxy.

While there is nothing stopping our readers and players from using those older rules to create the Rim planetoids that they may happen upon, doing so will result in several issues that should probably not occur in explorations outside the confines of the galaxy. It is ultimately up to the Games Master, but we encourage that the rules and tables altered and printed here be used for anything created outside the Rim.

To generate the type and size of a planetoid, roll on the following two tables. After the tables are individual entries that explain what each archetype actually means, and the percentage chance that the planetoid bears some form of life.

Rim Planetoid Type

2D6	Planetoid Archetype
2	Icy Barren
3-4	Rocky Barren
5	Mineral Rich
6-8	Composite Rock/Soil
9	Blasted Glass
10	Porous Stone
11	Metallic
12	Environmentally Evolved

Rim Planetoid Size

2D6	Planetoid Size
2-3	Tiny (2D6 hundred miles diameter)
4-5	Small (1D2+1 thousand miles diameter)
6	Medium (2D4+4 thousand miles diameter)
7-10	Large (1D4 +12 thousand miles diameter)
11-12	Huge (1D6 +16 thousand miles in diameter)

Icy Barren
Chance for Life: 2%

This planetoid was likely once a liquid-based world that was torn free of its stable orbit and flung through the cosmos, growing colder and colder as it drew farther and farther away from its sun. Now it is a barren ball of snow and ice that is deadly for all but the hardiest forms of life – if any at all. It is the image of what the cold of the Void can do, but still might hold secrets worth exploring.

Environmentally protected investigators and shuttles are necessary to explore the surface, which is likely treacherous and jagged. Depending on how long it took to freeze, or whether it recently suffered a thaw, the surface could be dangerously brittle – or many kilometres thick. The heat from fusion engines could start a chain reaction of steam geysers and cracking glacial plates, or simply open up a chasm that leads to the planet's core surface, should it even have one.

Icy barren planetoids are dangerous and difficult to explore, but the ice itself could contain interesting chemicals and minerals. Alternatively if the ice is oxygen-based, it could be used to aide in re-supplying survival supplies or perhaps atmospheric tanks. These planetoids are a good find, if not all that unique or exciting.

Rocky Barren
Chance for Life: 10%

This archetype is a common discovery in the Rim, as it is really just a planetoid whose predominate material is dense, sedentary rock and stone. Like a galactic boulder it slowly revolves and moves through space, sometimes with some minor forms of life clinging to it unknowing of their home's chaotic state. Eventually it might fall into a patterned orbit around a binary star system or collide with a star, but for now it is simply a bleak and desolate world of stone and rock.

Exploring a rocky barren is actually quite safe and simple. No different than exploring a rocky moon, normal methods work just fine. Core sampling, sonic scans, meteorological information and the like do not require special equipment, but some very dense planetoids could be resistant to normal sampling tools. Laser drills and carbinium-alloy picks are suggested, but may wear out over extended missions.

Rocky barrens do not warrant *much* exploration or study, as they tend to be mostly homogenous throughout their outermost layers. A few samples here and there combined with powerful ship-based sensor scans will determine whether deeper digs or extensive searching is necessary. Plainly said, rocky barrens are good for the books – but not for profits.

Mineral Rich
Chance for Life: 10%

Some planetoids are good for scientific research – others are better for sheer monetary worth. This type of planetoid is one of the latter. It is essentially a rocky barren that has deep and frequent deposits of a single type of mineral that makes up much of its crust. A sufficient excavation team and an empty cargo hold could make for a fortuitous find. In fact, there are some Rim explorations that will set up temporary mining colonies and expensive jump beacons just to be able to take as much of the mineral-laden rock as they can before the galaxy turns too far away from the planetoid's position.

With additional minerals in the 'soil' and groundwater (if any) there is a chance that life could exist on a mineral rich planetoid, but there is unlikely enough of an ecosphere to support complex organisms or the like; at least not on the surface. Tunnels and remnants of other miners' exploits could make for pockets of life and evolution, but are quite rare in any circumstance.

The amount of minerals that can be taken from a planetoid depends on its composition, the number of skilled excavators on the job and how long they work. The following table shows how much of each given substance each 40 man-hour equivalent work week could excavate from a mineral rich planetoid.

Mineral Rich Excavation Rates

Substance	Amount Excavated per 40 man-hours[1]
Salts, Sulphurs	2D6 x 1,000 lbs.
Carbon, Silicon	2D4 x 1,000 lbs.
Raw Gemstone	1D4 x 1000 lbs.
Unknown Mineral (soft)	1D3 x 1000 lbs.
Quantium-40	2D6 x 100 lbs.
Unknown Mineral (dense)	1D6 x 100 lbs.

[1] This number assumes that minimal mechanical aide is available; it should be modified if heavy equipment is used.

These minerals are in their most crude form, and are likely to be carried with a great deal of unwanted material, but can be cleaned and refined to create the saleable format that the common galactic citizen is used to seeing.

Composite Rock/Soil
Chance for Life: 18%

The most common form of planetoid, the composite rock/soil result means that the planetoid is actually quite similar to an early Earth-like, terrestrial planet. It has a sizeable chance of carrying an average atmosphere, and can support some forms of life considerably well. It rarely poses any more threat than finding a common planet in an uncharted stellar system and should be recorded as a significant find.

Composite planetoids are nearly always in transition from one state to another. It takes millions of years (or a massive stellar event) to change a planetoid's archetype, and these are a prime example of that slow change. Caught in the several-million-year-long growth process, composite planetoids have several regions of their surfaces that represent different aspects of other archetypes.

In game terms, any time a composite planetoid is rolled the Games Master must also roll 3D3 other archetypes from the Rim Planetoid Type table to incorporate into the regions of this planetoid. These areas can be arranged on the planetoid's surface however the Games Master feels fit to do so, but due to the effects Rim travel and Greater Void gravitational tides have on a planetoid – like archetypes should probably be found near each other.

Blasted Glass
Chance for Life: 1%

Any silicon or similarly-based planetoid that crosses paths (comes within a few million miles) with a wayward star or superheated comet will sometimes get bathed for thousands of years in powerful radiation and intense heat. This can cause the planetoid to literally scorch burn and eventually *melt* into natural glass. This makes for a beautiful and extremely hazardous planetoid to explore or investigate.

With the type of phenomenon that must take place to create a blasted glass planetoid, there is almost no possibility of life existing on its surface, but in theory there could be some life forms that were able to adapt to the early generations of heat and radiation long enough to become subterranean and escape the crust-melting era.

There is very little of true worth other then data recording and small glass samples when dealing with this type of planetoid, but some explorers still spend a great deal of time studying the *process* by which it was created. Even though this knowledge would surely do nothing to prevent this from happening should a galactic planet ever run into the same patterns – they still attain it just in case.

Porous Stone
Chance for Life: 8%

Some planetoids are far more trouble to explore than they could possibly be worth – and porous stone planetoids are exactly that. The result of either extensive erosion, over mining, the freezing and subsequent boiling of groundwater or a dozen other scientific possibilities, the upper crusts of these planetoids are built much like a sponge or piece of lace. They are rifled with holes, tunnels, tubes and flow-vents that could take *years* to fully explore.

Other than constant chances for cave-ins and heightened threats of volcanic activity (see page 37 for details), these planetoids are exactly the same as mineral rich planetoids. The tunnels and recesses that make up the infrastructure of these planetoids halve any gains from mining, and always bear the constant threat of collapse.

Metallic
Chance for Life: 1%

A combination of blasted glass and mineral rich planetoids, metallic planetoids were once heavy in rocky ores that could be smelted into various raw metals but were caught in powerful stellar energies. These energies blasted or melted away the rock and stone of the ore, leaving behind huge patches of molten metal to eventually cool and become raw slag. A metallic planetoid bears fields of smelted metal that might be several kilometres in diameter, making it an unbelievable find for profit-chasing industrial Rim explorations.

With the proper equipment this raw metal can be cut from the planetoid's surface and taken. Doing so requires several skilled technicians with the Technical (mechanical) or Profession (miner) skills, but can result in a great deal of profit for the mission organisers and their industrialist investors.

The amount of raw metals that can be taken from the planetoid depends on its composition, the number of skilled excavators and how long they work. The following table shows how much of each given substance each 40 man-hour equivalent work week could excavate from a metallic planetoid.

Metallic Excavation Rates

Substance	Amount Excavated per 40 man-hours[1]
Copper, Lead	2D6 x 100 lbs.
Aluminium, Nickel	2D4 x 100 lbs.
Iron, Silver	1D4 x 100 lbs.
Unknown Metal (soft)	1D3 x 100 lbs.
Gold, Platinum	2D6 x 10 lbs.
Unknown Metal (dense)	1D6 x 10 lbs.

[1] This number assumes that minimal mechanical aide is available; it should be modified if heavy equipment is used.

These metals are in their most raw smelted form, and are likely to be found in huge veins or puddle-shaped slabs that must be cut into smaller sections in order to be travelled with. This raw metal can be later melted and refined into ingots for common galactic sale, but not without a furnace and other important smelting equipment that most Rim exploration missions do not make room for.

Environmentally Evolved
Chance for Life: 50%

Occasionally the movements of a planetoid will keep it in some form of constant in the trail and light of a wayward star, or perhaps it has only just left its system-orbit to become a mobile planetoid, but whatever the reason is – this environment on this planetoid has managed to actually *thrive* in the Greater Void. It almost always has a stable atmosphere and weather system, readable and predictable volcanic/tectonic activity and a very good chance at complex life.

Many of the attempts at Rim colonies have been made on environmentally evolved planetoids, trying to set up self-sufficient colonies that will not need to rely on the rapidly thinning window of return to the galaxy. These colonies might survive for many generations, leaving behind the galaxy and its inhabitants forever. It is a risk that some try to take, if only to test the limitations of the universe and the strength of their resolve.

Other than the obvious modifiers to the rest of the tables used to create a planetoid, environmentally evolved planetoids are stable and do not bear any special rules of their own.

Planetoid Archetype Modifiers to Further Statistics

The Planetoid Archetype Modifiers table explains the modifiers each type of planetoid imposes on the many tables of the following sections. These modifiers apply *in addition* to any other modifiers applied from other sources.

Planetoid Archetype Modifiers

Planetoid Archetype	Gravity Modifier	Atmos. Density Modifier	Atmospheric Compositions Modifier	Geology Modifier	Volcanism	Hydro Sphere	Climate
Icy Barren	–5	–1	–5	+2	–5	–10	–10
Rocky Barren	+0	–5	–3	+0	–3	–8	–5
Mineral Rich	+1	–3	–2	+2	–2	–5	–5
Composite Rock/Soil	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0
Blasted Glass	–2	–5	–5	+3	+0	–2	+4
Porous Stone	–3	–2	–2	+5	+3	–5	+1
Metallic	+4	–3	–5	+2	+1	–5	+4
Environmentally Evolved	+1	+8	+10	–4	–5	+6	+5

Planetoid Gravity

Planetoid Size	Microgravity (0.1g or less)	Very Low (0.11g to 0.5g)	Low (0.51g to 0.8g)	Standard (0.81g to 1.2g)	High (1.21g to 2.0g)	Very High (2.01g to 4.0g)	Extreme (4.01g or more)
Tiny	1-11	12-18	19-20	—	—	—	—
Small	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	—	—	—
Medium	1	2-4	6-9	10-15	16-20	—	—
Large	—	1	2-4	5-11	12-17	18-19	20
Huge	—	—	1	2-3	4-12	13-17	18-20

G--ity

Planetoids may not be slave to any specific gravitational orbit, but they tend to revolve on their own axis and generate their own field of gravity in most cases. They are large enough to generate a moderate amount of gravitational pull of their own. Gravity is a very important factor for exploration, and it is the key to several of the planetoid's other characteristics.

Each planetoid generated must roll a D20 and consult the Planetoid Gravity table to determine its gravitational forces.

A-__ph--

While it is difficult to keep a constant atmosphere in the tides and forces of the Greater Void, planetoids that have significant gravity or specific make-up can normally keep a level of atmosphere for several hundred thousand years after leaving a constant orbit. Theoretically, some planetoids may even be able to sustain a constant atmosphere due to geological and biospheric conditions on the planet's surface as well.

Once a planetoid has had its gravity decided, roll on the Planetoid Atmospheric Density table.

Vacuum atmosphere is actually a misnomer, as there is so little atmosphere remaining on the planetoid that no life can be sustained outside of a cryogenic state and hypoxia will likely kill anyone who would venture around in it unprotected. The rules for exposure to vacuum are found on page 280 of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition* core rulebook.

Very Thin atmospheres are likely the result of thicker atmospheres being stripped away by passing stars or gravitational tides, leaving little for the planetoid. While not as deadly as a vacuum, they are not useful for sustaining any sample of the galaxy's sentient life. Air compressors can make the atmosphere breathable, but not good for long-term use – environmental suits are still preferred. Ranging from 01 to 0.69 Atmospheres (Earth has a sea-level constant of 1 Atmosphere), even using a compressor for longer than an hour in a very thin atmosphere calls for the character to make a Fortitude save (DC 18 +1 for each additional hour after the first) or begin to suffer from hypoxia as if in a vacuum (see above).

Thin atmosphere is breathable by most races (concentration-wise; it says nothing of chemical compatibility) and does not pose any significant penalties other than becoming fatigued and exhausted much faster and only being capable of a few hours activity at a time without some form of breather or compressor thickening the 0.7 to 0.9 Atmospheres of air.

Planetoid Atmospheric Density

Gravity Level	Vacuum	Very Thin	Thin	Standard	Dense	Very Dense	Extremely Dense
Microgravity	1-20	21+[1]	—	—	—	—	—
Very Low	1-12	13-17	18-20	21+[1]	—	—	—
Low	1-7	8-12	13-16	17-20	21+[1]	—	—
Standard	1-3	4-8	9-11	12-17	18-20	21+[1]	—
High	1-2	3-5	6-9	10-13	14-17	18-20	21+[1]
Very High	1	2-4	5-7	8-11	12-16	17-20	21+[1]
Extreme	1	2-3	4-6	7-10	11-17	18-19	20

[1] This result can only be achieved through additional modifiers found on the Planetoid Archetype Modifiers table (page 33) and cannot be the result of any unmodified D20 roll.

Standard atmospheres range from 0.91 to 1.1 Atmospheres and do not impose any adverse penalties on most forms of life. A life form that has been raised in a thinner or thicker atmospheric condition will treat this as an atmosphere type higher or lower on the scale, depending on how its normal atmosphere is classified.

Dense atmospheres are thick and difficult to breathe without becoming dizzy or permeated with the concentration of gases that make it up. They have a classification of 1.1 to 1.3 Atmospheres.

Very Dense atmospheres can exist from 1.31 to 1.5 Atmospheres, and are thick enough to cause physical damage to life forms that are not accustomed to their concentration. Without protective suits and breathers, characters will suffer one point of temporary Constitution damage similar to 'the Bends' each hour as gases build up in their bloodstreams.

Extremely Dense atmospheres are almost liquid in their density, weighing in at a crushing 4.01 Atmospheres or even more. Common environmental protection is not enough to stave off the air pressure, and most shuttles will suffer some minor surface damage from the stress of having to fly through it. Anything not rated for the density of such a planetoid will be crushed in minutes, and specially designed mechanised suits to move around would be necessary – and very expensive.

Atmospheric Composition

The types of gases that make up the atmosphere of a Rim planetoid vary from instance to instance, but they are almost always directly related to any external chemical reactions that might have thrown gases into the atmosphere. Collision with meteors can seed the air with dust and particulate matter, an encounter with a wayward star might burn thousands of tons of pollutants into steam or even just a massive disease could poison the atmosphere forever.

The Games Master must roll on the following table to generate the general composition of the planetoid's atmosphere (except *Vacuum*-level atmospheres).

Planetoid Atmospheric Composition

D20 result	Atmospheric Condition[1]
1-6	Inert
7-9	Poisonous
10-11	Corrosive
12-16	Irradiated
17-20	Breathable (Tainted)
21+[2]	Breathable

[1] Atmospheric conditions are highly variable, and the rules stated below only apply to beings and technology that have not evolved/were invented amidst the atmosphere of their planetoid (or a similar one).

[2] This result can only be achieved through additional modifiers found on the Planetoid Archetype Modifiers table (page 33) and cannot be the result of any unmodified D20 roll.

Inert atmospheres are not dangerous or life-supporting, they simply *are*. Made up of gases which are often stable by-products from other chemical reactions and the like, they are rarely even study-worthy. It is good to note that an inert atmosphere is not inert to races that have a use for it.

Poisonous atmospheres contain one or more chemicals or substances that are inherently toxic to most life forms. Unlike tainted atmospheres, a single lung-full of the air here could kill. Breathers are a must, and full-environmental suits are highly recommended as some toxic chemicals or agents are just as lethal if they come into contact with skin. After a single minute a Fortitude save (DC 18) must be made by anyone exposed to the gases, with additional saves being made at +1 DC every ten minutes they remain exposed. Whenever failed, the character suffers 1d4 ability score damage to the ability of the Games Master's choice, depending on the type of toxin.

Corrosive atmospheres are similar in nature to poisonous atmospheres, except that damage is physical rather than chemical in nature. Life forms and equipment not evolved/created to survive the caustic atmosphere will be eaten away in just a few short moments. *Anything* that must withstand the atmospheric condition suffers 1D6 damage each round that ignores all forms of Hardness and Damage Reduction (unless it specifically is noted so). It is for this reason exploring a corrosive atmosphere unprepared could be the end to any Rim exploration as their shuttles are eaten away before they can turn back!

Irradiated atmospheres have lost much of their protective layer to ward away stellar radiation due to outside gravitational forces or simply strong energies fighting. While this does not mean that the planetoid is downright deadly to visiting life, it does tend to lower the overall healthiness of those who are not prepared. For every full day that an outside life form is submitted to the atmosphere without suitable protection, it must pass a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer one temporary point of Con damage. This will eventually wear down the character's Fort saves further, and perhaps even bring about lethal radiation poisoning – but this can be averted with protective gear or rest and medication outside the atmosphere.

Taint

D6 Result	Taint type
1	*Polluted.* Take one point of Con damage for each day of unfiltered exposure.
2	*Low Breathable Gas.* Treat the atmosphere as having a pressure of 0.7 for the purposes of hypoxia; if it is already at this level or lower, reduce the effective number by 0.1.
3	*Dust Cloud.* The air has picked up a great deal of dust and particulate matter, making effective visibility 30 ft and having the same effects as *Polluted* (see above).
4	*Drug-like.* Odd chemical agents in the atmosphere mimic hallucinogenic drugs; breathing it for more than one hour results in powerful delusion. Continued exposure causes 1D4 Wis damage per day.
5	*Allergic/Irritant.* Something in the air is irritating and uncomfortable. Each hour of unfiltered exposure requires a Fortitude save (DC 15) or the character becomes incapacitated with cramps, nausea and vertigo.
6	*Diseased.* The atmosphere is rich with disease-causing organisms whether or not Life forms are otherwise present. Each day of unfiltered exposure requires the character to make a DC Fortitude save or contact whatever illness(es) are plaguing this planetoid.

Breathable (Tainted) atmosphere is not caustic or lethal; it merely has agents mixed in that can cause health issues and major discomforts. Although breathable, any character in this atmosphere for longer than fifteen minutes that does not wear some kind of filter or breather will begin to see the effects of the taint in the air. He must roll a D6 and compare it to the Taint table.

Breathable atmosphere is ideal for explorers to discover. It is thickly enriched with all the proper gases needed by most common life forms and is quite likely to support a natural biosphere. In short, the planet has a standard oxygen/nitrogen mix of gases, though there may be odd contaminants which will cause complications after months of exposure (Games Master's discretion).

G-Logy

Planetoids are quite similar to common planets in how they are physically constructed, complete with mountains, swamps and other geological terrain types. Icy barren planetoids might have flash-frozen peaks of solid water as high as a mountain, while metallic planetoids could have vast plains of slick copper pools. These space-roaming spheres come into contact with a vast array of external forces that could help mould them into all manner of different shapes.

Although the earlier sections determine what sort of materials make up a planetoid and its atmosphere, the following table is used to decide what sort of landscape the planetoid's has. This is not necessary for water worlds, but if a planetoid has any solid land mass at all – this table decides how traversable it is.

Planetoid Geology

D20 Result	Geology
2 or less	Very Flat
3-6	Flat
7-11	Standard
12-17	Rugged
18-20	Very Rugged
21+[1]	Hazardous

[1] This result can only be achieved through additional modifiers, and cannot be the result of any unmodified d20 roll.

Planetoid Geology Modifiers

Planetoid Gravity	Modifier
Microgravity	–5
Very Low	–3
Low	–1
High	+2
Very High	+3
Extremely High	+5
Atmospheric Density	**Modifier**
Vacuum	+4
Very Thin	+2
Very Dense	–1
Extremely Dense	–3

Very Flat planetoids have very few distinguishing landmarks or geographical features at all. A few rolling hills or a single tectonic crease might mark the planetoid's surface – otherwise it is a single sheet of landmass (or

metal mass, or ice and so on). This tends to imply a very old planetoid, or one that was scoured of its distinguishing features by some massive external cataclysm. For those planetoids with this geology *and* life forms, the lack of barriers tends to make life homogeneous across the surface, but not always as a rule.

Flat planetoids have rare spots of their surfaces that have seen noteworthy geological change. A small mountain range, oceanic trench or network of deep rivers may even be visible from orbit. Hills and rolling plains are commonly found in temperate areas, and some waterways have cut minor canyons out of the ground. There could be a few volcano-sites, but all have either fully burned out or never were fully active to begin with.

Standard planetoids are what one thinks about when a common landscape is mentioned. Mountains, crevasses, rivers, swamps and staggering ocean trench activity are common. There are likely to be large plains of flatland, which is where most life forms will try to congregate, separating the geological features. There could be some volcanic activity, but likely only at the centre of mountainous regions or oceanic islands. Earth's geology would be classified as *Standard*.

Rugged planetoids have very few flat areas at all, giving room to sprawling mountain ranges that form twisting intersections. It is not easy for life forms to move around between these severe natural dividers, making species specialisation and diversity a must. Should oceans be present, their floors are deep and jagged with trenches and volcanic vents that could swallow up some of the highest mountains. Although not very conducive to exploration and investigation, these planetoids have a great deal hidden away in their mountains and valleys.

Very Rugged planetoids are rife with geographical puzzles of mountains, plateaus and ravines that appear everywhere and tend toward extreme heights and depths. They are almost always accompanied by strong earthquakes, landslides and volcanic activity – the sign of either a young planetoid in its early stages of adjustment, or of a planetoid that has suffered a massive gravitational shift. It is very difficult to move around a *very rugged* geology, and harder still to find safe places to land an exploration craft or shuttle.

Hazardous planetoids are literally so unstable geologically that spending longer than a few hours upon them is actually dangerous! Shifting mountains, unsettled hills, tidal waves and unexpectedly opening ravines are commonplace, and investigating these planetoids by anything other than flyby scans and orbital data recordings is a risk that most Rim exploration teams are not willing to take.

Volcanism

Planetoids are typically tumultuous bodies rife with geological changes caused by the waves and washes of stellar forces directed against them as they slowly move through the Greater Void. Many of them are quite young in the grand planetary scheme, and cannot tie down their internal energies of change and growth long enough to become fully stable before being assaulted by a passing star or debris field. This makes for occasionally powerful volcanic cores. A planetoid's volcanism rating can help determine whether a Rim exploration should try and research the planet, and if the planetoid is likely to have complex life forms at all.

Using the planetoid's geology and gravity as modifiers (see Planetoid Volcanism Modifiers table), roll on the Planetoid Volcanism table to determine the level of overall volcanism a planetoid has.

Planetoid Volcanism

D20 result	Volcanism Level
5 or less	*Dead.* The planetoid has no active volcanic activity at all, and is either very old or has a solid core instead of a molten one.
6-10	*Stable.* The planetoid is geologically stable and has very few volcanic 'hot spots;' the few places were they do occur are easily charted and avoided.
11-16	*Active.* The planetoid is volcanically active and has a number of eruptions each year, with the chance of unexpected activity anywhere on the planetoid.
17-20	*Very Active.* The planetoid has an active volcanic cycle that can force eruptions to be frequent and powerful all over the surface, with some areas more frequent than others.
21+[1]	*Extreme.* The planetoid has an almost non-stop series of eruptions across its surface, and many of them seem random and unexpected. There very little chance for settled civilisations, as nowhere is truly safe to make permanent structures.

[1] This result can only be achieved through additional modifiers, and cannot be the result of any unmodified d20 roll.

Planetoid Volcanism Modifiers

Gravity	Modifier
Microgravity	–3
Very Low	–1
Low	+0
High	+2
Very High	+3
Extremely High	+5
Geology	**Modifier**
Very Flat	–4
Flat	–2
Rugged	+2
Very Rugged	+4
Hazardous	+6

Hydrosphere & Climate

Although the term 'hydrosphere' can be used for a water-based piece of a planet's make-up, a planetoid's hydrosphere does not actually *have* to be made up of water of any sort. It is simply the measure of liquid mass (not frozen!) the planetoid has across its surface, if any. Measuring a planetoid's hydrosphere can help determine if it is likely to have life forms on it.

The placement of the seas and oceans of a planetoid are what define the land masses, with a concentration of massive continents on those with a small hydrosphere, and few small ones on mostly liquid-based worlds. This too can help determine where to seek good research materials and possible life forms.

Planetoid Hydrosphere

D20 Result	Hydrosphere Coverage	Continents
4 or less	None	1 (wholly encompassing Supercontinent)
5-9	Very Dry (1D20%)	1D2 large continents
10-14	Dry (21+1D10%)	1D3+1 large continents
15-17	Damp (30+ 1D20%)	1D4+1 large continents
18-19	Moist (50+ 1D20%)	1D2 large continents and 1D4 +1 small continents
20	Wet (70+ 1D20%)	1D3 large continents and many large islands
21+[1]	Very Wet (90+ 1D10%)	Large islands and archipelagos

[1] This result can only be achieved through additional modifiers, and cannot be the result of any unmodified d20 roll.

Using the planetoid's volcanism and atmospheric density as modifiers (see Planetoid Hydrosphere Modifiers table), roll on the Planetoid Hydrosphere table to generate the level of liquid mass on the planetoid.

Planetoid Hydrosphere Modifiers

Atmosphere	Modifier
Vacuum	–9
Very Thin	–5
Thin	–3
Standard	–1
Dense	+1
Very Dense	+3
Extremely Dense	+5

Alien Hydrosphere

Many types of planetoids do not have water as the basis for their liquid hydrosphere; instead they have an assortment of other substances in liquid form. The following list gives examples as to what sorts of hydrospheric matter could be found on the various planetoid archetypes.

Alternate Hydrospheres

Planetoid Archetype	Example Alternate Hydrosphere
Icy Barren	Methane, Nitrogen
Rocky Barren	Magma, Sulphur
Mineral Rich	Crude Petroleum, Tar
Composite Rock/Soil	Hydrogenated Base Chemicals
Blasted Glass	Hydrochloric Acid, Silicon
Porous Stone	Magma, Sulphuric Acid
Metallic	Molten Lead, Carbon Monoxide
Environmentally Evolved	Hydrogen Peroxide, Oxygen

Climate

Unlike planets, which have a stable orbit and stars to offer them some form of cyclical change to their environmental climate – planetoids rarely have that luxury. They are subject to whatever star they happen to be nearest to at a given time, the amount of geo-thermal heat they are generating for themselves, and whatever atmospheric boon they could be getting from their internal weather patterns. Their patterns are almost always subject to change, perhaps not radically, but at least enough to make things diverse and possibly difficult for explorers who are not expecting them.

Rolling on the Planetoid Climate table will determine what type of climate a planetoid supports, and the average temperature of its land masses. A planetoid's climate is directly influenced by its atmospheric density (thicker atmospheres have an easier time staying warm), gravity (greater gravity draws in more stellar energies) and volcanism (higher volcanism means self-generated heat). These modifiers are found on the Planetoid Climate Modifiers table, followed by the descriptions of the climate groupings.

Planetoid Climate

D20 Result	Climate Grouping	Average[1] Temperature (Fahrenheit)
3 or less	Sub-Frozen	–100 to –30
4-8	Frozen	–31 to 35
9-13	Cold	36 to 60
14-17	Temperate	61 to 80
18-19	Warm	81 to 90
20	Hot	91 to 100
21-24[2]	Very Hot	101 to 150
25+[2]	Blistering	151 and higher

[1] This average can be up to 20% higher or lower than the listed temperature.
[2] These results can only be achieved through additional modifiers, and cannot be the result of any unmodified d20 roll.

Planetoid Climate Modifiers

Atmospheric Density	Modifier
Vacuum	–3
Very Thin	–1
Dense	+1
Very Dense	+2
Extremely Dense	+3
Planetoid Gravity	**Modifier**
Microgravity	–4
Very Low	–2
Low	–1
High	+1
Very High	+2
Extremely High	+4
Volcanism	**Modifier**
Dead	–3
Stable	–1
Active	+1
Very Active	+2
Extreme	+4

Sub-Frozen climates are that of the coldest planetoids in existence. They can normally kill non-resistant life forms from exposure in just a few hours, and often cause machinery that was not built for such weather to seize up and break. Very little life can be found thriving in this climate, and that which does is likely to be simple and stalwart.

Frozen climates are like a permanent state of winter for most planets, with much of the terrain covered in ice and snow (or the local equivalent). With sufficiently warm clothing and cold climate training explorers can safely move about unhindered, but being left exposed to the whipping winds and bitter cold for too long could cause significant cellular damage.

Cold climates are actually quite pleasant for many sentient species that enjoy a cooler temperature. It would take *weeks* of exposure to do any real harm to a normal being, and there is not much need for additional protective clothing or equipment. This is considered one of the more standard climates.

Temperate climates are considered statistically average for galactic planets, but are a bit rarer out beyond the Rim. A temperate climate stays cool and comfortable for long periods of time, and does not ever grow warm enough to be a worry for exhaustion. This is the galactic standard by which most Rim explorers compare outside climates.

Warm climates are likely due to a massive influx of stellar energy or volcanic heat from below, as the overall climate of the planetoid is on the higher end of average. Some races might find this to be too hot, but most galactic peoples view warm climates as soothing and welcome when breaking from the cold void of space.

Hot climates are the turning point for explorers. This is the last climate type that they can freely work within without special equipment. Staying cool and hydrated is a must, and short work shifts help keep workers from suffering exhaustion or dizzy spells.

Very Hot climates may threaten explorers who work too long in the open, outside of cooling shelters and apparatus. Without some form of cooling aid or protective layer heat stroke or dehydration is a very real threat. Only those who are adapted for activity in a very hot climate can do much for very long within one. This can be a very real obstacle for some Rim exploration crews.

Blistering climates are the hottest of planetoid classifications, and are likely so either because of proximity to a sun or truly powerful volcanic activity. Short periods of exposure can be tolerated, but quickly sap the moisture and will from nearly anything that is not directly adapted to deal with such intense heat. Rim

explorers tend to stay within the confines of exploration vehicles and environmental suits with cooling units on these planetoids – and for good reason.

Note: For rules on how adverse climates affect characters, see page 281 of the *Babylon 5 roleplaying Game Second Edition* core rulebook

Moons

Some planetoids have strong enough gravitational forces generated by their mass that they attract moons into an orbit around them, somehow holding them generally stable as they move across the Void. This tends to be rare, and only occurs regularly in planetoids with very powerful attracting forces. When Rim explorers find a planetoid with one or more moons, these moons are rarely much more than bare rock or ice spinning around.

To discover whether a planetoid has any moons, roll on the Planetoid Moons table and apply the modifiers from the Planetoid Moon Modifiers table.

Planetoid Moons

D10 Result	Number of Moons
1-6	No Moons
7-8	1 Moon
9	1D2 Moons
10	1D3 Moons

Planetoid Moon Modifiers

Gravity	Modifier
Microgravity	–7
Very Low	–6
Low	–5
High	–3
Very High	–2
Extremely High	+0
Size	**Modifier**
Tiny	–3
Small	–1
Medium	+0
Large	+3
Huge	+5

Planetoid Specifics

When generating a planetoid, we encourage the Games Master to fill in some of the blanks himself to best suit his own campaign. Because of this, some of the above generating tables might seem a little black and white or generic. We feel that by setting the stage we give the readers and Games Masters room to make adjustments and tweaks to their individual planetoids as they see fit. Just throwing the dice and seeing what comes up is fun too, and has its place, but we know that many of our players and readers want to come up with the specifics on their own. Not only do we feel this is probably best for the readers' campaigns, but it also encourages a little imagination and ingenuity on their part!

Once the number of moons has been determined, if any, the Games Master should roll on the following table to create the moon. However, he will only roll a die equal to the one listed instead in parentheses of the normal one for that table.

Rim Planetoid Type (1D10+1)
Rim Planetoid Size (2D3)
Planetoid Gravity (1D8)
Planetoid Atmospheric Density (1D8)
Planetoid Atmospheric Composition (1D20)
Planetoid Geology (1D10)
Planetoid Volcanism (1D6)
Planetoid Hydrosphere (1D6)
Planetoid Climate (2D6)

The chance for life on any planetoid's moons are rolled randomly (see page 43).

Unique Experience (00)

There are stories that are told of the great and vast darkness beyond the Rim that defy science and common thinking, some of which are little more than spacer fairy tales to keep people from travelling beyond known space. There are some however, that are born of fact and are likely to be quite true. Someone sees something, fails to record true data about it and then comes back to tell others – and are called crazy for their wild tale.

If everything was normal and expected in the Greater Void, explorations would be commonplace and trivial.

The danger and risks that a Rim exploration mission undertakes in order to chart out the uncharitable and see the previously unseen is considerable, and the rare and wondrous tales of unique phenomena are what keep pilots ready to try and crewmen willing to sign up.

The possibilities are truly endless. The manner of campaign a Games Master chooses to run is the only limit to what might turn up in the blackness beyond the Rim. It is up to the Games Master to decide what this event represents, and he should consider his options– and what they could do to his campaign in the long run.

Here are a few ideas that we have come up with that might represent a 'Unique Experience.'

- The ship locates some kind of hyperspace or Void flotilla; an island in the sea of chaos that could be paradise or hell – depending on what the explorers choose to do with it. What will the caretakers, if any, do when they are found? What might such a place mean to the mission, if anything?
- The ship finds empty space, only to be scanned by a rapidly moving energy-based vessel as large as a moon, and made up of technologies that baffle any scanners and sensors. All attempts to hail the vessel fail, and it seems to be *watching* the Rim explorers as much as they are watching it.
- The mission uncovers a living creature or series of creatures that migrate through the Void using unknown biology to survive the vacuum and traverse the gravitational tides. The life forms could be hostile or simply curious, or perhaps *hungry*.
- The ship uncovers a slowly moving rift or gate to an unknown destination, written on in many different languages that they cannot seem to fathom. Could it be a powerful enough jump gate to get them home and back? Or could it be another enigmatic entrance to *Thirdspace*, just waiting to be opened?
- The mission finds a planet that is somehow holding a very stable orbit around a stationary jumpgate-like device, allowing it to be a perfectly temperate and environmentally sound place for travellers to rest or even colonise. Is it the last refuge of the Techno-Mages? Or the home Lorien spoke of to the Vorlons and Shadows? Or some alien mousetrap designed to lure Rim explorers to their demise?

The idea behind all of these Unique Experiences is that they will be entirely unbelievable to nearly all scientific minds back in the galaxy, and any evidence the mission brings back will likely be scoffed at. It is like getting to know the answer to a question that no one ever asked – and it is for the explorers to decide what it means for them...if they survive the encounter, of course.

Is There An End?

This is the most profound question that every explorer has ever asked himself and his colleagues in the history of exploration. What we have shown here could be everything there is to find, or it could just be the beginning. There is no way to actually know; there is no defining end to the conquest for the edge of the map.

The end to the Universe can only be found when its inhabitants stop looking for it.

Scenario Introduction – 'The Path Least Travelled'

Perhaps the Player Characters have been added to a Rim Exploration crew and are being briefed on the HEL-tracked Rim-ping that the vessel has locked onto. Due to a variety of reasons, the mission captain believes that the ping is a trap and cannot be followed – in fact, he has thought that several times now, and would much rather blindly fly out into the Greater Void. This puts the Player Characters in an interesting position indeed.

The Set-Up

This scenario idea can be a true test of the Player Characters' loyalty to their employer/government, and to the mission captain of the vessel they have signed on with. The following scene is segmented into several small blurbs, each to be read when navigation picks up a new HEL-track signal.

First Briefing

'Nonsense!' the captain squawks, 'that signal is too large to be a common ping, and I do not like the way it changes density on the HEL-track. We will alter course to avoid its traverse path, and we will continue scanning. Carry on.'

Second Briefing

'Ah, I see,' the captain says, poring over the readout, 'but look here. This radiation scale is far higher than the shielding on the shuttles can handle. We have to abandon that ping and move on to find the next… we have no choice.'

Third Briefing

'No! No! No!' the captain barks at the screen, eyes wide and bloodshot, 'that ping is too close to the last one! We can't risk jumping out in a comet, can we? No! Of course not!' He storms out of the room without saying another word, leaving everyone else slack-jawed and more than a little worried for their captain's stress levels.

The above briefings should be a day or so apart from one another, giving time for the crew to begin circulating rumours that the mission captain has lost his mind and that he will get everyone killed if he does not choose a target destination soon. Of course the crew itself will not do anything without the help of the Player Characters, and it will be placed in their hands to hold secret meetings and the like to further plan either the medical incarceration or imprisonment of the captain – or perhaps even a mutiny against him.

The Player Characters will need to overcome a few major obstacles before they will be able to deal with the insane captain. From devoted security staff who will not back any play that breaks the rules, the captain's constant meddling on the bridge, or even a navigational officer who is so worried the ship is lost that he is making rather drastic mistakes; these are just a few things that could make setting the ship's course right more difficult than just flipping some switches.

The Plot Thickens

The added benefit of a scenario such as this one is the very real fact that the Rim Exploration could get horribly lost the longer the Player Characters take to set things right. Even if they do manage to get things back to normal on the vessel, they could be so off course and in the wrong direction that they might be several years getting back to the galaxy. A lot can happen in that time frame, both beyond the Rim and in the galaxy. What if they finally return to find the Earth Alliance at war with itself? Or perhaps they come home to find their homeworld ravaged by mass drivers nearly a year ago! There is a great deal of interesting things that can take place without them, and now they have to try to adjust to a galaxy that has really moved on.

Also, what if the captain was not actually insane at all, but was some form of HEL-track reading prodigy and that all of the previous Rim-pings were actually as dangerous as he claimed?

Then of course, there are the social and political ramifications of overthrowing a ship captain. Governments might be rather upset that a crew essentially mutinied against their chosen representative, while a corporate mission might want to promote them for the deed. It is a risky choice and a tight line they will need to walk, but it could save their lives – and their profits!

DISCOVERING NEW LIFE

Amidst the slipped moons and roaming planetoids beyond the Rim there seems little chance for stable or constant sources of life forms, but reality is quite to the contrary. Many of the planetoids that slowly move through the cosmos once held stable orbits around suns, forming life over millions of years only to be ripped away into the chaos of the Rim. Even so, it takes another *million* years to fully pass into the Greater Void – which is a great deal of time for sentient species to adapt and other forms of life to evolve or develop alongside them.

It is one of the first and foremost rules of any Rim exploration: seek new life and study it. The galactic races believe that there is a lot to be learned from the evolution of species outside of their galaxy, if only to understand what *might* be out there. Seeing what sorts of life can survive in the difficult ups and downs of an orbit-less planetoid can help teach scientists to better prepare their peoples for otherwise unavoidable stellar events. Who knows, perhaps if the Dilgar had believed more in learning from outsiders than conquering them they could have found a way to weather the nova event that all but snuffed out their entire race.

Successful Rim explorations bring back samples of previously undiscovered bacterium, plants and the occasional minor animal. These discoveries can bring about leaps in scientific studies, fetching quite a hefty profit in the meantime. The discovery of a new race – even the smallest of organisms – can be priceless to the right field of buyer.

Finding New Life

Life forms, simple or truly complex, are not exactly common in the Greater Void. Some Rim explorers search destination after destination for years and come up empty when others might discover a plentiful forest of flora and fauna on their first rim ping. This is not simply due to blind luck, and scientific theories point to certain planetoids being more likely than others to be life-supporting than others; even so, the theories are simply that – theories.

When a planetoid or moon is generated there is a percentage chance listed under its archetype that should be rolled straightaway to see if it has any natural life on it. For your convenience, those numbers are listed here as well:

Planetoid Archetype	Chance For Life
Icy Barren	2%
Rocky Barren	10%
Mineral Rich	10%
Composite Rock/Soil	18%
Blasted Glass	1%
Porous Stone	8%
Metallic	1%
Environmentally Evolved	50%

There are a number of modifiers due to the complete make-up of the planetoid or moon that apply to that percentage. These modifiers are listed in the Planetoid Chance for Life Modifiers table.

After all modifiers, if that percentage roll is failed, the planetoid or moon does not have any form of life on it at all. If the roll is passed the Games Master must then move on to the Complexity of Life section to figure out exactly what manner of life exists on the planetoid.

It should be noted here that a roll of 01 will *always* result in some form of life no matter what the percentage chance; perhaps some vacuum-resistant ice algae, or a fungus that could survive the crushing weight of an ocean and so on. Conversely, a roll of 00 will create a barren and dead planetoid – which might raise many questions if it seems the perfect place for life to thrive.

Generating the New Life Form(s)

There are *many* different types of life forms in the galaxy alone, let alone what might evolve to be discovered outside the Rim. In a universe that saw fit to create beings made of living energy and others that could become the actual energy of thought itself – anything is truly possible. There are no limits to what could crawl out from under a planetoid's crust or what an explorer might scrape into a test tube to bring back to his lab.

Planetoid Chance for Life Modifiers

% Modifier	Gravity	Atmospheric Density	Atmospheric Composition	Geology	Volcanism	Hydrosphere	Climate
–20%	High or greater	Vacuum/ Extremely Dense	—	—	—	None	Sub-Frozen
–10%	Microgravity	Dense/Very Dense	Inert	Hazardous	—	—	Blistering
–5%	—	Very Thin	—	Very Rugged	Extreme	Very Dry	—
–2%	—	—	—	—	Very Active	—	—
+2%	Very Low	—	—	—	Dead	—	—
+5%	Low	Standard	Breathable	Flat	—	Moist	Warm
+10%	Standard	—	—	Very Flat	—	Wet	Temperate
+20%	—	—	—	—	—	Very Wet	—

Once life of some form has been discovered on a planetoid, the Games Master must roll on the Complexity of Life table to create the highest form of life that can be found there. Like the Chance for Life table above, there are many modifiers that apply to this roll; which are listed in the Complexity of Life Modifiers table.

Note: This process is skipped entirely by any planetoid for which automatic life is rolled on the Rim Destinations table (see page 19); the Games Master can simply move to that section.

Complexity of Life

D20 Result	Highest Life Form Level	Examples
1-10	Basic Life	Viruses, Bacterium, Algae and so on.
11-15	Simple Life	Ferns, Snails, Worms and so on.
16-19	Complex Life	Insects, Vertebrates and so on.
20	Sentient Life	Humanoids, Rim Colonists and so on.

Once the Games Master has rolled the Complexity of Life for the planetoid, he may then move on to actually figuring what manner of life forms have been discovered exactly.

THE CHAIN OF LIFE FORMS

When dealing with a new ecosphere and biosphere, Rim exploration scientists take into consideration that it is very rare to ever find a planetoid without a 'chain of life forms.' Once nicknamed the

Complexity of Life Modifiers

Size	Modifier
Tiny	–3
Small	–1
Large	+1
Huge	+2
Gravity	**Modifier**
Microgravity	–5
Very High	–3
Extreme	–5
Atmospheric Density	**Modifier**
Vacuum	–10
Very Thin	–5
Thin	–3
Dense	–2
Very Dense	–4
Extremely Dense	–6
Volcanism	**Modifier**
Dead	+2
Extreme	–3
Hydrosphere	**Modifier**
None	–3
Dry	–2
Moist	+1
Wet	+2
Very Wet	–1
Climate	**Modifier**
Sub-Frozen	–5
Temperate	+2
Blistering	–3

'food chain', the chain of life forms is actually a pattern of evolution that tends to stay constant on all levels. If more complex life can be found at a given location, the building block life forms that came before it are likely to still be around as well. While there are exceptions to every rule, Rim explorers often pass them off as law more than theory. This means that a planetoid that has been determined to have Complex Life on it will have Simple and Basic Life as well. This generally holds true for any *indigenous* life forms – not extraterrestrial colonists.

In game terms, if the Games Master has determined the Complexity of Life for a planetoid or moon, he can assume that the lesser forms of life are also present. This may not be immediately recognisable by the explorers and might be very well hidden, but most Rim researchers find it to be true. The largest exception to this is if Sentient Life is rolled, as there is a chance that the life forms in question might be extra-planetary and therefore not subject to this rule at all. For more on extra-planetary sentients, see page 56 of this chapter.

Basic Life forms

On many planetoids beyond the Rim, the only life that can be found at all are the tiniest samples of single or multi-cellular organisms. Viruses, bacteria, slime moulds and algae are the most common of these creatures, but that is just fine to most explorers – simple life means easy study. Like with anything else in life, starting small can get you everywhere.

These organisms can be widely diverse, with thousands of strains of bacteria living across the surface of a young planetoid or a single virus that has eliminated *everything* else on the surface of a very old one. Growth farms of slime moulds can reach for hundreds of miles without as much as a single cellular difference. Entire seas can be thick with algal bloom, and cities of civilisations long since past could be turned to dust by billions of amoeba. It is a difficult thing to say what makes an organism do what it does when dealing with something so small and biologically 'simple'.

Basic is by no way means 'safe'. Some of the deadliest plaques and infections known to the galaxy and beyond hail from a single-celled invader introduced to a body, and the life forms found outside the Rim are no different. All precautions must be taken and samples stored in prepared vessels that will not introduce them blindly to home systems or ship populations. More than one exploration vessel has been lost to a single-celled stowaway that managed to slip by quarantine to infect the crew. When everyone is breathing recycled air and sharing the same common spaces for weeks or months – the effect of an infection can be staggering.

The Games Master must decide what kinds of Basic Life is available to be discovered on a planetoid, and in what amounts. There are literally *millions* of different examples of what basic life forms could be, and most of them could easily co-exist on the same planetoid. The following entries are a handful of sample Basic Life categories and some descriptions of what exactly they mean to a Rim exploration.

Algae

This basic plant-like life form actually encompasses several different groups of usually relatively simple living organisms that capture light energy from passing stars through photosynthesis, converting inorganic substances into life-sustaining nutrients using the captured energy. Many forms of algae are traditionally regarded as simple plants, and indeed some are closely related to the higher plants. Others appear to represent different organism classifications, alongside other organisms that are traditionally considered more akin to animal-kind, like protozoa. Thus algae do not represent a single evolutionary direction or line, but a level of organisation that may have developed several times in the early history of planetoids across the galaxy.

There are many different varieties of algae, but the most recognisable is that of a simple plant-like colony of loosely-walled organisms that live on or near hydrated recesses. It can be found anywhere that it can be well fed and get sufficient water (or similar liquid nourishment), and is very useful in sciences that require fast-growing examples to be studied. Some algae breeds are known to actually be capable of breaking down any manner of object they grow upon, but those are often too dangerous to keep around outside of a storage container.

There is a lot to be learned in the medical and botanical fields from algae samples, especially if harvested from a planet on which light and water are scarce. Sufficient testing and breeding could even help populations with food or agricultural difficulties develop a similar hybrid that could produce food at remarkable rates no matter the climate or ambient surroundings.

Bacteria

Bacteria are very simple organisms that can be found nearly anywhere. There are strains that can live in the most crushing of depths or the blasted plains of a glass planetoid. Some forms of bacteria seem to survive devoid of atmosphere altogether. They are resilient and powerful in their own way, and they are omnipresent in the galaxy and beyond. From invisible pathogens that can bring death and disease to all-important necrotic decaying agents that make sure things get broken down when they die, bacteria is among the most important facets of life as a whole.

Bacteria are so widespread that it is possible to make only the most general statements about their life history and ecology. They may be found on the tops of mountains, the bottom of the deepest oceans, in the guts of animals and even in the frozen rocks and ice of the coldest of planetoids. One feature that has enabled bacteria to spread so far and last so long is their ability to go dormant for an extended period – allowing them to essentially avoid harsh times for their planetoid, or not be snuffed out by unexpected extremes of any sort. A bacterium generally survives; that is what it exists solely to do.

Finding a new bacterium is a gamble for Rim explorers. Without sufficient testing on galactic life forms, knowledge of what it might do if it was cross-strained with a different bacterium or even just what diseases it might bring with it, there is no way to know the damage a single-celled organism could inflict. It requires long and enduring tests, normally in an Isolab on board the exploration ship before ever getting anywhere near galactic space. For safety's sake alone the samples must be kept so that they can be spaced or incinerated if it they pose a danger to the greater galaxy.

Useful bacteria can be helpful in a vast assortment of industries and scientific fields. There have been some discovered that devour pollutants and others that actually stimulate healing and cellular growth. Depending on what the bacteria is discovered to do, a buyer or investor can be found to profit on the tiny new organism. Even deadly pathogens can be at least brought back to be studied *very carefully* by the medical and military offices of the galactic governments. Whether it is to synthesise more to use as a weapon or to use as that weapon's cure depends on the morality of the buyer.

Microbial Sub-anima

The term 'sub-anima' is used by xenobiologists to define animal-like life that is somewhere between common protozoa and larger, yet still simple, life forms like jellyfish. These organisms are almost always too hard to see with the naked eye, with a very few growing to the size of a printed period. The most basic of instincts fill the lives of sub-anima, with only the acquisition of food energy and the ability to reproduce taking up every moment of their short existences.

Many sub-anima reproduce asexually and can simply create new versions of their species through splitting or budding, meaning that even a single specimen accidentally brought on board and put in a food-rich environment could become millions of the tiny beasts in a few scant days.

Sub-anima are rarely harmful in any way and can even be very helpful in eliminating harmful pathogens and bacteria. Huge swells of certain sub-anima populations could result in the destruction of too much helpful bacteria or mould, thereby causing further problems in the long scope of things. This could be problematic over months or years, but there is no existing sub-anima that is inherently harmful to any known galactic race but anything is theoretically possible.

Rim explorers tend to gather sub-anima for studying purposes only. They are too 'evolved' to serve as any sort of base model of life for a planetoid, and generally have already formed their niche in the ecosystem. If the purpose that they serve is helpful, they could possibly be bred for that use – but not for much else, making them very specific 'crop species.'

Slime Mold

A strange and magnificent class of organisms, slime moulds are basically enormous single cells with thousands of core parts. They are formed when individual slime mould cells swarm together and fuse. The result is one large bag of cytoplasm with the efforts and reactions of a single organism. These 'giant cells' have been extremely useful in studies of cellular movement and interactivity. In addition, the large size of the slime mould 'cell' makes it easier to manipulate and study than most cells.

Some slime moulds spend most of their lives as separate single-celled amoeboid hunters, but upon the release of a chemical signal, all of the individual cells aggregate into a great swarm to fall under one biological imperative. Cellular slime moulds are thus of great interest to cell and developmental biologists, because they provide a comparatively simple and easily manipulated system for studying how cells interact to generate a multi-cellular organism. The Gaim in particular seem to have a fascination with this facet of slime mould research. Something about the relation between slime mould's pheromone-based communication and their own hive mentality may explain this fascination, but there has not been any official comment on the Intelligence's behalf concerning the issue.

Rim explorers tend to gather samples of any slime mould they encounter in relatively large quantities if possible, as the mould seems reproduce by spores and may not be able to be bred successfully away from its natural environment. Depending on the size, type and complexity of the slime mould in question, several industries could be interested in a rapidly reproducing organism that feeds on harmful bacteria or perhaps dries into a very tasty condiment. There is no end to what researchers will try to find a use for, and slime moulds are no exception to that rule.

Viruses

The most dangerous word on the lips of a Rim explorer, viruses are actually defined as microscopic particles that can infect the cells of another biological organism. At the most basic level, viruses consist of genetic material contained within a protective protein shell; the existence of *both* genetic material and protein distinguishes them from other virus-like particles that some scientists deal with. They can infect a wide variety of organisms such as animals and plants, or even such minor organisms as bacteria or sub-anima.

It has been argued extensively for centuries by a dozen galactic governments whether viruses are actually living organisms. Most galactic virologists consider them non-living, as they do not meet all the scientific criteria of the generally accepted definition of 'life.' Viruses lack the means for reproduction outside a host cell, making them singularly and biologically focussed on trying to infect something in order to proliferate. This means that samples of other life forms might be carrying viruses in them when taken, possibly leading to unexpected infections and widespread contagion.

Viruses are one of the leading reasons Rim explorers observe very high safety measures and strict quarantine protocols at all times. Viruses are frequently sampled and studied in hopes of finding cures to the galaxy's own viral ailments, but this requires coming into close proximity with infected parties or samples of their viruses. Only through putting the researchers' heads in the proverbial lion's mouth can they possibly hope to learn from the tiny particles.

What Classification is it?

Every basic life form could be drastically different from another of its kind, that is true, but there are still several general classifications that can apply to each and every life form. Rim explorers use these general classifications for their discoveries in order to make sure that all relevant personnel are well aware what they are dealing with and can prepare the proper quarantines and storage facilities – if they are even going to risk bringing a sample on board at all.

While these classifications make for an easy way to categorise the samples for the characters themselves, they also provide a handy way for Games Masters to explain exactly what sort of organism the explorers are dealing with… or at least keep track of what it will do if it gets spilled or *escapes*. The following table can be used to randomly decide what classification a life form is, or the Games Master can simply choose whatever best serves his campaign at the time.

The Importance of Virology in the Galaxy

Over the many centuries of contact between the multitudes of races that have interacted within the galaxy, there have been several instances where a virus of some kind has taken a grave toll on a population. Infection rates are always heightened due to the confines of space travel, and the speed of hyperspace travel allows viral infections to spread that much faster. Some infections have been *deliberate*, and the death tolls that result make virology that much more powerful a field of study.

Some examples of massive virus infections that might have been helped or cured earlier with better virus research are:

- **Whur'ii** – A powerful virus ripped through elderly members of the Descari in the late 2100s, nearly wiping out a generation in a few bloody weeks.
- **Stafford's Plague** – The Dilgar unleashed a viral biological weapon on Latig 4 between 2234 and 2236, killing thousands in the initial days of infection alone.
- **Drafa Plague** – The possibly Shadow-designed (theoretically) virus swept through and killed 99.9% of the Markab population galaxy-wide in 2259 due to a cultural ignorance of how viruses actually worked.
- **Drakh Nano-Virus** – Released onto Earth in 2266, the Drakh virus was a five year countdown to Earth's utter death, but was cured long before its final adaptation by the valiant efforts of the EAS *Excalibur* and its crew.
- **Rebirth of Nar'chuk** – Something dragged up from the planet's crust during the mass driver bombing of the Narn Homeworld during the Narn/Centauri War, the debilitating Nar'chuk virus hid in the genes of the Narn for a full generation to rise again in 2280, when it is cured by ISA xenovirologists.

Basic Life Classifications

2D6 Result	Classification
2	Lethal
3-5	Dangerous
6-8	Commonplace
9-10	Interesting
11	Useful
12	Breakthrough

Lethal life forms are examples of basic life, when removed from their normal ecosystems, will surely cause the deaths of other organisms. Deadly bacteria or viruses that can infect hosts with contagions and slime moulds that dissolve flesh and spore are all examples of lethal life forms. Handling and transporting samples of these organisms requires the highest level of protection and safety protocols – sometimes even the use of molecularly fused iso-cubes.

Any lethal-class basic life form that comes into contact with another life form will automatically infect it with any number of horrible effects. Fortitude saves are only good to stave off the effects of the infections/contagions, and unless a suitable cure can be found in time, death is certain.

Dangerous life forms are those that must be handled and stored carefully, as they can cause significant bodily and ecological damage if allowed to. Rapidly growing oxyphilic (consumers of oxygen), algae and organically-fuelled bacteria are just some of these dangerous finds. Special care and safety measures are required to ensure that no harm comes to or from dangerous-level samples, but should contamination occur the situation can often be handled well enough to avoid irreparable damage.

Any dangerous-class basic life form that is left to its own natural devices will cause damage to anything susceptible to its particular style of danger. A metal-eating bacterium should never be allowed to touch the ship's hull, and for a flesh-eating virus – environmental suits are a must. Anything affected by the organism will suffer one hit point of damage (no reductions) to the object/character each minute. Although exposure could theoretically cause death, death can be averted – which is the main difference between the dangerous and lethal classes of Basic life.

Commonplace life forms are exactly as the name implies – common. While these life forms could be of a previously undiscovered species or sample, thereby worthwhile if only for cataloguing, they do not have any special properties that researchers will find ultimately useful or worth studying for long. They are a good find, but not terribly distinct or otherwise noteworthy.

Interesting life forms are what most Rim explorers hope to come across in their travels, as everything else comes with a great deal of stress and circumstance. These examples of how evolution changes from place to place are what researchers jokingly call 'lab icebreakers,' as they always bring about the strangest of conversations when being studied. Examples of interesting-class life forms may include a virus that strangely only reproduces in dead cells in order to do absolutely nothing to the host body, bacteria that glows when it gets to a certain temperature or perhaps a sub-anima that behaves very strangely when spoken to.

These life forms are not dangerous, nor are they ground-breaking in any way. They tend to have odd quirks that are discovered in the first hours of study and seemingly have no effect on them or their surroundings. While someone could theoretically find a use for their quirky nature, most of the organisms in this class are truly just entertaining on a scientific level.

Useful life forms are examples of an organism that performs some function that is readily apparent and useful to the galaxy as a whole. Oxygen-filtering algae or infection-hunting bacteria are good examples, and once they are put through a series of tests to make sure they are not harmful, these life forms can be put to good use. They are not only good for the cataloguing of new species, but also have several avenues of investment that could fund further missions.

It takes a Knowledge (Xenobiology) skill check (DC 20) to decipher exactly what sort of useful ability the basic life form offers, with further checks resulting in the best ways to maximise it. When a Games Master creates this class of life form he must choose what sort of use it has, which should not be *too* wondrous.

Breakthrough life forms are the key to some strange and previously unknown technique or science that, once unlocked, will put the exploration mission's name down in scientific history. Slime mould that simulates telepathy, a virus that only infects cancerous tissue or bacteria that generates engine-grade energies; the discovery of these organisms almost guarantees a fortune in profits and further funding of future trips for any Rim explorer. A breakthrough-class life form might change the galaxy, and means a fortune for the team that discovers it.

It takes a Knowledge (Xenobiology) skill check (DC 30) to decipher exactly what sort of scientific breakthrough the basic life form has to offer, with any further checks resulting in the best ways to stimulate its unique ability. When a Games Master creates this class of life form he can truly imagine whatever he wants– the Rim has far too much to offer to be limited by conventional thinking.

Simple Life Forms

Moving up the evolutionary ladder, the next type of biological findings a Rim exploration mission can hope to find on a planetoid or suitable moon are called 'simple' because of their overall cellular structures and biological make-up. Worms, basic fauna, molluscs, jellyfish and the like are some of the more common varieties of simple life to be found. They represent the ecological growth of the life forms of that planetoid, and are often found in large numbers around pockets of suitable environments.

Far easier to find than a virus or a single strain of bacteria, simple life forms are sometimes more difficult to actually take a sample of. The term 'simple' refers not to their size or cunning, but instead describes their cellular organisation and primal organelles. These are the biological steps between higher animal and plant life forms, but are no less important to the ecosystems they come from.

Simple life forms tend to be almost unintelligent in their dealings with new experiences – including being taken as biological samples by a Rim explorer. Although they might run solely on instincts and biological-response to stimuli, they are still capable of defending themselves in unexpected ways. A strange worm capable of burrowing through volcanic glass might lacerate an explorer's environmental suit; a jellyfish that has evolved tentacles that dissolve cellular walls might be able to do the same to flesh, and a fern with bladelike fronds might have toxic sap for laying low creatures that are soon to be fertiliser. Proper care must be taken even with simple life forms. Rim explorers cannot allow ease of finding and sampling to mean ease of study.

The Games Master must decide what kinds of Simple Life are available to be discovered on a planetoid, and in what concentration. There are hundreds of thousands of different sorts of simple life forms, and many of them on the same planetoid are food for one another. The following entries are a handful of example Simple Life categories and some descriptions of what exactly they mean to a Rim exploration.

Cnidarians

These simple life forms get their name from the scientific term for specialised cells that carry stinging organelles, often found in long draping tentacles or stubby appendages held close to the main body. This family of life forms include corals, which are important reef-builders on any ecosystem they are found within, along with other familiar aquatics – sea anemones, jellyfish and sea wasps. They are only ever found in the hydrosphere portion of a planetoid, and require special sampling measures before they can be taken by a Rim exploration mission.

There are many different varieties of cnidarians already catalogued in galactic records, with some as large as dinner tables and others smaller than the smallest coin. They are extremely diverse depending on their surroundings, so many explorers may not be prepared to deal with those that evolved, say, in a 99% hydrospheric planetoid. The entire category of organism has evolved to gather up nutrients as they drift across their chosen home – seeing careless Rim explorers as nothing more than intergalactic plankton to be caught and digested.

Cnidarians are typically very simple beings that can answer many questions about what sort of hydrosphere a planetoid has, making them very useful to Rim exploration mission crews that may not have the proper equipment for a full aquatic exploration. By their very nature they can be quite dangerous – sometimes deadly – and research teams will often treat them with just as many safeguards as they would a deadly virus. When a single sting from a 'jellyfish' on Earth can kill, Rim researchers must think of what a similar creature found swimming in a sea of liquid sulphur could do.

Flatworms

These are very simple creatures that are sometimes only a few cells thick, but are quite capable of moving and hunting down smaller creatures (sub-anima mostly) in order to consume them through their one orifice. They are capable of cellular regeneration on a whole-body scale, with one flatworm becoming two if there is an equal bisecting. Although little more than large, multi-cellular metazoa, flatworms are among the first indicators of an animal-kingdom evolution. Although nearly all members of this class of life are found in aquatic environments, they have been known to begin their slow evolutionary crawl onto moist land. The rare flatworms that do so often grow larger than their kin and develop thicker skin layers to keep from drying out instantly.

These creatures tend to be unknowingly parasitic, seeking out any source of food energy that they can gather. Whether by attaching to the roots of a plant or rasping the dead skin from an animal, most flatworms eat whatever they can. For normal examples of this life form type, this is not much of a problem. For some examples that have been found on Rim planetoids, there is no limit to the size and voracity of this classification – making many flatworms reminders that there is *always* a reason to be careful when dealing with a life form sample.

Rim explorers tend to try and get flatworms for study early on in an Exploration, as they are more or less an inexhaustible resource of test animals. So long as the flatworms continues to regenerate and divide evenly, the researchers can 'farm' more of them for scientific use. This can occasionally backfire if the flatworms' cellular

regeneration rate is much higher than anticipated. A large number of a new species always has its worries for a Rim exploration team, so precaution must be taken to watch flatworm numbers carefully.

Fungi

Fungals are plant-like organisms that lack chlorophyll or other energy-to-nutrient processors, requiring them to actually siphon nutrients from other sources. Many fungal organisms are good and useful, such as edible mushrooms or waste-decaying moulds. Some, like infectious or allergenic breeds or the rare fungus whose spores can set into flesh to grow and devour the host, cause severe problems. Medical mycologists (fungal specialists) study new fungal organisms to fight fungus-based infections and allergies the galaxy suffers from already, while agricultural and research mycologists study new forms of fungi to find their profitable industrial uses.

Since they cannot produce energy on their own, fungi must absorb nutrients from other sources. Most fungi 'eat' dead organic matter for energy, but some species have been known to start this process while the organism is still alive. It is the second variety that Rim explorers must be extremely careful of. A single spore that clings to a environmental suit or slips past breather-filters could mean a painful death for the crew member, and possible infection for the remainder of the crew.

Organisms as prolific as fungal species are easy to collect and sample, but are a very real danger to any form of enclosed vessel or research base. Containment protocols are of the highest priority, like with a virus or bacteria, but a destruction-based contingency must also be arranged for in case of spore contamination. Common galactic fungi range from mildly allergenic to downright deadly; there is no way to know just how powerful, survivable or *lethal* a breed of Rim fungus might be.

Mollusc

The most advanced of all of the simple life forms; molluscs are typically comprised of a single body mass with some having tentacles or similar appendages, and sometimes hard shells they secrete. There are a multitude of different organisms found in this category, including snails, clams, squids, octopus and similar creatures. They have evolved digestive and locomotion systems, and many are very much capable of decision-making and learning from their mistakes. They are the largest step from simple multi-cellular organic 'machines' to fully independent animals.

From the early days of Earth, sailors feared the giant octopus for its cunning and predatory strength, just as the Abbai revered the clam-shelled gra'lly for its ability to destroy the source of pollutants with the collective weight of its colonies. It is clear that molluscs are not just simple creatures to be scooped up into a sample container whenever found. They can be quite dangerous, and some known galactic species are capable of killing sentient beings supposedly armed to hunt them – therefore, the unknown versions beyond the Rim must be handled with due care.

Exactly how a Rim explorer should approach sampling a Rim mollusc depends on the given animal. It is necessary for the explorer to study the creature in its natural surroundings before trying to act, but watching too long could allow the creature to get away un-sampled. Moving too slow could allow the cure to all the worlds' ailments gets away, but moving too quickly could result in the deadliest stinger on the planet shearing through the explorer's suit and killing him. This conundrum can lead to lost samples or hasty actions – both which can be disastrous to a planetoid exploration. However, these are risks that some simply *must* take, if science is to learn about Rim molluscs at all.

Proto-Flora

The general term 'proto-flora' covers all sorts of simplistic plants, speaking on a cellular level. Ferns, lichen, moss, ground grasses and most non-flowering vines fall into this category. They are a staple of most ecosystems and eventually turn into higher forms of life, especially if an ecosystem is to include any form of more advanced plant life or herbivorous animals. is the existence of proto-flora is also a sign that a planetoid has a growing and evolving biosphere. Plants are always good indicators of a planetoid's stability, as they are almost always the first to go when a drastic change takes place on a planetary scale.

Just because these life forms are plants does not mean that they are *safe* to simply transplant and collect as biosphere samples. Vines could quickly overtake a vessel with an unexpected growth spurt when brought into the ship's higher-oxygen atmosphere. Lichen could develop an acidic root structure that can eat through a container… and a ship's hull. A simple fern could have a powerful hallucinogenic effect on crew members because of its frond-pollen. Anything can happen with a new species, so assuming that a plant is safe because it is 'just' a plant is often a horrible mistake.

Rim explorers are expected to collect samples of plant life in two ways. The first way is just to take a cutting and isolate it in a sealed container for scientific study elsewhere. This is the safest way, but yields very little information about the species as a whole – it merely sheds light on the physical characteristics of the sample taken. The second way is far more time consuming and requires a better knowledge of xenobotany: the Rim

explorers must actually take the *entire* living plant as a sample. This often means constructing a much larger containment unit, using additional soil (or equivalent substance) and supplying hydrosphere compounds and atmospheric elements taken to keep the plant alive for study. There is some risk involved in doing this without knowing the full growth potential of the species, but it offers a vastly increased amount of scientific data for the exploration mission as a whole.

Segmented Worms (Annelids)

These wonderfully simple life forms are commonly referred to as segmented worms. Annelids are often found in nearly any moist environment, from the deepest marine sediments to the soils in many galactic city parks and agricultural homestead yards. Earthworms, leeches and marine-worms called polychaetes comprise the bulk of the diversity of the segmented worm families and are a sign that aquatic life has begun to move toward land-based evolution. They are a staple of evolutionist theory, and Rim explorers are almost always happy to find them whenever they can.

Like flatworms, segmented worms have a very fast and predictable reproductive rate when stimulated and monitored, making them a good research tool for genetics and immunity study. This does not mean that they are entirely harmless, but only a very few annelids are even capable of harming other life forms – and when they do it is often unintentional, due to a secretion or biological allergy. Leeches are parasitical by evolutionary design, but rarely voracious enough in small numbers to cause significant harm to their 'victims.' This is not to say that a new breed of Rim leech could not be focussed on nerve tissue instead of blood, or perhaps carry viral agents in its saliva. Researchers and explorers should at least be wary of new species, no matter how small.

Not that size has much to do with the description of segmented worms. As long as a worm has flexible body segments, a separate mouth and waste-vent and a complex digestive system, it can likely be counted amongst the annelids. From the tiniest woodworm of Zhabar all the way to the bloated Spoo that can span several metres, the size of segmented worms is only limited by their lifespan and food supply.

Gathering samples of annelids can be tricky for an ill-prepared Rim explorer. The best and easiest way to do so is to gather up the entire area around the worm (a scoop of soil, or container of liquid) and taking all of it as a single sampling. This only works for the more commonly sized life forms, and can result in damage to the creature if the sampling device does not have *all* of the worm's body at the point of taking. The good thing is that nearly every annelid ever sampled can regenerate from massive body trauma very quickly and efficiently. The bad thing is that it means that most of them cannot be killed without employing more drastic measures… should there be a problem.

Simple Classifications

Just as with the Basic Life category, Rim exploration teams have classifications of simple life forms. This serves the same purpose as it does for all manners of life form samples, and is universally used by the scientific industry when dealing with Rim explorers. Even though these organisms are more advanced and are likely to have much more detailed studies done to them, classifying them as 'simple' makes for an industry standard to work with.

The following table can be used to randomly decide what classification a life form is, or the Games Master can simply choose whatever best serves his campaign.

Simple Life Classifications

2D6 Result	Classification
2	Dangerous
3-7	Commonplace
8-9	Interesting
10	Useful
11	Breakthrough
12	Intelligent (and roll again, ignoring further rolls of 12)

Dangerous life forms of the simple variety are often just possible predatory species that are capable of causing some kind bodily harm to crew or the vessel. Toxic ferns, virus-laden leeches and paralytic anemones are good examples of these dangerous species. Dangerous life forms must be contained properly and studied under high security due to the possibility of someone becoming injured. Anything that has a poisonous or toxifying evolution falls into this category automatically.

Any dangerous-class simple life form that comes into a situation that warrants it will react instinctively and bring its dangerous elements into play. It could be a poisonous squid being handled by a clumsy technician or hull-weakening lichen allowed to overgrow its container. Whatever the effect or the cause, the Games Master has the final say as to what sort of affect an organism will have.

Commonplace simple life forms are treated exactly as commonplace-class basic life forms. They are nothing special, but are still worthwhile to collect for specimen catalogues.

Interesting life forms tend to raise many questions about a planetoid's chain of evolution, as they have one or a collection of strange quirks that do not seem to have any role in the organism's life at all. From flatworms that reproduce only to devour their offspring and clams that shed their shells only to grow new ones of the exact same size, to a grass that is brightly coloured and patterned, interesting-class life forms are mysteries to researchers. Unlike interesting-class basic life forms, the oddities are no longer merely amusing – they are puzzling.

These life forms make research scientists wonder if they missed something about a species or planetoid that would have caused such an odd evolution. Solving the mysteries of these life forms can easily become the driving goal of a lab researcher with nothing better to do on the long trip back from the Rim.

Useful life forms at the simple level are examples of organisms that can be used to function or aid in some form of action or study. This could include a plant of foodstuff quality that grows with almost no water to help arid species, or maybe a flatworm immune to radiation that could be studied in anti-rad medical research. Without comprehensive study it could be difficult to say exactly what a creature could offer to galactic society. Other than increasing the Knowledge (xenobiology) DC to 25, this classification of life form is identical to the Basic Life classification of the same name.

Breakthrough life forms of the simple level are very rare, as they are often caught in-between their level of usefulness. Too advanced to affect anything on a cellular scale, but too simple to be of major use in the larger galaxy, breakthrough-class molluscs or flatworms are not found often. A species of leech that siphons toxic chemicals in the blood could be a huge boon in the medical industry, while any sort of plant that actually emits massive amounts of oxygen would be fantastic for atmosphere-scrubbing gardens on space stations all across the galaxy. Other than increasing the Knowledge (xenobiology) DC to 35, this classification of life form is identical to the Basic Life classification of the same name.

Intelligent-classed life forms actually belong to a sub-class attached to any of the other classifications used by Rim explorers. 'Intelligent' is not to be mistaken for 'Sentient,' as researchers are very specific about throwing about that term. A breed of marine octopus that learns quickly from its mistakes, shows problem-solving skills and can obviously be trained to perform certain functions would be considered intelligent-class, while the same type of animal that *choose* whether to do all of the above could be classified as Sentient.

Whatever the nomenclature attached to this class of life form, such a creature can be a major find in the Void. It is always a boon for scientists to find organisms capable of problem-solving and the like. These finds breed long studies of what these species are capable of, and how such behaviour came about. An Intelligent organism must also be watched far more closely than a common biological sample. If it views its captivity a problem, and has problem-solving capabilities, it is only a matter of time after its capture before it seeks ways to escape. For some samples this might just be the destruction of the container it is in, for others it could be far more sinister – costing mission team lives in the process.

For game purposes, anything that is Intelligent-classed should be given a rudimentary Intelligence Ability score of 1d3. This may not seem like much, but when dealing with a colony of snails that can dissolve flesh *and* open doors…three Intelligence will seem like a lot!

Complex Life Forms

Taking a further step up the evolutionary ladder, the next and most profitable type of biological finding Rim exploration mission teams might discover on a planetoid is categorised as 'complex.' Named as such because of their advanced organ structures and interactions with one another, complex organisms are what most galactic citizens think of when someone says 'plant' or 'animal.' The majority of the plant and animal kingdom fall in this category in terms of their scientific classification. They are the plateau of evolutionary science, with the last leap of growth being the acquisition of sentience.

With only a few exceptions, complex life forms tend to be readily apparent on any planetoid on which they can be found. Insects buzz around, birds can be seen in the sky, schools of fish swim in oceans and herds plod across the land masses. The types of animals most of the galaxy is used to seeing fall into this classification group. This is where the real relationships and life cycles become visible to non-scientist types, and where being predator or prey means much more than just whether or not creatures happen across one another.

Complex life forms are split into two large categories: plant and animal. Where plant life tends to be far easier to sample and act upon without undue danger, this is not a steadfast rule. There could be any number of lethal, predatory plants that could kill a hapless explorer just as fast as some insect's sting or predator's claws. Complex life forms require a much higher degree of knowledge and personal protection when trying to acquire samples, or sometimes even when just getting data recordings.

Xenobiologists often have their hands full trying to discover the key elements of am ecosystem's evolutionary triggers, so it is up to Rim exploration crew members to make sure that no one gets hurt or killed trying to get that information.

The Games Master must decide what kinds of Complex life can be discovered on the planetoid, and how readily they will be found. The sort of evolutionary chain that develops Complex life normally has many branching categories that create a multitude of diverse life forms that could make up a single food chain. Alternately, there could also be a single dominant species that 'rules' the entire planetoid. It is up to the Games Master to decide the exact nature(s) of the life form(s) on a planetoid. The following entries are a handful of example Complex Life categories and some descriptions of what exactly they mean to a Rim exploration team that finds them.

Avians

This category of Complex life form encompasses all forms of birds (or related life forms), especially those capable of actual flight. They are often the easiest to find on many planetoids due to their travel across the sky, but that is not always the case. Many are flightless or even partially aquatic, but are commonly classified for their bony beaks, the laying of hard-shelled eggs, a high metabolic rate, a multi-chambered heart and a light but strong skeleton which has often been found to be hollow. Avians are rather advanced life forms, and can take many shapes and sizes.

Avian life forms are extremely diverse; some predatory raptors grow as large as a man, and berry-eating songbirds the size of a child's finger have been sampled on several terrestrial worlds. With such a wide scale of life and variety of species, there is no way other than study and preparation for a Rim exploration team to try and take a sample of an unknown avian. Like hunting for an animal for which no one has a description, going out to catch avians without some kind of plan based on facts is likely to be fruitless.

Rim explorers who take avian biosphere samples, like capturing any form of unknown Complex life, must understand that they will not be able to provide the necessary environment for the animal to 'function' naturally. Without the ability to exercise their chosen form of movement avians are going to react differently, making them often better suited for posthumous research rather than observation in an artificial environment. Any animal can be a danger if handled improperly, but many avians are capable of flight – making them an ever present escape risk if not contained adequately. Rim explorers that take avian life forms as living samples can expect complications, even on those vessels ready for them.

Crustaceans

Crustaceans are fully or partially aquatic arthropods that have tough exoskeletons that protect their soft inner organs from outside threats and the crushing weight of external pressure. They are similar in construction to other arthropods (insects and arachnids), but have gills or rudimentary lungs to help them in both aquatic and land-based environments. They are one evolutionarily step above simple life forms, evolving from their fully aquatic versions up into their land-based ones, and sometimes eventually on to insectoid species.

While nowhere near as diverse and specialised as their cousins, crustaceans tend to be designed to survive so they can reproduce – and that is about it. They rarely show any sort of communal behaviour except in the form of seasonal migrations, and only a few galactic species found in Abbai space have ever demonstrated intelligence beyond plain instinct. Rim explorers should be careful, however, as crustaceans are often naturally equipped for conflict – and are often armed with their own suit of armour and sometimes flesh-shearing pincers!

Taking a crustacean as a bio-sample can be as easy as putting one in a common research container, but others have shown powerful, almost *hydraulic* strength that could pose a threat to some container materials. Fully aquatic crustaceans will obviously need a supply of their own environment to sustain them as living samples, but not for posthumous research. Using galactic versions of this classification as a guide, Rim explorers who may be on their mission for a long time may want to make sure that any sampled crustaceans are not stored in containment units that are too small. Several known species can grow exponentially in certain circumstances; those evolved in unknown environments might be able to do the same or more.

Fish

Fish are aquatic creatures that 'breathe' through gills that chemically absorb the gases they need from the hydrosphere of their environment. They exist in many shapes, colours, sizes and dependant infrastructures, and often exist in any habitable hydrosphere that can support them. Fish are the primary marine evolution of animal life and have high breeding rates.

There are fish that cover every aspect of biology. Bony fish, smooth-skinned fish, predatory fish, enormous fish and tiny fish are just a few of many different classifications of this life form. There are venomous fish that can poison with a stab of specially-evolved scales, or that toxic blood to exact retribution on the unknowing creature that eats them. Most known species of fish are harmless to an explorer with proper protective gear.

Unless explorers take deceased samples for posthumous research, fish of any variety will require a large amount of their natural environment in which to keep them alive for studies. Depending on the substance in which the fish dwell, this could lead to problems with toxic substances being brought onto a ship, or even just excessive volume of an aquatic environment. It is recommended that samples of a planetoid's fish population should be cryogenically-based *only*. Aquariums for unknown species are too risky to keep on an explorer ship, even if all of the proper precautions are supposedly performed.

Insectoid

Possibly the largest group of complex life on record, insectoids are a grouping of both insects and their close relatives (spiders, scorpions, centipedes and so on). Like any other arthropods they have dense exoskeletons packed with fatty tissues and advanced organ systems. They are capable of great feats of strength for their size, with some tiny insectoids carrying up to 100 times their own weight easily! This makes them interesting organisms, but it also makes them quite deadly in their ways.

These life forms tend to be extremely numerous whenever present and are generally designed as best they can be for their lifestyles. Having a massive birth rate and generic evolutionary capabilities, insectoids adapt very quickly over just a few short generations to surpass whatever threat is upon them at any given time. There have been species discovered that have evolved beyond the effects of

Green Flora

This is a large category that contains trees, flowering plants, tubers and any other 'advanced' forms of plant life. The components of this classification are the staple of an evolved ecosystem, and oftentimes the basis of the planetoid's entire food chain. It is through their storage of food-energy in the form of eatable leaves, seeds and fruits that herbivorous fauna stay alive so that the carnivorous fauna can eat, eventually dying off themselves to become nutrients for the next cycle of flora. It is a long and twisted cycle that might take many years to fulfil its course, but it is a time-tested one that has created millions of life forms throughout the known galaxy and beyond.

Unless dealing with particularly dangerous (carnivorous, toxic or allergenic) plant life, the most difficult issue to overcome in studying flora is the sampling of particularly large species. Some of the trees on Andromа grow to the size of starships, and there have been data records of even *larger* ones on some Rim planetoids. This could make for very difficult sampling, as the bark of such a tree might be metre-thick and as dense as deck plate. Also, any sample taken would likely be too small to get anything but a *part* of the cellular structure involved. Plant life is also rather delicate on an ecological scale, meaning that taking a species out of its environment could do it irreparable harm. This is a risk that some explorers must take in order to further research, and they take whatever they can.

Plant life is not a great security risk in most cases, with common containment methods and storage adequate for stable samples. There is always some risk when dealing with a particularly odd or resilient plant – like kudzu cuttings from Kokkar III – but most Rim exploration vessels can handle the sorts of flora they bring on board with ease.

The Gaim & Insectoid Research

Surprisingly enough, the Gaim Intelligence are quite interested in the purchase of any insectoid species found outside the Rim. The exact nature of their studies is unknown, but there are three very distinct theories in exploration-based conversation circles as to why the Gaim want these creatures; they are as follows:

- The High Queens do not want their galactic neighbours to understand new species of insectoids because such research could lead to better ways of neutralising the Gaim's biological and genetic superiority.
- The Gaim are not researching the bio-samples at all. Instead they are freeing them into their own collective in order to add genetic material and adversity to the Intelligence's greater Hive for some interesting new initiative that requires new breeds of Gaim.
- The High Queens are actually upset over the capture of possible cousins of their race and are merely buying them in order to set them free if they wish it so.

If any of these theories is actually true the Gaim are not talking much about it, nor are they showing any signs to the contrary. If something is to come of their collection of other governments' insectoid bio-samples, it will sure to be a surprise for the entire galaxy.

once-lethal poisons, developing thickened exoskeletons to survive increased air pressure, and even immunity to high-end radiation emissions. Insectoids do not simply evolve to avoid harm, however, they also adapt to their surroundings faster than any other complex life form. Many have learned true flight with a better degree of manoeuvrability than any bird can boast, some can leap several hundred times their body lengths and a few can even swim quite well. Insectoids adapt and survive; that is their main function.

Rim exploration teams that take insectoid samples must be very aware of just how durable and cunning these organisms can be. Some have evolved hive minds that bring their peers to help a captured hivemate, or even the ability to 'play dead' until they can spring back to life and attack their captors. Nearly every insectoid species has some way to protect themselves, be it with deadly venom or slashing mandibles, and researchers must be careful when dealing with their samples. Insectoids are far more powerful than they might seem.

Mammals

This surprisingly large group is the class of vertebrates named and characterised by the presence of mammary glands in females, which produce nourishing milk for their growing young. Mammals are also known for the presence of hair or fur, even if it is very fine or nearly invisible to the naked eye. Many have naturally warm-blooded bodies that force them to live in environments they are best evolved for, commonly using thick fur or blubber to survive in colder climates. They support advanced organ systems and are often very social animals.

Mammals tend to be separated into two main categories when being classified for sampling priority – predator or prey. Neither is going to be easy to sample without tranquilisers or some form of special trapping mechanism, as few mammalian animals will simply allow a foreign creature (the explorers, in this case) to snatch them up. Prey animals are far less likely to bite, claw or otherwise injure a would-be captor unless trying to get away; predator animals have a killer's instinct and will gladly use their talents on a Rim explorer if they either wants to escape…or make a meal of the explorer. It tends to be animal instinct to escape capture, and that includes fighting the threat of same.

Unless a Rim exploration vessel is fully equipped for zoological study, the bringing on of large mammals could put a great deal of stress on the ship's atmospheric processors and lead to possible illnesses. This can be helped by keeping the animals in their own isolabs, but very few ships stocked for Rim exploration journeys can say they have that luxury. The study of Rim-based mammals is left to small species that can be stored easily, cell-samples taken from tranquilised beasts or data recordings taken by witnesses in the animal's own environment.

Reptilians/Amphibians

This generalised class of complex life form contains all of the cold-blooded, non-fish life forms. They are normally (but not always) characterised by scaly, smooth or leathery skin devoid of true hair or fur, and are born from eggs (with a few cases of internally-hatched live births). That is where any form of comparison on a grand scale has to end. There are reams of differences between snakes, turtles, sauropods, lizards and frogs, and then again between their individual species and breeds. Reptiles are highly adapted and evolved animals that Rim explorers often avoid direct interaction with if at all possible.

Most species of reptiles are equipped for and very capable of defending themselves with sharp claws and/or teeth, and some have even evolved wickedly sharp fangs that deliver deadly venom to their prey or protective shells that can withstand PPG fire. They range from the extremely tiny to the titanic, and run the gamut of dispositions. Researchers commonly study reptiles for their spot in the overall evolutionary chain of a planetoid, due to the general reptilian pattern of evolving to a certain point and simply *stopping*. Many reptiles have the same body type and structural make-up as their ancestors did hundreds of thousands of years prior, sometimes longer. Scientists can hope to learn a great deal about the ecological evolution of a planetoid by studying the changes in the bodies of its reptiles.

Unlike mammals or avians, reptiles of a moderate size can often be stored or contained quite easily on board a starship. Most (if not all) reptilians are cold-blooded, meaning that they require external sources of warmth to heat up their bodies and keep them active. This allows them to be forced into a form of cold-based hibernation by researchers, simply by lowering their containment temperature until they slip into a form of 'cold coma.' This may not be a perfect solution, as the animal could have some kind of adverse reaction to the cold or have the ability to spontaneously and chemically stimulate itself when threatened during hibernation, but it is a well-used and tested approach to reptile storage on Rim exploration trips. As described earlier, reptiles are often quite formidable for their size and may have adapted interesting ways to deal with prey or attackers; sampling explorers should be very aware of that and not take chances with bites or scrapes that could be envenomed or infectious.

Complex Classifications

Just as with the Basic and Simple Life categories, Rim explorers have created further classifications of complex life forms. Again, this allows for an industry standard which is usually expanded upon by the research scientists in their studies, but not necessarily in the collection of samples.

The Complex Life Classifications table can be used to randomly decide what classification a life form is, or the Games Master can simply choose which best serves his campaign.

Complex Life Classifications

2D6 Result	Classification
2	Dangerous
3-6	Commonplace
7-9	Social
10	Useful
11	Breakthrough
12	Intelligent (and roll again, ignoring further rolls of 12)

Dangerous complex life forms are treated exactly as commonplace-class basic or simple life forms. They have the capability of causing massive bodily harm in short order and are likely to be poisonous, toxic or otherwise deadly in a direct confrontation.

Commonplace complex life forms are treated exactly as commonplace-class basic or simple life forms. They are nothing noteworthy, but are still worthwhile to collect for specimen catalogues. This grouping often includes most small prey animals.

Social life forms are those who seem to be singularly interested in interacting with the explorers as much as the researchers want to study them. Either through an ignorant avoidance of outside threats, or simple curiosity, the life form *wants* to spend quality time with the exploration team crew. Although its inclusion is not unheard of, plant life is normally excluded from this classification altogether.

These life forms can be double-edged swords. Researchers can get as close as they like to the life form in order to study it, but always run the risk of the organism changing its behaviour rapidly – possibly turning from inquisitive to savage in a blinding flash of claws and teeth. Even the most attractive and 'cute' specimen from the Rim could be capable of anything, and it is best for researchers not to let down their guard.

Useful complex life forms are specimens that seem to offer some form of service or researchable facet to an exploration mission. Whether it is in the form of a bird that senses telepathy in use or a fish whose meat is naturally anti-aging, this classification of life form is identical to the Basic and Simple Life classifications of the same name.

Breakthrough complex life forms are specimens that could be tapped for a new aspect of previously unknown research or a leap in an existing one. From the mysterious chameleonic reptile that actually turns *invisible* to a cattle-like sloth that somehow weathers 250 degree heat, this classification of life form is identical to the Basic and Simple Life classifications of the same name.

Intelligent-classed complex life forms are capable of rudimentary communication between members of the same species, and show some true forms of learned behaviour as well as instincts. A ground-dwelling rat that builds protection for its community against a *new* threat that its species had not faced before and an spider that can open doors and windows to get at household pets both fall into this category, Besides rolling a 1D4 for the Intelligence score, this classification of life form is identical to the Basic and Simple Life classifications of the same name.

Sentient Life

Even though the textbook definition of being sentient is the simple ability to have feeling and comprehend others' feelings, xenobiologists take it one step further when dealing with alien organisms. They look at sentience as the ability to learn to also *communicate* those feelings and thoughts to other species without relying on basic instincts. An animal can be taught to interact with pre-programmed commands and interact with other species, but a sentient one will discover how to do so with some form of language or mannerisms – even telepathically. This is a difficult and thin line to draw, but when there is the slightest chance of discovering sentient life outside the confines of the galaxy, it must be marked for the explorers.

Finding sentient life outside the galaxy is very rare. Theoretical astrophysicists believe this is due to the constantly fluctuating ecosystems of most Rim planetoids, which make it difficult to evolve a higher form of life at all, let alone one that naturally awakens to its own sentience. Explorers have something like a one-in-one-billion chance of finding truly sentient life beyond the Rim; Intelligent-class life forms are the most evolved organisms in most Rim exploration records. There have been a handful of Rim exploration missions

that have returned from their voyage beyond with stories of new races of sentient humanoids and other creatures, but few interactions with them beyond first contact have gone well.

When a Rim planetoid or star system produces a planet that actually has Sentient Life on it, the Games Master should not automatically give out that information. Before moving forward in the exploration he must come up with the specifics of the sentient species, as their technology level and cultural quirks could make for a *very* interesting first contact – if the species can be found at all!

The following sections detail how a Games Master can randomly come up with the type of sentient life form found, or he can use the entries as guidelines to detail his own.

Type of Organism

Considering sentient organisms can theoretically take any size or shape in the galaxy, there are just as many if not more options past the Rim. Games Masters can roll or choose the general archetype from the Type of Sentient Organism table.

From this list the Games Master can randomly roll or decide what manner of sentient life can be found on a planetoid (or in a functioning spacecraft and so on). Many of the options above are self-explanatory, but a few require further definition. These are found below.

Humanoid (Aquatic) – This type of life form spends most or all of its life under the hydrosphere of its given planetoid or moon. If this sentient life form is rolled for a planet that has no hydrosphere, then it is automatically assumed to roll 'extra-planetary' on the Origins table later in this chapter.

Humanoid (Amalgamate) – This type of life form has physical traits of multiple archetypes of organisms, all working in unison. This cellular mixture is sometimes due to genetic alteration, rapid environmental shifts or the symbiotic organisms' combination, eventually becoming one creature over several thousand generations.

Parasitical Dominator – This type of life form describes the main manipulative creature in a relationship between two or more organisms. Be it a flatworm that drives a mammalian humanoid (Kor-Lyan) or an insectoid that can meld with anything (Vindrizi), the parasite and its host become one creature for all purposes. The best way to decide which is the parasite and which the host is to roll twice more on this table; ignoring/re-rolling results of 51-95 for the parasite. Obviously the second roll could theoretically be anything on the list being dominated by a parasite, although an Energy-Based or First One life form being dominated by anything might seem *off* by all standards.

Type of Sentient Organism

D100 Result	Archetype	Galactic Example (if any)
01-05	Cnidarian	—
06-10	Flatworm	—
11-15	Mollusc	Ipsha
16-20	Segmented Worm	Tikar
21-25	Avian	—
26-30	Crustacean	—
31-35	Insectoid	—
36-40	Reptile/Amphibian	Koulani
41-45	Fish	—
46-50	Mammal	—
51-65	Humanoid (Mammal)	Human, Centauri, Narn
66-70	Humanoid (Reptile)	Drazi, Grome
71-75	Humanoid (Aquatic)	Abbai, Denovan
76-80	Humanoid (Avian)	Corillani
81-85	Humanoid (Insectoid)	Gaim, Ch'lon
86-90	Humanoid (Crustacean)	Zand
91-95	Humanoid (Amalgamate)	Tal-Kona'sha
96	Parasitical Dominator	Kor-Lyan, Vindrizi
97	Fungal	—
98	Floral	—
99	Energy-Based	Vorlons
00	First Ones	Kirishiac Lords, Travellers

Fungal – This type of life form is actually a sentient colony of fungal matter. Although there are no existing examples of it anywhere in the galaxy, theoretical xenobotanists claim it is 'possible' to have a non-animal reach sentience. Whether something like this would have a hive-mind like the cells of a slime mould or independent thought like fragmented colonies is completely unknown. Such a find would be priceless to xenobiology, and would bridge tens of thousands of hypotheses gaps.

Floral – This life form is a sentient breed of plant life. Like a fungal sentient, there are no true examples of this in existence. There have been countless studies as to whether or not plant life 'feels,' with hundreds of professionals on both sides of the debate. Finding an actual sentient plant life organism would shock the scientific community, and answer a great many questions currently tabled until such a specimen can be found.

Energy-Based – This type of life form is comprised wholly of some form of energy, be it bio-electricity, telepathic wavelengths or even a sentient form of gravity. There exist records of beings such as the Mindriders and the Vorlons having given up physical forms aeons ago, which leads scientists to believe that it is possible to find other transcended beings made of energy. Although the capture and study of them would be difficult, it is safe to say that anything so advanced to have given up its physical form should be able to be reasoned with… hopefully.

First Ones – This type of life form is actually a grouping of life forms that could very well be made up of many different other types of life forms. Collectively called 'First Ones,' these are the progenitors of the galaxy and are ultra-powerful. The First Ones came and went beyond the Rim at their leisure until they were asked to leave completely in 2261, and finding a First One is like being in the presence of a god in both power and humility. These beings are both dream and nightmare to a Rim exploration.

Life Form Origins

Xenobiologists say that nearly all sentient organisms in the galaxy naturally evolved due to their environment, and possibly also to a few nudges by the First Ones. With the standard environmental conditions of galactic planets, this is likely the case. In the chaos of intersecting orbits and travel paths of stellar bodies found beyond the Rim, any form of biosphere is far less likely to evolve on most planetoids – let alone survive long enough to support sentience.

There are several reasons sentient life is found on a Rim planetoid or moon, only one of which is natural evolution. Although it may become apparent to scientists after gruelling months of research and study, the origins of a sentient life form could be vital in deciding if an organism is *safe* to interact with. A 'stranded' race of conquering humanoids with powerful technology could be a very big problem if thought of as just another bio-sample, for instance.

The Games Master can roll on the following table to randomly determine a life form's origins, or he can simply choose whichever best suits his campaign story.

Sentient Life Form Origins

2D6 Result	Origin
2	Mutation
3-5	Natural Evolution
6-10	Extra-Planetary
11	Genetic Manipulation (Abandoned)
12	Genetic Manipulation (Monitored)

Mutation – The life form in question achieved its sentience very rapidly due to a powerful influx of radiation or other unexpected energies, forcing a massive evolution in a single generation. This likely results in a very primitive species with only a rudimentary sentience, but one that could easily be grown into a higher form given time and a stable environment. Some mutation-based sentient races are considered to have naturally evolved *after* their initial mutation, but this can be disproved with a few thousand generations of ancestry research.

Natural Evolution – The life form simply evolved its way up the natural order until its environment required it to have sentience. For whatever reason, the species acquired the ability to feel and communicate freely without any sort of outside influence other than its own genetic growth. These species tend to be very old , as they had to grow through *millions* of years to become what they are now.

Extra-Planetary – The life form, although discovered in its current location, did not originate there. It has been found in its current location for one of any number of reasons, not the least of which could be that the life forms too were once explorers.

When this type is rolled the Games Master can use the Extra-Planetary Source table to determine what circumstance brought the sentient beings to the location.

Genetic Manipulation (Abandoned) – The life form was actually created or at least artificially given sentience by another species or higher power for whatever reason, and was then left to their devices on a planetoid. This may have been an early experiment by their creators that was later ignored or forgotten, or simply an exercise at 'playing god' that soon lost its flair.

Genetic Manipulation (Monitored) – The life form is a part of an ongoing experiment that arranged for it to become sentient. Unlike an experiment gone wrong or ignored, the creators of this sentience are still around and monitoring everything that happens to this organism and its growing culture. Only truly powerful beings could ever hope to 'gift' sentience to another species, and the explorers coming in and possibly blundering around in their experiments could make them quite upset. Then again, it could also make the creators interested in *the explorers* as well – adding them to the experiment in progress.

Extra-Planetary Source

D6	Sentient Race is a group of…
1	…*stranded explorers*. They seek a way off the planetoid and back to their homeworld if at all possible.
2	…*victims of circumstance*. Their ship crashed here and they have managed to make the best out of it. They might want to go, or they may wish to stay.
3	…*colonists*. They came here willingly to begin a new colony. They are unlikely to want to be involved with outsiders.
4	…*refugees*. They came to this planetoid to get away from a superior foe, which might still be after them. They could erroneously assume the explorers are in league with their enemy and become hostile.
5	…*travellers*. They have their own ship nearby and can leave the planet whenever they wish to. They likely stopped for supplies or rest, and the explorers happened upon them by way of chance encounter.
6	…*conquerors*. They are only here because they came and smashed the indigenous peoples into submission, and will likely be ready to undertake another campaign when they discover the explorers – and their galaxy ripe for the picking!

Sentient Organism Technology

Any species of organism that evolves (for whatever reason) to sentience will eventually realise that they can use tools and technology to help shape their surroundings and better survive their environment. Some take generations to learn simple tool use; others eventually discover how to make fire or even machines. It is difficult to comprehend a sentient race not knowing the sciences of the galaxy, but there was a time when the Centauri still had fangs and humans lived in caves. Technology does not happen overnight, but it has a tendency to rise up from the strangest of places.

The Games Master can use the Rim Sentients Technology Level table and Technology Level Modifiers table to determine what technology level the sentient life form has reached.

Rim Sentients Technology Level

D20 Result	Technology Level
Less than 1	Formative Age – natural implements and bodily tools only
1-3	Stone Age – muscle and animal power
4-5	Bronze Age – early metalworking and agriculture if possible
6-7	Iron Age – advanced metalworking, large cities
8-10	Renaissance – advanced social, economic and political systems, recorded history
11-13	Steam Age – beginnings of an industrial revolution
14-15	Fuel Age – advanced industry, multi-terrain travel, primitive space flight
16-17	Fusion Age – orbital industrial, stellar travel
18-19	Advanced – 23rd Century Earth Alliance or Drazi equivalent
20-24	Very Advanced – 23rd Century Brakiri or Minbari equivalent
25+[1]	Superscience – Vorlon, Shadow, or First One equivalent

[1] This result can only be achieved through additional modifiers, and cannot be the result of any unmodified D20 roll.

Technology Level Modifiers

Sentient Archetype	Modifier
Cnidarian	–10
Flatworm	–10
Segmented Worm	–4
Avian	–2
Crustacean	–2
Insectoid	–1
Reptile/Amphibian	–2
Fish	–2
Mammal	–1
Humanoid (any)	+2
Parasitical Dominator	As Dominated Species +2
Energy-Based	+17
First Ones	+20

Life Form Quirks

Amongst the known life forms of the galaxy is a multitude of strange and interesting qualities that differentiate organisms from others of their kind from planet to planet, moon to moon and so forth. It is the mystery of nature itself that seems to grant some organisms the ability to fly, others to swim and even others to read minds. Unlike common biological aspects of an organism like its organ structure, atmosphere tolerance, skeletal structure and so on, there are some oddities in existence that make some stand out. Earth bats are mammals that learned true flight. Some insectoids glow in ultraviolet light, and the dreaded malkiff of Zhabar regurgitates its meal *twice* before actually digesting it. We call these oddities *quirks*.

Quirks are a fast way of making sure that each life form the Games Master creates has a chance at being special in its own way. They are an optional method to making each organism unique with just a quick die roll, or by the Games Master's choice. There is a percentage chance for each type of life to have a Quirk based on its complexity.

Basic – 10%
Simple – 20%
Complex – 40%
Sentient – 80%

Once it has been determined whether a life form has a Quirk, the Games Master can move on to figure out what that Quirk is. The following tables are actually broken up by the different categories of life, with narrative and descriptions of each Quirk after all of the tables.

Basic Life Form Quirks

D4 Result	Quirk
1	Adaptive
2	Resilient
3	Hyper-Reproductive
4	Void-Traveller

Simple Life Form Quirks

D6 Result	Quirk
1	Adaptive
2	Resilient
3	Hyper-Reproductive
4	Void-Traveller
5	Toxic/Venomous
6	Telepathic

Complex Life Form Quirks

D10 Result	Quirk
1	Adaptive
2	Resilient
3	Hyper-Reproductive
4	Void-Traveller
5	Toxic/Venomous
6	Telepathic
7	Fearless/Curious
8	Carrier/Host
9	Huge Size
10	Small Size

Sentient Life Form Quirk

D12 Result	Quirk
1	Adaptive
2	Resilient
3	Hyper-Reproductive
4	Void-Traveller
5	Toxic/Venomous
6	Telepathic
7	Fearless/Curious
8	Carrier/Host
9	Huge Size
10	Small Size
11	Naturally Combatant
12	Ultra-Telepathic

Adaptive
The life form can quickly adapt to its surroundings through natural means or sheer force of will to survive. The organism is considered to have a +10 bonus to its Fortitude saves, a DR of 5 against all environmental damage, and a miscellaneous +3 bonus to any skill checks required to overcome its surroundings. This often comes in the form of dense cellular tissues or advanced organelles designed to adapt to the constantly shifting Rim environment.

Resilient
The life form is decidedly difficult to kill or destroy. Through cellular regeneration or a powerful immune system, the organism has all of the benefits of the *Adaptive* Quirk (see above) and regenerates 1d6 hit points per minute. In the case of organisms too small to actually have hit points, they should be extremely difficult to kill with anything but the most powerful effects.

Hyper-Reproductive
The life form reproduces at a staggering rate, covering planetoids with its offspring in a few generations if left unchecked. This could be the result of a massive birth rate, longevity or simple mitosis-rate. Depending on the type of organism and its normal average reproductive cycle, this could be a threat to the life-support systems of enclosed vessels. The Games Master has final say as to what the new rate should be, but it is a good point of order that the smaller the organism is, the faster it will reproduce.

Void-Traveller
The life form has the strange and mysterious ability to survive unaided in the complete vacuum of space, and even in hyperspace! Whether it is from solar-fuelled survival-based organs or some new and enigmatic state of hibernation, the organism can withstand the deadly onslaughts of the Void. Strangely enough this does not protect the organism from any other form of damage, merely the effects of hypoxia and cold-related damage.

Toxic/Venomous
The life form is somehow able to produce or secrete a substance – intentionally or otherwise – that is universally toxic or venomous. Anyone that comes into contact with the organism will need to make a DC 15+1D10 Fortitude save or suffer 1D6 points of Constitution damage instantly, testing again every minute for 1D6 minutes after contact is broken. Even those species that are naturally resistant to such things (Pak'ma'ra, for instance) will need to make the save, albeit with a +5 miscellaneous bonus. Unlike the natural dangers of some animals or plants, this is a powerful toxin or venom that seems out of place for the organism and might have evolved as a mutation.

Telepathic
The life form and its entire species are rudimentarily telepathic. They can sense others' thoughts and emotions, using them to avoid or hunt prey as well as possibly communicate with one another (if intelligent). The organism has an effective P-Rating equal to 2D4–1, yielding a P-Rating between one and seven. Unless also sentient (and therefore able to tap into any learned telepathic powers instinctively), the organism has a Telepathy skill rating equal to its P-Rating and can use the following telepathic abilities: *Daze, Nerve Stimulation, Pain, Jamming, Idea Seed, Message, Warning, Surface Scan, Sense Telepathy*.

Fearless/Curious
The life form has either no sense of danger at all or is insanely curious about other things. It is considered to automatically pass any and all Will saves related to fear, anxiety or similar emotions. This also means that

the organism is much more likely to try and make contact with explorers, even if it means exposing them to dangerous situations. This is often the case with any sort of animal evolved in a predator-less environment, or at the top of its food chain.

Carrier/Host
The life form is actually nothing special at all, other than an evolved organism designed specifically to carry another, smaller organism. This is often the case with some breeds of worms that travel unhindered in the gut of a large animal until it is slain or dies, emerging then to seek out new animals to infect. There is a 50% chance that the carried organism is either Basic or Simple Life, and the Games Master should roll all of its traits and classifications as normal.

Huge Size
The life form is at least twice the normal size of its traditional counterparts. Due to an enhanced skeletal structure or environmentally-arranged mutation, the organism is vastly larger than normal. 'Normal' is a relative term when dealing with Rim life forms, but we suggest that a common galactic equivalent be used as the status quo before multiplying the organism's height by 1d6+1 times, its weight by double that rolled number.

For example, if an Earth cat is thirty centimetres tall at the shoulder and weighs twenty pounds, and the Games Master rolls a five on his multiplier, this strange species of Rim feline is actually a metre-and-a-half (30cm x 5 = 150cm) at the shoulder and weighs in at a powerful two-hundred pounds (20lbs x (5x2) = 200lbs)!

Small Size
The life form is a diminutive version of its traditional galactic counterparts. Either to better survive in harsh environments or possibly to avoid dangerous predators, the organism is significantly smaller than normal. Like with *Huge Size*, 'normal' is a relative term when dealing with Rim life forms, but we suggest that a common galactic equivalent be used as the status quo before dividing the organism's height/length and weight by 2d6+1 times, rolled separately.

For example, if a Brakiri desert snake is five metres long from nose to tail and weighs two-hundred and seventy five pounds, and the Games Master rolls a five on a new organism's height/length divider and a nine on the weight, this new species of Rim serpent is actually a metre (5m / 5 = 1m) long and weighs in at a lithe thirty-and-one-half pounds (275lbs / 9 = 30.6lbs)!

Naturally Combatant
The life form has grown up in a culture that revels in or forces its members to use their natural appendages to battle or hunt, making them naturally powerful in close combat. They likely have claws, fangs, horns or some other natural weaponry in addition to a way to survive blows inflicted upon them. Due to these evolutionary benefits, the organism gains the following bonuses:

Natural Weaponry – claws, fangs, horns or spikes that grant the Brawler feat and inflict 1D6 damage with a critical threat of 19-20/x2
Natural Protection – scales, hide or fat that grants natural DR equal to their Constitution modifier
Battle Instincts – a bonus to their Unarmed Attack bonus equal to their Wisdom modifier

Ultra-Telepathic
The life form and its entire species are all very powerful telepaths by any galactic standard, and make some of the most powerful governmental telepath-related agencies weep with the knowledge that such powerful minds exist outside their scope of influence. They are unlikely to ever use verbal communication, and exist mainly on a different level of consciousness. The organism has an effective P-Rating equal to 1D4+11, yielding a P-Rating between 12 and 15. The organism has a Telepathy skill rating equal to its P-Rating plus 10 and can use any Telepathic Ability listed in any current or future *Babylon 5 Roleplaying game 2nd Edition* sourcebooks. Also, there is a 25% chance that this Quirk also grants the organism any and all Telekinetic abilities detailed in future sourcebooks (specifically the upcoming *Babylon 5 – Telepaths*).

Cannot find the Quirks you want?
As described earlier, there are countless different ways to make a life form interesting special and strange or dark and deadly. We have outlined a few good options above, but we encourage Games Masters to go ahead and design their own if they so choose to. The Rim and its ultimately inexhaustible supply of possibilities could easily create a host of new Quirks for each type of organism the explorers stumble across. It is the decision of the Games Master to ignore, use or invent Quirks of his own in his campaign as he sees fit.

Life Form Interaction Safety

There is no good way to outline the best ways to deal with new life forms found on planetoids outside the Rim, and each exploration team will have its own sets of protocols in place to help regulate its team members. This varies

If it were that easy…

It is ultimately up to the Games Master to decide how frequently a Rim exploration would ever find new life forms, as well as determine the types of life forms that are found. A cakewalk of an exploration that comes back from the Rim laden with all sorts of new creatures and plants and a new sentient race is highly unbelievable in the overall *Babylon 5* universe. These things should be the *goal* of some multi-year expeditions, not the payoff of a few weeks' romp outside galactic borders.

Investors are paying *billions* each year to occasionally bring back a new fungus or worm from beyond the Rim. It would not be fair to let one trip unlock *all* of the Rim's secrets, would it?

from expedition to expedition, which is something that every Rim explorer must know fully before signing on to put himself in such danger.

No matter what sort of life forms are discovered, safety should be the utmost deciding factor before choosing to have any form if interaction. The definition of 'safety measures' differs greatly from culture to culture, which depends where the explorers originally hail from or whom they are being funded by. Where the Drazi might be happy to hunt down anything as a challenge no matter how large and potentially deadly, the Earthers tend to be far more studious and look for information *first* before trying to take any samples at all.

Scenario Introduction – 'But I'm the Scientist!'

It is always good to force the Player Characters to view the universe in a different light, especially those who think they have all the answers all of the time. Simply tossing them an unknown situation or circumstance might be enough to shake them up a little, but giving them a complete and total paradigm shift is a great way to remind them just how small they are in the Greater Void.

The Set-Up

This is a scene that should occur when a Rim exploration team is on a planetoid, moon or abandoned starship. It is designed to have the Player Characters all in a group, and alone from other crew members of the exploration vessel. It sets them up to be captured by fellow Rim explorers – from an unknown alien race!

'Grazz kulla pok!' an electronic voice booms out from behind you, and before you can turn to see from where it came there is an audible powering up of some sort of device. Suddenly the area is filled with greenish light bright enough to blind you, and your limbs feel a thousand times heavier than normal. Your head is swimming, and darkness begins to creep into your line of vision…

Essentially the Player Characters are hit with an extremely advanced gravity-enhancing device to capture them. The Games Master is free to give them a few Fortitude saves (DC 25) to resist, but they will likely succumb to its effects quickly enough to move on with the scenario.

…you awake to find yourself completely nude, all of you contained in a single large plastic room. One of the clear walls reveals several humanoids of unknown origins in yellow coats. They seem to be studying you!

The Player Characters are now the life form specimens of a race of unknown aliens that hail from a different galaxy, taken aboard their Rim exploration vessel like the characters were going to do to anything they might find. It is a dark irony that, given a few moments, will likely make the Player Characters very unsure about what to do next.

Over the course of a few days, the Player Characters will be subjected to a number of interesting tests. Many of these are extremely benign, and unless they make a big issue out of them they should take place without any sort of problem. If they habitually refuse to perform the tests or try to act violently toward the examiners, they will be almost instantly subjected to the green-light gravity enhancer again until they lose consciousness. Here is a good list of example tests they should go through:

- Endurance – This could be a treadmill, or gigantic mouse-wheel that the characters must run on for specific periods of time.

- Medical Exam – After 'sedating' them with the gravity device, they will be restrained and poked, prodded and scanned for biological information.

- Dietary Needs – This takes place over a few meals, with varied types of food (meat, vegetables, fungus, carrion, etc.) brought in for them to eat. Observant Player Characters might notice the examiners taking notes and watching while they do so.

- Climate Tolerance – This test is taken without the Player Characters even knowing about it at first. The ambient temperature/moisture in the examination cell is raised and lowered drastically for the examiners to record the reactions.

- Problem Solving – This is likely the test that could lead the Player Characters into trouble. The examiners send a number of simple tools and resources into the room, wanting to record what the Player Characters do with them. Depending on the individual Player Characters' skills, they might be able to do a great deal with: two screwdrivers, a blunt knife, a hammer, seven steel nails, three pieces of synthetic wood, a decorative stone and fourteen pieces of copper wire.

The Player Characters might try to escape, or they could simply do their best with a series of Linguistics skill checks or Telepathy to communicate with the examiners. This of course could lead the scenario down a dozen different paths, and it is up to the Games Master as to what exactly the examiners will want to do with the information they gather and the Player Characters themselves. Eventually the Player Characters' own exploration vessel should find the smaller examiners' ship – or some other method of bringing them back to their own mission. Until the Games Master decides how that can take place, the Player Characters must do their best to not be studied posthumously!

For general use, the statistics for an 'Examiner' is as follows:

'Examiner' Researcher
6th Level Scientist; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 12; Atk +3 close combat or +5 ranged; SQ Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study (Xenobiology), Peripheral Studies (Electronics, Xenobotany, Alien Artefacts), Alien Technology Familiarity (Wok'bok, Agg'naa'ii); Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 14
Notable Skills: Appraise +7, Bluff +5, Computer Use +12, Diplomacy +3, Investigate +10, Knowledge (Xenobiology) +13, Knowledge (Greater Void) + 10, Linguistics +5, Operations (Systems) +8, Notice +8, Technical (electronics) +8
Feats: Contact (x2), Fluency ('Examiner'), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Resist Scan
Equipment: Wok'bok Gravity Generator, Examiner's Coat (DR2)

The Plot Thickens

Anything could happen when dealing with a truly alien species, especially if there is no feasible way that either race can know anything about the other. Unless telepathy can be used to bridge the language barrier, the relationship between Examiner and bio-sample is a frustrating one. Perhaps it will make the Player Characters think twice about snatching up random bio-samples from their explorations, or maybe it will make them even more curious about extra-galactic life?

What happens with the Examiners is up to the Player Characters and the Games Master. Were they just a peaceful race that thought they found a new life form in the characters? Did they have something important to teach or show the galaxy? Or were they a scouting party for a darker, more sinister force that is just a few hundred light years behind, looking for a new galaxy to plunder and destroy?

NEW PLANETS

There have been many recorded planetoid findings outside galactic space throughout the centuries of Rim exploration, many of which are near enough to 'stable' jump routes to find repeatedly. When explorers seed the route with beacon transponders and send frequent missions back and forth to update their locations, they ensure that these planetoids are accessible for a decade or more before moving too deep into the Greater Void. These Rim Planets are known primarily the scientific community, and the governments or companies that sponsor their research.

This chapter presents five Rim Planets (planetoids that are stable enough to find repeatedly) and all the necessary information to use them in a *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* campaign. They were all generated using the planetoid generation system found in this book, showing a variety of examples as to what might be found outside the Rim for (un)lucky explorers.

Beta-X Research Site

Type: Metallic (44% silicon-based stone, 34% uranium, 14% sulphur, 6% chromium, 2% miscellaneous metals); **Size:** Medium (7,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Standard (1.1g); **Atmospheric Density:** Thin; **Atmospheric Composition:** Poisonous (Chlorine-based Smog); **Geology:** Flat; **Volcanism:** Very Active; **Hydrosphere:** Very Dry (14% Sulphurous Ocean Coverage, 2 large continents); **Climate:** Very Hot (120 degree average); **Moon(s):** N/A; **Biosphere:** N/A

Discovered in: 2254; **By:** IPX Expedition B44Y; **Currently Controlled By:** Interplanetary Expeditions (Research Division); **Estimated Accessible on Current Route:** 2254-2272

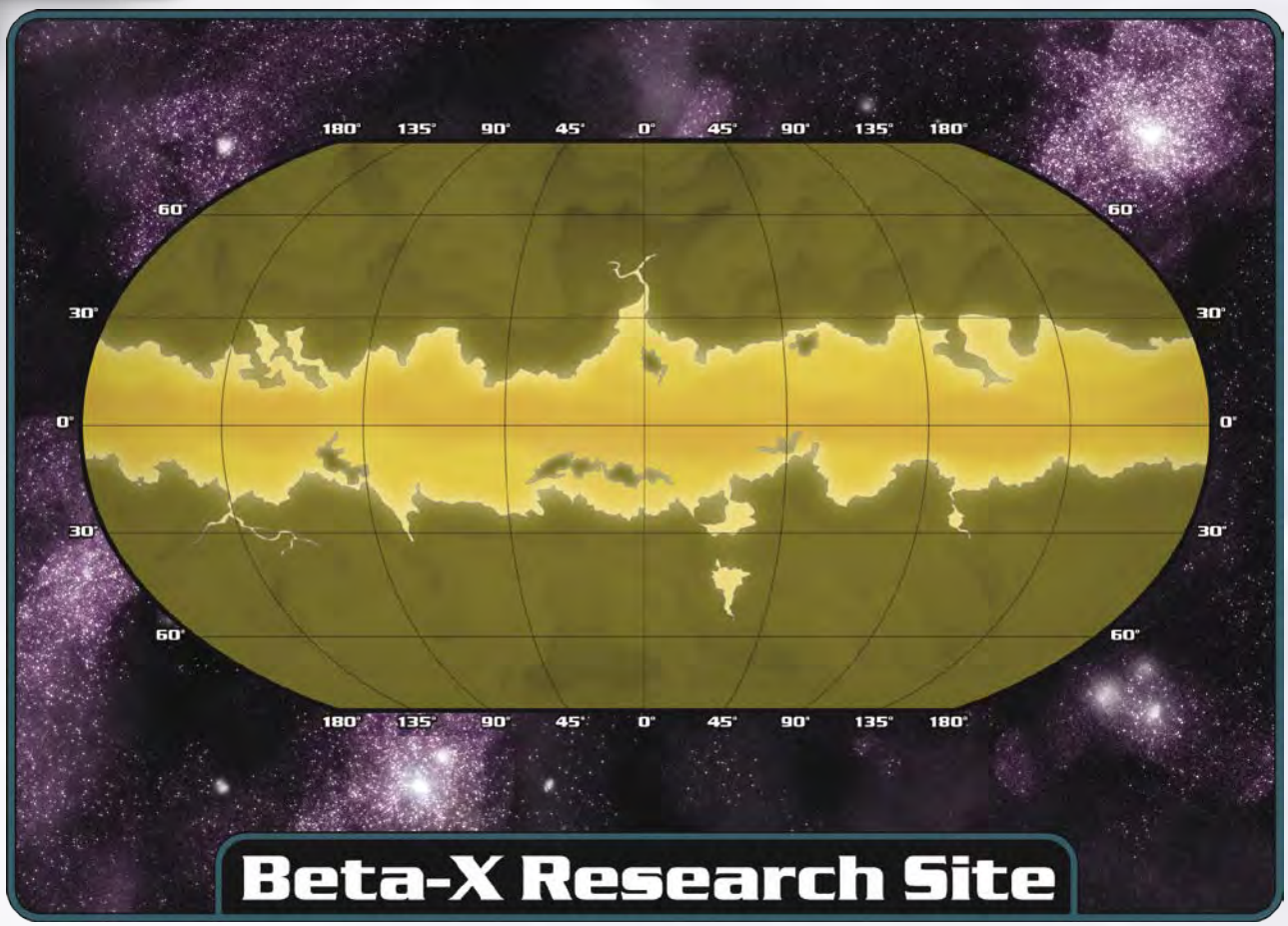
Just outside the Rim beyond the stable jump beacon at Kokkar IV, Interplanetary Expeditions research and exploration team B44Y, with Centauri permission, launched out of the galaxy in 2252. Returning after two years of travel and finding several interesting stellar bodies, B44Y came back with fantastic news for IPX – they had discovered a powerful binary star system that was stable enough to hold a number of planetoids in orbit. One of the planets proved to be a worthless ball of volcanic glass. The other, however, was a dense sphere made up of rare and expensive depleted uranium. Having seeded a usable temporary (20 years estimated) jump route with a number of powerful beacons, IPX claimed the planet for 'research' and now has a steady stream of mining and science vessels coming and going to the smallish planetoid.

Naming it Beta-X Research Site in order to keep corporate saboteurs from snooping around the lucrative uranium mining business, IPX has been stockpiling the uranium they have been digging up there in an effort to eventually sway the entire galactic market with new uranium-based products previously thought too expensive or resource-intensive.

Beta-X itself is a flattened planetoid cut basically in half by a thin strip of ocean. This ocean is a brilliant yellow-orange, a combination of natural sulphur run-off and newly introduced industrial pollutants. The thin air is thick with chlorine-based smog banks that are concentrated enough to kill workers in minutes, and the surface temperature is hot enough to cause many machine breakdowns during the strip mining. Under the stony surface of silicon and uranium lie rivers and pools of sulphur and molten chromium which consistently burst through and spray the surrounding area – sometimes a mile in diameter – in deadly droplets of corrosive metal slag. Beta-X is a very dangerous place to work, where a single mistake of accidental drilling could release an explosion. IPX believes the risk is well worth the profits it provides, and will likely continue processing the planetoid for as long as their window of travel remains open.

Research scientists believe that Beta-X may have been, at one time, a lush world of fertile hills and rolling grasslands. They have found many fossil records that there may have even been simple forms of life and a spanning ocean that covered much of the world. Because of the glassy state of the only other planet in the 'system,' IPX astrophysicists believe that the area was likely a *trinary* system several hundred thousand years ago. One of the stars may have gone supernova and bathed the entire system in radiation and superheated plasma hot enough to bake one planet into glass and the other (Beta-X) into the metal-laden hulk that it is now. While this lesson in history means little to the IPX mining teams, it does lead researchers to believe that either of the two remaining suns could be internally unstable as well.

Beta-X is home to a fluctuating number of astrophysical research teams and dozens of professional miners stationed in durable shelters scattered across the two continents. Roughly one hundred IPX employees stay on the planet at any given time, with re-supply and relief ships arriving every three months or so. The uranium that is mined out of the crust is packed into cargo shuttles and escorted back to the galaxy by the returning relief ships. It is a long tour of duty to be employed on a Beta-X mining or research run, a great deal of it spent in fully sealed environmental protection suits; however, the



miners only suffer an average of three casualties annually due to volcanic eruptions or atmosphere poisoning, and the pay is high for what is essentially menial labour. Until Beta-X slips too far beyond the Rim to reach by beacon, IPX will continue to take it for everything they can.

Goyal-Abba

Type: Porous Stone (52% limestone, 20% granite, 13% quartz, 10% iron, 5% Quantium-40, 2% miscellaneous minerals); **Size:** Large (14,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** High (1.31g); **Atmospheric Density:** Dense; **Atmospheric Composition:** Breathable (Oxygen); **Geology:** Rugged; **Volcanism:** Stable; **Hydrosphere:** Wet (84% Oxygenated Ocean Coverage, 1 large continent and many small islands); **Climate:** Temperate (74 degree average); **Moon(s):** 1; **Biosphere:** Complex Life (Aquatic and Insectoid)

Goyal-Abba I (moon)
Type: Icy Barren (94% frozen nitrogen, 6% miscellaneous metals); **Size:** Tiny (600 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Microgravity (0.07g); **Atmospheric Density:** Vacuum; **Atmospheric Composition:** N/A; **Geology:** Very Flat; **Volcanism:** Dead; **Hydrosphere:** None; **Climate:** Sub-Frozen (-75 degree average); **Biosphere:** N/A

Discovered in: 2243; **By:** Captain Mother Ay'lanna; **Currently Controlled By:** Abbai Matriarchate; **Estimated Accessible on Current Route:** 2241-2270

Happened upon by a Dilgar-hunting/refugee-saving warship in the years following the Dilgar Invasion, the planetoid named Goyal-Abba by the Matriarchate was truly an accidental windfall. Searching the Rim outside of the Rohric transfer point through much wreckage of former battles the *Tylla* (Abbai rescue warship) accidentally triggered an explosion in a nearby dreadnought hulk that seriously damaged their navigational sensors and sent them spiralling off into the Void. When they finally were able to get their bearings and stop careening through hyperspace, they exited to find a world just floating around in empty space, its moon slowly circling it.

Goyal-Abba

The Abbai needed to take orbit around the planetoid in order to properly make their repairs, during which time they sent many exploration teams down to the surface of this new planetoid. What they found was a true paradise. It was a limestone world of swampy marshland above the surface; a surface riddled with huge tubular pipelines tracing its crust filled with heavily oxygenated water perfect for the Abbai to swim and hunt within. Even more astounding was the high number of previously unknown species of fish, mollusc and cnidarians that lived within these flooded tunnels. The exploration teams returned to the ship time and time again with new tales of this, the saviour planet, aptly named *Goyal-Abba* (translated to 'the saving home' in Abbath). By the time the ship was repaired, the Abbai had taken dozens of samples to show the Matriarchy back home.

Eventually finding their way back to the Rim somewhere in Hurr territory, the ship returned to Abba with their unexpected story and biological samples, asking the High Mothers to send further expeditions to try and find this planetoid once again. It took them another two years of repeated trial and error, but Goyal-Abba was found once more in 2243 and dotted with several powerful jump beacons in order to be re-located again and again. Even though the estimated time of the planetoid's accessibility is roughly thirty years in its current gravitational swell, the Abbai believe that it will make a wonderful colony for their more adventure-minded.

Goyal-Abba is a primarily water-based world layered on a latticework limestone crust. Its thick atmosphere and powerful gravity keeps what little geothermic heat and solar energies cling to the planetoid, allowing it to stay very comfortable both above and below the surface of the enormous ocean. There is a great deal of life in and out of the water, with fish and molluscs making up the majority of the biosphere; however, a high number of woodcutting insects and primitive ferns and thick-rooted trees inhabit the marshy land masses. Although nothing has proved to be high on the food chain on either side of sea level, there are a great many deep-sea

tunnels that have not been examined or explored due to the high-pressure and extreme darkness – who knows what could be lurking in their depths?

At first Goyal-Abba and its frozen moon was used only for research and exploration, but with the added interest of other League worlds and greedy industrialists, the Matriarchate chose to call the planetoid an 'extra-galactic proto-colony.' This title baffled many of the Matriarchate's peers, but threw enough red tape against avaricious third parties that the Matriarchate were able to freely use the planetoid their own way. The Abbai have since created many small colony homesteads on the marshy continent and its surrounding islands, knowing that one day the beacon chain will be broken and they and their families will be forced to live out the generations until they can manage to build a transponder strong enough to continually link up with the galactic jump route network. This is not likely to take place in anyone's current lifetime, but the Abbai will not give up on the planetoid they believe was cast towards them by the Great Mother herself.

Mahlxx ('Malice')

Type: Composite Rock/Soil (40% composite soil, 25% silicon, 20% copper, 10% iron, 5% miscellaneous materials); **Size:** Large (15,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Standard (1.0g); **Atmospheric Density:** Standard; **Atmospheric Composition:** Breathable (Tainted - *Diseased*); **Geology:** Standard; **Volcanism:** Stable; **Hydrosphere:** Damp (41% Oxygenated Ocean Coverage, 3 large continents); **Climate:** Warm (85 degree average); **Moon(s):** 2; **Biosphere:** Basic Life (Bacteria and Viruses)

M-Alpha (moon)
Type: Metallic (65% Quantium-40, 30% iron, 10% miscellaneous metals); **Size:** Small (2,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Low (0.67g); **Atmospheric Density:** Vacuum; **Atmospheric Composition:** N/A; **Geology:** Hazardous; **Volcanism:** Stable; **Hydrosphere:** None; **Climate:** Cold (10 degree average); **Biosphere:** N/A

M-Beta (moon)
Type: Metallic (65% iron, 30% Quantium-40, 10% miscellaneous metals); **Size:** Small (2,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Low (0.77g); **Atmospheric Density:** Vacuum; **Atmospheric Composition:** N/A; **Geology:** Hazardous; **Volcanism:** Stable; **Hydrosphere:** None; **Climate:** Cold (15 degree average); **Biosphere:** N/A

Originally Discovered: 1809 (by Drakh); **Re-Discovered in:** 2265; **By:** Captain Orley Marx; **Currently Controlled By:** Drakh Entire; **Estimated Accessible on Current Route:** 1800–(?)

This strange and powerful experiment performed by the Drakh is the key to much of their powerful viral and biological weaponry. The composite planetoid was given to the Drakh by the Shadows, who showed the Drakh how to travel to and from it via the hidden jump route between L-213 and Z'ha'dum. The planetoid was to be the Drakh's planetary laboratory where they would create, breed and test their powerful nanotech contagions. It was halfway between the two great Shadow Wars, and the Drakh had to prepare. They shaped and manipulated the planetoid's two moons to be gravitationally opposed to one another, using their mirrored compositions of Quantium-40 and iron-laced crusts to create a powerful hyperspace well in which they could keep the planetoid stationary essentially *forever*. It worked, and the planetoid Mahlxx was brought under Shadow control.

The Drakh used their powerful contacts across the galaxy to seed their planetoid with thick and diverse biospheres – only to summarily test their new bioweapons on it, turning it back into a dead world. Every fifty years or so they would reset the life form stage and introduce their newest strain of deadly nanovirus, making each version more lethal than the last. The research there went unchecked until after the Shadow War in 2261, when Z'ha'dum exploded the tracking system the Drakh were using to come and go to Mahlxx.

The planetoid known to the Drakh as Mahlxx is actually a perfectly groomed planetoid for raising all sorts of life, making it an excellent planetary-scale laboratory. It has nice weather and stable gravity, is not too wet or dry and even has a pleasant atmospheric temperature held in place by the complex spinning rhythms of its two altered moons. If it were not for the saturation of deadly incurable contagions that permeate the entire planetoid's atmosphere, Mahlxx would make a startlingly attractive colony. However, when it fell out of the hyperspace cell Z'ha'dum was creating for it, the Drakh lost track of the location in the resulting chaos and thought their experiment lost forever – sending several carriers past the Rim to search for signs of their beautiful disease farm.

In 2265, Captain Orley Marx of the Explorer-class EAS *Coronado*, homed in on the powerful hyperspace ping of the perpetual machine of the two moons and re-discovered the virus-laden planetoid. Sending explorer teams down to the surface, Marx discovered very quickly that the atmosphere was thick with some new strain of flesh-eating bacteria and contagious viruses that baffled filtration systems and killed the entire team in just a few painful hours! In the transmissions during that hour they were able to make out a few outpost markings and a common word that appeared on several ruined structures – Mahlxx. Nicknaming the planetoid 'Malice' for its obviously deadly atmosphere, Marx never managed to return to his corporate headquarters before being assaulted by a Drakh carrier homing in on any active signal in the area. The Drakh captured the explorers and interrogated them with Drakh techno-magic and telepathy, finding the new location of their experiment. This came just in time for their planned attack on Earth, allowing them to harvest their nanoviruses in preparation for the final assault on the enemy of their Masters.

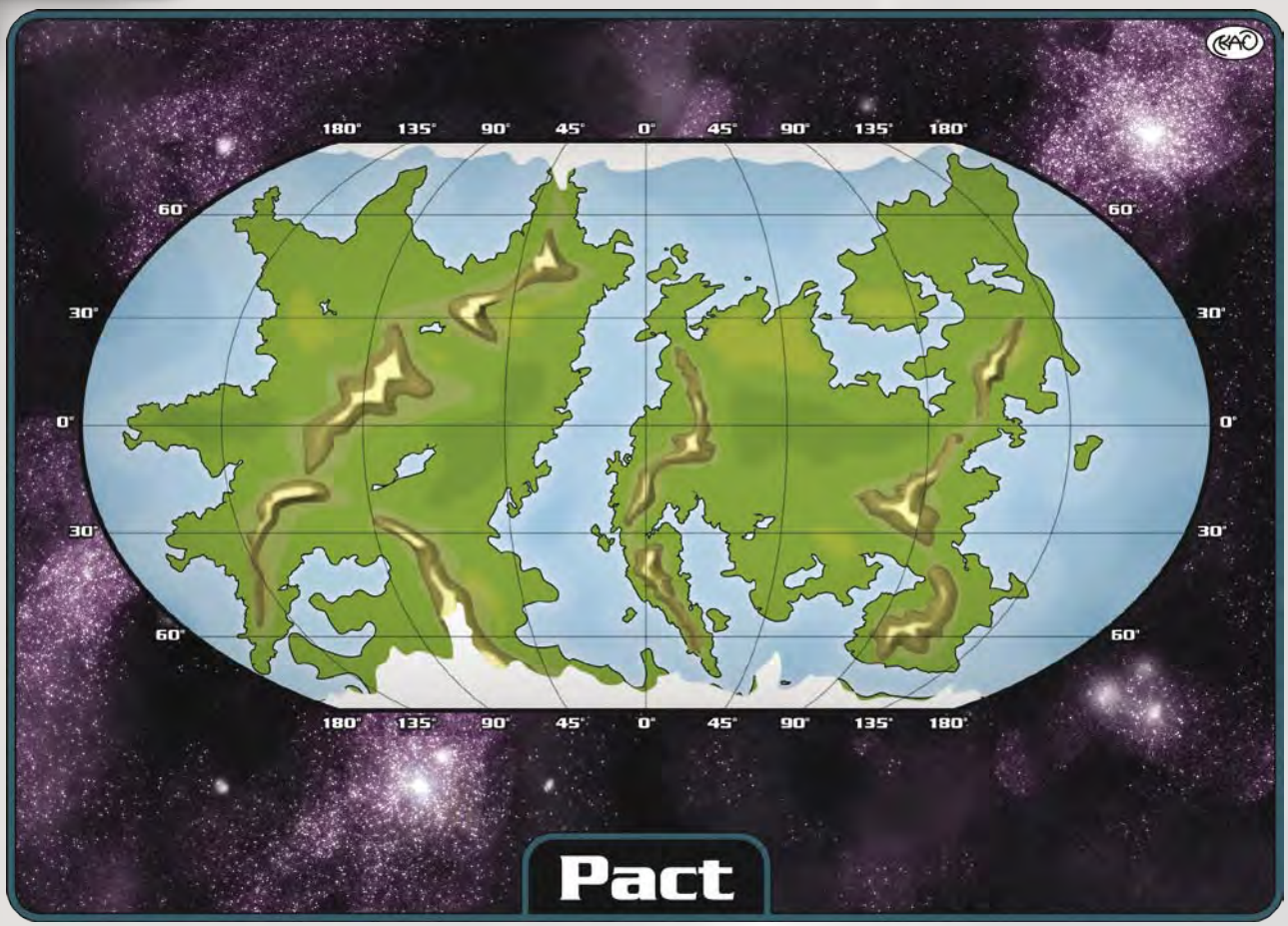
The Pact

Type: Environmentally Evolved (60% composite soil, 15% calcite, 10% diamond, 5% ferrous aluminium, 5% miscellaneous minerals, 5% *unknown materials*); **Size:** Medium (8,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** very High (2.02g); **Atmospheric Density:** Very Dense; **Atmospheric Composition:** Breathable (Nitrogen); **Geology:** Standard; **Volcanism:** Dead; **Hydrosphere:** Dry (27% Saline Ocean Coverage, 2 large continents); **Climate:** Cold (55 degree average); **Moon(s):** 0; **Biosphere:** Sentient Life (First Ones)

Discovered in: 2261; **By:** Ranger Captain O'Conor; **Currently Controlled By:** The Pact; **Estimated Accessible on Current Route:** *Unknown*

When Lorien suggested that the Army of Light find the rest of the First Ones for the final battle against the Vorlons and the Shadows, Sheridan and Delenn had their best minds poring over any mention of ancient and powerful races they could find in any records they had access to. One such entry in the pre-Valen archives spoke of a 'Pact between the Gods,' and that the road was 'between the long and twisted path of the three Suns.' Sending the Anla'Shok to find any truth in these matters, they only managed to bring five remaining First Ones to the battle at Coriana VI…

…but they actually found *six*.



A clever human Ranger captain named Renee O'Conor found a rare trinary solar system on the edge of the Rim outside of the jump beacon at Sorpigal, deep in Minbari territory. Her advanced sensors were baffled, but appeared to indicate that there was a single planetoid spinning in the *exact* astrophysical centre between the three stars. Carefully traversing the gravitational and solar swells of the deadly trinary cluster, O'Conor found a mystery that was over a million years in the making.

The planetoid, called 'The Pact' by the First Ones, is laden with aeons of growth and ruined architecture that would make the Younger Races weep in awe of their beauty alone. Fields of grasses and ferns, sprawling cities that were designed fifty-thousand years before the Minbari discovered how to break their own gravity and glowing oceans of saline seawater cover its surface. It is a perfect planet *created* by a neutral race of First Ones that never wanted to be involved in the matters of the galaxy.

So perfect and isolated was their planet that they named it after their solemn monastic-esque order.

The Pact (both planetoid and species living on it) chose to stay out of the Kirishiac War even when their fellow First Ones were becoming embroiled in combat. They stayed too out of every instance of the Shadow Wars that followed. The Pact merely wanted to explore their endless consciousnesses and eventually transcend good and evil altogether. No matter how deep, strange and metaphysical their search for 'true nothingness,' they remained just outside the galaxy in their constructed paradise between the three suns. They thought of the galaxy as an interesting case study in emotional anarchy, but nothing more.

When Ranger O'Conor found their planet and began scanning it, sending messages out to hail the Pact for help in the growing Shadow War… the Pact answered in the only way they thought the galactic races could understand. With a single pulse of their unfathomable technology they ripped open hyperspace itself around the Ranger's White Star, sending her careening back into the galaxy like a fly being swatted off a horse's flank. By

the time she was able to restore power and navigational control to the ship, a month had gone by – the Pact had actually flung them out of *time*! O'Conor immediately reported to Coriana VI, where she met up with Ranger Walter Ericsson and ended up sacrificing herself and her crew to ensure the data he carried fell into the right hands – taking with her the secret of the Pact's location.

Perhaps the Pact left with Lorien and the others, or maybe they did not, and wait on their planetoid for the next foolish explorer to come by and request their aid…

R-117

Type: Mineral Rich (70% Quantium-40, 15% platinum, 10% carbon, 5% miscellaneous minerals); **Size:** Huge (20,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Low (0.45g); **Atmospheric Density:** Thin; **Atmospheric Composition:** Breathable (Oxygen/Nitrogen); **Geology:** Flat; **Volcanism:** Dead; **Hydrosphere:** Moist (62% Tar/Petroleum Ocean Coverage, 1 large and 3 small continents); **Climate:** Temperate (72 degree average); **Moon(s):** 2 and one debris ring; **Biosphere:** Simple Life (Fungals)

R-117a (moon)
Type: Icy Barren (95% frozen methane, 4% carbon, 1% miscellaneous metals); **Size:** Small (2,000 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Microgravity (0.07g); **Atmospheric Density:** Vacuum; **Atmospheric Composition:** N/A; **Geology:** Very Flat; **Volcanism:** Dead; **Hydrosphere:** None; **Climate:** Sub-Frozen (-75 degree average); **Biosphere:** N/A

R-117b (moon)
Type: Rocky Barren (75% silicon, 20% calcite, 5% miscellaneous minerals); **Size:** Tiny (600 miles diameter); **Gravity:** Very Low (0.3g); **Atmospheric Density:** Very Thin; **Atmospheric Composition:** Inert; **Geology:** Rugged; **Volcanism:** Stable; **Hydrosphere:** None; **Climate:** Frozen (10 degree average); **Biosphere:** N/A

Hunter's Mould

Just because Hunter's Mould is native only to R-117 does not mean that it could not have found its way into the galaxy by other means. The deadly semi-intelligent fungus might have been sampled several times by underhanded Hyach explorers, who may or may not have sold these samples to immoral third-parties that could use it as a weapon. Perhaps the Hyach were not the first race to have found R-117. Or maybe a single spore finds its way into a homeward bound vessel – to be found by a foreign salvage team long after it spread throughout the ship! Whatever the case may be, Hunter's Mould could be a real danger to the Player Characters and their friends *outside* of a Rim exploration to the planetoid if the Games Master chooses to use it.

In game terms, Hunter's Mould infects any sort of organic tissue it comes into contact with. From that point forward, the host must pass a Fortitude save (DC 22) every 2D6 minutes or suffer one permanent point of Constitution damage as the mould grows across the organism. This can be cured by removing the infected portion of the organism if possible, or by heavy radiation or by the application of plasma-level heat directly to the mould.

R-117 (debris ring/formerly moon)
Type: Metallic (45% iron, 30% Quantium-40, 20% carbon, 5% miscellaneous metals); **Size:** Medium (10,000 miles wide); **Gravity:** N/A; **Atmospheric Density:** Vacuum; **Atmospheric Composition:** N/A; **Geology:** N/A; **Volcanism:** N/A; **Hydrosphere:** None; **Climate:** Sub-Frozen (-200 degree average); **Biosphere:** N/A

Discovered in: 2255; **By:** Captain Pou'li Kanaka; **Currently Controlled By:** Hyach Gerontocracy; **Estimated Accessible on Current Route:** 2255-2270

Based on a secret initiative of the Hyach Gerontocracy to hopefully discover new or hidden breeds of the Hyach-Do in order to undo the damage they did to their genetic pool by killing the 'lesser' sub-species, R-117 was not the blessing they were seeking, but was instead a source of massive profits. With a clock running against their own reproductive rates, the Hyach were happy to find anything outside the Rim, let alone a mineral-rich planet *teeming* with life forms.

R-117 teems with one dominant life form, actually. Seventy-five percent of the entire land surface is blanketed with colonies of a reddish orange spore-mould. A strange and somewhat intelligent fungus that achieves mobility through the generation of new tissues while atrophying the opposite side, 'hunter's mould' actually is a predatory organism capable of moving a few inches a day! As if the fungus understands what would happen if it devoured the entire planet, it actually leaves patches of ground to grow vegetation – almost as if the fungus is *farming* the ferns and lichens of R-117!

When Captain Kanaka's ship first set down on R-117 he found the annoying red mould to be bothersome and pervasive, as it seemed to find its way onto every team member's exploration suit and into the landing shuttle's every crevice. When the first team member was found dead and eaten away by the hungry fungal, her quarters layered in deadly mould, the team knew they had a serious problem. The fungus was voracious, almost assuredly fatal to living tissues and seemed to survive the void of space for long periods of time.

When Hyach expedition teams were later sent to mine the rich veins of Q-40 and platinum from the planet they had to repeatedly use high-yield plasma-throwers purchased from the Pak'ma'ra to keep the hunter's mould from infecting workers or getting spores on machinery. Every ounce of ore that was dug up from R-117 was heavily irradiated and baked in a blast furnace before it was allowed to come on board populated vessels, but occasionally a spore or two slipped by and entire ships ended up as quarantined hulks in near orbit.

With an estimated window of only fifteen years to make as much profit from R-117 as possible before it slips too deep into the Greater Void, the Hyach have begun to look at the mineral-rich and ore-laden moons for opportunity as well. The work conditions on the moons are difficult due to little to no gravity or atmosphere, dense crusts and an overall cold temperature that Hyach are not especially fond of. Strangely enough, when given the choice between working one of the R-117 moons or the planetoid itself, it seems the line for moon-based teams is always *much* longer than the planetary one!

Scenario Introduction – 'One Way Ticket to Adventure'

Sometimes the lure of adventure is the only bait necessary for the Player Characters to go to the lengths of the galaxy and beyond. If there is sufficient payment and action promised to them, they might just go on faith alone. Of course this might require a little show of something special up front, but the unknown can lead a mission team a long way if the credits are right.

The Set-Up

This scene is the lead-in for the mission ahead, where the Player Characters are about to be asked by a high-ranking IPX officer to be paid observers on a trip to a known location outside the Rim. There is obviously more to the offer under the table, but they do not need to know this just yet.

'Thank you for seeing me,' the broad-shouldered man in the IPX uniform says with a smile, 'my name is Mission Captain Daniel Rouse. I am looking for a group of common spacefarers like yourselves to join me in an important mission to a private planetoid as general observers. It is a paid contract, half now, half when you debrief to IPX.'

The deal is simple enough; they have to stick by the side of Captain Rouse whenever he is on duty, and are delegated to a number of other officers when he is not. They are given multi-feed data recorders that they cannot remove from their persons during waking hours, and are offered a contract for 5,000 credits to observe! Of course, going to the Beta-X Research Facility is not exactly a picnic.

The crew will not take to them snooping around kindly, but the captain will have given the Player Characters permission to go wherever they want to and record whatever they need to in order for him to get his license-extension after this trip. He knows that the trips to Beta-X have taken a toll on many of the crew and some have left him over the past few months, and he needs proof that he is a good captain before he can requisition more from the home office.

The ship will spend roughly a month in total (travel time and orbit included) dealing with Beta-X, and the Player Characters will have a chance to see and report specifically on any or all of the following events.

- Crewman Outburst – A disgruntled engineer will throw a violent tantrum during mess one day. He will yell and carry on about the 'same old food' and 'back-breaking cot' before trying to assault the nearest person (perhaps the Player Characters?).
- Miners' Strike – One of the uranium mining encampments goes on strike, making it impossible to pick up loads. They will need to be negotiated with, and the captain needs fresh ideas (the Player Characters') and advice.
- Unstable Geyser Eruption – One of the liquid chromium geysers bursts through the ground and showers the landing shuttles with molten metal. The Player Characters will need to arrange for new transit back to the ship in orbit before their EVA suits run out of power and air or they will surely be cooked.
- Corporate Sabotage – The ship suffers a catastrophic explosion in one of its storage rooms, ripping an easily repaired hole in the hull, but leads the captain to think that there has to be an anti-IPX saboteur on board. The only problem is that many of the crew members think it might be one of the Player Characters…

The Plot Thickens

Once the mission is complete and the Player Characters are brought back to the starport of their choice, they will have to turn in their data recordings and then get debriefed by an IPX middle-manager and a commercial telepath to verify veracity. This could be the most interesting part of the entire scenario, as they truly have the capability to make or break Captain Rouse's career – and make a powerful ally or terribly enemy in the process.

Depending on how thorough, honest and useful the Player Characters are, they could also be setting themselves up to become IPX's new observation team on a regular basis. The company has more money than it could possibly ever use, and it could make any offer sweeter than the last. Even if it means observing a two-year trip out to the ruins of the Drakh-ridden Thenothk colonies, or perhaps weapons testing in old Dilgar space…

Rem-kal'ta
Ohran'khi
TAL-KONA'SHA
HURR REPUBLIC
GROME AUTOCR
Andromа
Gromahk
Goyal-Abba
Wahant
Innata
Omelos
Latig
Rohric
DRAZI FREEHOLD
Imphil
Drathun
Mofaka
ABBAI MATRIARCHATE
Alaca
Utriel
Tirolus
Melat
Zhabar
BALOSIAN
Abba
Balos
Heptharg
Fendamir
R-117
Roth
Shri-Shraba
Shambah
CORILLANI
Zagros
Tirrith
Corillan
Quadrant 7
Hilak
Tachung
Yonog
Sector 83
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BRAKIRI SYNDICRACY
Sorith
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Shra-Bal
Comac
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NARN REGIME
Brakos
Shu
Dross
Elitria
Krish
Quadrant 14
Mitoc
HOMEWORLD
Lorka
CASCOR COMMONWEALTH
Kotak
Ipsha
Gamma 7
Sigma 957
IPSHA BARONIES
Zachai
N'Chak'Fah
Sin'talith
Akdor
Janos
Coriana
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LLORT
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Theta
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VREE CONGLOMERATE
Nacambad
Proxima
Kor-Lya
Lotna
Denizala
Sol
EARTH ALLIANCE
Trogoh
Oleng
KOR-LYAN KINGDOMS
Ceti Gamma
Torat
Kazomi
Beta 7
Beta Durani
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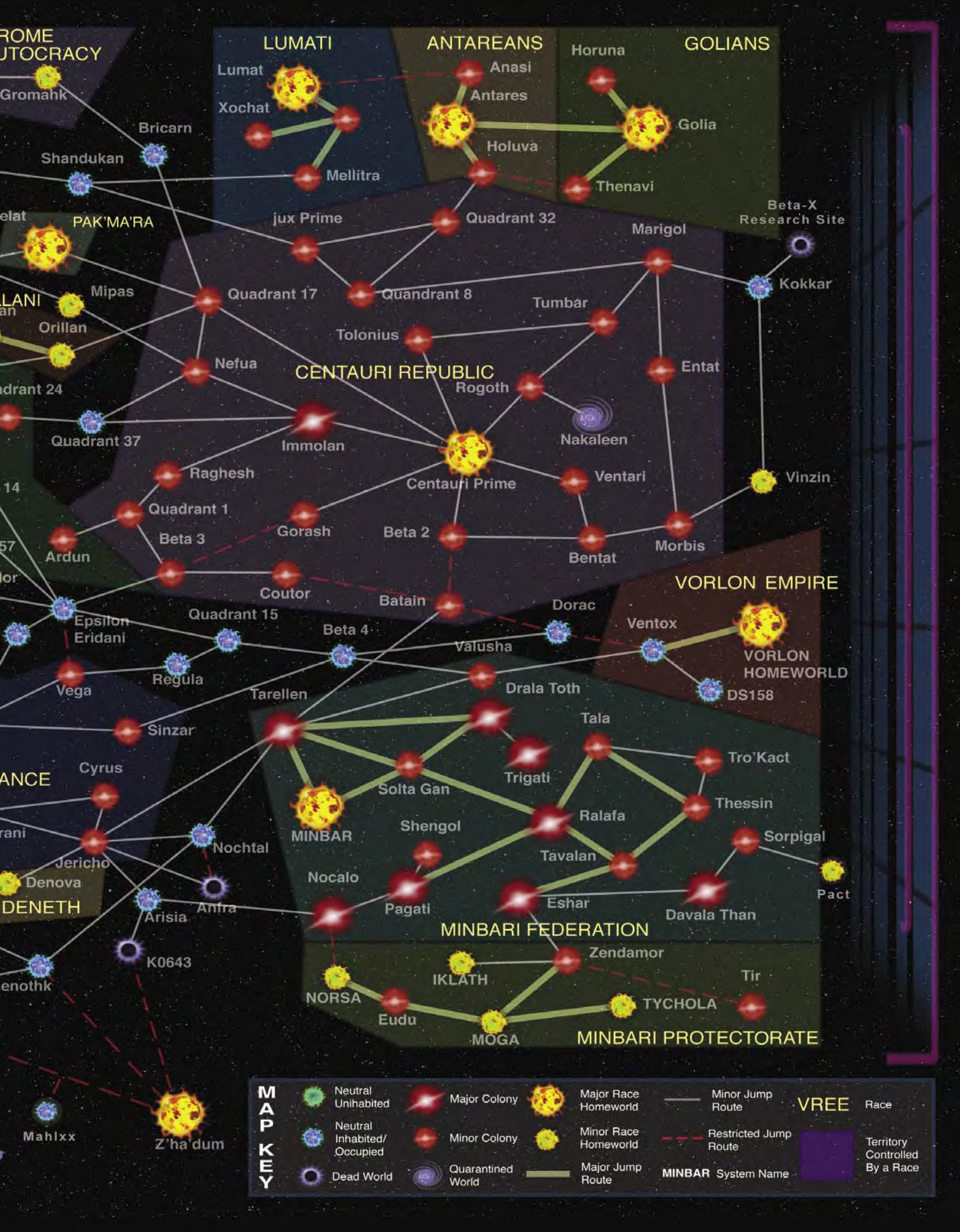
Tikan
Deneb
Jodan
TORTA REGENCY
CH'LONAS
Koula
TIKAR
Krindar
Zafran
KOULANI
Krich
Uthum
Daltron
Lleista
Korel
Gigmos
Soom
Tokat
Dura
Thenothk
Morad
TOKATI
Kandar
Zander
MORADI
Thrakalta
Ikarra
L-213
Praxis
TRAKALLAN
MAJOR SYSTEMS AND GOVERNMENTS OF 2257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Ventari
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Sorpigal
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Tavalan
Jericho
Denova
Nocalo
Pact
Pagati
Eshar
Davala Than
Arisia
Anfra
MINBARI FEDERATION
K0643
Zendamor
IKLATH
Tir
NORSA
TYCHOLA
Eudu
MOGA
MINBARI PROTECTORATE
Mahlxx
Z'ha'dum
MAP KEY
Neutral Unihabited
Neutral Inhabited/ Occupied
Dead World
Major Colony
Minor Colony
Quarantined World
Major Race Homeworld
Minor Race Homeworld
Major Jump Route
Minor Jump Route
Restricted Jump Route
MINBAR System Name
VREE Race
Territory Controlled By a Race

NEW LIFE FORMS & TECHNOLOGY

The brave souls that rocket out past the Rim in search of new frontiers and new worlds occasionally actually find interesting enough artefacts and organisms to bring back to the galaxy for study. This is the goal of many exploration missions: to find, claim and return with something new that the company or government can make use of – and profit from. Many have succeeded in this task in the past and the resulting technological advances or biological leaps made those trips successful. Sure there could be some *risk* in blindly bringing back samples of alien technology or life from past the safety of the galactic Rim…but most investors are willing to take the chance.

This chapter details several examples of life forms and technology that have been brought back from Rim explorations in the past, and contains a small section on equipment that could be seen as necessary by most mission teams.

NEW LIFE FORMS FROM THE RIM

There have been dozens of life form samples taken from exploration encounters throughout the years, many of which have been studied for decades to unlock whatever secrets they could tell the galactic races. Medical and genetic advances have been made due to their existence and research, as have some terrible consequences. Whatever the case, there exists a great precedent for studying biological samples from the Rim, hopefully learning from them for the betterment of all.

The following entries are statistical information on several new forms of life that have been brought back from the Rim in some fashion for study.

Fletcher's Mould

Discovered By: Professor Eric B. Fletcher, IPX Explorations; December 14th 2253
Where: Unknown Origin Derelict Spacecraft; 19 weeks outside of Ikarra jump beacon
Classification: Useful-class Basic Slime Mould

This blue tinted slime mould was sampled in large quantities on board a long-since derelict shuttle-like vessel found spinning through space several months past the Rim. The ship bore no other signs of life and was almost completely exhausted of breathable atmosphere; yet the slime mould managed to survive. Professor Fletcher, an eccentric oddball working with IPX because of his savant-esque mannerisms, took almost five kilograms worth of the sticky blue organism as a biological sample before deeming the rest of the shuttle too fragile to bring back. The ship was abandoned and the mould brought to Fletcher's Isolab. In the following forty-three weeks of the mission he spent almost every waking hour with the organism.

What he discovered was that the slime mould – which was later named after him – had an unbelievable cellular regeneration rate. It could effectively survive the vacuum of space or toxic atmosphere levels by simply letting its external layer die and harden while constantly regenerating the cells beneath, a process that seemed to actually give off oxygen in large amounts. Essentially, the environment it was in could not kill it faster than it could heal itself. Using this knowledge, Fletcher put the organism through all sorts of tests to determine its compatibility with common materials and some other forms of life, and discovered that the disgusting stuff only was capable of digesting vegetable matter.

By the time the mission team returned to the galaxy, Professor Fletcher had already put together a powerfully demonstrated proposal for the mould's potential uses. By spraying the thick blue organism on a non-vegetable object or life form (a large dog was used in the presentation), the now-covered object was all but immune to environmental damage! Fletcher's Mould would harden and regenerate when exposed to the harmful stimuli, forming a dense, bubbly shell around the object or life form – even creating bubbles of oxygen to be breathed while encased in the hard mould 'armour'. To test this, the dog was sprayed with copious amounts of the mould before being placed in a firing furnace. The mould hardened almost instantly, protecting the animal for a full ten minutes of direct heat. The dog was quickly broken free of the shell and, although sticky and very uncomfortable, was fine! The mould, other than what was hardened by the heat, was fine as well and infinitely reproducible and reusable. Fletcher had found the perfect emergency shield for environmental situations. Fletcher's Mould now comes standard with most IPX emergency packs and sells for almost 2,000 credits an ounce.

In game terms, Fletcher's Mould has a one-round reaction time when exposed to any sort of environmental damage (heat, cold, flame and so on), at which point it will harden. This outer shell has a hardness rating equal to whatever damage it actually suffered in the reacting round, and can withstand a number of hit points of damage equal to twice that number before cracking. The object or life form encased in the hardened mould cannot move, but can breathe in shallow breaths if an oxygen-friendly organism. Conversely, any vegetation that is touched by Fletcher's Mould will suffer 1D4 points of damage (ignoring hardness or DR) every hour until the mould has devoured it completely.

Chitinous Influenza (a.k.a Thrakallan Plague, Gaimpox)

Discovered By: Prefect Paydon Hessius, Exploration Edict of the Centaurum; July 11th 2264
Where: Slipped Moon A-9; six weeks outside of Vinzin jump beacon
Classification: Dangerous-class Basic Virus (*Resilient* Quirk)

What would be later become a deadly weapon in the Drakh's arsenal against the rapidly adaptive Gaim of the Interstellar Alliance, 'Chitinous Influenza' was discovered by a Centauri exploration mission (sponsored by the Drakh-controlled Minister of Science) that happened upon a small slipped moon almost two months outside the Vinzin system. The moon was still clinging to a great portion of its old atmosphere and was reading to have several species of small insects still alive on its moss-covered surface. The mission's Prefect sent explorers down to the moon's surface and had them return with samples.

These insect samples, when brought into the warmth of the vessel, began to shake and shudder uncomfortably in just a few hours – eventually splitting their own exoskeletons in a dazzling froth of liquefying fatty tissues. Research scientists immediately began to study the remains closely, as all of the samples of each of three different species had the same fatality. What they found was that the deaths were caused by a very specific form of virus that was dormant on the cooling moon, but re-activated when warmed back to room temperature. After further testing, the virus seemed harmless to non-insects and was brought back to Centauri Prime for possible re-evaluation.

Research proved that the virus targeted the fatty tissues that form the majority of an insect's internal body cushioning around its various organs, causing it to reproduce and swell far beyond the containment capabilities of the host's exoskeleton. The resulting pressure eventually becomes too much for the carapace plating, splitting the host at its weakest points.

It was decided upon by the Drakh-controlled Ministry of Defence to be placed in hold status indefinitely in case of 'any major insect infestation'. What was actually being done behind the scenes was the modification of the virus to be used as a powerful weapon against the insectoid Gaim – who had proven in past generations to be far too resilient to be dealt with by commonplace biological means, too numerous in their hives to be directly assaulted, and too alien to be infected with Keepers satisfactorily. If the Drakh could not conquer the insectoid race, they would gladly unleash the deadly virus into their population instead!

In game terms, Chitinous Influenza will only infect arthropods that come into contact with an infected portion of fatty tissues. With most insectoid races this is not an issue, as their fallen are often used as a food source for the greater colony. There is a single DC 25 Fortitude save to fight against the infection, taken each time the arthropod comes into contact with the virus. If failed, and the infected host is not placed in a temperature of less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the virus will begin the painful swelling of internal tissues in 1d6 hours. Each hour thereafter the host suffers 1d3 points of damage to all Ability Scores and hit points, dying in a grisly, exoskeleton-splitting display when any of those numbers reach 0.

Hull Worms; Navismort Annelida

Discovered By: Captain Steven Ratherow, EAS *Magellan*; November 5th 2253
Where: EA-10; 12 weeks outside of Wahant jump beacon
Classification: Dangerous-class Simple Segmented Worm (*Void-Traveller* Quirk)

'Found' on a brief stop to a metallic planetoid called EA-10 in the official records, the horrifying beast known to most spacefarers only as *hull worms* is to spacecraft as lice are to mammals. The first exploration team sent to EA-10 from the EAS *Magellan* reported very little in the way of life-supporting chemicals or atmosphere, took a few soil samples and then returned to the Explorer-class vessel waiting for them in orbit. That landing would prove to bring a horrible infestation with them, but not in the samples – it was attached to their hull.

When they set the shuttle down for a few hours of sampling, the ferrous materials used in the construction of the hull sent certain chemical signals down into the lead-heavy crust of the planetoid. Following those chemical

signatures up to the veritable feast of the shuttle were several dozen chrome-skinned worms that exist only to do two things – eat and reproduce. This would not be a problem if it were not for their food source…anything containing iron or iron alloys. Aptly called 'hull worms' by the surprised crew of the *Magellan*, and much to their dismay, the metre-long beasts actually drilled rather quickly through the outer hull of the shuttle!

Not knowing how best to contain worms that could tunnel through metal, Captain Ratherow decided to just space the entire shuttle rather than risk a hull breach or dangerous contagion. Four days later, the bridge received word of atmospheric leakage in the aft sections of the ship. When they sent worker crews to investigate and repair, they found that the hull worms had apparently survived the spacing and managed to somehow attach themselves to the outer hull of the Explorer. It took them only four days to burrow through the ship's external layers, and the leakage came from their entry holes. The hull holes were repaired and the crew set out to capture any worms still on board the vessel.

The worms proved difficult to contain in anything except plastic, and were quite capable of inflicting nasty and painful 'bites' if given the chance when handled. They were bottled as best they could be and saved for EarthGov to choose what to do with them. They were cryogenically stored in several science facilities, but rumour had it that President Clark sent several of the horrible beasts as biological weapons to several alien governments anonymously during his reign of terror – meaning that the metal eating organisms are still out there *somewhere*.

H-ll W_—
Small Alien Creature
Character Level: 3 (9 hp)
Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)
Speed: 10 ft./20 ft. swim
DV: 13 (+2 Size, +1 Dex)
Attack: Bore +5
Damage: 1D2
Special Qualities: Natural DR 10, Metalphage, *Void-Traveller* Quirk
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 24, Int –, Wis 4, Cha –
Skills: Athletics +3, Notice +4, Stealth +3
Feats: Iron Will

Metalphage: Hull worms can sense any amount of iron-based metallic alloy or ore within 60 ft. automatically, and can burrow one inch per hour through metallic substances. In combat this means that a hull worm's boring attack will ignore the hardness or DR of any metallic-based object.

Traveller's Moss; Brachythesium Oxyianus

Discovered By: Doctor Shayli Yacula, Matriarchy Mothers of Science; February 26th 2231
Where: Goyal-Abba (see page 66)
Classification: Useful-class Simple Proto-Flora

One of the most useful findings from the discovery and repeated exploration of Goyal-Abba, this bright green moss was originally thought to be biologically like any other found in the galaxy. Luckily for the Matriarchate it was Doctor Yacula that decided to pursue further testing on the simple moss while her peers focussed on new breeds of fish and molluscs. Her experiments would revolutionise the Abbai spacefaring industry.

Traveller's Moss is a feathery green moss that grows quickly on moist soil or decomposing compost, and gives off a rather fragrant odour similar to that of an Earth pine tree. It is very soft to the touch and durable enough to be walked upon without too much physical damage to its structures. Even though it is nothing extraordinary on the outside, it has a staggeringly useful internal array of cellular structures that Doctor Yacula was fortunate enough to find.

What she found was that each cellular colony of moss cells functions in a similar way to an animal's lung, processing atmospheric chemicals like carbon dioxide and nitrogen into a clean by-product…oxygen. This is normal for most plant life, but Doctor Yacula found one odd anomaly in the production *rate* of Traveller's Moss: it somehow churns out an almost equal amount of oxygen as the gases it absorbs! This feathery proto-flora was almost as efficient as current life-support scrubbers, and completely natural. This meant that a moist environment (like all Abbai space vessels happen to be) could grow large patches of the moss and be able to route a great percentage of power and computing upkeep away from hardwired life support systems. This moss would truly revolutionise the Abbai shipbuilding and space travel industries.

Doctor Yacula was awarded a massive grant from the Matriarchy Mothers of Science (MMS) and was put in charge of the xenobotanical research department for the Matriarchate as a whole. Traveller's Moss is now a staple part of any Abbai ship manifest and is being raised on several Abbai colonies and in governmental agricultural centres wherever possible. It costs roughly 10,000 credits per twenty-kilogram unit, and is available only through the League of Non-Aligned Worlds.

In game terms, it takes one-hundred kilograms of Traveller's Moss to fill a single Crew Construction Space on a common spacecraft. For each Crew Space noted as being filled with Traveller's Moss, the ship can support five Crew Space's worth of additional passengers without negatively affecting the life-support ratio of the vessel.

Agh'u Iek ('Forever Rat')

Discovered By: Junior Executive Vega Tinnipa, Ak-Habil Conglomerate (Explorations and Excavations); June 19th 2240
Where: Abandoned Drazi Spacecraft; seven days outside Shri-Shaba jump beacon
Classification: Social-class Complex Mammal (*Hyper-Reproductive* Quirk)

Junior Executive Vega Tinnipa's mission was to venture out past the Hyach borders, find any form of life and bring it back to show investors that they were not throwing money away with Ak-Habil. No longer than a standard week after jumping out of the Rim did Vega's ship pick up a weak distress signal floating in the Void. Answering the call, Vega found an old Drazi exploration cruiser just sort of hanging in space. Sensors claimed it was filled with life, but it still would not answer any hails with anything other than its automated distress signal. They made the choice to board it just in case the Drazi communications were damaged.

What they found when they locked on an umbilical and forced open the airlock doors was shocking to say the least. Dozens of fist-sized, red-furred rodents came scampering out of the ship and through the umbilical – some even made it on board Vega's ship before the crew could get the secondary hatches closed! As they entered the Drazi vessel they found it to be utterly deserted except for dozens of the chittering little rats. The rats were extremely curious about the newcomers, climbing all over them and squeaking often and loudly to one another. The science officer on board determined that the rodent was not in any data records they knew of, and although the Drazi seemed to abandon their chance at bringing them home for whatever reason, Vega would not pass up such an easy success.

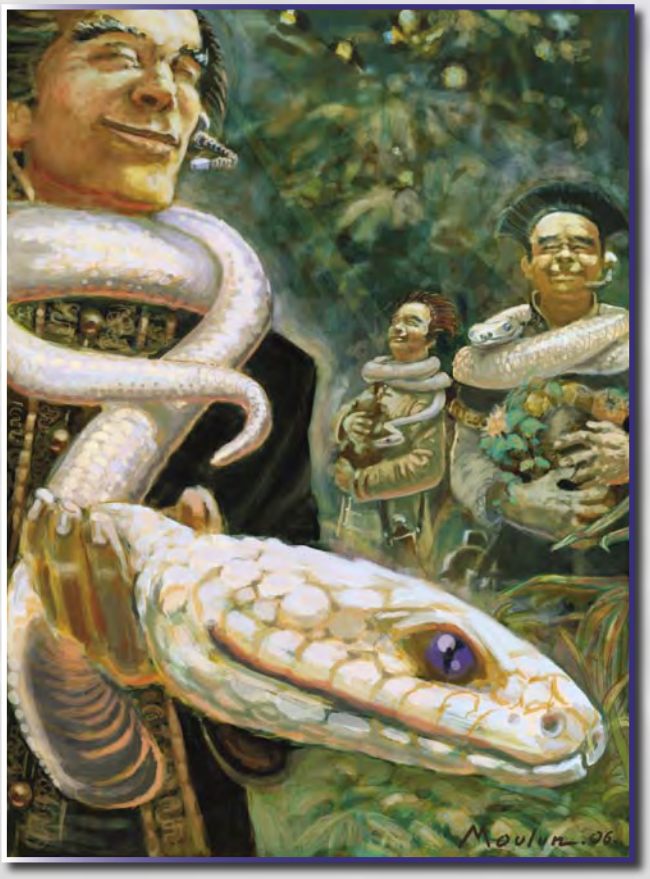
The rodents are small, reddish-furred and have long, hairless tails. Their ears are very adept at picking up sounds from all around them, and it is suggested that they can actually see in perfect clarity and colour. This ability to take in high levels of stimuli possibly adds to the creatures' strange curiosity toward larger, possibly predatory life forms. They are very active at all times of day and night and sleep briefly in small 'naps' in order to conserve energy. They are cute, cuddly, social…and a threat to any enclosed life-support system.

It was on the trip back that Vega realised why the Drazi had abandoned their vessel. The rats – now named Agh'u Iek, or Forever Rat – multiplied exponentially in just a few weeks! The samples were bursting out of their containment units, they were being found in every foodstuff on board the ship ;, and they seemed completely curious about crew members. If not for the larger hold and faster engines of the Brakiri ship, the life-support systems of the vessel would have been taxed to dangerous levels and the Brakiri too would have had to evacuate. However, they made it back to a Comac affiliate and deposited the clever little pests into a holding facility that now has to sterilise thousands of the rats every month or risk an over-populating bloom that they would never be able to contain.

F_-_-_ R_-
Diminutive Alien Creature
Character Level: 1 (3 hp)
Initiative: +10 (+4 Improved Initiative, +5 Dex, +1 Racial Bonus)
Speed: 40 ft./20 ft. climb
DV: 19 (+4 Size, +5 Dex)
Attack: Bite +2
Damage: 1
Special Qualities: *Hyper-Reproductive* Quirk*
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +8, Will –1
Abilities: Str 4, Dex 20, Con 8, Int –, Wis 6, Cha –
Skills: Athletics +5, Notice +8, Stealth +8
Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

*Forever Rats have a cumulative 10% per day chance of doubling the number of adult rats in their colony. Once this doubling takes place the next day's chance reverts back to 10%, only to start the cycle again. They grow to their adult stage in a matter of days, faster when given nutritious food to augment their metabolisms. They can become a hazard to life-support or food supplies in just a few weeks, but it is up the Games Master to decide the exact nature of what their overpopulation would mean for his own campaign.

Republican Viper



Discovered By: Captain Gaolyn Orestes, CRS *Duellist*; October 5th 2259
Where: 'New Immolan;' 11 weeks outside Bricarn jump beacon
Classification: Intelligent-class Complex Reptile (*Telepathic* Quirk)

When the initial battles against the Narn were being fought along the borders between the Centauri Republic and the Regime, some of the early battles did not go well for the Centauri. One ship very nearly run down and destroyed by the Narn was the CRS *Duellist*, whose captain chose to blindly jump away toward the Rim rather than ever be captured by 'barbaric Narns.' When Captain Orestes was satisfied he was no longer in any danger, he jumped back to realspace – only to find that he was *far* off course and none of his instruments were giving him any useful information. He had shot out past the Rim and would likely be stranded out there forever.

Luck smiled upon him after nearly three months and two near mutinies, and he happened upon a beautiful gem of a world that he immediately claimed for the Republic and named for his family's primary base of world operations; he called it New Immolan. Since his vessel was no science vessel, he sent his landing shuttles down to the planet in search of food and water. They found all of this and much, much more. Many of them came back with dazzling white serpents coiled around their necks. These serpents had eyes the colour of the Republic's own royal crest and somehow were able to soothe anyone they came into contact with using some form of muted telepathy. Always convinced of the workings of the gods in Republic matters, Orestes allowed the serpents to come on board as pets for anyone who they *chose*.

When the ship left New Immolan with hopes of somehow finding their way home they had two dozen of the rudimentarily intelligent predators as guests upon their ship. It just so happened that the next jump allowed the *Duellist* to pick up the local beacon at Anasi, and Orestes returned to find that the Republic had all but defeated the Narns in their absence. He attributed this to the gods' pride in his finding and brought the white serpents to the Centaurum to tell of his prophetic success beyond the Rim.

When he was about to tell Emperor Cartagia of his findings, the serpents sensed the madness in the Emperor and became unsettled and quickly aggressive to any and all within striking range. Seven Centaurum members were bitten and suffered horrible fevers,

two of the *Duellist*'s crew were shot dead by Imperial Guardsmen to keep Cartagia safe and Orestes himself –with all of his 'Republican Vipers'- were banished to the hell of Nakaleen. It is said that Gaolyn Orestes still lives on Nakaleen as a wilderness prophet, kept safe from the Feeders by the vipers that revere him as their king of sorts. No one will ever find out if the Republic can help it; what can survive on Nakaleen should *stay* on Nakaleen.

Republican Viper
Small Alien Creature (P-6 Telepath)
Character Level: 6 (18 hp)
Initiative: +7 (+4 Improved Initiative, +3 Dex)
Speed: 20 ft./10 ft. climb
DV: 15 (+2 Size, +3 Dex)
Attack: Bite +6
Damage: 1D4 plus venom
Special Qualities: Venomous Bite, *Telepathic* Quirk
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +4
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills: Athletics +6, Intimidate +6, Notice +10, Stealth +10, Telepathy +6
Feats: Adaptive Mind, Alertness, Improved Initiative
Telepathy: Republican Vipers count as being P6s, and can use the following abilities: *Daze, Nerve Stimulation, Pain, Jamming, Idea Seed, Message, Warning, Surface Scan, Sense Telepathy.*

Venom: Anyone suffering damage from the bite of a Republican Viper must make a Fortitude save versus poison at DC 18 or suffer 1d6 points of Dexterity damage; secondary damage on following rounds is only 1d3 Dexterity damage and must be saved against every hour until the save is passed or proper anti-venom is applied to the victim.

New Technologies From Beyond the Rim

Where life forms are exciting and possibly profitable to xenobiologists and genetics research, the main reason so many exploration missions risk so much is to hopefully come across some piece of new *technology*. Finding a new chemical compound or mysterious alloy could revolutionise the shipbuilding industry, or bring about a complete overhaul of jump gate construction. What might be a common trinket to the naked eye could be the key to inter-dimensional travel or complete viral immunity. Nothing is certain anymore as to what might be waiting in the Greater Void to be discovered. It stands to reason that anything is possible; humans never believed in hyperspace until after it was revealed to them. What else might the universe be waiting to reveal?

The following few entries are statistical information of a small selection of new technology that have been brought back from the Rim for study, reverse-engineering and eventual duplication.

Universal Inorganic Solvent (Dichlorinol Hydroquantide)

Discovered By: Captain Barzak, Freehold Exploration Fleet; May 4th 2258
Where: Tail of Comet PRZ-77; eight weeks outside of Andromma jump beacon

Discovered in frozen form in the area of a small comet, this yellowish, viscous fluid is possibly one of the most dangerous substances ever to have come back from a Rim exploration mission. Unfortunately for the galaxy, it was discovered by the Drazi. It was happened upon when a prominent ship in the Freehold Exploration Fleet stopped in the area surrounding a frozen oxygen comet to drag in chunks of water in order to refill life-support measures for the journey home. When they began to filter out all the impurities in the ice, several globules of yellow fluid began to thaw – and immediately eat through the deck of the shuttle! With quick thinking on the part of Captain Barzak, the hangar bay was immediately vented of atmosphere and exposed to the cold of the Void. The globules (and any crewmembers nearby) froze instantly and the ship was saved.

When the substance was returned to the Freehold, the Drazi managed to use cryogenics chambers to move the samples of the acid around and researchers were called in from all around. Scientifically classified as *dichlorinol hydroquantide*, this naturally occurring chemical compound baffles some of the best research scientists of all the League worlds. The chemicals involved in creating the substance should not be able to combine like they do. The primary components – chlorine, hydrogen and Quantium-40 – are not chemically attractive to one another in any form. It is a mystery to galactic science that this substance should exist.

The 'Universal Inorganic Solvent' is possibly the most powerful room-temperature acid compound known to exist. It can eat through deck plating in minutes, and does not seem to have a stopping point until it eventually boils off by chemical corrosion. The only way to stop it is to force it to its relatively low freezing point (–10 degrees Fahrenheit), at which point it can be handled like any other solid. In game terms, contact with the Solvent inflicts 1D6 points of damage automatically to anything it comes into contact with in its liquid form, ignoring hardness and DR after a single round of contact. A liquid ounce of the Solvent is able to dissolve

up to two hundred pounds worth of solid matter before 'boiling' away, and costs 100,000 credits and a Drazi Freehold (Political or Military) Influence check (DC 25) to acquire.

Gravitational Stabiliser

Discovered By: Crew Chief Deg'yarr Pux, Fourteenth Autocratic Exploration; August 10th 2260
Where: Destroyed Alien Ship; two weeks outside of Gromahk jump beacon

The Grome are not commonly very adventurous when it comes to venturing outside the Rim, but only a few weeks into their fourteenth scheduled excursion they happened upon the wreckage of what they believed might have been a Hurr or Lumati escort cruiser. Knowing that they would want to report any deaths and possibly save the main computer's core for their galactic neighbours, the Grome sent explorers on board. When they arrived they discovered that they were very wrong about their speculations and that the vessel was utterly unidentifiable. The mission immediately turned from solemn salvage to eager investigation.

In their ransacking of a more-or-less destroyed vessel, the Grome found several small devices that seemed to cling to the floor as if there were a strong gravity on board the floating hulk – which was not the case. Thinking them to be strong magnets of some kind, the explorers took them. As soon as an explorer would pick up one of the discs, he would immediately 'fall' to the nearest wall or floor as if gravity suddenly took effect upon him. By turning a disc on its axis, they discovered that they could affect which direction this 'gravity' was pulling! They were personal gravity devices, and they would be a huge boon in the spacefaring efforts of the Autocracy. The Grome took as many as they could find…forty-six. These were brought back immediately to Grome space and given to researchers for study and, hopefully, reverse-engineering.

Each disc is roughly five inches in diameter and only half-an-inch thick at the centre. There are no seams, no (de)activation buttons and no way to open the device short of cutting it. Not wanting to ruin even a single one of the fabulous devices even though its secrets could mean artificial gravity for their ships, or billions of credits in sales to other races' spacefaring industries, forty of the devices were distributed to the highest ranking officers in the naval military; six remain in research custody.

A gravitational stabiliser, when held or worn with its edge pointing toward the floor and ceiling, generates a localised field of gravity at *exactly* 0.97g no matter what other gravitational force or lack thereof is present. The bearer will always be considered to be at Standard Gravity for all purposes, so long as the device is intact. Each disc has a hardness of 12 and six hit points, and costs 200,000 credits if a Grome Autocracy (Scientific or Military) Influence skill check (DC 25) is passed.

'Polymer-X'

Discovered By: Commonwealth Captain Weginol, Free Cascoran Explorer *Fable-Chaser*; April 1st 2262
Where: Debris Cluster; 22 weeks outside of Elitria jump beacon

Ignoring travel protocols instituted by the Ipsha Baronies, Commonwealth Captain Weginol of the Cascor raced out of the Rim while ignoring hails and protocol recommendations barraging him from all sides – causing quite a stir in the politics between the two galactic neighbouring League races. Weginol, in an effort to save time and Commonwealth money, simply made the jump without permission. When Ipsha hails began to sound as upset as Interlac will carry, he threw open the proverbial throttle and soared out into the Rim to officially begin his mission. In his exuberance he overshot any semblance of rim ping that he might have had locked, if any.

Thoroughly lost for almost two standard years, Weginol and his crew were thankful for eventually finding a large debris cluster out in the middle of the vast nothingness. Although not very helpful to them in any significant way, it was *something*. Performing normal explorer protocols, the team took dozens of samples and returned to the ship to research them before looking into more. Most of the samples were worthless rock, but three close groupings had a strange granule permeating them that seemed to bind together with one another when gathered. It was some sort of cellular plastic, capable of joining into a single piece if two pieces touched. Other than with a sonic-enhanced scalpel, the material was impervious to harm. Knowing the possibilities of such a material, Weginol filled his hold with as much of the substance as he could and set course to return to the galaxy.

After answering weeks' worth of questions about his scandalous exit, Weginol unveiled his mission's new find…Polymer-X. This mysterious plastic could not be melted, frozen or otherwise punctured; it was the perfect protective coating. Weginol sold the material for a fortune to his government, and retired happily after the Ipsha demanded that his flight status be revoked. Now the Cascor have this strange material that can withstand almost any type of physical damage, and that automatically repairs itself. The possibility of use is mind-boggling, yet the Cascor have barely experimented with it – they are far too happy to have something that other races want!

In game terms, Polymer-X is a pliable plastic material with a hardness of 40 and 200 hit points per square yard! The only type of energy that ignores this hardness value is anything even partially based on sonic energy or vibration; this ignores any damage reducing effects of the plastic and actually inflicts double normal damage. Polymer-X costs 150,000 credits per square yard, and only if a DC 22 Cascor Commonwealth (Economic) Influence check is passed.

Muon Generator

Discovered By: Ipsha Baronial Salvage Corps; March 2nd 2262
Where: Battle Site; seven hours outside of Eklor jump beacon

Not all Rim technology has been found due to galactic excursions beyond the boundaries of known space; sometimes it is brought to the galactic races' doorsteps. This was the case in the wake of the mysterious 'Redhelm' attacks on Ipsha and Gaim territories, which then moved on to Babylon 5 to be thwarted by the White Star fleet. Even though the Redhelms had the element of surprise and caused a great deal of damage to the Ipsha Defence Globes that battled them, they took several casualties from Ipsha energic cannons; much wreckage was left behind.

Knowing that the ISA would send allies to aid them in defence and clean up, the Ipsha were quick to scoop up whatever technologies they could manage from the derelict Redhelm ships. One such piece of technology that was found many times over was the deadly muon generator – the main component to the powerful weapons of the Rim invaders. Gathering the generators, the Ipsha were able to create several working anti-muon cannons and muon beams for their own ships. Truly a secret project that has only been leaked through nefarious methods, the muon generator is a piece of Rim technology that came to this galaxy – not the other way around.

In game terms, a single muon generator is a cylindrical device around twenty cubic feet in size and almost a thousand pounds that can be worked with the proper Technical (electrical) skill checks into starship weaponry. One muon generator costs no less than 25 million credits and requires a Ipsha Baronies (Military) Influence check (DC 30) to obtain.

New Starship Weaponry

The following pieces of starship equipment require the specified number of muon generators to function, and have the listed statistics for the ship to which it is attached.

Name	Range	Offence	Qualities	Weapon Spaces	Muon Generators Needed
Anti-Muon Cannon	Close	30 + Special[1]	N/A	1	2
Muon Beam	Long	50 + Special[1]	Beam 2d3	2	3
Prismatic Bolt	Close	25	N/A	1	1

[1] Any ship that suffers structural spaces of damage from this weapon immediately suffers +1 crew space worth of damage per hit.

Teep-Shredder

Discovered By: Watch Captain Kyle Dantan, Nightwatch 'Raider Cell'; November 17th 2268
Where: Unknown Alien Encounter; three weeks outside of KO643 jump beacon

There are some technologies that should have never been uncovered by the people who did so, and the aptly named 'teep-shredder' is a perfect example of this. After the Earth Civil War and Clark's suicide, the remaining members of Nightwatch turned into a band of anti-alien human supremacists that had a serious hatred for two things: Sheridan's Interstellar Alliance for deposing Clark, and the Psi Corps for standing idly by while they did so. Running from ISA agents, Captain Kyle Dantan and a few of his fellows hijacked a small science vessel just outside of the Arisia transfer point, aiming it toward a hidden rendezvous point on KO643. One of the scientists on board valiantly tried to throw the hijacker off course and triggered the jump drive early, sending him out into the Rim.

After regaining control of the vessel, Dantan ordered the crew at gunpoint to use the ship's significant sensors to get them back home. During that long and tense trip back they were contacted by a small crew of previously unknown race of aliens that seemed like everything a Rim exploration team would want to meet – friendly, curious and highly advanced. Kyle arranged for the two ships to be linked and convinced the aliens to show him the proper way back to the galaxy. After they claimed to verify he was not a 'mind thief' with a small handheld device, Kyle then used his significant talent for ambushes and terrorist traps to completely slaughter the aliens…all in the name of human superiority. The scientists wept at the loss to research as Kyle nabbed a few of the anti-telepathy devices and followed the course home they had laid.

Once back he had all of the scientists killed for sedition against humanity, and then set to test the 'mind-thief' devices. Extensive and costly testing proved that the device created a field of mental feedback that was painful – sometimes *lethal* – to telepaths who use their abilities in its presence. It did not take long for Nightwatch-friendly researchers to try and reverse-engineer the device in order to get them seeded all across the galaxy.

In game terms, the Teep-Shredder is a handheld black box with a simple trigger that turns on or off the anti-telepath field. The field itself is twenty-five feet in all directions, and somehow uses the existence of hyperspace to pass through solid objects. Any telepath caught in the field has his P-Rating temporarily reduced by half

That is all?

Those few examples are obviously not *all* that have been found in the Greater Void out beyond the Rim, but they are all that we had room to show you for now. We will likely describe more extra-galactic devices and technologies in future *Babylon 5* sourcebooks and scenarios, but in the meantime we encourage our fans and Games Masters to come up with their own interesting technologies that could be unearthed out in the vast darkness beyond...

(round down), and all nonlethal damage suffered from the use of Telepathic Abilities is considered to be *doubled* and *lethal*. Acquiring one of these devices would cost 250,000 credits and a Nightwatch (Criminal) Influence check (DC 25).

New Equipment for Rim Explorers

There are a number of devices and protective measures that any Rim exploration mission should never be without, especially when knowing the risks they are likely to face in the chaos outside the galaxy. Although a good needler and PPG are never far on the list of priorities for a ground team in any mission, these few items might rank a little higher overall.

The following are new pieces of equipment for Rim explorers to make use of in their travels and research.

Data Transmission Lens (DTL)

The best friends of any exploration vessel, DTLs are helmet or shoulder-mounted data recording devices that take in a dozen different wavelengths of information from audio and visual to thermographic and barometric levels all at once and transmit them to a ship's computer in orbit. Although this device might seem somewhat morbid, it was constructed to keep whatever data each individual exploration officer recorded from getting lost should something *unforeseen* happen to him. Since the DTL does not actually record anything at all, there is no time limit as to how much information it can take on. It does, however, have solar cells that keeps it powered in pitch blackness for up to seven standard hours.

Environmental Protection Suit mk.II (EPS2)

Slightly different from a common EVA suit, the EPS-2 is very lightly armoured from physical damage. It has vastly improved shielding from the elements and temperature changes, allowing for comfortable conditions in climates ranging from –50 to 150 degrees. It is made of flame retardant and chemically resistant polymers that give the entire EPS-2 an effective DR of 25 against normal acid, heat, cold, flame or radiation-based damages. It is quite bulky otherwise, and although it offers a standard DR of one against physical or energy-based attacks, it imposes a –20 ft, penalty to Speed and –5 to all Dex-based skills.

Hyperspace Echo-Location Software Kit

IPX's greatest leap in narrowing down Rim-based searches for planetoids and star systems, the HEL system is little more than two or three dozen external sensors and a transmission array that must be attached to outer hull of a vessel, as well as the elaborate and powerful software program needed to use them in conjunction with a common sensor suite. Having a HEL system on a vessel adds an additional Control Space, dedicated to the routing systems and transmission conduits, to its profile. For how to actually use the HEL system to form a rim ping and follow it properly, see page 6 of this book.

Medical Emergency Stabiliser

When something goes wrong during a Rim exploration, it often goes *very* wrong. This adhesive-backed, dinner plate sized module is the best solution to any unknown emergencies the Abbai have been able to create. Essentially the Stabiliser is a combination scanner/trauma kit that can be used without compromising the seal of a proper environmentally sealed suit. Without having to know the exact nature of a medical emergency during an exploration (not all scientists are skilled at medical arts!), the Stabiliser has the best chance to help. Simply removing the plastic backer activates the chemical adhesive and allows the device to be placed on either the chest or upper back of the patient. The AI program in the Stabiliser then takes over, scanning the victim for tell-tale signs of medical ailments and administering hypodermic chemicals as needed. The Medical Emergency Stabiliser is considered to have a Medical Skill of +18, and enough chemical medications and other drugs to treat someone for twelve hours. Due to the nature of the Stabiliser, it is a one use item.

Sampler Gauntlet

Rim exploration teams have to take soil, atmosphere, hydrosphere and biological samples constantly while they are investigating. Although carrying a heavy case of instruments is a possibility for some, the new IPX-created Sampler Gauntlet is much easier. It is a thick forearm and fist gauntlet that contains several containers and sampling devices that allow the wearer to take the necessary samples with just a few flicks of the fingers inside the oversized gauntlet and a touch of the mechanical hand. Although nothing but a hindrance in close combat (–3 to all attack rolls), it is equipped with a sonic-scalpel for special samplings that could theoretically be triggered as a weapon to inflict 1D4 damage that ignores DR or hardness.

New Exploration-related Equipment

Item	Cost	I/R	Weight
Data Transmission Lens	3,500 cr.	R	5 lb.
Environmental Protection Suit mk. II	3,500 cr.	—	40 lb.
HEL Software Kit	250,000 cr.	R	N/A
Medical Emergency Stabiliser	800 cr.	R	8 lb.
Sampler Gauntlet	2,500 cr.	—	32 lb.

SCENARIO INTRODUCTION — 'DO NOT ASK WHERE THIS COMES FROM'

Handing the Player Characters a solid opportunity to screw things up is sometimes the best form of entertainment around the gaming table, especially when they have been suitably warned of their impending folly. Like giving a child a new toy and then saying not to use it, the Player Characters might be tempted by technology that came from somewhere very far away.

The Set-Up

This is a scene that could take place in any out of the way establishment, possibly on the account of a mysterious message from an old friend – especially if it is a friend that is not exactly known for his law-abiding ways.

'Hey,' he says as he slides into the table and sets his sweaty glass down, 'glad you showed up. I was worried for a little while, but I told 'em you'd come through.' He passes a small plastic locker key to you under the table and takes a deep drink, 'Its in 72 A… I need you to hold it for me for like, a week or so? Don't open it, and don't ask where I got it, just be ready for my call when I need it. Thanks!'

Like a ghost he disappears into the crowd, and you are left holding a small red key labelled '72-A'.

The key is to a static locker elsewhere on the station/colony/plaza, and contains a large black box made of expensive composite synthetics – the kind used to protect very expensive items. It is not labelled, nor does it bear any form of locking mechanism, just a simple electronic latch. The box was recently stolen from Transdimentics Incorporated, a private Rim exploration firm that specialises in alien technologies. It contains an experimental bio-feedback pistol that can kill almost any humanoid in a single hit (Fortitude save (DC 20) or complete vitals failure), but it also contains a very powerful tachyon-tracker that is activated when the latch is opened.

The Player Characters could manage to avoid opening it, thereby giving it back to their contact/ally at the end of the week. If they do so, they deserve a reward of some sort – it takes a lot of willpower not to at least want to take a peek at the contents of a mysterious black box. Their ally might have some credits to give, or perhaps something else he had stolen in exchange for their diligence.

Of course if they did open it to see what they were carrying, the tracker will go off and Transdimentics Inc. bounty hunters will be dispatched en masse to bring their prototype Rimtech pistol back to them – by any means. This could put the Player Characters in a week-long chase or fire fight after fire fight with trained killers. It will be a hectic week for them, and likely one they will never soon forget.

The Plot Thickens

There are a few things that the Games Master can do to spice things up a bit for the Player Characters. He could have enemies of their ally try to take the box from them, or even have the bounty hunters show up to investigate. What if they find their ally before the week is out and capture him? Will he sell them out? Will they kill him – leaving them with this box and nowhere to be rid of it? Will they just turn it over and risk angering the mysterious 'them' that their ally spoke of so nervously?

Even if they make it through the whole week unscathed, they now have a new problem. Transdimentics Inc. has their faces and possibly identities on record, and know they had something to do with the theft of their powerful new Rimtech prototype. What the Player Characters never knew was that there were ten of those prototypes stolen, and that they have unwittingly been tied to all of them because of this whole deal. Transdimentics' bounty hunters still want to find the other nine, and they can be quite persuasive when they need to be…

EXPLORER VESSELS

Although we were shown the famous and massive Earth Alliance Explorer-class vessel in the *Babylon 5* series episode *A Distant Star*, we know that many of the other galactic governments and commercial powers also have vessels designed to take teams large and small into unknown space and perform mapping, research and sampling of whatever they can find there.

This chapter details a handful of the most popular exploration vessels the galaxy has to offer.

Explorer-class Survey Ship

Earth Alliance

The largest class of vessel to be found in the Earth Alliance, the Explorer survey ship is designed to roam unexplored regions of hyperspace, acting as vanguard to other craft on the frontiers of known space. It is the role of Explorers to plot positions of new star systems and build or record new jump gates that will be used by the following craft if possible. Using the HEL navigational software to great effect once it was sold to EarthForce, several of the Explorers have been permanently relocated for tours beyond the Rim. The command, control and personnel quarters fill the rotating centre section of an Explorer's immense superstructure, while to the fore is a large zero-gravity construction and launch facility. This artificial gravity helps crews that will be living on board for their missions a great deal.

Too expensive to mass produce, especially for their rather specific roles, only six Explorer ships are ever put into service at any one time. Collectively they map the Rim and have uncovered a multitude of new scientific discoveries that have fuelled research and development within the Earth Alliance in many areas of industry and science. Because of their extremely extended missions (up to five years in duration), it is extremely rare for even high-ranking EarthForce officials to see one up close during their careers. It remains the dream of many ship captains and commanders to gain command of an Explorer ship and begin searching the Rim, travelling to stars never before seen by human eyes.

The Six EA Explorers

The six Explorer-class vessels currently in service (as of 2265) and where they are assigned are as follows:

EAS *Cortez* – Searching the Rim area between Minbari and Lower League governments
EAS *Magellan* – Searching the stretches of galaxy surrounding the old Dilgar Empire
EAS *Coronado* – Currently missing off the hyperspace beacon near Ikarra 7
EAS *Vespucci* - Searching the fading rimward jump routes of the Hyach, Llort and Kor-Lyan
EAS *Verrazzano* – Mapping previously blockaded hyperspace routes near Vorlon Empire territory
EAS *Shackleton* – Searching for stable jump routes on the Rim systems of the Minbari Protectorate (with ISA permission)

Explorer Survey Ship
Colossal Spacecraft
Defence Value: –2 (–16 size, +4 Handling); **Armour:** 24; **Handling:** +4; **Sensors:** + 10; **Stealth:** 0; **Stress:** 4; **Features:** Artificial Gravity, Fusion Engine, Jump Point, Targeting Computer (+3)
Crew: EarthForce Line (+4 BAB, +9 Training); 10 Officers, 30 Pilots, 40 Sensor Operatives, 250 Crewmen
Construction Spaces: 282 (Cargo 100, Control 5, Crew 100, Engine 31, Hangar 18, Weapons 28)
Fore Arc Weapons
5 Twin-linked Heavy Pulse Cannon (Long, Offence 30, Rapid Fire 3, four weapon spaces)
5 Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
5 Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
5 Mk II Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 *or* Intercept 15, one weapon space)
Port Arc Weapons
5 Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)

- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Mk II Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 *or* Intercept 15, one weapon space)

Starboard Arc Weapons

- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Mk II Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 *or* Intercept 15, one weapon space)

Aft Arc Weapons

- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Twin-linked Particle Beams (Close, Offence 9, two weapon spaces)
- Mk II Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 *or* Intercept 15, one weapon space)

Craft (6): Nine Light Shuttles, 36 Starfury heavy fighters

Hakilkorta Planetary Research Cruiser

Brakiri Syndicracy

A brilliant variant of the Ikorta Assault Cruiser, the Ab-Hakil Conglomerate purchased a small fleet of these from the Military Marketing Offices of the Syndicracy in the late 2230s and had them re-fitted with scientific equipment. All of the spacious areas once intended for marines and troops to train and bunk were gutted, cleaned and turned into a hundred separate Isolab cubicles for individual researchers. What was once a travelling barracks and troop deployment platform was transformed into a mobile laboratory and research facility that made many IPX offices jealous.

The Hakilkorta has all the benefits of its predecessor – spacious living quarters, true artificial gravity, atmospheric sealing for planetary landings and a number of weapon ports to dissuade attackers. Although not as offensive as its parent vessel, this ship is very well protected with additional shield generators and a number of expensive gravitational shifting arrays to steer asteroids and harmful debris away from its hull– as a single significant impact could seriously hinder the scientific integrity of experiments performed within.

Hakilkoria Research Cruiser

Huge Spacecraft
Defence Value: 12 (–4 size, +6 Handling); **Armour:** 22; **Handling:** +6; **Sensors:** + 8; **Stealth:** 12; **Stress:** 8;
Features: Atmospheric Capable, Gravity Engine, Jump Point, Targeting Computer (+2)
Crew: Brakiri Civilian (+1 BAB, +5 Training); 7 Officers, 7 Pilots, 10 Sensor Operatives, 180 Crewmen/Science Personnel
Construction Spaces: 86 (Cargo 25, Control 6, Crew 19, Engine 25, Hangar 2, Weapons 17)
Fore Arc Weapons
- Graviton Shifter (Close, Offence 0, two weapon spaces)*
- Graviton Shifter (Close, Offence 0, two weapon spaces)*
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Gravity Shield Generator (Close, Intercept 30, one weapon space)

Port Arc Weapons
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Gravity Shield Generator (Close, Intercept 30, one weapon space)

Starboard Arc Weapons
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Gravity Shield Generator (Close, Intercept 30, one weapon space)

Aft Arc Weapons
- Graviton Pulsar (Close, Offence 15, one weapon space)
- Gravity Shield Generator (Close, Intercept 30, one weapon space)

Turret Weapons
- Graviton Shifter (Close, Offence 0, two weapon spaces)*

Craft (3): Three Brakiri Shuttles

*Any ship struck by a graviton shifter has the benefit of cancelling one of the following orders: *Angle for Maximum Effect, Defensive Position, Escort Defence!, Extreme Measures!,* or *Grapple*. If the target ship is under the effect of more than one of these orders, randomly determine which is cancelled. If the target ship is not under the effect of one of these orders, it instead loses its Handling bonus to Defence Value.

Pathfinder-class Corporate Surveyor

IPX, Transpace Industries, other civilian organisations
The most popular of the civilian-level exploration vessels, the Pathfinder is actually rather affordable for most project investors at a mere 50 million credits from Delta Flight Industries, the people responsible for the widespread and inexpensive Delta-V series of fighters. It is the vessel of choice for first time Rim explorers and any science team not wanting to advertise their allegiances by flying in a governmental craft. With the added number of Pathfinders being used to perform galactic planetary surveys, it is easy to blend one in with common scientific traffic if necessary.

The Pathfinder is equipped for long-distance trips of up to thirty-six months, and has three separate back-up power and life-support systems in case of emergency. Well armoured for a civilian vessel, it also bears a few market-standard particle beams for defence against the dangers of space travel. It also boasts a sizeable hangar for landing shuttles and can support a trio of escort fighters – which Delta Industries is happy to provide at a discount.

Pathfinder Corporate Surveyor

Huge Spacecraft
Defence Value: 14 (-4 size, +8 Handling); **Armour:** 18; **Handling:** +8; **Sensors:** + 8; **Stealth:** 8; **Stress:** 10;
Features: Fusion Engine, Jump Point
Crew: Civilian (+1 BAB, +4 Training); six Officers, two Pilots, five Sensor Operatives, 50 Crewmen
Construction Spaces: 86 (Cargo 20, Control 6, Crew 20, Engine 31, Hangar 5, Weapons 4)
Turret Weapons
- Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, two weapon spaces)

Craft (3): Five Light Shuttles, three light fighters

Quixarion Deep-Space Scout

Centauri Republic
Another use for the aging Altarian-class hull, the Quixarion is the primary exploration vessel of the Centauri. Stripped of its ammunition-necessary matter cannons in favour of more energy-based weaponry and powerful sensor arrays capable of mapping deeper into unknown space, this vessel is still no pushover for raiders and enemies of the Republic. It is still a warship; it has merely been angled for true exploration rather than conquering whatever is found.

The Quixarion is not the most prestigious of assignments for naval captains, but does bring a great deal of honour to the house that sponsors it. The Centaurum see any venture toward unknown horizons as a possible way to expand the great Centauri power-base, and look very favourably on those willing to potentially sacrifice millions of ducats on the horrible odds of finding anything beyond the Rim. Even against such poor chances, many Centauri explorers prefer the Quixarion to cheaper, science-dedicated vessels, just in case they run into trouble.

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Huge Spacecraft
Defence Value: 10 (–4 size, +4 Handling); **Armour:** 24; **Handling:** +4; **Sensors:** + 9; **Stealth:** 7; **Stress:** 8; **Features:** Gravity Engine, Jump Point, Targeting Computer (+3)
Crew: Centauri Line (+3 BAB, +8 Training); five Officers, 10 Pilots, 15 Sensor Operatives, 80 Crewmen
Construction Spaces: 89 (Cargo 20, Control 6, Crew 15, Engine 19, Hangar 5, Weapons 24)
Fore Arc Weapons
- Battle Laser (Long, Offence 60, Beam 1d8, 2 weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)

Port Arc Weapons
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)

Starboard Arc Weapons
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)

Aft Arc Weapons
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)
- Particle Array (Close, Offence 15, Array, two weapon spaces)

Craft (6): Four Centauri Shuttles, four Sentri Medium Fighters

Walkabout-class Xenobiological Explorer

Earth Alliance, Civilian Corporate Firms
A massive hulk of spinning metal and plastics, the Walkabout is a human-designed science vessel that is little more than a fully equipped zoological research and communications station wrapped around a fusion core. It is not designed for speed or battle, but is thick with some of the best sensor and jamming suites money can buy. It comes standard with an entire section devoted solely to the housing, study and care of large animals and flora bio-samples in either Isolab-styled paddocks or cryogenic lockers large enough to store half-a-dozen beluga whales. It is a floating ark of sorts, designed to gather life forms that range from as small as a virus to as large as alien pachyderms – so that scientists may learn all there is to learn from them as they slowly drift through the cosmos.

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Gargantuan Spacecraft
Defence Value: 2 (–8 size, +0 Handling); **Armour:** 26; **Handling:** +0; **Sensors:** + 12; **Stealth:** 15; **Stress:** 6; **Features:** Artificial Gravity, Fusion Engine, Jump Point
Crew: Civilian (+1 BAB, +4 Training); 10 Officers, 18 Pilots, 25 Sensor Operatives, 100 Crewmen/Science Personnel
Construction Spaces: 190 (Cargo 130, Control 7, Crew 27, Engine 14, Hangar 7, Weapons 5)
Fore Arc Weapons
- Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Port Arc Weapons
- Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Starboard Arc Weapons
- Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Aft Arc Weapons
- Particle Beam (Close, Offence 6, one weapon space)

Turret Weapons
- Mk I Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 *or* Intercept 10, one weapon space)

Craft (3): 12 Landing Shuttles, six Heavy-Lift Shuttles

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