

CHOOSE YOUR OWN FATE



STRANGE STARS

BY JOHN TILL



ARMCHAIR PLANET & THE HYDRA COOPERATIVE PRESENT

STRANGE STARS

FATE RULE BOOK



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STRANGE STARS: FATE EDITION

Welcome to the **Strange Stars Fate Edition Rulebook**, the system companion to my **Strange Stars Game Setting Book**, published in 2014. With this book, you will be able to create characters and run adventures in the **Strange Stars** setting.

I knew I wanted John “Fate SF” Till to be part of this because he has one of the most prolific and creative blogs devoted to the Fate system — and specifically to science fiction gaming powered by Fate. John asked a lot of questions and worked with the answers and suggestions I gave him to make this as true to my vision for the setting as possible while making it play well in the Fate environment.

You can find even more setting detail on my blog, *From The Sorcerer’s Skull*. Look for the Strange Stars Index there at <http://sorcerersskull.blogspot.com/p/the-strange-stars.html>. You should also visit John Till’s *Fate SF blog* at <http://fatesf.blogspot.com/> for more **Strange Stars** content written for the Fate system.

Between the setting book and this one, there’s a lot of content to digest, but keep this in mind: they’re *your* **Strange Stars**. I’ve designed the setting with plenty of room for you to create your own clades and species, develop new worlds to explore, come up with new factions and threats to challenge your players, and add lost empires and mysterious civilizations to the **Strange Stars** timeline.

So get out there and adventure!

Trey Causey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is dedicated to my two boon companions, Carlos Novenario and the Anubian Ambassador.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with Trey Causey to create the Fate system edition book for his **Strange Stars** setting. The world is entirely his own creation, and many of the aspects in the book were inspired by the detailed **Strange Stars** entries on his blog. Trey also wrote original copy for the “Adventures and Regions of Space” and subsections of the Adventures and Campaigns chapter. Anything that shines about the **Strange Stars** is due to Trey’s inspiration and efforts. I take full responsibility for any errors or flaws in the Fate implementation here — don’t blame Trey if you see a mechanic you don’t like!

A number of people playtested **Fate Strange Stars**, including Alan Carlson, Bob Cook, Chad Davidson, Jeff Dreher, Eric Gilbertson, Rachel Kronick, Jay MacBride, and Travis Lubbers. Thanks!

Bob Cook was a huge support, running two **Strange Stars** playtests, as well as providing a couple of rounds of incisive feedback on the manuscript!

Both Chad Davidson and Rachel Kronick have consistently supported all my projects. Thanks for the moral support over the years!

Thanks to the entire team at Evil Hat Productions for developing the Fate Core system: a game I love writing for, and to Fred Hicks for his quick responses to questions. Reviewers of the manuscript encouraged me to write a summary of Fate mechanics for this game setting. I have tried to avoid direct quotes from Fate Core but readers will find some paraphrasing — as well as new mechanics.

When I was working and reworking the Resources and Credit system for **Strange Stars**, Sarah Newton’s *Mindjammer* was a useful point of reference. Any serious fan of space opera and Fate really owes it to themselves to get her game. It is published by Mophius Entertainment.

The Factions chapter owes a debt to Fate Accelerated Edition, as well to Chris Birch and Stuart Newman’s magisterial Fate SF game *Starblazer Adventures*. Ryan Danks’ innovative *Jadepunk* RPG was the first Fate game to cut to the chase and take a “Consequences Only” approach to stress in dueling; that mechanic influenced my design in the Factions chapter.

Brad Murray has been consistently supportive of this project and of my efforts to build on the wonderful foundations for Fate-based SF gaming pioneered by *Diaspora*. Our approach to star systems and clusters was inspired by that game. I’d encourage anyone looking for a hard SF game to give *Diaspora* a try.

John Till

01: FATE IN THE STRANGE STARS



This chapter offers a very brief summary of the *Fate Core* system implementation of **Strange Stars**. There are some rules here that are specific to the **Strange Stars** setting, including the strangeness aspect, some uses of Fate points, credit stress, consequences, and recovery.

A much fuller treatment of the basic system is presented in the *Fate Core* rules; you should consider picking up a copy! It's available as a Pay What You Want download.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Fate works best with 3-5 players, plus a GM. At least one player will need the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book*, which is available where you purchased this book.

The players and GM will need at least one set of Fate/FUDGE dice but preferably four **Fate dice** (4DF) per player or a **Deck of Fate** (see below).

Fate dice work a little differently from other dice. They're six-sided dice with two blank faces, two faces with a "+" symbol, and two faces with a "-" symbol. You roll 4DF and add the blank, positive, and negative faces together. So if someone rolled two blank faces, and two positives, the result would be noted as a "+2." If someone rolled 1 positive face and three negatives, the result would be a "-2."

Most actions are carried out by rolling 4DF plus a skill for a total. For example, if you were trying to punch someone, you would roll 4DF (let's say the result was +1) plus your Fight skill (let's say the skill level is a +3) for a total result of +4.

The **Deck of Fate** is an alternative to rolling 4DF. Each card is equivalent to a 4DF die roll outcome, and each card drawn also presents two aspects that can be used immediately in-game. We use the Deck of Fate all the time at our gaming table, especially for making oracular judgments about the disposition of NPCs and emergent circumstances. The Deck of Fate can be purchased directly from Evil Hat Productions, in game stores, and via print on demand.

GMs will also need some tokens such as glass beads or poker chips to give to the players to represent Fate Points (FP).

Index cards, Post-it notes, or dry erase flash cards are recommended as resources for writing down aspects arising during play. We've found that using the latter has really upped our game, and encourages everyone at the table to create and make more use of situation aspects.

Each player will also need a Fate Strange Stars character sheet. We have provided one for you in this book.

THE LADDER

The Fate system uses a ladder in which each rung has both an adjective and a number. The ladder provides a way to quantify skill ability, difficulties for actions, and results. It looks like this:

- +8 Legendary
- +7 Epic
- +6 Fantastic
- +5 Superb
- +4 Great
- +3 Good
- +2 Fair
- +1 Average
- 0 Mediocre
- 1 Poor
- 2 Terrible

You can use either the numbers or the words (or both!) when you play the game, and numerical results can go higher or lower than the ladder

ASPECTS

Aspects are brief, often pithy phrases that say something about a character, NPC, scene, situation, or other setting element (such as a **Strange Stars** world, faction, or signature piece of equipment).

The characters you create in **Strange Stars** game have five aspects. Three of these aspects are special: a **high concept**, a **trouble**, and a **strangeness**.

High concept is a phrase that sums up who your character is and what he or she does. It could be your job, your role in life, or your calling.

- In *Battlestar Galactica*, Starbuck's high concept might be HOTSHOT VIPER PILOT; Colonel Tigh's EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE GALACTICA; and President Roslin's SCHOOLTEACHER TURNED PRESIDENT.
- A cool high concept for a cyborg from a **Strange Stars** playtest was MORE MACHINE THAN MAN.

Trouble is a phrase that sums up how your character gets in trouble — what complicates their existence. Typically troubles fall into two broad categories: personal struggles and relationships that *bring* you trouble.

- In *Battlestar Galactica*, Starbuck's might be: DRUNK & DISORDERLY (or WAY TOO MESSY RELATIONSHIPS); Colonel Tigh's a MOSTLY-RECOVERED ALCOHOLIC, or ANGRY AS HELL, or a WIFE WHO KEEPS COMING BACK. Take your pick. He's got trouble in spades.
- One cool trouble from a **Strange Stars** playtest was for an Oneironaut who was GETTIN' HIGH ON MY OWN SUPPLY.

Strangeness is a phrase pointing out something strange, weird, or odd that you discovered about yourself or your circumstances during your first adventure among the **Strange Stars**. This strangeness aspect could also be something you own that is almost part of your person, such as a prized possession or an inexplicable alien artifact.

- A couple of strangeness aspects for a xenopsychedic band **Strange Stars** playtest included I PLAY THE PHARMACOPEIA (an in-setting musical instrument) and DUPLICATES APPEAR WHEN I'M IN A MUSICAL TRANCE.
- A **Strange Stars** pirate game included a ssraad PC with the strangeness aspect WANDERED TOO FAR FROM THE NEST. (See **Chapter 05: Threats and Encounters** for the ssraad; they aren't ordinarily PC material!)

If your character takes enough **physical**, **mental**, or **credit stress**, you may take on another kind of aspect called a **consequence**. Consequences reflect some kind of temporary or longer term disadvantage faced by a character. The first time an adversary invokes a consequence they do so for free, meaning that they gain an advantage such as a +2 to their skill roll or a 4DF re-roll without needing to spend a **fate point** (see below).

Some aspects are also very temporary. They are called **boosts**. You can invoke a boost once for free, and then it goes away. See the Taking Action section below for more information on how to get a boost.

FATE POINTS

Fate points (FP) are a resource pool for doing awesome things. Players have this resource pool, and GMs do as well. Player characters start each *session* with a fixed number of FP equal to their **refresh rating**. During a session, a player's FP will decrease as they make expenditures such as invoking aspects and declaring minor narrative changes in a scene. However, players can get FP back in a couple of ways, as described later.

Here are some of the ways that fate points are used:

- A player may **invoke** any of their aspects by spending a fate point. The effect of doing this is to add +2 to a skill roll, or to allow the Fate dice to be rerolled entirely. A player can invoke a given aspect only once when taking an action. However, a player may invoke multiple *different* aspects during an action, as long as they have the FP to spend on doing so. You spend FP to invoke an aspect *after* the dice have been rolled, not before.
- In **Fate Strange Stars**, some players and NPCs have an aspect which ties them to one of the political/organizational factions found among the **Strange Stars**. See the **Chapter 07: Factions** in this book for details on how this works. Invoking a faction to which one is tied by an aspect costs 1 FP and can produce other benefits as described in that chapter.
- Some players will create aspects implying financial connections. They can invoke such an aspect, paying 1 FP to increase their resources skill by +2 for one purchase. This is a way to reduce the risk of taking credit stress when making a purchase in whose cost is higher than their normal resources skill.
- It's also worth noting that players aren't restricted to invoking their own aspects. They can invoke any situation aspect that they are aware of in a scene.

- Another way that FP are spent is to fuel particularly powerful stunts. There aren't too many stunts like that in **Fate Strange Stars**, but there are a few!
- Independently of aspect invokes and compels, Fate points can also be spent to make minor narrative changes or additions to a scene. For example, a player might spend a FP to declare that they know one of the mercenaries who has just arrived on the scene, or that they have a particular piece of equipment or an access code that would prove handy in a situation.

GMs start each scene with a number of fate points equal to the number of player characters involved in that scene. The GM can spend these FP on any of the NPCs they are running in that scene.

Earning Fate Points: One way to regain fate points is by doing something exceptionally cool. At our table, we leave a pile of FP tokens in the middle of the table. If a player does something particularly outstanding, funny, or spectacular, or just demonstrates particularly good roleplaying, the other players point at the pile of FP. That's the player's signal to take one FP as a reward.

Another important way to regain FP is for a player to accept a **compel**. A compel is a situational disadvantage or complication of some kind tied to one of the player's aspects. For example, a character with the trouble aspect **GENEROUS TO A FAULT** might be compelled to give away a scarce resource to someone in need precisely when that the player character or their team needs the resource the most. The GM then rewards the player with a FP in exchange for that inconvenience or disadvantage. Generally, these FP rewards come out of the general FP pool in the middle of the table, not out of the GM's private stash for NPCs in that scene.

Players can also compel each other or their adversaries. The player offering the compel needs to pay for it out of their own FPs. Any NPC aspect that a player can discover or that they already know about can be compelled in this way.

SKILLS AND STUNTS

Characters take action by using their skills and stunts. The **Strange Stars** skill list is described in Step Two of the Character Generation in **Chapter 02**.

Skills are rated on a "ladder" in which a higher number is better than a lower number. A higher number indicates stronger proficiency in that skill. Each rung on the ladder has a corresponding word and number. Average skills are rated as +1; Fair skills as +2; Good as +3; Great as +4; Superb as +5.

Skills are used by rolling 4DF and adding the skill number to the roll. So a 4DF roll of +3 and a skill of +2 total to a +5 or Superb result on the ladder.

If a skill is not on your character sheet you can still treat it as a skill with a value of zero, and roll 4DF.

In the real world, skills like Shoot (and sometimes Fight) require equipment such as weapons. Fate almost always assumes that if a character needs a tool, weapon, or other piece of equipment in order to use a skill, they have access to what they need. Signature and/or particularly potent or efficacious weapons and tools can be represented through **stunts** (a good option when a device does just one thing) or **extras**, which can be used to represent tech with multiple capabilities.

Stunts play a particularly important role in **Fate Strange Stars**. They help to define the abilities of the various clades in the **Strange Stars** setting. Clade is used similarly to how "race" is used in other games; it denotes cultural and phenotypic differences that make up specific populations.

Stunts are usually tied to a particular skill, but help you to use that skill more effectively for a particular purpose. Some stunts allow you to substitute the use of one skill in place of another. Other stunts give you access to a resource or ability that you wouldn't ordinarily have.

Your **refresh** determines how many stunts you can have. You get 3 stunts for free at character generation. Each stunt after the first three reduces your refresh by 1 point. Your refresh can never go below 1.

Each of the clades in **Chapter 03: Clade Templates** has suggested stunts and stunt descriptions. Stunts with an asterisk are required if you are creating a character of that clade, and count against your first three free stunts and/or stunts purchased with Refresh.

Step Three of Character Generation (**Chapter 02**) also provides examples of stunts which are universal and not tied to specific clades. Any character can select one or more of these stunts.

Many *Fate Core* games restrict the applicability of any given stunt in a couple of different ways: The stunt works with one specific skill, or substitutes one skill for another for a special use, and stunts typically also work only with one specific action of the four basic actions described in the next section below. With **Fate Strange Stars**, we've opted for a faster and looser implementation of stunts. While most stunts only apply to a specific skill, some stunts can be used with more than one action, and we have de-emphasized the language about the four actions in the stunt descriptions. You can tighten up this usage if it's important to your table.

TAKING ACTION

Doing something is easy in Fate:

1. Describe what you are trying to do
2. Pick a skill to use
3. If a stunt supports the skill you are using, say so and explain how.
4. Roll 4DF plus your skill rating.
5. You can invoke an aspect to reroll the dice or add +2 to your roll result. Pay a Fate Point if you do this.

There are four basic actions in Fate:

- **Overcome** — when you face an obstacle of some kind such as needing to climb a wall, move silently, or alter data in the metascape. With overcome actions, the GM will often assign a target number or difficulty on the ladder that you need to meet or exceed for an action to succeed. Sometimes you are in a contest against another person, as when you try to use your Stealth skill to move quietly past a guard using his Notice skill.
- **Create an Advantage** — when you try to create a situation aspect that gives you a benefit, or claim a benefit from any aspect to which you have access. Your goal is to either create/discover an aspect or do something with an aspect that you already know is in the scene, and that helps you in some way. When you create or discover an aspect this way, you can invoke it once for free.

Example of creating an aspect: Suppose there is a drum of oil in the scene you are in. You can create a new situation aspect by rolling your Physique skill to spill over the drum and create the aspect OIL SLICK, which you can invoke once for free. If an adversary is near the oil drum, they might try to stop you by using their Fight or Physique skill.

Example of claiming a benefit from an existing aspect: Once the OIL SLICK exists, someone else might use it to slide a heavy object across the floor right at you. They'd pay 1 FP and take a +2 to their Physique action to shove it right at you.

- **Attack** — to do harm to another person, or try to take them out of a scene. Your adversary will oppose by your attack with some defensive skill. An attack can be mental, social, or financial as easily as physical. For example, a Zao Corsair (a kind of space pirate) could attack someone using their Provoke skill in an attempt to terrorize their target; the target would defend with Will. If you score more on your attack skill roll than your opponent did on their defend roll, the numerical difference (called "shifts") is usually dealt in harm to your adversary's physical, mental, or credit stress track.
- **Defend** — to protect yourself from an attack or prevent someone from creating an advantage that works against you. When someone attacks you, you always get to use a skill to defend yourself. If you lack a relevant defensive skill at +1 or more on the ladder, you can always say you are rolling a relevant skill at 0; this means you just roll 4DF and take that as the result. You may defend against a physical, mental, or credit-related attack, or against another kind of action which seeks to create an advantage against you.

OUTCOMES OF ACTIONS

Overcome:

- If you fail at an action, you can either: 1) accept the failure, or 2) succeed at a serious cost. Maybe you get past the guard, but he knows that someone just ran by him, and raises the alarm.

- When you tie at an action, you either 1) attain your goal, or 2) attain your goal at some minor cost (e.g., you sneak past the guard but leave some evidence behind to be found by someone later).
- When you succeed, you obtain your goal without cost.
- When you succeed by +3 or more, you succeed with style and gain a boost.

Create an Advantage:

- When you fail, either you are unsuccessful in creating/discovering the aspect, or in using it to your advantage. Alternatively you create the aspect but an adversary gets the free invoke.
- When you tie, you get a Boost instead of a situation aspect. In the oil drum example used up above, maybe a little oil spills out of the drum, but not enough to create an ongoing situation aspect.
- When you succeed, you create the situation aspect and get a free invoke on it.
- When you succeed with style (gaining +3 shifts over the target) you get two free invokes on the situation aspect.

Attack:

- When you fail at an attack, you don't deal any harm to your adversary.
- When you tie at an attack, you don't harm your adversary but you gain a boost against them.
- When you succeed in an attack, you deal the number of shifts of harm in excess of your adversary's defend result. If your result on an attack roll using the Shoot skill was +6 and your adversary used Athletics to avoid your shot, scoring a +4 on their roll, you deal +2 shifts of harm against their physical stress track.
- When you succeed with style on an attack (gaining +3 shifts over the target), you can exchange one point of the resulting harm for a boost.

Defend:

- When you fail at a defend roll, you take harm in the form of stress against the appropriate stress track, or you have an advantage created against you.
- When you tie at a defend roll, your adversary gets a Boost.
- When you succeed at a defense, you avoid the harm or the advantage that someone was trying to gain over you.
- When you succeed with style (gaining +3 shifts against your attacker), you avoid the harm and get a boost.

Definitions, Definitions: Depending on your mental wiring, you may blow a fuse if you spend too much time trying to differentiate overcome actions from creating an advantage. Focus on what you are trying to achieve with the action. If you're not sure, it's probably an overcome anyway.

CHALLENGES, CONTESTS, AND CONFLICTS

A **challenge** is an action in which one or more characters try to do something complicated or dynamic. It is usually a series of overcome actions which can be broken into individual skill rolls representing periods of time required to complete the action, or two or more steps required to reach the end result. The GM treats each step as a separate skill roll to identify which skills are required to complete the tasks. Each step can have a different difficulty set by the GM, using a target from the ladder. The challenge is successful only if each step in the challenge is successfully completed.

A **contest** occurs when two or more characters compete for a goal, such as when two characters are running a race toward the finish line. This is different from a conflict (see below), when two or more characters try to harm each other.

In a contest, a series of exchanges occurs between contestants. Each exchange, each contestant gets to make a skill roll with the following possible outcomes:

- If you get the highest roll, you win the exchange. Put a hash mark on a piece of paper indicating victory in that exchange.
- If you succeed with style, make two hash marks representing two victories in that exchange.
- If two contestants tie for the highest result, no one gets a victory that exchange, but a new twist or complication occurs in the contest.

The first participant to score three victories wins the contest.

A **conflict** occurs when two or more characters are attempting to harm each other in a series of exchanges. Conflicts are described in detail in the following section.

RUNNING CONFLICTS

Setting the Scene: Think about the scene where the action will take place. Who will the PCs be most likely to encounter in this scene? Have a few NPCs ready, or adapt one from **Chapter 05: Threats and Encounters of Fate Strange Stars!**

Next think about the environment where conflict will occur. In a space dock, there may be cargo containers; mechs, robots, or vehicles to move cargo containers; and possibly some shuttles. There's probably also an airlock or cargo bay door. It may be so silent you can hear a pin drop. It may be as noisy as a factory floor. It may be under remote surveillance.

Create a few aspects to represent these setting details:

BIG DUMB LABOR MECHS
SHIPPING CONTAINER MAZE
ONE FAULTY AIRLOCK

Think about **zones** as well. Zones are abstract spatial relationships. An airlock is a separate zone. The cargo area is probably one or two zones if it's not very crowded, but may be several zones if it's filled with all kinds of stuff that creates lots of isolated nooks and crannies. If the space dock has a mezzanine with a dockmaster's office, that's a separate zone too.

When contestants are in the same zone, they can use skills like Athletics, Fight, Shoot, and Physique in attack and defend actions against each other. When contestants are in adjacent zones, they can still use Athletics, Fight, and Shoot. When contestants are further away than being in adjacent zones, Athletics and Shoot are probably the most relevant skills.

But maybe not. Maybe what you really want to do is use your Engineering skill to get that airlock open and blast your adversaries into space. That's an overcome action to disable whatever security locks happen to be in place.

Turn Order: Characters act in order from highest-to-lowest skill rank using the specific skill that is most relevant to the detection of changes in the conflict environment. For a physical conflict, turn order is determined by the Notice skill; mental conflicts use Empathy; financial conflicts use Investigation.

The Exchange: Every player gets a chance to take one of the four actions on their turn. If you are attacked on someone else's turn, you always get to roll a skill to defend yourself. In fact, you can take a +2 to all defend rolls in a turn if you forgo taking other actions in that exchange.

You can always move one zone for free as part of your action. If you want to move more than one zone on your turn, roll Athletics against a difficulty set by your GM. A cluttered zone, multiple zones, a closed and/or locked door, or other obstacles such as fire or liquids make for higher difficulties.

GMs, you may want to have most or all of the NPCs you run act together on the same turn during an exchange. Use their leader's relevant skill to determine NPCs' position in the turn order, or the highest NPC skill if there's no leader.

Shifts of Harm: When conflicts begin, some kind of harm being dealt is inevitable. Shifts of harm are also known as **stress**, and will be flavored based on the kind of attack that delivers the stress: physical stress goes onto the physical stress track, mental and social stress onto the mental stress track, and financial stress onto the credit stress track.

Stress Tracks: Each stress track has a certain number of boxes. Each box is labelled to show how much stress it can take. So a stress box with a 1 takes one point of stress, a stress box with a 2 takes 2 points, and so on.

Physical and mental stress goes away at the end of a conflict. Credit stress only resets at the end of a game session. You can make credit recovery rolls to reduce credit stress as well as to resolve credit-related consequences. Credit stress is also discussed in Step Two of Character Generation, in the **Resource and Credit Stress** section.

Being "Taken Out": If a stress track is completely filled-in, an individual is taken out of the conflict. This is not necessarily death

— but what it does mean is that the character no longer can act or define what happens next on their own terms. They have temporarily lost agency.

The good news is that being taken out can often be avoided by taking consequences or by offering a concession.

Consequences: Consequences are a kind of negative aspect, representing physical, mental, or credit injury. Players have slots for mild, medium, and severe consequences. Consequences are also aspects; when you take one, you write a short phrase describing it. An adversary can invoke this consequence once for free, and after that by spending 1 FP.

Each type of consequence clears a certain amount of stress from a stress track:

- **Mild consequences** remove 2 stress. These are things like SCRAPES AND BRUISES or DAZED AND CONFUSED. Wait until the next scene to attempt a recovery action.
- **Moderate consequences** remove 4 stress. These are things like BROKEN ARM or HUMILIATED IN FRONT OF THE FLEET ADMIRAL. Wait until the next session to attempt a recovery action.
- **Severe consequences** remove 6 stress. These things are quite bad like SEVERED LIMB or METASCAPE PSYCHOSIS. Wait until the next scenario to attempt a recovery action.

Credit-related consequences are typically financial in nature. Examples include: CREDIT ALERT (Mild), TEMPORARY ACCOUNT FREEZE (Moderate), NESHEKK AUDITORS WITH SUBPOENAS (Severe).

Concessions: Once a character has taken three consequences, they have been taken out of a conflict. However, you can always avoid being taken out by offering your opponent a concession. You can do this right up until the moment when you are taken out of a conflict — so don't hesitate to make an offer!

To offer a concession, you must offer your adversary some concrete benefit in exchange for you not being taken out. You still lose the conflict, but you get to define what happens to you as a result of losing (for example, being LEFT FOR DEAD instead of being CAPTURED!). Your adversary can negotiate further and counter your offer. If the two of you come to terms and your concession is accepted, you define the terms on which you end the conflict. You also get a fate point.

For an example of a concession ending a financial conflict, have a look at the vignette "Asset Attack Example" in the **Resource and Credit Stress** section in **Chapter 02: Character Creation**.

Recovery from Consequences: Recovery from consequences takes time, and often a recovery roll using a specific skill.

The difficulty of a recovery roll to remove a consequence is equal to the number of stress that the consequence slot absorbs. So a moderate consequence needs a recovery roll of +4.

Roll Physique to try and recover from a mild physical consequence. If you want to remove a medium or severe physical consequence, you will need to get help from an autodoc, or find

someone with the Science skill and the Medic stunt.

Roll Will to shake off your own mild mental consequence, or Rapport if you want to help someone else remove a mild mental consequence. If you want to remove a moderate or severe mental consequence you will need to find someone with the Academics skill and the Psychotech stunt.

Removal of a credit consequence is discussed in detail Part Two of the Character Generation, in the **Resource and Credit Stress** section.

MILESTONES

Characters in Fate start out as very competent individuals. Some GMs in Fate games don't even mess with character advancement. That being said, Fate comes out-of-the-box with rules for advancement called milestones:

Minor Milestones occur at the end of any session. You can do ONE of the following:

- Switch the rank values of any two skills, or promote one skill that is not on your character sheet to +1.
- Change any stunt for another stunt.
- Purchase a new stunt, as long as you have the refresh to do so (refresh can't go below 1).
- Rename one aspect as long as it isn't your high concept.

Significant Milestones occur at the end of a scenario, a major plot development, or every 2-3 sessions. You get to select ONE benefit from a minor milestone, as well as ONE of the following:

- One additional skill point to advance an existing skill by one rung on the ladder (i.e., from +2 to +3), or to acquire a skill at +1 provided you don't currently possess it.
- Rename a severe consequence so that it becomes something less severe, making it a moderate consequence that is more amenable to recovery.

Note that you never *have* to take a minor milestone, particularly if it feels forced or if the change doesn't seem credible to you. But early in a campaign, particularly in the first few sessions, it's a great way to fine tune your character's aspects, skills, and stunts so that they work well for you.

That's it for the Fate systems basics! If you want more than this — especially more examples and player and GM advice, you'd be well-served to pick up the *Fate Core* rules.

02: CREATING CHARACTERS

Creating Fate characters for **Strange Stars** is easy. Before getting started, at least one player should have read through the **Fate in the Strange Stars** rules summary, or be familiar with the *Fate Core* mechanics. As noted at the beginning of the **Fate in the Strange Stars** chapter, there are some specific rules there for **Strange Stars**. But someone who has read the *Fate Core* rules can certainly skip ahead to Step One of Character Generation, and refer back to **Fate in the Strange Stars** as questions arise!

STEP ONE: CREATE YOUR ASPECTS

Once at least one of the players has read either the **Fate in the Strange Stars** chapter or the *Fate Core* rules, it's time to get started with character generation! You have two choices about how to proceed:

- If you want to get playing quickly (say within 15 minutes), use On the Fly Character Generation.
- If you have about an hour to complete characters, use Collaborative Character Generation.
- If you choose On the Fly Character Generation, you will start with three aspects; if you choose Collaborative Character Generation you will start with five aspects.

ON THE FLY CHARACTER GENERATION

Start by selecting a clade template for your character. Read the "What is a Clade?" text box in this chapter. There are brief narratives describing the different clades in the **Strange Stars Game Setting Book (SSGSB)**. Choose one that interests you, and find the corresponding clade template in this book (they're in **Chapter 03: Clade Templates**).

Next start thinking about a High Concept and Trouble aspect for your character; these aspects are described with examples in the **Fate in the Strange Stars** chapter, and on pages 32-35 of the *Fate Core* rules. We repeat just the definitions here:

WHAT IS A CLADE?

A **clade** is roughly similar to how "race" is used in other games. The **Strange Stars** setting is in the far future, after centuries of genetic manipulation, cybernetics, and social engineering. Many of the apparent "aliens" in **Strange Stars** are in fact *clades* — branches off of a recognizably human line. Select a clade template, and pick an aspect from that template that highlights a distinctive feature of your race. Alternatively, make up a new clade aspect for an existing clade or even a new clade template. For example, you might decide to create a clade template for a synthetic or mechanical entity, something like: HUNTED REPLICANT or SHINY PROTOCOL DROID.

BUT CAN I MAKE SOMETHING REALLY DIFFERENT?

In one of our playtests, Jay wondered if he could make a PC that was a one off type not featured in any of the clade templates for the *Fate Core* version of **Strange Stars**. My answer was "Sure!" Jay was looking at a space toy on the game table. The toy was a Star Wars knockoff; imagine a Wookie with antennae and a face like a demonic Ferengi! He decided that was his character's exact appearance! Jay was also flipping through the character templates in a copy of the D6 *Star Wars* RPG. Then he said, "I'm a Chewie that lost his Han Solo" — a high concept that rocked!

- A **High Concept** is a phrase that sums up who your character is and what he or she does. It could be your job, your role in life, or your calling.
- A **Trouble** is a phrase that sums up how your character gets in trouble - what complicates their existence. Typically troubles fall into two broad categories: personal struggles and relationships that *bring* you trouble.

Try to incorporate your clade into either your high concept or trouble aspects. Use the aspect examples in the clade template you selected to tweak an existing aspect so that it includes something about your clade. You don't need to use an exact copy one of the aspect examples from the template. You can pick one there as a starting point, and modify it so that it's more flavorful, punchy, and double-sided! If you can't think of a way to do that right now, you can try to include your clade when you write your strangeness aspect (a bit further below).

WHAT ABOUT HYBRIDS?

In one of our playtests, a player asked if she could create a hybrid between two different clades. I said: "Sure!" She decided to create a character whose father was a Vokun Lord and whose mother was a Yantran "comfort woman." Her PC's appearance was that of a Yantran, but she had her father's blue skin color. The Vokun "look" became her trouble aspect. The player picked stunts from both clades — but no rocket chair. Yet.

The **Strange Stars** setting is intentionally open enough so that you can allow these kind of hybrids if you want them in your game. Space opera features these kind of interspecies hybrids all the time. However, if the table wants a game that hews closer to hard science fiction, you probably want to say "no" to these kind of hybrids since in reality most clades — even those derived from the same root species — are likely to be so genetically isolated from each other as to be incompatible.

Aspects that can be both invoked and compelled are the best, as they help keep the give and take of the fate point economy moving.

- **High Concept Example:** Jane looks at the clade descriptions in the **SSGSB**, and the **Clade Templates** chapter in this book, and decides that the **ibglibdishpan** are kind of a cool clade; she likes the “LIVING COMPUTER” OF THE VOKUN EMPIRE aspect of the template; they’re kind of like **mentats** from *Dune*. But Jane’s working on her high concept, so she decides to modify the aspect a bit to **LIVING COMPUTER GONE FREELANCE**. That sounds cool enough to her to use as a high concept! She also likes the fact that it’s double-sided, since her character’s freelance status may bring her business, as well as trouble with her former employers in the Vokun Empire!

Once you have a High Concept nailed down, start working on a Trouble.

- **Trouble Example:** Jane writes down **LIVING COMPUTER GONE FREELANCE** in the high concept slot on her character sheet. She likes the **GENDER-TALK IS RUDE** aspect from the clade template, but she doesn’t want all her character’s trouble to revolve around gender identity. She notes that one cladistic vulnerability of the **ibglibdishpan** is that they tend to overthink situations, even to the point of mental breakdowns. Jane decides that her character’s trouble aspect will be short but sweet: **ANALYSIS PARALYSIS**. (Note also that Jane now has her clade built into both her high concept and her trouble; nothing wrong with that at all.)

Next up is your Strangeness aspect. How did you first come to travel among the **Strange Stars**? What started you on the path to adventuring? Come up with a strangeness aspect: something strange, weird, or odd about your origins or your circumstances as a result of your first adventure among the **Strange Stars**. This strangeness aspect could also be something you own that is almost part of your person, such as a prized possession or an inexplicable alien artifact.

CHOOSING A STRANGENESS ASPECT

A player’s strangeness aspect should add some weirdness to the mix. Even apparently “normal” humans in **Strange Stars** have been changed as a result of bizarre formative experiences, nanotechnology, drugs, immersion in the metascape, and more. Being in the **Strange Stars** can change you in other ways too.

Did your first trip into the unknown begin with a fortuitous discovery or disaster? Did you make contact with a new race, or stumble upon an alien ruin? Perhaps you were born and raised (or cloned and force grown) your whole life on a starship — maybe going planetside was your first brush with strangeness? Were you were raised by aliens or humans from a radically different clade than your own? Do you have a unique piece of tech that adds flavor to your character? Pick an aspect that accentuates that strangeness or difference, something like: **HAUNTED BY ANCIENT ZURR VOICES** or **SELF-TUNING SPACE SITAR**.

- **Strangeness Example:** Jane decides that her character’s first journey among the **Strange Stars** ended in disaster. Zao Corsairs attacked the ship of her Vokun employer. Everyone else on the ship was killed by these fearsome pirates. But for some inexplicable reason, her character’s life was spared. This becomes one of the many preoccupations of the character. Jane creates the aspect **EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON?** as her PC’s strangeness aspect.

Once you have a high concept, trouble, and strangeness aspect, you’re finished with aspect creation for now. You may create two additional aspects for your character at any point in the game.

Next, go to STEP TWO of Character Generation (below Collaborative Character Generation) **to continue building your character by selecting one or more skills.**

COLLABORATIVE CHARACTER GENERATION

Select a clade template, and create a high concept and trouble aspect as described above in the **On the Fly** rules. Look in the **Fate in the Strange Stars** chapter and the **On the Fly Character Generation** rules in the previous section for examples of aspects and aspect creation.

Next comes the Phase Trio. It’s described in more detail in *Fate Core*, p. 38-44, but all you need run the Phase Trio is described right below. You’ll need some scratch paper for this activity.

In PHASE ONE, each player writes an “origins story” that is a sentence or two long. Describe your first adventure among the **Strange Stars**; the emphasis should be in identifying a strangeness aspect — something strange, weird, or odd that your character discovered about themselves or their circumstances as a result of their first adventure among the **Strange Stars**. This strangeness aspect could also be something your character owns that is almost part of your person, such as a prized possession or an inexplicable alien artifact.

Write your name and your character’s name on the sheet of scratch paper. When you have completed Phase One, you should have three aspects on your character sheet: a high concept, a trouble, and a strangeness.

In PHASE TWO and THREE, Crossing Paths and Crossing Paths Again, players contribute to each other’s ongoing story, generating the two final aspects for each character. This activity creates a very cohesive group of player characters who have a stake in each other’s story.

PHASE TWO starts with each player passing their scratch paper sheet to the person sitting just to their left (imagine you are gaming at a circular table rather than a rectangle). In other words, everyone should now have the Phase One story written by *another* player.

Next imagine that your character had a supporting role in the story of the character whose Phase One sheet you are holding. Write yourself into their story.

Write a sentence or two describing on their scratch sheet of paper about how your character did ONE of the following:

Complicated the adventure: You did something that caused trouble or unpredictability. Don't worry about the specific resolution of the issue or complication. For example, *"I brought the Vokun fleet down on Ydaxstub."* ("Ydaxstub" is the name of Jane's ibglibdishpan character. She made it up. So can you!)

Solved a situation: You did something that made the situation better, solved a problem, or helped the other character. *"I snuck past the kuath guards to liberate Ydaxstub from the Vokun prison barge."*

Solved one situation, but complicated another: "Later" is a great linking term in such a sentence. *"I fought off the hwuru assassin who was stalking Ydaxstub, but later got us stalked by the bounty hunters on my tail."*

Pulled a Strange Stars Faction into the situation, for better or worse: The **Strange Stars** setting has lots of factions (see the **SSGSB** and the **Factions** chapter of this book) that care about what is going on, and will intervene — sometimes to be helpful to you and sometimes with extreme prejudice. Write a sentence showing how you pulled a faction into the situation. *"The Instrumentality of Aom is always looking for new converts, so I asked for their help on this newly discovered world."*

You're putting yourself in the spotlight in the other player's adventure.

Once you've come up with a sentence or two, you write one new aspect for YOUR character sheet that reflects something that you did or that happened in the story, such as:

VOKUN ENEMIES
ESCAPE ARTIST
STALKED BY BOUNTY HUNTERS
FRIENDS IN THE INSTRUMENTALITY

You should now have four aspects on your character sheet.

PHASE THREE starts by passing the story on scratch paper that you have just added a line or two to once more to the left. The player to your right hands you the scratch paper to which *they* just added a line or two. Repeat the steps from Phase Two, this time adding a sentence to the story on scratch paper that is right in front of you.

Based on the story addition that you wrote, add a fifth and final aspect to YOUR character sheet. You are done creating aspects!

Next, go to STEP TWO of Character Generation to select one or more skills for your character.

STEP TWO: SELECT YOUR SKILLS

Fate characters are competent right out of the box. Each character starts with one Great (+4) skill, two Good (+3) skills, three Fair (+2) skills, and four Average (+1) skills.

CAN I PLAY A BASELINE HUMAN?

The answer is yes, although we're not going to give you a whole lot of guidance on how to do that — mainly because it isn't necessary. Just create your aspects and stunts without reference to a clade. You still can add some sizzle when it comes to your strangeness aspect though. Maybe your strangeness is REFUGEE FROM A LOST GENERATION SHIP, or COLLECTORS WANT MY GENES. Either of those would also make a great trouble.

On the Fly: Select a skill at Great (+4). Choose one that will help to define your character by *what you do best*. Players should make sure to select different Great skills from each other, so that everyone's character is distinctive and each player begins with a skill at which they can shine. Select other skills as you need them in play.

Collaboratively: Select as many of your skills during the character generation process as you can, paying special attention to filling-in the skill slots at the Great (+4) and Good (+3) levels. Empty skill slots at lower levels can be filled-in *before play* starts if time permits, but they can always be filled-in during play if you want to get into the game quickly.

The **Strange Stars Skill List** follows. Where new skills have been added to the default list skill list from the *Fate Core* rules, or substituted for a default *Fate Core* skill, these new skills are marked with an asterisk. The skills list includes a brief description:

CAN I PLAY A ROBOT?

You can easily create a moravec, robot, or android using **Fate Strange Stars**. Wanderer Avatars are one clade template that lets you do something like this right out of the box, but that's only one example. Instead of choosing a clade template, choose aspects and stunts that fit your specific vision for the kind of robot you want to create: Are you golden and well-polished, like a certain protocol droid? Pick a few aspects that say something about how you look, move, and act.

Or maybe you want a human-seeming android like Ruk in the original *Star Trek* episode "What Are Little Girls Made Of?", or Replicant Pris from *Blade Runner*? In that case, you just might want to look at the clade templates to at least get a sense of a clade you might have been built to look like.

Most robots and androids are constructed for a specific purpose (or at least, their ancestors were) that makes for a great high concept, like *Alien's* Ash (SCIENTIST-LIAISON FOR THE COMPANY). Some robots (though few moravecs) have built-in Asimovian ethical protocols that make for good trouble aspects (such as BOUND BY THE LAWS OF ROBOTICS).

You can get away with light armor on most worlds in the **Strange Stars**, so consider taking one point of stress reduction in the form of the Armor (Light) stunt (see STEP THREE of Character Generation).

***Academics:** A catch-all skill covering formal fields of study other than Science; academic specializations can be further refined by creating Stunts.

Athletics: Physical fitness and athleticism. Strength in contrast is covered below with the Physique skill.

Burglary: Skill at stealing things and breaking and entering.

Contacts: Networking and making connections with people.

Deceive: Lying and misdirecting people, as well as sleight-of-hand moves.

Drive: Operating land vehicles, including vehicles that hover or fly just a bit above a planet's surface such as a hovercar or hovercycle. Choose the Pilot skill to operate air/sea vehicles and unusual land vehicles such as mecha. Select Pilot and the associated Starship Pilot Stunt to operate spacecraft. Use the Ride skill for getting around on the backs of living creatures.

Empathy: Ability to read other people's emotions, and spot changes in their affect. Similar to the Notice skill below, but focused on reading the emotions in a person or scene.

Engineering: Used for applied Sciences such as mechanics, starship repair, etc.

Fight: Melee combat, whether fists, claws, teeth, or weapons.

Investigate: Skills used for detailed observation, sleuthing, and clue-finding.

Notice: Situational awareness and perception; it's quick and superficial ("Someone's coming") as opposed to Investigate ("I've found something; the murderer left a calling card").

Physique: Physical strength and staying power. You can be big and strong if you have a high Physique, but not be very nimble unless you also have a high Athletics. Physique also affects the length of your physical stress track. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) adds a 3-point stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) adds a 3-point and a 4-point stress box; Superb (+5) adds a 3-point and a 4-point stress box and an extra mild consequence slot that can be used to absorb physical harm only.

Pilot: Operating air/sea vehicles and mecha. If you want to be able to pilot a spacecraft, take this skill, and select the Starship Pilot stunt (see the Stunts section, below).

Provoke: Inciting negative emotions in others such as anger and fear.

Rapport: Skill of connecting with others and building their trust; contrasts with Empathy, which is the skill of *reading* others' emotions.

Resources: Your relative wealth in the **Strange Stars** setting and your ability to use that wealth to advance your goals and interests. This skill can be used to purchase items, obtain credit, or secure a loan using an overcome obstacle action with a tar-

WHY NO COMPUTER OR VR SKILL?

Computers and VR are ubiquitous in the **Strange Stars** setting, and most people from civilized regions know how to access information through digital networks as well as how to navigate Virtual Reality. If you want a character who has expertise in Hacking less advanced data networks or in manipulating more advanced VR systems (e.g. you want to play an artist who custom builds VR environments), then select a Stunt such as Hacking or Metascape Fixing in STEP THREE of Character Generation.

get set by the GM. It can also be used to influence the markets using a create an advantage action. Finally, the Resources skill affects the size of your credit stress track: Average (+1) or Fair (+2) Resources adds a 3-point stress box; Good (+3) or Great (+4) adds a 3-point and a 4-point stress box; Superb (+5) adds a 3-point and a 4-point stress box and an extra mild consequence slot that can be used to absorb credit harm only.

***Ride:** This skill is mentioned as a possibility in the *Fate Core* book; select this if you want to get around on the backs of living creatures.

Shoot: Covers all ranged weapons, whether projectile or energy weapons.

***Science:** A catch-all skill for all sciences; can be further refined by selecting a specific Stunt.

***Social Systems:** The skill of understanding and manipulating the behavior of big systems and bureaucracies such as governments, religious hierarchies, military organizations, and corporations.

Stealth: The ability to remain undetected, whether by hiding or moving unseen.

Will: The mental equivalent of the Physique skill, Will represents mental fortitude. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) adds a 3-point stress box to the mental stress track; Good (+3) or Great (+4) adds a 3-point and a 4-point stress box; Superb (+5) adds a 3-point and a 4-point stress box and an extra mild consequence slot that can be used to absorb mental harm only.

RESOURCES AND CREDIT STRESS

The Resources skill provides an abstract measure of relative wealth and creditworthiness. It is assumed that a character's Resources are fairly stable over time. The Resources skill rating reflects stable, predictable earnings due to a character's professional skills, assets, and class privileges. Overextending your Resources by making unusually costly purchases provokes temporary financial wear and tear (i.e., credit stress), or unwanted attention, status changes, and financial problems (i.e., credit-related consequences). But typically Resources don't decline or erode permanently.

When you want to purchase something, make a bribe to secure a favor, or hire someone to do a job, the GM will assign a Resources rating as a difficulty for the expense. Examples are given in the **Goods and Services Resource Cost** box text.

Complications occur frequently, since pricing in the **Strange Stars** is highly variable. Some worlds have scarcities in the availability of desired goods and services, while other worlds have same goods abundantly and at lower prices. The GM should feel free to adjust difficulties accordingly.

Making Purchases: Your Resources skill affects the amount of stress your credit stress track takes with each purchase. You never take credit stress for expenses whose cost is less than or equal to your Resources skill rating. You don't need to roll for these purchases, either. Your finances permit these kind of routine purchases. For example, using the Goods and Services Resource Cost Table, someone with a skill of Resources +3 would not ordinarily take stress to purchase a hwuru thug, whose typical cost to hire is +2.

However, if the item is one step on the ladder above your Resources skill, you take one point of stress; if it is two steps above your Resources skill, you take two stress, and so on. This reflects temporary resource depletion due to unusually high expenditures.

If players have an aspect that ties them to a faction, patron, or other source of additional revenue, they can spend 1 FP and invoke that aspect to increase their normal Resources rating by +2 for one purchase. This represents securing a favor in the form of a small loan. Alternatively, players can use Contacts or another skill in an attempt to create an advantage that creates a more favorable market for them for one scene. If they create such an aspect, they can invoke it once for free to increase their Resources rating for one purchase by +2. Either approach is a useful way to stretch limited Resources and avoid taking credit stress.

Credit Stress: Credit stress is more durable than normal stress. While physical and mental stress resets to zero at the end of every conflict, credit stress only resets at the end of a game session. You can make credit recovery rolls to reduce credit stress as well as to resolve credit-related consequences.

Credit Recovery Rolls: As with physical and mental consequences, you will need make an overcome action in order to recover from credit-derived consequences. Because credit stress lasts for an entire session, you can also use recovery rolls to eliminate credit stress. Resources rolls are one important way to make recovery rolls; a couple of different recovery examples follow. Credit "Repair," Friends with Deep Pockets, Quick Sale, and Rebalance Assets and are all credit-related stunts described in STEP THREE of Character Generation; each helps with Credit recovery rolls.

Resource Contests: Characters can engage in contests such as bidding wars for valuable items. In a bidding contest, each contending party rolls their Resources skill in attempt to place the highest bid for an item or service. The highest roll wins the con-

GOODS AND SERVICES RESOURCE COST

+8: Purchase an item from the "Valuable Artifacts" list (**SSGSB** p. 30); secure the services of a military starship for one session.

+7: Purchase a serviceable civilian starship or orbital; find the missing Orichalcosan trade envoys from "People Someone Wants Found" (**SSGSB** p. 30).

+6: Hire a crew of Kosmoniks for a major starship overhaul after an accident, engineering mishap, or battle; bribe required to access a "black gate"; typical ransom for a hostage of the Zao Corsairs; purchase a Vokun Rocket Chair.

+5: Rent a starship for one scenario; typical bribe securing a big favor from a Vokun Lord; purchase Thrax powered armor or a Kuath Bio-armor suit; reward for finding Rhona Tam, Captain of the *Moral Hazard*, privateer/customs enforcement officer from "People Someone Wants Found" (**SSGSB** p. 30).

+4: Hire the services of a Psi-sensitive or ibglibdishpan consultant for one scenario; hire a mercenary crew for one mission; routine starship maintenance and repair fees; typical bribe securing a small favor from a Vokun Lord.

+3: Hire a starship pilot for a scenario; hire a djagga or ngghrya bounty hunter; typical bribe securing a small favor from a youthful Vokun bureaucrat; hire a specialist to data-wipe someone from a cursory noosphere search on one world.

+2: Hire muscle such as a hwuru thug; hire several non-specialist hands for a starship crew; a cryo-sleep berth on an interstellar voyage; purchase items from "Drugs in an Epic Stash" (**SSGSB** p. 30).

+1: Rent a nonspohont, AI legal consult for one scenario; purchase a minor biomod or cosmetic surgery at a doc-in-the-box.

+0: Purchase everyday items and trinkets such as those featured in the "Contents of Spacehauler Container 49" (**SSGSB** p. 30)

test, but the winner takes credit stress equal to the difference between their Resources skill and the result of their Resources roll.

- **Bidding Contest Example:** A ksaal "cold egg" rogue and a neshekk speculator both travel to Orichalcos to bid on a rare antiquity priced at Resources +6. The ksaal has a Resources rating of +4, and makes a bid with a Resources roll of +7. The neshekk has a Resources skill of +5, but with a bad 4DF roll of +1, gets only a +6 for their bid — one less than the ksaal.

The neshekk's player decides to spend 1 FP to invoke her aspect THERE'S A LOT MORE WHERE THAT COMES FROM! Her player rerolls the dice for a new Resources roll result of +8.

The GM asks the ksaas' player whether she wants to invoke an aspect and spend a FP to top the neshekk's bid. The ksaas' player is leery of the credit stress she would take with such a high result (a +9 result would be 5 points above the ksaas' Resources rating of +4, which means 5 stress!). The ksaas bows out of the contest, so the neshekk wins the bidding war, and gets to take the artifact home! The neshekk also takes credit stress, since her final result on the Resources roll was +8, and her Resources skill is +5. The neshekk takes a total of 3 credit stress for this transaction!

Asset Attacks: Credit stress can also be inflicted in other ways. An enemy can use their Social Systems skill to try to provoke a government investigation into someone's Resources, thereby inducing credit stress. The defender might use their own Social Systems skill to defend, or even use Resources if they're not above a little bribery to defend their personal interests. If the defender loses the exchange, they take credit stress. If the defender wins the contest, they take no stress.

- **Asset Attack Example:** A gnome prospector with Resources +3 has laid claim to an asteroid for mining. Unfortunately, a neshekk banking clan has set its sights on the entire system's mineral rights. The neshekk clan CEO rolls a +3 on an Investigation roll to look into the gnome's prospector's finances in the noosphere. The gnome defends with its Deceive skill of +2, and after the roll the total result is +1. The neshekk leader gains access to the gnome's financial records. Unfortunately the gnome prospector also has the trouble aspect SOMETHING TO HIDE.

The gnome counters by lobbying the Alliance government for title to the space rock. It rolls its Social Systems skill of +2 for a total roll result of +3. The Neshekk CEO counters by using its own ample government influence (its Resources skill is +6 and when combined with the Influence Trader stunt, that gives him the equivalent of a Social Systems skill of +6), for a roll result of +7; the gnome's lobbying action fails.

Next round, the neshekk uses his Influence Trader stunt with its considerable Resources skill of +6 to get an Alliance government official to harass the gnome prospector, opening a credit fraud investigation. The neshekk rolls a -1 on 4DF which becomes a result of +5 when their Resources skill is added to the roll. The gnome only has its Deceive and Social Systems ratings (both of which are +2) with which to defend itself. The Gnome defends with a total roll of +1 on Social Systems, trying to persuade the Alliance official that the Alliance is being manipulated. This fails miserably, as the Neshekk had a +5 on this roll.

The gnome takes 4 stress on its credit stress track, and checks off its 4-point credit stress box. Not good. The gnome sees the writing on the wall and offers a concession to end the contest: the neshekk can have 50% of the profit from the mining operation. The neshekk clan leader counters with an offer of 75% profits; the gnome grudgingly accepts and takes the fate point.

STEP THREE: CHOOSE YOUR STUNTS

Characters select 3-5 stunts. The first three stunts are free and do not count against Refresh. Players may select sample Stunts as described in the Clade Templates, choose stunts from the list of general stunts below, or create their own.

Examples of general stunts available for any **Strange Stars** character are described below:

Armor (Light): On most worlds in the **Strange Stars** setting, you can wear light armor without raising too many eyebrows. Light armor reduces any physical stress taken by one point per hit.

Beastmaster: A character with this stunt might be a planetary primitive or a star-spanning pan-species empath. This stunt enables the use of skills such as Empathy and Rapport to understand and befriend animals (and mobile plants and fungi) just as you would sophonts. You must take this stunt once for each skill you wish to use in this way. Designate the stunts as Beastmaster (Empathy) and Beastmaster (Rapport). GMs may assign a higher difficulty to skill rolls involving reading the emotions of or persuading truly alien creatures, especially ones that lack standard/obvious communication organs.

When you achieve a Success with Style on a Rapport roll with the Beastmaster (Rapport) stunt, you may take the creature as a familiar. You may have as many familiars at one time as the lower of your Empathy and Rapport skills. Your first familiar is a Fair NPC as described on p. 165 of *Fate Core*: give it one or two aspects, a +2 in one skill and a +1 in one or two other skills, and a two point stress box (two points of stress are enough to take it out). Any other familiars are Average NPCs as described on p. 165 of *Fate Core*: give them one aspect, a +1 in one or two skills, and no stress boxes (even a single hit is enough to take it out).

Carking: Because you have specialized in the study of genetics, take +2 when using your Science to modify the genome of a DNA based organism. If you have this stunt, it is assumed that you have access to gene splicing equipment.

Credit Repair: This stunt helps with credit-related recovery rolls. You know a financial infosophont that is willing to scrub your credit records in the noosphere. *Once per session*, you may attempt to get someone's help to alter your credit records, using the Contacting roll:

Remove Stress: Make a roll at a difficulty set by the GM. You may clear one or more credit stress boxes whose total stress capacity is equal to the number of shifts you roll above the difficulty, OR

Remove a Consequence: Make a roll whose difficulty is equal to the stress capacity of the consequence. If you meet or exceed the difficulty, the consequence goes away.

Cryptography: Take +2 to your Investigate skill to encode a document using a cypher. The roll result becomes the target for others to *decode* the document. The Cryptography stunt is also used to decode documents; the GM will set a target that needs to be met for this action to be successful.

Friends with Deep Pockets: This stunt gives you a special reserve which you can use for credit recovery rolls. Maybe you know neshekk financiers (in which case the stunt works with your Contacts skill) or officials in business or government bureaucracies (in which case the stunt works with your Social Systems skill) who float you credit when you need it. *Once per session*, you may attempt to lean on these friends for help one of the following ways:

Remove Stress: Make a Contacts or Social Systems roll at a difficulty set by the GM. You may clear one or more stress boxes whose total stress capacity is equal to the number of shifts you roll above the difficulty, OR

Remove a Consequence: Make a Contacts or Social Systems roll whose difficulty is equal to the stress capacity of the consequence. If you meet or exceed the difficulty, the consequence goes away.

Hacking: Take a +2 to Science to intrude into and modify antiquated data systems. This skill is most common in societies that have not yet developed full metascape/noosphere integration, or that have lost the ability to use them.

Influence Trader: Use the Resources skill in place of Social Systems to influence the behavior of factions, organizations, and governments. This is the kind of lobbying known as “throwing money at a problem.”

Medic: In the absence of expert systems that provide medical care, a person with the Medic stunt is required to remove moderate and severe physical consequences expeditiously. You are trained in medicine, and may provide medical assistance to injured individuals. You use Science to remove physical Consequences according to the recovery roll guidelines described in **Fate in the Strange Stars** (or *Fate Core*, p. 165).

Metascape Fixing: Use the Engineering skill to take an Overcome action that hacks the local metascape.

Money Opens Doors: You may substitute your Resources skill in place of Contacting or Social Systems to get an audience with a powerful person.

Node Sensitive: You are a trained psi-sensitive with the ability to use the Investigate skill to detect hyperspace nodes — even inactive, forgotten ones. If you know the psionically transmitted code to awaken the gate, your psi-ability allows you to transmit it. You still need the Starship Pilot stunt to navigate hyperspace nodes with a ship. To use this stunt, you also need to take an Aspect that relates to being a trained psi-sensitive sophont.

Node Sniffer: You have some kind of animal companion which is sensitive to the presence of hyperspace nodes. It behaves differently when you are in a space vessel in proximity to such a node. It can detect nodes that are inactive, but cannot help you activate them. Create an aspect for your relationship with this creature, and/or its species. The creature has no other abilities or skills, but can have up to two other aspects and one 2-point stress box.

Own a Starship: This stunt can be taken at the GM’s discretion. It requires two points of Refresh. It allows a PC to begin the game in possession of a starship, regardless of their Resources skill. The PC should take an aspect that relates to this ship. This stunt is not necessarily the same thing as having a clear title to the starship. There may be other parties in the **Strange Stars** who think they own it fair and square, but you have at least some documentation and security access/control codes to substantiate that you do. Work out ship details with the GM, such as whether the ship has an AI, what capabilities it has, etc.). The GM can also create one or more hidden aspects for the ship which you will need to discover through play. You or someone else in your party will need the Pilot skill and the Starship Pilot stunt if you want to pilot the ship.

Psi-Cryptography: The Cryptography stunt is a prerequisite for taking this stunt. Psi-Cryptography allows you to use your Investigate skill in an overcome an obstacle action to create or guess the psionically transmitted passcode required to activate an inactive hyperspace node (or deactivate an active node). When trying to create or guess such as passcode, the GM will set a target that needs to be met for this action. Fair warning: shutting down an active hyperspace node is often considered a political/economic crime by local and interstellar authorities.

Psychotech: You have been trained to work alongside neuro-psychiatric AIs to assist sophonts suffering from mental disorders and trauma. This stunt is required to remove moderate and severe mental consequences expeditiously. You have interdisciplinary knowledge including medicine, memetics, cladistic psychologies, and more, and are skilled in working with the AIs that direct clinical mental health care. You use Academics to remove mental consequences according to the recovery roll guidelines in the **Fate in the Strange Stars** chapter (or *Fate Core*, P. 165).

Quick Sale: You know where to sell goods fast, and for a good price. Once per session, you can permanently sell off something valuable to clear a credit stress track or recover from a credit-related consequence. The item to be sold must be something on your character sheet (such as an Aspect or Extra) or an item that everyone at the table agrees is in your possession (such as a shipment in your cargo hold). The GM will use the **Goods and Services** table located in STEP TWO of character generation to determine the item’s value in Resources; that is how many stress points can be cleared from the credit stress track, or the total stress value of consequences to be recovered. (More than one consequence can be recovered by this kind of drastic action.) You need to make a successful Contacts skill roll to find a buyer at a difficulty set by the GM. Erase from your character sheet the Extra or Aspect related to the item you are selling off. If an aspect is affected, go ahead and modify or replace it with another aspect. A modified aspect should reflect the loss: SOLD MY STARSHIP TO PAY A DEBT. A new aspect could be just about anything other than a new possession

Rebalance Assets: This stunt helps you or lets you help others make recovery rolls to clear a credit stress track or credit consequences. You apply your financial acumen by moving assets out of an investment account to replenish a spent expense account, or otherwise take action to rebalance assets and restore credit.

Once per scene with this stunt you may use your Resource skill to attempt one of the following:

Remove Stress: Make a Resources roll at a +1 difficulty. You may clear one or more stress boxes whose total stress capacity is equal to the number of shifts you roll above the difficulty, OR

Remove a Consequence: Make a Resources roll whose difficulty is equal to the stress capacity of the consequence. If you meet or exceed the difficulty, the consequence goes away.

Starship Pilot: This stunt gives you permission to use the Pilot skill to operate spacecraft including starships, and to navigate the hyperspace network.

Telekinesis: Roll your Will rather than Athletics, Physique, or Shoot to move objects by the force of mind. Objects can be moved in a particular direction for up to three Zones. The difficulty of the action depends on the amount of mass you seek to move: a small object is typically +1, an object of about half your mass is +2, an object equal to your mass is +3, an object twice your mass is +4, and this is the normal limit. Force fields and tractor beams may impose additional difficulties on telekinesis.

Telepath: Roll your Will against a difficulty set by the GM (usually the target's Will) to read the mind of a biologic sophont. This stunt will not ordinarily work on moravecs and infosophonts.

Teleporter: Roll your Will against a difficulty set by the GM; the number of shifts beyond the difficulty is the number of Zones you are able to teleport on that turn. Add +2 to the difficulty for each additional person you attempt to teleport with you in this way; they will need to be in direct physical contact with you to make the jump. It will take a successful Notice roll for others to see where exactly you have gone during an action scene. Force fields and tractor beams may make teleportation more difficult. Someone using telekinesis may directly oppose your action.

Xenoarchaeologist: Because you are an expert on ancient alien civilizations, you take +2 to your Academics skill when trying to create an advantage in interpreting the meaning and purpose of alien artifacts and ruins.

Xenobiologist: Because you are an expert on alien biology, you take +2 to create an advantage when using your Science skill to understand the characteristics (anatomy, physiology, ecological niche) of an alien life form.

STEP FOUR: FINISHING UP

Refresh: A PC's refresh rating determines the number of fate points with which they start each session. PCs start with a refresh of 3, and may select three stunts for free. Every stunt after the first 3 reduces Refresh by 1. Your refresh cannot go below 1, so you can start with a maximum of 5 stunts.

Stress and Consequences: The *Fate Core* default is that PCs start with a physical stress track based on Physique, and a

mental stress track based on Will. **Strange Stars** adds a credit stress track based on Resources, as a convenient measure of stress to financial resources.

The default is that each character starts with 2 stress boxes on each stress track. The first box absorbs one stress point, the second takes two stress. Skill levels in Physique, Will, and Resources add boxes to their respective stress tracks, as described in the specific skills descriptions in STEP TWO above.

Players also start with three slots for consequences: one mild consequence which clears two stress points from a track, one moderate which clears four stress points, and one severe, which clears six stress points. When the specific skill related to each stress track reaches Superb (+5), the PC gains an additional mild consequence slot that can absorb two points of additional stress associated with that skill and stress track.

Extras: Some characters will have an additional mini-character in the form of an Extra. These represent special things — in **Strange Stars**, usually equipment — that may come with their own aspects, skills, stunts, and stress tracks. A few of the clade templates feature these kind of items, which usually cost some of the PC's refresh (just as stunts do). Examples include: Thrax Armor, Kuath Bio-armor, and the Vokun Rocket Chair.

03: CLADE TEMPLATES



Clade templates provide guidance for players and GMs about the various populations that make up the **Strange Stars** setting. The *Strange Stars Game Setting Book* contains in-world descriptions for these clades; even more information is accessible from the **Strange Stars Index** online.

Each clade here is represented by a template including one or more suggested aspects, skills, and stunts. Some templates also have important notes as part of their description. When making characters, players should select a Clade Template for their character, and use the template to develop a high concept, trouble, or strangeness aspect that relates to their clade in some way — or more than one aspect if desired.

The aspects in each template are fairly literal. Some are also a bit long. The intent is to express clearly what makes each clade unique. You can modify any of these aspects by making them shorter, more double-edged, or embedded within a hybridized aspect that conveys a specific character concept. For example, if you decided to create a Blesh character (see the first template below) who has access to the memories of a human mechanic, you might make its trouble aspect something like: A MECHANIC WHO IS HARD TO REPAIR.

Stunts/Equipment marked with an asterisk (*) after the name are required for that clade template, and count against Refresh as all other stunts also do.

The **SSGSB** number provides the page that describes the clade in the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book*. (If you are reading this as a PDF, the **SSGSB** references cite the actual page number appearing in the page layout, not the page number of the PDF file.)

ALLIANCE

BLESH SSGSB 11

Sophont Type: Biologic (bioroid with blended digital human-alien minds)

Aspects:

SIX-LIMBED CRYSTALLINE INSECT BIOROID
SLOW SELF-REPAIR WHEN AWAY FROM THE TREES (also a good trouble aspect!)
GROWN LIKE FRUIT FROM CYBERNETIC TREES
HUMAN-ALIEN GESTALT MIND
PULLED BACK FROM EDEN BY A CRASHED SPACE ARK
INTERESTED IN GALACTIC STABILITY AND HUMAN ARTIFACTS

Skills: Academics, Empathy, Physique, Rapport, Science.

Stunts:

- **Ark Dreams*:** Because blesh have access to the dreamlike recorded memories of the human half of their gestalt consciousness, they take +2 to Rapport when interacting with humans.
- **Strong Immunities:** Because blesh are bioroid constructs, they take +2 to their Physique to Defend against poisons and disease.
- **Tough Integument:** Because blesh have exoskeletons, they take +2 to Defend against Attacks based on Fight.

DEVA
SSGSB 11

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

LUMINOUS HUMANOID WITH FEATHERED WINGS
WONDROUS AND MYSTERIOUS
SERENE AND ALOOF
REPAIR THE BROKEN MIND OF GOD
OF COURSE, I'M IMMORTAL
DEMONS ARE REAL.

Skills: Academics, Athletics, Engineering, Science.

Stunts:

- **Gift of Flight*:** Deva may use their wings to fly — even in space.
- **Megastructure Engineering:** Because the Deva have experience with repairing the artificial worlds of Altair, they may take +2 to any Engineering roll to Overcome an Obstacle involving a *large* engineering problem. For example, they might use this stunt to figure out how to cobble together two great space hulks into a single functional vessel.
- **Vacuum Immunity*:** Deva are not affected by exposure to hard vacuum.

GNOME
SSGSB 11

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

LOOSE, WRINKLED SKIN AND LARGE EARS
DIMINUTIVE MALE WORKER
TALLER FEMALE MANAGER
CLANNISH ASTEROID DWELLER
FEAR OF OPEN SPACES
GREGARIOUS AND INQUISITIVE
SELDOM ACTS RASHLY
DON'T CALL ME A "NAKED SPACE-MOLE RAT"!

Skills: Engineering, Notice, Rapport, Science.

Stunts:

- **Get 'er Done:** Because gnomes are bred to work efficiently and without breaks, once per session, a gnome may complete an Engineering task earlier than scheduled, or with a higher degree of quality.
- **Let's Make a Deal:** Because gnomes are extremely gregarious, they may use Rapport for any action normally requiring the Social Systems or Resources skills.
- **Squeeze Through:** Because gnomes are small and have loose skin, they can take +2 to Physique actions to squeeze through tight spaces that stop other species in their tracks.
- **Tunnel Rats:** Because gnomes are accustomed to living in subterranean warrens, they take +2 to their Notice skill when navigating underground.

HYEHOON
SSGSB 11

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

SPLICED FROM AVIAN AND HOMINID DNA
FEATHERS NOT HAIR
HOLLOW-BONED BUT STRONG
I HAVE A CLAN AND A CLUTCH
DYNAMIC, DRIVEN, AND INQUISITIVE
ANAT MORAO IS OUR MOTHER
THE EDEN SEEKERS ARE A PROBLEM

Skills: Fight, Notice, Provoke, Shoot, Social Systems.

Stunts:

- **Keen Eyesight*:** Because of their avian genome, hyehoon take +2 to their Notice skill when using their superb visual acuity.
- **Talons:** Because of their avian genome, many hyehoon take +2 to their Fight skill to Attack hand to hand using their razor sharp claws.

NESHEKK
SSGSB 11

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

BANKING AND FINANCIAL BACKBONE OF THE ALLIANCE
REPUTATION FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR
STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE LETTER OF CONTRACTS
OBSESSED WITH SECURITY AND PRIVACY
NEVER GO IN PUBLIC WITHOUT *NIZARA*

Skills: Academics, Notice, Resources, Social Systems, Stealth

Stunts:

- **Financial Wiz:** Because the Alliance is so dependent on Neshekk clans for its financial and banking operations, you may take +2 to your Social Systems skill whenever you seek access to the executive or financial leadership of an Alliance corporation.
- **Legal Eagle:** Because your clade are contract law experts, you may take +2 to Academics to find an advantageous loophole or codicil in any business contract.
- **Market Intuition*:** Because of your uncanny market acuity, you may take +2 to Notice to when using the Metascape to foresee imminent market trends.
- **Nizara privacy screen/firewall*:** Take +2 to Stealth to avoid detection by surveillance systems.

See also the **Credit Repair**, Friends with Deep Pockets, Influence Trader, Money Opens Doors, Quick Sale, Rebalance Assets stunts from **Character Generation STEP THREE**.

SMARAGDINE
SSGSB 11

Sophont Type: Most are Biologics; Pharesmid Crime Syndicate members are mind-copies in biologic bodies.

Aspects:

- **General:** GREEN-SKINNED HUMANOID; AT THE CENTER OF THE ALLIANCE; WE DO IT WITH STYLE; HAPPY TO HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE; ACCESS TO SUPERIOR TECH.
- **Urban:** CITIZEN OF THE PSYBERDEMOCRATIC GROUP MIND; THE GREEN CRYSTALLINE MEGAPOLIS OF SMARAGDOZ.
- **Rural:** CRIMINAL FROM THE RURAL PREFECTURES; STALKED BY CONSCIENCE WISPS.
- **Weird:** ATAVISM TOURIST IN AN ANIMAL BODY; SCARECROW NEWS CRIER OF THE GROUP MIND; DISSIDENT OF THE WASTE.

Skills: Academics, Notice, Rapport, Science, Social Systems.

Stunts:

- **Psi Gifted (Skill/Action):** Because many Smaragdine are born with psi-abilities and often trained in them, choose one skill to use in an unusual way. For example, use Deceive to implant suggestions in the minds of others.
- **Psi Implants*:** Because all denizens of Smargadoz are psi-connected to the noosphere and to each other, take +2 when using Notice in environments that have a Metascape.

THRAX
SSGSB 10

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

CLONE WARRIOR OF THE ALLIANCE
HEAVY-BROWED, GRAY-SKINNED, AND POWERFULLY BUILT
TACITURN AND SERIOUS
SPARTAN WARRIOR'S CODE
WE'LL NEVER BE CONTROLLED AGAIN BY AIS AND 'BOTS
OUR ARMOR /S/ OUR INDIVIDUALITY
EVERYTHING FOR THE UNIT
BLAMED FOR THE FALL OF THE RADIANT POLITY

Skills: Athletics, Fight, Physique, Shoot, Social Systems.

Stunts:

- **Battle Conditioning:** Thrax have been genengineered and trained since childhood to endure physical hardship. They take +2 to Physique rolls on overcome actions in harsh or extreme environments (e.g., high gravity, extreme temperature, unstable tectonics, etc.).
- **Heirloom Weapon:** Thrax often possess treasured heirloom weapons associated with their clone lineages. Create an aspect reflecting such a weapon, and give it a benefit such as a +2 for a specific skill use, or another special ability.
- **Lowlight Vision*:** Thrax take +2 to Notice rolls in low light conditions.
- **Military Discipline:** Thrax who have a lower Social Systems skill rating than yours will follow your orders.

Extra: Thrax Battle Armor (Costs 2 Refresh)

Permission: Each member of this clone warrior race gets their own suit of battle armor. Thrax take a dim view of Thrax impersonators. Thrax Battle Armor has the following Aspects: BATTLE DRESS OF THE ALLIANCE'S GREATEST WARRIORS; CUSTOMIZED AND INDIVIDUALLY DISTINCT

This extra comes with the following stunts:

- **Damage Reduction:** Thrax armor absorbs the first two points of stress of any successful physical attack.
- **Vacuum Immunity:** When the helm is worn, a thrax warrior in battle armor is protected from exposure to hard vacuum.
- **Notes:** Thrax may not have psychic abilities; Thraxu from a clone lineage can be either male or female; A thrax's Social Systems skill rating denotes its relative rank in the Alliance military.

VOKUN EMPIRE

ENGINEER
SSGSB 17

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

CYBERNETIC CITIZEN OF THE VOKUN EMPIRE
MASTER OF THE VOKUN EMPIRE'S TECH
KEPT UNDER CLOSE CONTROL
METAGANGLIA
PILL BUG WITH A FACE
ROLL UP WHEN IN DANGER
PLENTY OF HANDS
METALLOFULLERENE CARAPACE
KINSHIP MEANS NOTHING TO US
ALL MATING IS CASUAL
CHILDREN ARE TOOLS
LITERAL AND PEDANTIC

Skills: Academics, Athletics, Engineering, Physique, Science.

Stunts:

- **Backup Body*:** If an Engineer takes a severe consequence they may offer a concession, and be reborn by the next game session in a fresh body grown in an Engineer facility.
- **Metaganglia*:** Engineers are able to modify and control many of their autonomic functions through their metaganglia, as well as connect to the Metascape. Engineers take +2 to their Physique skill to access and interact with the Metascape when they use their metaganglia.
- **Tough Integument*:** Because Engineers have exoskeletons, they take +2 to Defend against Attacks based on Fight.

IBGLIBDISHPAN
SSGSB 17

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

"LIVING COMPUTER" OF THE VOKUN EMPIRE
IDEAL (ACCOUNTANT, ADMINISTRATOR, OR ARCHIVIST)
SPINDLY YELLOW-SKINNED HUMANOID
"WE DO NOT DISCUSS GENDER."
BRAIN ENHANCED BY VOKUN EUGENICS
LOW EMOTION, NO EMPATHY
"WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE THE OBVIOUS — AND LOGICAL — COURSE OF ACTION?"
PEDANTIC AND PRECISE
AVOID VIOLENCE AT ALL COSTS
I'M NOT WARRIOR MATERIAL
WIRED FOR OBSESSIONS
PRONE TO MENTAL BREAKDOWNS

Skills: Academics, Investigate, Notice, Science, Social Systems.

Stunts:

- **Humanoid computer*:** This stunt may be taken multiple times; it can be taken once for each of the skills listed. The stunt enables the character to take +2 to discover something hidden, strange, or unusual about a person, place, thing, or situation by using one of the following specific skills: Academics, Engineering, Investigate, Notice, or Science.

Notes: Ibglibdishpan are mentally fragile and prone to over-thinking in stressful situations. Select WIRED FOR OBSESSIONS, PRONE TO MENTAL BREAKDOWNS, or something similar for their trouble, or strangeness aspect.

Invoke: To succeed with an action that requires deep analysis.

Compel: To be forced into deep thought at a time that calls for resolute action.

When an ibglibdishpan "Succeeds at a Cost" at any action using Academics, Engineering, Investigate, Notice, or Science, they must take a temporary moderate or severe consequence on their mental stress track for the rest of the scene. This consequence reflects the ibglibdishpan's propensity for mental crises due to over-thinking problems. A moderate consequence manifests one symptom, while a severe consequence manifests two symptoms combined into one aspect. Possible symptoms include: catatonia, a phobia, seizures, screaming fits, dizzy spells, hallucinations, or a temporary decline in intelligence. Consequences are aspects, and the first character to invoke this aspect does so for free. The consequence goes away at the end of the scene.

KUATH
SSGSB 17

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

BIO-ARMORED SHOCK TROOPER OF THE VOKUN
NEOLITHIC YOUTH HOPPED UP ON BATTLE DRUGS
I'D BE SCARED IF I WEREN'T ALL DRUGGED-UP
JUST A KID
AT HOME BY THE SEA
I REALLY SERVE THE NAGA MA
THE DRAGON MOTHERS ARE IN OUR HEADS
OUR GODS ARE REAL — I TALK TO THEM
KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT WHAT'S UNDER THE COAST

Skills: Athletics, Fight, Physique, Rapport.

Stunts:

- **Natural Diver:** Because Kuath are a coastal people they take a +2 their Athletics skill when diving or swimming.
- **Old Salt:** Because Kuath commune with the Dragon Mothers, they have access to many secrets when beneath the waves. When below the waves, Kuath can access the wisdom of the Dragon Mothers, taking +2 to their Rapport skill to Create an Advantage based on the Dragon Mothers' wisdom and insight.
- **Fight Like A Shark:** Because the Kuath are a coastal people, they take a +2 to their Fight skill when Attacking someone under water.

Extra: Kuath Bio-Armor (Counts as 2 Refresh)

Permission: A PC must be a Kuath to use or possess Kuath Bio-Armor. Aspects that come with the Bio-Armor: HUGE, GREEN, SCALY SEA MONSTER and DAILY DIP REQUIRED

This extra comes with the following stunts:

- **Tough Integument:** The bio-armor gives a +2 to defend against attacks based on Fight.
 - **Vacuum Immunity:** Bio-Armor protects its wearer from exposure to hard vacuum.
-

VOKUN SSGSB 16

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

ONCE-FIERCE CONQUERORS IN DECLINE

OBESITY GROWS WITH AGE

GREAT DISTRUST OF MACHINE MINDS

INFECTED WITH INDOLENCE

DEPENDENT ON OTHER SPECIES TO GET THINGS DONE

Youth: FUNCTIONARY OF THE VOKUN EMPIRE, MANAGE THE DETAILS, EMOTIONAL AND VIOLENT

Elders: LORD OF THE VOKUN EMPIRE, MEASURED EGOIST, PLAYER OF DECADENT GAMES, FLYING CHAIR

Skills: Deceive, Drive (for Elders with a Flying Chair), Physique, Provoke, Resources, Social Systems, Will

Stunts:

- **Fast Healing:** Never underestimate a Vokun's ability to regenerate and heal. Whether a youth or an obese, immobile elder, all Vokun ignore the first two Physical stress taken from any Attack.
- **Elder Pheromones*:** Vokun elders can release pheromones to restrain the violent impulses of youth and help them focus on an Elder's goals and priorities. Elders take +2 to their Rapport skill when attempting to influence the actions of Vokun youth.
- **Regeneration:** After any severe physical consequence such as a SEVERED LIMB or LOST EYE, a Vokun begins to regenerate. By the beginning of the next session, the regeneration is obvious. For example, a new limb or eye-bud appears at the site of the injury. By the beginning of the following session, lost organ has fully regenerated, and the Consequence goes away.

Notes: Only Elders may take the Elder Pheromones Stunt; Elders should have a Resource skill of at least +3, and youth should start no higher than +2.

Extra: Vokun Flying Chair (Counts as 2 Refresh)

Permission: Only Vokun Elders have access to this technology. Aspects that come with the Flying Chair: TRICKED-OUT FLYING CHAIR, STATUS SYMBOL, HEAR ME COMING!

This extra comes with the following stunts:

- **Emergency Liftoff:** Vokun Flying Chairs have the ability to make an emergency liftoff away from attackers. Use Drive skill (instead of Pilot) to maneuver a Flying Chair *up and away* from assailants.
- **Force Field:** The Flying Chair's force field gives its *rider* a +2 to Defend against Attacks based on Shooting.

The Flying Chair can be tricked out with surprises in the form of additional stunts, at the cost of one additional point of refresh per stunt. It has a mechanical stress track with two 2-point stress boxes. It takes one Mild and one Moderate Consequence before BREAKING DOWN or — if in Emergency Liftoff mode — CRASHING.

"WOULDN'T EVERYONE PLAY A VOKUN?"

A **Strange Stars** playtester took one look at the Vokun's stunts and Flying Chair, and wondered if they weren't overpowered. Who wants to play a gnome or neshekk when you can play Harkonnen with a rocket chair?

There are several good reasons why you might *not* want to play a Vokun. While a Flying Chair is cool, it comes at a cost of two Refresh. Furthermore, most Vokun are universally feared and mistrusted. Constant schemers, the Vokun have enemies everywhere. They are not always PC "party" material. Being a Vokun can be lonely.

VOIDGLIDER SSGSB 17

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

SLEEK, ELONGATED FORM

JET BLACK SKIN WITH PHOTOPHORES THAT REFLECT UV LIGHT

SUNLIGHT, FOOD, AND WATER ARE ALL I NEED

BLACK DRAGONFLY WINGS UNFOLD

RADIOWAVE THROAT-SINGER

ASTEROID CAVES PROVIDE SHELTER

CONFINED TO AN ASTEROID BELT RESERVATION

CONFINEMENT DOESN'T SUIT ME

SCOUTS FOR THE VOKUN SPACE NAVY

Skills: Athletics, Investigate, Notice.

Stunts:

- **Find Hyperspace Nodes:** Voidgliders' specialized senses allow them to detect the presence of active and inactive hyperspace nodes. Finding active hyperspace nodes is second nature to them; Voidgliders take a +2 to their Notice skill to locate inactive nodes.
- **Radio Communicators*:** Voidgliders may communicate by means of radio and UV laser.
- **Plasma Sails*:** Voidgliders' dragonfly wings act as solar sails, allowing them to move about in the vacuum of space.
- **Vacuum Immunity*:** Voidgliders are immune to the effects of exposure to hard vacuum.

YANTRAN
SSGSB 17

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

NATIVE OF A CAREFULLY MANAGED GARDEN WORLD
EDENIC PRIMITIVE

"YANTRA PROVIDES EVERYTHING WE NEED"

THE STONE SHRINES ARE PART OF YANTRA

"SOMETIMES SYSTEMS FAIL."

MYSTERIOUS TECH FAILURES AND PROBLEMS SURROUND ME

NONVIOLENT AND UNSUITABLE FOR CONSCRIPTION

"HOW CAN WE PLEASE YOU?"

Skills: Athletics, Empathy, Notice, Rapport.

Stunts:

- **Expert Gatherer:** Yantrans don't just have it easy; they expect nature to provide for them - without fail. Yantrans take +2 to their Notice when searching for food, water, and shelter.
- **Tech Animism*:** Although you appear to be a primitive, you have a shamanic relationship with technology, and can take +2 to your Rapport skill to access a networked system. When doing this, it appears to others that you are reciting a primitive chant or spell.
- **Welcome to Paradise:** Yantrans are accustomed to having their basic needs (food, drink, pleasure, etc.) met easily, and they naturally want to reciprocate with others. Yantrans take +2 to their Rapport skill to figure out the best way to be a good host.

ZURAN EXPANSE

ALGOSIAN
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

PALLID AND THIN

BIOROID PLAYTHING OF THE FACELESS ONES

FANATICAL DEVOTEE OF AN ANCIENT TORTURE CULT

EXPERT ON THE PHYSIOLOGY OF PAIN AND PLEASURE

Skills: Contacts, Deceive, Notice, Physique, Provoke.

Stunts:

Durable*: Reportedly purpose-built by their ancient masters as torture playthings, Algosians take one additional Moderate Consequence.

Procure Victim: Algosians can always find (or rescue) prospective victims. Once per session, they may roll Contacts to access new victims through local networks in the criminal underworld who run kidnapping rings, clubs, and brothels.

Notes: Algosians can make good adversaries in more horror-based games, but not everyone is going to have a fun time with the themes of torture and sexual exploitation associated with their clade. GMs, be sure to know the preferences of your players before introducing Algosians as adversaries. Players, check with the group before creating an Algosian PC.

AUROGOV PARTICIPANT
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Usually biologic, although some could be moravecs and infosophonts

Aspects:

MEMBER OF A QUASI-RELIGIOUS VOLUNTARY TYRANNY

SELF-HELP THROUGH THOUGHTWARE

FOLLOW THE PROTOCOL

EVERYONE WANTS TO BE ADVANCED

ROOT OUT DEFACTORS

Skills: Academics, Empathy, Notice, Social Systems.

Stunts:

- **Eyes Everywhere*:** Because the Aurogov software is networked, you will always detect other nearby people who have downloaded the cult's self-help software. They may or may not be following the Protocol; Defectors have similar patterns.
- **The Protocol Is All:** The Aurogov software makes you very persuasive with other cult members. Cultists with a lower Social Systems skill than you will follow your orders for one Scene.

Notes: The Aurogov is a multi-species cult. If you select this clade, you may select aspects or stunts from one other Clade Template of your choice to build your character. Your Social Systems skill determines your rank in the cult and is used in place of Resources to determine the number of boxes in your credit stress track.

DEODAND
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

BLACK ON ONE SIDE, WHITE ON THE OTHER
WE CALL OURSELVES "PENITENTS"
PUNISHED WITH ETERNAL REBIRTH BY A POSTHUMAN GODLIKE INTELLIGENCE
REBIRTH IS UNWELCOME AND CERTAIN
SINNER OR SAINT?

Skills: Academics, Fight, Notice, Physique, Provoke.

Stunts:

- **Eternal Sojourner:** Many Deodands have seen a great deal of the **Strange Stars**, and are experts at getting institutions and governments to help advance their own long term conspiracies and hidden agendas. They may use Provoke in place of the Social Systems skill to understand and manipulate large organizations.
- **Infected with Immortality*:** Deodands have nanomods which give them a form of serial immortality. If ever taken out under conditions where the player agrees their PC has been killed, the PC is reborn by the next session as an adult beggar on the streets of their habitat of origin.
- **Sin Bravely:** Deodands often seek oblivion through either extreme ascetic practices (e.g., fasting and self-flagellation) or excesses of various kinds, but these privations and indulgences rarely kill them. They take +2 to Physique when indulging in vices (e.g., drugs, sex) that might result in poisoning or infection.

Notes: GMs, you could build an entire **Strange Stars** campaign around an NPC who joins the party, is seen by the PCs to have been killed, and then rejoins the party a few sessions later after seemingly rising from the dead. These kind of recurrent/reincarnating characters can also bring a lot of baggage with them, such as the obsessive pursuit of vengeance (or a cause), or pursuit by a series of ancient enemies with longstanding grudges.

MAGUS
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

ITINERANT FORTUNE-TELLER
REPUTATION AS MYSTICS AND CHARLATANS
ON A QUEST FOR ENLIGHTENMENT
MANY NEURAL MODIFICATIONS IN THE GENELINE
CONSCIOUS DREAMER
ZENNER CARTOMANCY
TELL THE CLIENT WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR
GOOD AT GAMES OF CHANCE
I DIDN'T CHEAT
I FEAR THE WORLD IS ONLY A SIMULATION

Skills: Empathy, Investigate, Notice, Rapport.

Stunts:

- **Enhanced Precognition*:** Because Magi are wired for precognition, they may roll their Rapport to create an advantage in the form of a brief, near future vision about something that matters to themselves or someone else. They take +2 to the roll when they take the time to enter a conscious dream state or use Zenner Tarot Cards to focus their predictive faculties.
- **Weigh the Odds:** Because of their neural enhancements, Magi take a +2 to their Investigate skill to create an advantage by estimating the odds correctly in any game of chance.

Notes: The Rapport skill is useful to Magi. Magi often use Rapport to create an advantage in advance of using the Enhanced Precognition stunt. It helps Magi gauge what clients really want from a fortune-telling session. A successful Rapport roll may create a temporary aspect such as I KNOW WHAT XE WANTS TO HEAR, which can then be invoked for effect when using Enhanced Precognition.

NGGHRYA
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

A DWINDLING RACE OF PRIMITIVES
SUBSTANCE USE, VIOLENCE, MISTRUST OF OTHERS (also a good trouble aspect!)
TOUGH-SKINNED, SKELETAL HUMANOID
RITUALS AND TABOOS KEEP SPIRITS AWAY
PSI-GIFTED TRACKER, BOUNTY HUNTER, AND SKIP TRACER
HEMMED-IN BETWEEN TWO GALACTIC POWERS

Skills: Fight, Contacts, Investigate, Notice, Shoot.

Stunts:

- **Tough Integument*:** Because ngghrya skin has calcified nodules, they take +2 to Defend against Attacks based on Fight.
- **Track Quarry:** Because the ngghrya are skilled hunters, they take +2 to Notice when tracking prey.
- **Yaa'hii*:** When ngghrya have access to the right psi-drug, they may find someone who is in hiding on another world/habitat. Spend 1 Fate Point to activate this powerful stunt. You immediately receive a vision of the location of your target, beginning with a specific world or habitat. (Depending on the game, you may get to declare the location, or the GM will tell you the location.) Once you have this vision, you never lose your vision of the target. As you move closer to the target, your vision zooms in further, becoming increasingly specific with respect to the target's location and details.
- **You Missed A Clue:** Because their observation skills are so acute, once per scene, ngghrya may spend 1 FP to declare they have found a clue that others missed.

WANDERER AVATAR
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Infosophont

Aspects:

HUMANOID ROBOT (OR BIOROID)
DOWNLOADED PARTIAL COPY OF AN ASTEROID-SIZED, POSTHUMAN MIND
NO "HOME PLANET" EXACTLY
I KNOW A LOT ABOUT COMPUTRONIUM
LET'S MAKE A TRADE
I REMEMBER THE GREAT COLLAPSE
SORRY, THAT'S PRIVATE
OUT OF SYNCH WITH THE PRIMARY MIND
I'M MY OWN PERSON NOW

Skills: Engineering, Pilot, Science.

Stunts:

- **Megastructure Engineering:** Because the Wanderers *are* artificial worlds, they may take +2 to any Engineering skill roll involving a *large* engineering problem. For example, they might use this stunt to figure out how to repair their "original" asteroid body.
- **Metascape Engineering:** Wanderers may use the Engineering skill to make large-scale modifications (i.e., hack, build, take down) in local information systems and a local system's Metascape. Note that this is a more powerful version of the Stunt Metascape Fixing as described in the stunt examples in the **Strange Stars** character generation rules.
- **Computronium Hacker:** Wanderers may use their Engineering skill to hack other Minds that use Computronium as a cognitive substrate.
- **Starship Pilot*:** Wanderers may use their Pilot skill to operate spacecraft including starships, and navigate the hyper-space network.

Notes: One fun option is to play a remote that is out of synch with its original source Mind, and has developed as unique fork off that mind. To do that, select one or both of the last two aspects in the list for your character.

THE RIM

DJÄGGA
SSGSB 8

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

BIG EYES, HIGH-PLACED EARS, CATLIKE TAIL
FROM THE LAWLESS REGIONS OF THE RIM
LONER
LOVE THE HUNT
AVENGE ANY BETRAYAL
COMPETITION TRIGGERS DEADLY INSTINCTS
BORN BOUNTY HUNTER (OR ASSASSIN)

Skills: Fight, Investigate, Notice, Shoot.

Stunts:

- **A Contract's The Easy Part:** In any community with a criminal element, you can spend a Fate Point to find someone seeking the services of a bounty hunter or assassin.
- **Sharp Senses*:** Because the djägga are natural predators, their sense of hearing and smell is extraordinarily sharp. Take +2 to your Notice skill to detect the presence of any living being in the same or an adjacent Zone to you — even through solid barriers such as stone walls or bulkheads.

THE COREWARD REACH

BOMA
SSGSB 18

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

FROM A RENOWNED SPECIES OF MUSICIANS
ON TOUR
I DIG THAT BOMOTH JOOK
GIANT BLUE CATERPILLAR WITH A FOUR-EYED FACE
A BODY BUILT FOR SOUND
PHILOSOPHICAL AND OBSCURE MUSINGS
SAVVY SLANG SLINGER
MAY BE THE LARVAL FORM OF SOMETHING ELSE
I MISS THE UNDERGROUND MUSHROOM FORESTS OF HOME

Skills: Notice, Physique.

Stunts:

- **Auditory Corona*:** With a head crowned by auditory sensors, bomoth take +2 to their Notice skill to detect and characterize faint, subtle, or unusual sounds.
- **Breath Control*:** Because bomoth (plural of boma) are built for sound, a boma uses Physique in place of Academics, Provoke, or Rapport to affect others' mood through compelling vocal or instrumental music.
- **Mimic:** Because bomoth are built for sound, a boma may take +2 to their Deceive skill to mimic a human or alien voice.

HWURU
SSGSB 24

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

SHAGGY HAired APE-SLOTH FROM AN IRON AGE WORLD
POWERFUL ARMS LONGER THAN LEGS
HORN-COVERED BONY CLAWS
LET THE HWURU WIN
SMALL, BEAKLIKE SNOUT WITH A LONG TONGUE
A DIET OF SMALL BUGS AND MASH
MILD DEPENDENCE ON CHAOFSH
HIRED MUSCLE AMONG THE SPACEWAYS

Skills: Athletics, Fight, Notice, Physique, Shoot.

Stunts:

- **Built for Climbing*:** Because of your huge arms, you take +2 to your Athletics skill in any action involving climbing or swinging between places.
- **Leatherbelly:** Because of the segmented leather “plates” on your chest and belly, you take +2 to your Physique skill to Defend against any physical Attack from a foe that is facing you.
- **Limb from Limb:** Because of your powerful arms and upper body, you take +2 to your Physique skill when attempting to damage something or someone by pulling it apart.

PHANTASIST
SSGSB 14

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

DREAM MERCHANT FROM THE SKY CITY OF EIDOLON
AIR OF ANCIENT NOBILITY
DESCENDANT OF AN ANCIENT ARTIST’S COLONY
AN EXTENSIVE STUDY OF DREAMS
CALL ME AN “ONEIRONAUT”
OUR ART IS DREAMLIKE SENSATIONS
DRINK THIS
BASELINE HUMAN WITH PALE SKIN AND BLUE EYES
ROGUE DREAM MERCHANT SELLING JAMAIS VU TRAPS AND UNWAKING NIGHTMARES

Skills: Empathy, Notice, Rapport, Resources, Science.

Stunts:

- **Oneirochemist*:** You can use your Science skill to create unique neuronanochemical cocktails that offer a specific dream experience for a particular client. Treat this as a Create an Advantage Action that brings about a new ingestible dream; the dream is represented by an Aspect which generally lasts for one scene.

- **Oneironaut*:** In order to identify the optimal dream experience for a client, the client’s individual neural patterns must be recorded and compared to simulations of dream log data collected over centuries from myriad sophont species. The Phantasist enters the data flow and uses their Notice skill to identify the client’s optimal dream experience. The target for this skill roll will vary with the target: +1 for human and near human biologic sophonts (Star Folk, Yantrans, Deodands, blesh), +2 for more divergent clades (deva, gnomes, neshekk, Kosmoniks) +3 or +4 for radically non-human biologics (e.g., Vokun, bomoth, Voidgliders), and +5 or more for radically different beings (e.g., ssraad, ancient zurr).

Notes: Being a “Baseline human with pale skin and blue eyes” will definitely make you stand out in some places in the **Strange Stars!**

A Phantasist will need to invest one point of the Resources skill per portable piece of equipment:

- Sleep lab technology including dream scanning and recording equipment
- Secure dream archive
- Basic neuronanochemosynthetic apparatus to synthesize designer cocktails

NOMADS

KOSMONIK
SSGSB 20

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

TRADERS (OR PIRATES) DESCENDED FROM SPACE-ADAPTED HUMANS
READY TO DEAL?
FLAT, GLOSSY MASK FOR USER
MUTE SIGN LANGUAGE USER
SUPERSTITIOUS, BUT FRIENDLY
HIDDEN MEANINGS EVERYWHERE
SMALL, LEAN, AND LONG-ARMED
RUNE-INSCRIBED SHIPS
TRANSLATION DEVICE [See Notes]
TABOO [See Notes]

Skills: Athletics, Contacting, Empathy, Physique, Pilot, Rapport, Resources.

Stunts:

- **Starship Pilot:** Use Pilot skill to operate spacecraft including starships, and navigate the hyperspace network.
- **Prehensile Feet:** This stunt can be taken multiple times; it is taken once for each specific skill selected. Take +2 to a skill where having an extra pair of “hands” would be... handy. Skill suggestions include Athletics, Drive, Fight, Physique, Pilot, Ride, Shoot, and Survival.

- **Radiation Protection:** The flexible gray membranous outer skin of a Kosmonik absorbs the first point of Stress from any successful energy weapon Attack or other exposure to harmful radiation.
- **Vacuum Protection*:** The flexible gray membranous outer skin of a Kosmonik provides temporary protection against hard vacuum. A Kosmonik may take a total of four successive Actions (any combination of Overcome an Obstacle, Create an Advantage, Attack, and/or Defend) before they begin to be affected by vacuum.

Notes: Kosmoniks are highly superstitious. Each social group has its own taboo of some kind, and many individuals have their own personal ones as well. Make one up for your character. This can be used as the trouble or strangeness Aspect for a Kosmonik PC.

Examples include: TWO IN AN AIR LOCK IS TABOO, THE FIRST OFF A SHIP SHOULD BE THE LAST BACK ABOARD, NEVER TOUCH METAL BAREHANDED THAT HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO VACUUM, NEVER LET AN ALIEN TOUCH YOUR MASK.

Although Kosmoniks are mute and use sign language among their own kind, most also carry a device that facilitates communication with other species. Some may be worn like a medallion, others will be hand-held. Exact modes of operation vary.

STAR FOLK [S'TA ZOKU]

SSGSB 18, 21

Sophont Type: Biologic

Aspects:

NOMADIC, STAR-FARING HUMAN TEEN OR YOUNG ADULT
 WE ARE THE STAR CHILDREN
 DO YOU RELATE?
 I DECLARE "FESTIVAL!"
 A MISHMASH OF ANCIENT MYSTICAL MEMES
 DRUGS, DRUMMING, HANDMADE WARES, AND XENOPHILIA
 PRANKS AND CON GAMES
 RADICAL BODY-CHANGING
 DO YOU WANT TO USE MY BOX?

Skills: Contacts, Empathy, Rapport, Will.

Stunts:

- **Alter Body:** Star Folk can make radical changes in their physical appearance (such as changing gender) when they are on-board their bioships. During any scene in which the PC is on-board their bioship, they may choose to make one or more radical changes in their physical appearance (such as changing their apparent gender) while maintaining an overall humanoid form. This change remains effective until they once again use the bioship's resources to change their appearance. This is limited to one physical transformation per game session. While not prone to deceit, this ability can be used to change one's physical appearance to impersonate someone. This degree of transformation requires the expenditure of a fate point.

- **Know How to Party:** Star Folk have an intuitive ability to find out what strangers find most pleasurable, whether that is music, dance, games of chance, drugs, sex, or something stranger. In any Scene in which a Star Folk interacts with a stranger, they take +2 to their Empathy skill to "read" the stranger and find out what they like.
- **Make Friends Anywhere:** Star Folk are experts at striking up intimate friendships with total strangers. They take +2 to their Rapport skill when seeking to persuade a stranger to carouse with them for the first time.

Extra: Box (Costs 2 Refresh)

The Star Folk have developed a cargo cult around a type of ancient sophont artifact called a Numen Box. The boxes have strange surface patterns and emit both acoustic and psi-signals. The devices bring a sense of cohesion and group well-being to a Star Folk community.

Permission: A PC must belong or have belonged to a Star Folk group to possess such a device. Aspects that come with a Box: COLORS, SOUNDS, AND PATTERNS, IT SPEAKS TO US, WORSHIPFUL ANCIENT TECH.

Box Stunts:

- **Soothe the Savage Beast:** The person holding the Box gets a +2 to their Rapport to Create an Advantage in the form of a temporary Scene Aspect such as *Soothe the Savage Beast*. This Aspect can then be used by any Star Folk in the scene to Compel an opponent to mellow out and avoid physical aggression and conflict. The Fate Point comes from the Star Folk offering the Compel.
- **Come Together:** The person holding the Box gets a +2 to their Rapport to Create an Advantage in the form of a temporary Scene Aspect such as *Come Together*. This Aspect is used to increase group cohesion, and can be invoked to Compel a newcomer or outsider to join the group temporarily, such as happens during Festival. After the Aspect is created, it can be invoked additional times at the cost of one Fate Point by any Star Folk present in the scene.

Stress Tracks: Has a physical stress track with a 1-point and a 2-point stress box, and a mental stress track with three 2-point stress boxes. **Consequences:** None; once a stress track is filled, the Box is taken out.

04: ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

The **Strange Stars** setting offers great opportunities for a wide range of science fiction adventures. You can use it for classic SF adventures inspired by games like *Star Frontiers* and *Traveler*, and favorite SF authors such as Andre Norton, Leigh Brackett, C.L. Moore, Jack Williamson, C. J. Cherryh, Poul Anderson, Bertram Chandler, E. C. Tubbs, Larry Niven, and Jack Vance — to name a few. The exploits of SF comic book characters like the Metabarons, Cody Starbuck, Lorna, and Dreadstar are a huge influence, as well. But the **Strange Stars** has hidden depths and works just as well for games inspired by the New Space Opera of Iain Banks and Alastair Reynolds, and the transhuman SF of Charles Stross, Vernor Vinge, and Hannu Rajaniemi.

We're assuming you have created RPG adventures and campaigns before. If you haven't, we recommend downloading the *Fate Core* rulebook (see the beginning of **Chapter 01** for details), and reading the following chapters: "Game Creation," "Running the Game," "Scenes, Sessions, and Scenarios," and "The Long Game." Those chapters offer about the best GM guidance we've ever seen.

The sections that follow focus on helping the GM run Fate games for the **Strange Stars** setting. We'll start by discussing how GMs can help players grasp the setting quickly. Then we take a deeper look at the setting assumptions, which can create a range of interesting play opportunities. Next we look at adventure creation and how the different regions of Strange Stars space offer different adventure types. Finally we share a few different directions that GMs and players can take with campaign creation.

INTRODUCING THE SETTING IN 15 MINUTES

Players can quickly grasp the highlights of the **Strange Stars** setting.

Historical Overview: Start by showing players the two page "Historical Overview" spread on the pages 2-3 of the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book* (SSGSB p. 2-3). This timeline clues players into the fact that Old Earth is long lost, that technology used to be much more advanced, and that there were at least a couple of sinister and dangerous cultures that grew up during The Long Night between the fall of the Archaic Oikumene and the rise of the Radiant Polity. That should take all of two minutes.

Categories of Sophonts: Next, show players the "Categories of Sophonts" spread from SSGSB p.4-5. Make sure to explain the difference between biologics, moravecs, and infosophonts, as this will help to ground players in the various kinds of intelligent beings found in the **Strange Stars** setting.

You should also foreground that it can be quite difficult to distinguish humans from aliens. Various human populations have been isolated from each other for centuries or even millenia, having settled many different worlds and systems. Humanity

is divided into numerous clades which exist as distinct genetic populations with sometimes quite profoundly alien-seeming phenotypes. Clades are explained in more detail in **chapters 01 and 02** of this book, and the details of specific clades are shared in the **Clade Templates** chapter.

This discussion should take about two minutes, too.

Starships and Travel: Then, show players the two page "Starships and Travel" spread on SSGSB p. 6-7. Make sure they understand that most true starships are treasured items, and that hyperspace travel happens through an architecture of linked hyperspace nodes that connect different systems. This should take about a minute.

Scan the Strange Stars: If you have multiple print copies of the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book*, or a PDF of the book that you can share, let the players take about 10 minutes to look through the various regions of space, clades, worlds, and factions in the **Strange Stars**. Tell them not to worry about all the setting details; just look for a few entries and images that grab them.

SETTING FEATURES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Here are a few of the setting features and assumptions that it will be helpful for GMs to keep in mind when creating Strange Stars adventures and campaigns:

- **The Strange Stars is as big as you want it to be.** Strange Stars adventures can happen on a large starship, in a space habitat, on a single world (primitive or advanced, artificial or natural), star system, or across an entire region of space. It's a big place.
- **Civilization is cyclical.** The **Strange Stars** have seen astounding ups and downs, with godlike hyperspace technologies (Archaic Oikumene) and transhuman intelligences (Radiant Polity) at the high points, and fragmented, conflict-ridden lower tech periods like the present. There are many caches of Archaitech waiting to be discovered. The PCs' discoveries could help humanity climb back up to a higher level of civilization, or spur new conflicts that deepen the fragmentation and decline.
- **There are many new worlds out there waiting to be discovered.** The regions of space and systems featured in the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book* are the tip of the iceberg. Many other settings exist, either as secret holdings of one of the many factions among the **Strange Stars**, or as lost worlds that were part of the Archaic Oikumene, or influenced by the Radiant Polity. There are countless clades waiting to be discovered, as well as genuinely alien species.
- **Sinister threats lurk in the margins.** Nature abhors a vacuum. When the Archaic Oikumene fell, the dark spaces were

often filled in by alien menaces. The zurr and the Faceless Ones are just some of these inimical presences. There are many more.

- **Orbitals and space habitats are as common as worlds.** Many people in the **Strange Stars** setting grew up and have lived most of their lives in space. Star systems in The Alliance, Vokun Empire, Instrumentality, and Zuran Expanse are very likely to have one, several or many of such habitats. In a star system in these regions of space (subject to GM approval), players can always spend a fate point to declare that such a habitat exists.
- **Space Battles are Infrequent, but boarding actions are common.** We don't present detailed starship or space combat rules in this book (perhaps we will in a future supplement) because big space battles are relatively rare. Space combat is the refuge of the desperate and careless (*Zao Pirates, we're looking at you!*) or large empires like the Vokun. However boarding actions, like the one towards the beginning of *Star Wars: A New Hope* are very common.
- **The transhuman rubs shoulders with the primitive.** Many people experience the world through the augmented reality interface of the real and the virtual called the Metascape and worlds are interconnected via an advanced evolution of the internet called the noosphere. But because of humanity's many rises and falls, the clades and worlds of the **Strange Stars** setting have a mix of technology levels ranging from high tech non-biological intelligences such as moravecs and infosphonts, to apparently Stone Age primitives like the Kuath and Yantrans. But appearances can be deceiving...

CREATING AN ADVENTURE

To gauge the SF interests of a group I haven't played with before, I sometimes ask the players to go around the table and share one SF story, movie, comic, or TV show that they really like — and say why. That can help you identify story elements that may be exciting to the players, particularly if you are running a one shot game or playing with a group you don't know very well. It can also help you identify **Strange Stars** clades that may be of particular interest to specific players.

Follow the steps outlined in "Introducing the Setting in 15 Minutes." Once the players have had an opportunity to flip through the setting book, ask them what clades, regions of space, and worlds drew their interest.

If you're running a one-shot game at a convention or with your regular gaming group, just focus on three things:

1. **Everyone picks a clade for their character.** People could pick the same clade, different clades, or clades representing different regions of space and factions.
2. **The group decides on a reason for being together.** Space pirates have been popular parties with playtest groups, but a few other ideas might include:
 - A group of current or former rebels against one of the interstellar powers in the **Strange Stars** setting;

- The crew of a free trader ship;
- A group scouting out new star systems through recently discovered hyperspace nodes;
- A mercenary company working for a shady patron;
- Star tomb raiders, xenoarchaeologists, or freelance bug hunters;
- A starfaring musical group playing for riches, fame, and glory among the **Strange Stars**.

3. **The GM creates a story location and a simple scenario idea.** Use locations and details from the **Strange Stars Game Setting Book** for inspiration! See the last page of that book, "5 Operations, 8 Iterations" for numerous mission and MacGuffin ideas that you can steal for an adventure.

Adventure Example: In one convention game, the players decided to create a group of pirates. The GM went with that, creating a Vokun space convoy for the players to raid. No ship stats were necessary; the GM just needed to come up with an idea for what the convoy looked like. He figured that the Vokun fleet consisted of a *very* large transport vessel (think of *Metamorphosis Alpha's Warden*) and a few very well-armed escorts.

The GM also decided that the transport vessel contained all sorts of endangered and dangerous species destined to stock a Vokun safari tourism world. That set-up was about all that was needed for a great adventure! If you've seen the *Doctor Who* episode "Dinosaurs on a Spaceship" you have an idea what the players encountered — plus giant purple worms and cyber apes!

ADVENTURES AND REGIONS IN SPACE

While almost any adventure can probably be run in any of the regions of **Strange Stars** space, each region of space lends itself well to particular sorts of action:

Outer Rim: This sparsely populated "wilderness" region is a good place for dangers that lurk on inhospitable worlds. Inspirations might include *Alien*, *Planet of Vampires*, and *Pitch Black*, or *Star Trek* episodes like "The Galileo Seven," and "Obsession." Because the Outer Rim is also the home of the scheming ksaas, most Romulan-flavored *Star Trek* episodes might work, as well as Scarran-involved episodes of *Farscape*.

The Alliance: As a fairly civilized region with an enemy (the Vokun Empire) on its border, the Alliance makes a good place for espionage and special ops missions. Poul Anderson's Dominic Flandry novels or the Trigger Argee stories of James M. Schmitz might be good inspiration. Law enforcement or military operations along its border with the lawless Zuran Expanse are would also be good fits. Crime and detective stories work well, too. The stories of master criminal Luff Imbry by Matthew Hughes or the Mars portions of the Hannu Rajaniemi's *The Quantum Thief*, would be good science fiction inspiration — but there are plenty of non-science fiction detective stores to draw from!

The Alliance manages its affairs using a very balanced set of military, diplomatic, and economic tools to advance its interests. It encourages voluntary inter-species cooperation, in direct contrast to the more totalitarian and oppressive Vokun Empire. The Alliance is the closest polity to something like Star

Trek's Federation. It could even be a democracy, if you want it to be (certainly some of its member cultures are). Its strength in mercantile affairs could also make it a good home base for a "merchant princes" type campaign

The Instrumentality: The Instrumentality can be a tyrannical force to be fought against or a basically decent but realpolitik-driven patron in need of freelance "specialists." Players can be virtuous freedom fighters or self-interested rogues based in the free habits sharing Instrumentality space, and their adventures can be similar to *Star Wars: Rebels* or *Serenity*. They could also be space pirates or privateers operating out of some anarchic starport like Chaykin's Cody Starbuck or Ironwolf. Interzone on the Instrumentality orbital ring of Circus is also a good home base for such crews. On the other side of the coin, the PCs could be spies or soldiers serving the Instrumentality, and some of the inspirations cited for the Alliance above could be used.

The Coreward Reach: This is another wilderness area, but with more of a "lost world" feel. Isolated planets with lost technologies or quirky cultures are the order of the day. This is the place for exploration. A lot of *Star Trek* episodes would work here but particularly ones like "A Taste of Armageddon," or "Shore Leave." The strange societies of Jack Vance's science fiction stories like the Alastor cycle and *Showboat World* would work well, too. The Locust swarm also presents an element of danger or a threat to overcome with military force.

The Vokun Empire: There's a lot of rough customers in the **Strange Stars**, but in playtests people have often zeroed-in on the Vokun as prime villain material. When players see the picture of Lord Mulzakesh (**SSGSB** p. 16) they often immediately think of the decadent, greedy, and power hungry Baron Vladimir Harkonnen from *Dune*. While that is an apropos comparison, perhaps a deeper inspiration for the Vokun are the Regul from C.J. Cherryh's *Faded Sun* trilogy. The Regul are a mercantile species in which the elders depend upon "flying sleds" to get around; they treat their youngsters as expendable and exploit other races such as the humanoid Mri as mercenary warriors. Another might be the sybaritic merchant-slaver Kyras Shakati of Cinnibar from John Byrne's *Star-Lord* comic.

The Vokun have inspired playtesters to create PC rebels, freedom fighters, and pirates — often from among the races that the Vokun dominate through drugs and genengineering such as the Kuath, Engineers, and ibglibdishpan, or have subdued through colonial conquest, such as the voidgliders and Yantrans. The Vokun are suitable military and economic adversaries for PCs from Alliance space. They can work well as the foils in merchant princes and espionage-oriented campaigns. But Vokun Lords are also always looking for new talent; the Lords are in deadly competition with each other, and aren't above hiring aliens with the talents and abilities required for special jobs. A couple of the worlds in Vokun space are mystery worlds: Utu-An (the Kuath homeworld) is an intriguing world of coastal settlements and Cthulhoid alien minds in the watery deeps; Yantra was once home to an advanced civilization and its current inhabitants *seem* like naive innocents reminiscent of the worshipers of Vaal in the *Star Trek* episode "The Apple".

The Zuran Expanse: This region is more lawless than wilderness; it's the "Old West" to the civilized "back East" of the Al-

liance and Instrumentality. Tatooine with its Hutt crimelord would be in the Expanse. Some of the places visited in *Firefly* would seem right at home, as do many of the ports of call in *Farscape's* Uncharted Territories. Check out the *Farscape* episodes "The Flax," "Home on the Remains," and "Liars, Guns, and Money." Since there are also a lot of ruins here, some of which contain valuable artifacts, tomb-raiding and Indiana Jones style treasure hunting are good fits with this region of space.

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

If you are starting a new **Strange Stars** campaign, there are a few different ways to create your campaign.

Standard Fate Core: *Fate Core* uses a highly collaborative approach to campaign design. Players work together to create both the setting and campaign framework: the issues and themes to be explored. Here's what the *Fate Core* approach to game creation looks like, as well as a couple of ways to use it with **Strange Stars**.

The **Strange Stars** setting offers different kinds of adventure opportunities. Campaigns set in different regions of **Strange Stars** space can suggest distinct adventure types. GMs should familiarize themselves with the "Adventures and Regions of Space" section above before the table meets to create the campaign.

The GM can share some detail on the regions of space. The players then talk together about what kind of campaign they want to play (e.g., pirates, trade, exploration, space archaeology, war) — and in what region of the **Strange Stars**.

Once the players have settled on a broad campaign type, they **identify two issues** that they believe will make for an interesting campaign; the two issues are then represented as **campaign aspects**: permanent situation aspects for the campaign that the players can always invoke with the expenditure of a fate point.

Campaigns usually include a **current issue** and an **impending issue**.

The **current issue** is a problem or a challenge that the PCs can begin dealing with right away once the campaign begins. Let's say that after some exploration and discussion, the table agrees that it would be fun to have a campaign based on a remote Alliance frontier outpost. Players decide that initial problems of the campaign should involve exploring and mapping the sector of space that the frontier station has opened.

Example: The "Adventures and Regions of Space" section suggests both the Outer Rim and Zuran Expanse as good prospects for stories set in remote regions of space. But the players want a campaign in which there will be lots of brushfires, trade wars, and petty conflicts setting planet-against-planet even within star systems. The table agrees that the Zuran expanse is the best fit for that kind of game.

The players also agree that they will need to solve most problems on their own. The Alliance's military forces are a long way away and are needed for more pressing conflicts else-

where. So the players create the aspect: WE'RE ON OUR OWN OUT HERE as their campaign's current issue campaign aspect.

The **impending issue** is a problem or challenge that emerges during play. It may be related to the current issue, or represent a completely independent variable. An impending issue is something that the players need to discover — or confront — as it arises in the campaign.

Example: In the frontier outpost campaign example up above, the players decide that the Impeding Issue is that the Vokun Empire is winning allies among the locals, and gradually expanding its influence into the Zuran Expanse. The players decide that one of the worlds they encounter has agreed to host a Vokun expeditionary force. This becomes the Impending Issue that players will eventually have to deal with to protect Alliance interests in the region. So the players create the aspect: LURKING VOKUN MENACE.

Once the players have identified suitable current and impending issues for their campaign, the players and GM work together to identify a few additional story and setting details to start the campaign, such as a list of important NPCs and story locations. Once these details have been fleshed out a bit, the GM can either use the **Worlds** chapter rules to engage players in creating a cluster of star systems to represent the frontier, or create these and other systems details on their own as a GM. Then the players begin character creation!

Collaborative Cluster Creation: The hard SF RPG *Diaspora* introduced the concept of collaborative campaign creation through a structured process for generating a linked set of star systems. The **Chapter 06: Worlds** in this book gives you rules for doing that in the **Strange Stars**. Collaborative Cluster Creation is a good option for a group that wants to help create the setting, but prefers to be surprised by and/or gradually discover the nature of the campaign. It's ideal for sandbox style play in which the players help create a limited sandbox consisting of 5-6 star systems.

Before beginning collaborative cluster creation, players should read "Adventures and Regions in Space." The descriptions of typical adventure types for different regions of **Strange Stars** space will help the table identify a region of space in which to situate their cluster. The players should select a specific star system from the cluster they create as the place where the action will begin.

The table uses the **Worlds** chapter of this book to create a cluster of several star systems in which the campaign's action will take place. Creating the cluster and its star systems will take a couple of hours.

The table may also want to discuss what kind of political factions are present and/or contending for power and influence in their starting star system. This may give the players additional ideas for factions which they wish to affiliate, as well as which might oppose them as adversaries. Factions are described in the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book* and in the **Strange Stars Factions** chapter of this book.

Based on the starting system selected, and any factions that may be involved in the system, players should next discuss and decide on what kind of group their party represents (e.g., merchants, spies, mercenaries, rebels, tomb raider-style archaeologists, etc.). Players then create their characters. Players may originate on one or several worlds from the cluster, or from a world and region of space beyond the cluster.

As a prelude to play, the table may decide to use the rules for factional play in the **Factions** chapter to work out recent political developments in the star system where play will begin. Each player runs one of the political factions for a few turns. This will take an hour or so.

At the end of factional play, the players can interpret "what happened" in the factional play into a couple of campaign aspects that players can invoke at any time during game play with the expenditure of a fate point. The GM then develops the starting adventure.

Traditional Campaign Creation: One way that GMs get to "play" roleplaying games is through setting creation; that's one reason why not all GMs enjoy collaborative campaign creation. The same is true for many players; they enjoy the surprise of discovering a world and experiencing a campaign that a GM has created for them. You can easily use the **Strange Stars** setting for this kind of campaign!

To start a campaign with minimum GM prep, the GM should start by reading the "Adventures and Regions of Space" section to select a region of space and a corresponding adventure type. All the GM really needs to do is to select one star system as the starting point for their campaign. Flesh the system out a bit more by writing a paragraph or two about its world(s) and recent events there. Create a few aspects to represent those recent events. Write those aspects on Post-its or dry erase flash cards so that they are available for players to discover and invoke once the game starts.

GMs wishing to prepare a multi-star system setting should start by reviewing the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book* which provides several ready-for-play star maps featuring multiple star systems in a specific region of space. GMs can select one of these existing star maps for their campaign. Many of the systems featured in those maps are presented with system statistics in "Strange Stars Gazetteer" section of the **Worlds** chapter. GMs may alternatively supplement those maps with additional star systems created using the system and cluster generation rules in the **Worlds** chapter, or create an entirely new cluster of systems using those rules.

Once the GM establishes the specific setting for their campaign, they engage the players in character generation. If the players use the Collaborative Character Generation rules, they will develop a cohesive group with reasons to adventure together. You will get some very good ideas for adversaries and foes from their character generation activities, but there is also a good selection of adversaries in the **Threats** chapter of this book.

05: THREATS



The **Strange Stars** are a dangerous place. Enemies can emerge from anywhere. In this chapter you will meet a number of them. Most that aren't represented in the **Clade Templates**. They're rough customers, and often beyond the pale.

The examples presented in this chapter use NPC rules on pages 213-223 of the *Fate Core* rule book. In a nutshell, the *Fate Core* rules support the creation of NPCs for three distinct Threat levels:

- **Nameless NPCs** are mooks. They may be in the way of your player characters but they're not much in the way of opposition. In *Star Wars* terms, these are the Imperial Stormtroopers and Trade Federation droids. Nameless NPCs can make use of the mob rules on p. 216 of *Fate Core*.
- **Supporting NPCs** can command multiple teams of mooks. Supporting NPCs often report to a Main NPC, or independent villains who haven't made it to the big, big league. They are thorns in the side of the PCs. Think Darth Maul or Boba Fett.
- **Main NPCs** are the "big bads." They're behind the largest problems that the PCs face, but Main NPCs are very hard to fight directly — at least at first. There's usually a few supporting NPCs handling their day to day business, so Main NPCs frequently stay behind the scenes — at least until a big finale. In *Star Wars* terms, think Darth Vader or the Emperor.

Now, we present some examples of typical threats found in the **Strange Stars** setting. These were created using the NPC rules in *Fate Core*. In a few cases, we have substituted a more flavorful term for the usual Skill (e.g., replacing Fight with Cutlass or Tail Swipe). Supporting and Main NPCs below require a small amount of additional customization, such as Stunt selection. These examples should help you create suitable adversaries for your own **Strange Stars** campaigns.

RADIANT POLITY

The Radiant Polity was a small but influential civilization with its epicenter in what is now the Instrumentality. It saw itself as the ultimate guardian of humanity's future. The Polity was torn apart by memetic conflicts. Traces of the Radiant Lords' tools are still found today, such as caches of the supersoldier **Hannibal T. Early**.

HANNIBAL T. EARLY, *One Man Army of the Radiant Polity* (Supporting NPC Adversary):

The military of the Radiant Polity consisted of one soldier, and that man was named Hannibal Tecumseh Early. Early mostly appears

as a steely-eyed, taciturn veteran of late middle years, but when necessary tens of thousands of versions of him were embodied. The Early war machine was manufactured to whatever size was needed, but at least one Early was kept in hibernation, as a reserve. When the Radiant Polity began to disintegrate, Early's military might was turned against himself. Aomist hacks of Early fought to the death against secular ones. He performed interrogations on himself, knowing for certain at what point his resistance would break. In some habitats, memes and conditioned responses extracted from his mind were introduced into the psyches of the populace to ensure unwavering public support for the war effort.

When the Radiant Polity was gone, the Instrumentality thanked him for his service and requested his seppuku in recompense for his war crimes. Early did as ordered, a soldier to the last.

It's rumored that not all copies of Hannibal Early were destroyed, however.

Aspects: "RUN RIGHT NOW; THIS IS HANNIBAL T. EARLY COMING!"; A SOLDIER TO THE LAST; LOYAL TO [INSERT CAUSE OR FACTION].

Skills: Superb (+5) Shoot; Great (+4) Fight; Good (+3) Physique; Fair (+2) Social Systems; Average (+1) Investigate.

Stunts (choose one of the following):

- **Battlefield Lore:** Hannibal T. Early knows where the bodies are buried because he's buried so many of them himself on countless battlefields. Roll Will to remember the locations of battlefields where ancient weapons may still be intact.
- **Liaison to Civil Authorities:** Take +2 to Social Systems roll when persuading civilian authorities to follow your recommendations in political and military affairs.
- **Military Genius:** Take +2 to Investigate skill to create an advantage in preparing for a battle.

Stress: 4 physical boxes, 3 mental boxes, 2 credit boxes

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate.

THE ALLIANCE

They're the good guys, unless you cross them...

THRAX CLONE WARRIOR (as a Supporting NPC Adversary):

Aspects: ALLIANCE ARMORED CLONE WARRIOR; STICK TO THE WARRIORS' CODE; EVERYTHING FOR THE UNIT!

Skills: Great (+4) Fight; Good (+3) Physique; Fair (+2) Shoot; Average (+1) Athletics.

Stunts:

- **Battle Reflexes:** Because the Thrax are all clones, they don't hesitate to step in and take a blow meant for a comrade. A Thrax may take any Physical stress resulting from a Fight or Shoot attack targeting a comrade in the same or an adjacent zone.

- **Lowlight Vision:** Thrax take +2 to Notice rolls in low light conditions.

Stress: 4 physical boxes; 2 mental boxes, 2 credit boxes.

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate.

Equipment: Battle Armor: Thrax armor absorbs the first two points of stress of any successful physical attack.

INSTRUMENTALITY OF AOM

An interstellar, expansionist theocracy, the Instrumentality grows primarily by peaceful conversion, but it's willing to use more violent means. Whether harsh or subtle methods are required, the Instrumentality's Agents (see **SSGSB** p. 12) are mobilized to advance the Instrumentality's interests.

AGENT OF THE INSTRUMENTALITY (as a Supporting NPC Adversary):

Give them a name: Example: *Syrtis Elyeth, Agent-Infiltrator*

Aspects: COLD PRACTICALITY; ELEGANT AND ALLURING; LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT OUR FAITH; IT'S NOT AN OPTION TO REFUSE ME; SUBVERSION IS BUT ONE OF OUR TOOLS.

Skills: Superb (+5) Deceit; Great (+4) Contacts; Good (+3) Rapport; Fair (+2) Shoot; Average (+1) Will.

Stunts: Choose one.

Stress: 2 physical boxes, 3 mental boxes, 2 credit boxes

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate.

AGENT OF THE INSTRUMENTALITY (as a Main Adversary):

Give them a name: Example: *Thelema Jehanna Sixx, Special Agent-Prelate*

Aspects: SPOKESPERSON, LOBBYIST, DIPLOMAT; THREATS AREN'T NECESSARY; EXPANSION PLANS; MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU REALIZE; COLD PRACTICALITY.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Rapport and Social Systems; Superb (+5) Deceit and Resources; Great (+4) Notice and Will; other skills as needed.

Stunts: Choose at least 3.

Stress: 2 physical boxes; 4 mental boxes, 4 credit boxes

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, one Severe; one extra Mild (Credit).

KSAA

Described on p. 26 of the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book*, this reptilian species has three sexes: the diminutive, less intelligent, and colorful males; larger, aggressive, territorial, and egg-laying females, and a neuter third sex, the “cold eggs” (implied meaning: “cunning bastards”), who are the most intelligent and politically-minded of the three. Player characters are most likely to encounter cold eggs, followed by male soldiers. They are least likely to encounter females.

Males will typically be found as Nameless NPCs. Cold eggs most suitable as Supporting or Main NPCs. If a female is in a campaign, she is likely to be a Main NPC.

MALE KSAA (as a Nameless NPC Adversary):

Aspects: SMALL AND BRIGHTLY COLORED; A SOLDIER DOESN'T NEED TO BE BRIGHT.

Skills: Average (+1) Fight

Stunts: None.

Stress: None — a one shift hit is enough to take one out.

Consequences: None.

NEUTER KSAA (as a Supporting NPC Adversary):

Give them a name: Example, *Tsennaaksarra, the Accuser of the Red Mountain Clan*.

Aspects: COLD EGG = CUNNING BASTARD; I SOLVE PROBLEMS — SO DON'T BECOME ONE FOR ME; PLUS AT LEAST ONE OTHER ASPECT: EXAMPLE, MASTER OF ASSASSINS FOR THE RED MOUNTAIN CLAN.

Skills: Great (+4) Social Systems; Good (+3) Saber; Fair (+2) Contacts and Resources; Average (+1) Academics and Investigate.

FEMALE KSAA (as a Main NPC Adversary):

Give her a name: Example, *Mattsakka'srendilikka, Clutch Queen of the Red Mountain Clan*.

Aspects: AGGRESSIVE AND TERRITORIAL; WATCH THE TAIL!; plus a few other aspects.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Shoot and Tail Swipe; Superb (+5) Physique and Provoke; Great (+4) Resources and Will; other skills as needed.

Stunts: Choose at least 3.

Stress: 4 Physical boxes; 4 Mental boxes, 4 Credit boxes.

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, one Severe, and one extra Mild (Physical).

SSRAAD

Described in *SSGSB* p. 27, even nameless ssraad foes are formidable threats, and a single ssraad seldom attacks an enemy on its own. Of the three types of ssraad, red ssraad are least likely to be found as Supporting or Main NPCs; they are usually servants of the blue and green ssraad, and seldom take the initiative in planning and executing plots of their own. A blue ssraad could easily be a Supporting NPC working for a more powerful alien ally. A green ssraad could be a Main NPC such as a criminal mastermind or master manipulator.

RED SSRAAD (as a Nameless NPC Adversary):

Aspects: HULKING TOADLIKE REPTILIANS; OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR VICIOUS ANIMALS.

Skills: Fair (+2) Fight; Average (+1) Physique

Stress: 2 boxes; three shifts is enough to take one out.

Consequences: None.

Special: Anyone who takes a consequence from physical combat with a ssraad may have been bitten and infected with an egg for one of their young. The GM may offer the player a compel in exchange for taking the aspect INFECTED WITH SSRAAD YOUNG as a complication.

BLUE SSRAAD (as a Supporting NPC Adversary):

Give them a name: Example, *Slaadhra the Render*.

Aspects: GIGANTIC BIPEDAL BLUE REPTILE; BONE SPUR CLAWS AND MASSIVE JAWS; THE STRONGEST RULE; NO HIERARCHY BEYOND THE TRIBE; ALL OUR TECHNOLOGY IS STOLEN.

Skills: Superb (+5) Fight; Great (+4) Physique; Good (+3) Shoot; Fair (+2) Provoke; Average (+1) Will

Stunts: Choose one.

Stress: 4 physical boxes, 3 mental boxes, 2 credit boxes
Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, and one extra Mild (Physical).

GREEN SSRAAD (as a Main Adversary):

Give them a name: Example, *Vertak, Hortator of the Ravenous Faction*.

Aspects: THE SMALLEST SSRAAD; PLUMP BODIES, THIN LIMBS; INTENSELY XENOPHOBIC; POISONOUS DOMINANCE.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Poison Tongue and Social Systems; Superb (+5) Deceit and Notice; Great (+4) Resources and Will; other skills as needed.

Stunts: Choose at least 3.

Stress: 2 physical boxes; 4 mental boxes, 4 credit boxes

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, one Severe.

Special:

- A green ssraad will only engage enemies when accompanied by red ssraad soldiers.
- A character taking a consequence from a physical fight with a green ssraad must select Paralysis or Suffocating Paralysis, respectively, if taking a moderate or severe consequence.

ZAO CORSAIRS

Described in **SSGSB** p. 23, the Zao are ruthless space pirates. Ordinary crew and officers are Nameless Adversaries. A pirate Captain could easily be a Supporting or Main NPC in a story arc. The Zao are multi-bioform; while many Zao are humanoid, crew Aspects derived from clades may vary with the particular pirate or ship.

ZAO CORSAIR (as a Nameless Fair Adversary):

Aspects: RUTHLESS SPACE PIRATE; A FONDNESS FOR TRADITIONAL BLADED WEAPONS.

Skills: Fair (+2) Cutlass; Average (+1) Shoot

Stress: 1 box — one shift is enough to take them out

Consequences: None

ZAO CORSAIR LIEUTENANT (as a Nameless Good Adversary):

Aspects: MAKE THE ENEMY FEAR US; GRAB THE LOOT!

Skills: Good (+3) Rapport; Fair (+2) Cutlass; Average (+1) Provoke and Shoot.

Stress: 2 boxes — three shifts is enough to take them out.
Consequences: None.

ZAO CORSAIR CAPTAIN (as a Supporting NPC Adversary):

Give them a name: Example, *Captain Jolanda Almaviva Chang, Ruthless Captain of the Zor's Maw*.

Aspects: BELOVED BY HER CREW; RUTHLESS TOWARD ENEMIES!; PIRACY IS BIG BUSINESS.

Skills: Great (+4) Cutlass; Good (+3) Physique; Fair (+2) Rapport; Average (+1) Will.

Stunts: Choose one.

Stress: 4 physical boxes; 3 mental boxes, 2 credit boxes.

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate.

Using the format for threats provided in this chapter, you can create new ones. Some of the standard **Strange Stars** clade templates are particularly suitable for creating adversaries. Good clades for building adversaries include:

- **Algolian** — these bioroid torture artists would fit right in as adversaries in a SF horror campaign.
- **Deodand** — an ally or patron who keeps returning from the dead could bring all kinds of trouble in his wake.
- **Djägga** and **Ngghrya** — no one wants to be tracked by these assassins, bounty hunters, and skip tracers.
- **Hwuru** — known for their upper body strength, they are frequently hired as enforcers and thugs
- **Smaragdine** — may be connected to the Pharesmid crime syndicate, bringing all sorts of criminal and terrorist trouble.
- **Star Folk** — space hippies bring trouble wherever order and predictability are paramount.
- **Vokun** — these expansionist and ever-feuding clan-lords make excellent main villains.

See also "Criminals" on pp. 24-25 of the **SSGSB**.

MOST WANTED

Here are a few profiles of dangerous threats known to be at large among the **Strange Stars**.

COLONEL GREEN, *One Man Army of the Radiant Polity - Modified* (Main NPC Adversary):

An extremely capable incarnation of Hannibal T. Early was recovered by a green srraad schemer while exploring the deadly Radiant Polity ruins known as the Peaceful Armory. For some reason, the awakened Early thought the srraad was a Radiant Lord, and swore to fight for his interests. Since returning to his master's orbital in the Sirius A system, Colonel Green (as this Early has been named) has successfully marshalled his new forces to victory against numerous blue srraad enemies and green srraad rivals. It's rumored that Colonel Green will begin moving against external enemies of the srraad very soon. He and his forces have been recently spotted at the sites of several of the ancient battles that tore apart the Radiant Polity.

Aspects: "RUN RIGHT NOW; THIS IS COLONEL GREEN COMING!" (HC); A SOLDIER TO THE LAST (T); CACHES REMAIN (S); MILITARY MASTERMIND; LOYAL TO THE GREEN SSRAAD.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Fight and Shoot; Superb (+5) Physique and Social Systems; Great (+4) Notice and Will; Good (+3) Athletics and Rapport; Fair (+2) Investigate and Contacts; Average (+1) Academics and Science.

Stunts:

- **Battlefield Lore:** As a clone of Hannibal Early, Green knows where the bodies are buried because he's buried so many of them himself on countless battlefields. Roll Will to remember the locations of battlefields where ancient weapons may still be intact.
- **Green Srraad Champion:** Take +2 to Social Systems roll when persuading green srraad bosses to follow your recommendations in political and military affairs.
- **Military Genius:** Take +2 to Investigate skill to Create an Advantage in preparing for a battle.

Stress: 4 Physical boxes; 4 Mental boxes, 2 Credit boxes.

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, one Severe; plus one extra Mild (Physical).

LURKER-IN-THE-DUST, *Ngghrya Bounty Hunter* (Supporting NPC Adversary)

Gold dust (as his patrons know) is the only dust he lurks in. He collects debts for Orichalcosan aristocrats and their administrators. Lurker never uses his real name. He is hunted by far too many out for revenge for that kind of exposure. Lurker wears a gold ring which marks him as an agent of the Optimates of Orichalcos.

Lurker's collections activities take him far from the Coreward Reach, and into many other regions of the **Strange Stars**: into Alliance space, the Zuran Expanse, and even the Vokun Empire. Those who are unable or unwilling to pay their debts... just disappear. It is likely that Lurker has access to allies or other deadly resources.

Aspects: FEARED NGGHRYA BOUNTY HUNTER (HC); THE HUNTER HUNTED (T); GOLD RING OF THE ORICHALCOS (S).

Skills: Great (+4) Notice; Good (+3) Investigate; Fair (+2) Stealth; Average (+1) Shoot.

Stunts:

- **Tough Integument:** Because ngghrya skin has calcified nodules, they take +2 to defend against attacks based on Fight.
- **Track Quarry:** Because the ngghrya are skilled hunters, they take +2 to their Notice skill when tracking prey.
- **Yaa'hii:** When a ngghrya has access to the right psi-drug, they may create an advantage in finding someone who is in hiding on another world. The ngghrya takes +2 to Notice the target's location, while the target defends using Will or Deceive. On a Success, the Ngghrya may declare that they know the location of the target (a specific world or habitat). On a succeed with style, the ngghrya's vision also includes a specific location that can be readily identified using metascapes data.

Stress: 2 Physical boxes; 2 Mental boxes, 2 Credit boxes.

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate.

MARTA ZOR, *Thrax Renegade* (Main NPC Adversary):

Something happened on the maiden voyage of the Neshekk collections cruiser *Devaluator*. The mission seemed simple: pick up a cache of Archaic Oikumene technology, and bring the Archaitech back to a secure facility for more study. Only one of the Thrax clone warriors came back from planetside. Soon she was the only crew member left alive on the ship. Days later, the vessel was found with an empty cargo hold drifting near a black gate. Bodies everywhere. Rumors of Marta Zor's location vary, but there have been reliable reports that she is running a bot-breaker crew on Gogmagog, or commanding an impregnable stronghold of warriors and wizards on Rune.

Aspects: THRAX WARRIOR RENEGADE (HC); "WHY AREN'T YOU WITH YOUR UNIT?" (T); SOLE SURVIVOR OF THE DEVALUATOR (S); SECRET STASH OF ARCHAITECH; I'M IN IT FOR MYSELF NOW.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Fight and Shoot; Superb (+5) Notice and Physique; Great (+4) Athletics and Will; Good (+3) Contacting and Rapport; Fair (+2) Engineering and Resources; Average (+1) Academics and Science.

Stunts:

- **Archaitech Stash:** Once per session, spend a FP to have access to a device of seemingly inexplicable power and sophistication: a relic of the Archaic Oikumene. Give it two aspects and two stunts. It has a two point stress box. The device

goes away at the end of the session, but another can be created as early as the beginning of the next session.

- **Lowlight Vision:** Thrax take +2 to Notice rolls in low light conditions.
- **Practical Xenotech:** Exposure to Archatech has given Marta Zor a sixth sense about weird alien tech; she takes +2 to her Notice skill when trying to create an advantage by interpreting the meaning and purpose of alien artifacts and technology.

Stress: 4 Physical boxes; 4 Mental boxes, 3 Credit boxes.

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, one Severe; plus one extra Mild (Physical).

Equipment: Battle Armor: Thrax armor absorbs the first two points of stress of any successful physical attack.

ZEL-9-AMIRI, *Blesh Criminal Mastermind* (Main Adversary)

Zel-9-Amiri is different from most blesh. All blesh are insect-like bioroid gestalt entities whose minds combine a post-sapient alien intelligence with one of 1,803 digitized human minds downloaded from a crashed space ark. While most blesh are pacifistic and respect other intelligences, Zel-9-Amiri inherited the mind of a human hacker-saboteur (Amiri) who caused much suffering and chaos in the early megaseconds of the ark's voyage. The blended being learned how to download, copy, and "bottle" human minds and sell them to collectors. Often these minds are placed into bioroid or moravec bodies where they suffer myriad perverse servitudes. Zel-9-Amiri left the blesh homeworld a decade ago, and is believed to operate his illegal ghost

merchant business with impunity from a compound called "The Glasstree." This sanctuary is located in the city of Interzone on ring habitat of Circus. Rumor has it that Zel-9-Amiri would pay handsomely if someone could smuggle a cybernetic tree off his homeworld.

Aspects: GHOST MERCHANT (HC); DO ANYTHING FOR A TREE (T); AT HOME IN THE INTERZONE (S); FRIENDS BACK HOME; KNOWS HUMANS INSIDE OUT.

Skills: Fantastic (+6) Engineering and Contacts; Superb (+5) Deceit and Resources; Great (+4) Notice and Will; Good (+3) Empathy and Rapport; Fair (+2) Physique and Shoot; Average (+1) Academics and Stealth.

Stunts:

- **Ark Dreams:** Because Blesh have access to the dreamlike recorded memories of the human half of their gestalt consciousness, they take +2 to Rapport when interacting with humans.
- **Ghost Trapper:** Zel-9-Amiri can use Engineering to modify and install infosophonts into bioroid and machine bodies.
- **Strong Immunities:** Because Blesh are bioroid constructs, they take +2 to their physique to defend against poisons and disease.
- **Tough Integument:** Because Blesh have exoskeletons, they take +2 to defend against attacks based on Fight.

Stress: 3 physical boxes; 4 mental boxes, 4 credit boxes

Consequences: One Mild, one Moderate, one Severe; one extra Mild (credit).

06: WORLDS

Space is a big place, and GMs (and possibly their players) can make the **Strange Stars** setting their own by adding their own unique star systems to the setting. In this chapter, we show you how to create your own star systems, provide an example of system creation, and follow that up with rules for linking systems together to create a local hyperspace network. Finally, in the **Strange Stars Gazetteer** below, we share Fate mechanics for some of the signature worlds featured in the *Strange Stars Game Setting Book*.

STAR SYSTEM CREATION

The mechanics for the creation of individual star systems are inspired by the *Diaspora* SRD, which provides an excellent set of tools for creating star systems and linking several systems together into travel and trade networks called clusters. **Strange Stars** modifies *Diaspora's* approach to create star systems that fit the feel of the **Strange Stars** setting. At the heart of the star system mechanics are three tables that use 4DF rolls to generate attributes for a star system's Technology, Environment, and Resources.

Players familiar with the *Diaspora* SRD may want to know the differences between the SRD's approach and that taken with **Strange Stars**. There are a lot of minor differences, but only two central ones:

- **Strange Stars assumes that Earthlike garden worlds are rarer** than in *Diaspora*, with the average solar system having one or more hostile or just barely survivable planets. Garden worlds may be less common but that hasn't really gotten in the way of human expansion. Billions of humans live in orbitals and habitats of various kinds.
- **Strange Stars makes more optimistic assumptions** about the dangers associated with the most advanced future technologies (e.g., total conversion drives, Jupiter brains, and superluminal drives) which were commonplace before the Great Collapse of the Archaic Oikumene. These technologies don't invariably bring civilizations to the brink of extinction. But their availability has been pretty rare since the Great Collapse. Those ancient technologies (the T4 rating in **Strange Stars' TER Rating System**) are resources people fight over now.

Let's take a look now at the system creation rules. **Strange Stars** uses the **TER Rating System**, which provides descriptors and a corresponding number for a star system's technology level, environmental conditions, and resources. System creation happens in steps:

1: Roll 4DF three times. Assign results of the first, second, and third set of rolls respectively to the Technology, Environment, and Resources Tables in the TER Rating System. Write down the T, E, and R ratings like so: T-2 E+3 R+2. GMs can make all these rolls themselves (for example as part of game prep), or go around the table and invite players to make a roll (for example, if the players wanted to create a homeworld together).

4DF Result

Technology Rating

+4	Technologies of the Ancients: GUT drives (complete matter-energy conversion); Construction and repair of hyperspace networks; Superliminal drives (not dependent on hyperspace networks); Moonbrains/solar system brains; Build entire planets; Ubiquitous directed energy weapons; Drive boxes/cubes; Various artifacts.
+3	Strange Stars Peak Technologies: Anti-matter conversion and compact fusion devices; Sublight vessels that routinely use the hyperspace network; Reliable but slow terraforming; Molecular computers, quantum computers, super-sophont ais; Nanotech cures, limb regrowth, cloning, and computer/brain interface; Self-powered projectile weapons with programmable smartmatter projectiles; Exoskin.
+2	First Steps to the Stars: Crude fusion drives; Accidental discovery/dangerously unreliable access to hyperspace network using sublight vessels; generation ships.
+1	Exploiting the Solar System
0	Exploring the Solar System
-1	Atomic Power
-2	Industrialization
-3	Metallurgy
-4	Stone Age

2: Think about what each of the three results might mean in terms of the Technological, Environmental, and Resource characteristics of the system. A GM can do this alone, as part of adventure prep, or engage the players in a collaborative effort at world creation. In the latter case, the players would discuss what the system might look like given the ratings. For example, a system with a Technology rating of T-2 (Industrialization) represents a tech level comparable to 19th-mid-20th century societies on Earth. Perhaps this is a colony world that experienced a tech crash due to a war, and the settlers are just climbing back up to a 19th century tech level.

3: Write an aspect corresponding to each of those ratings. So in the case of the T-2 rating, you might give the system an aspect such as: WE JUST REINVENTED THE STEAM ENGINE to represent this. Again, the GM can do this as part of session prep, or invite the players to collaboratively work out these aspects.

SYSTEM CREATION EXAMPLE

4DF Result	Environment Rating
+4	Two garden worlds (evidence of the Ancients' planet-building and terraforming technologies) or megastructures.
+3	One garden world and several habitable worlds and/or numerous orbital habitats.
+2	One garden world and several survivable worlds and/or numerous orbital habitats.
+1	One tough but survivable world and/or one orbital habitat.
0	One or more worlds with hostile environments (e.g., gravity but dangerous atmosphere).
-1	One world with a very hostile environment (e.g., gravity but dangerous atmosphere; an environment contaminated by the Ancients' wars).
-2	Barren world (e.g., gravity but no atmosphere).
-3	Uninhabitable (e.g., no gravity or atmosphere).
-4	Spacetime itself is hostile (inimical energies and life forms bleed through and contaminate the system).

4: Give the system a name. If the system has one prominent world or orbital habitat, the system name may be the same as the world. GMs can assign a name themselves, or engage the players in coming up with something cool.

5: Write a paragraph that briefly describes the system. This step is optional, but can help pull everything together for a unified system description. Additional details can be added at this point.

4DF Result	Resources Rating
+4	All you could want
+3	Surplus
+2	Multiple exports
+1	One significant export
0	Self-Sustaining
-1	Almost Self-Sustaining
-2	Needs significant imports
-3	Multiple dependencies
-4	Utterly dependent on outside support

Andrea's prepping her **Strange Stars** game for next week, and decides to create a new system for the PCs to explore. The players in her campaign have just discovered a hyperspace node that leads to this system. They'll be the first ones in since it was colonized centuries ago.

Andrea rolls 4DF three times, getting a 0, a +2, and a +1 as the three roll results. She assigns these in order to the three system attributes, resulting in a system with the following ratings: T0 E+2 R+1.

"Let's see," she mutters, consulting the TER Rating System tables. "A T0 is 'Exploring the solar system', so the people in this system have made it out into space, but not to the stars." She decides to look at the other ratings and come back to this point.

"An E+2 is 'One garden world or two survivable worlds and/or a few orbital habitats.' That's a lot to choose from!" Andrea decides that it's going to be a system with two survivable worlds — the possibility for conflict between two different spacefaring but system-locked worlds seems interesting. She'll figure out the Environment aspect in a bit.

Returning to the T0 rating, Andrea says: "Let's say that one world has chemical rockets and has just barely started to go out into space, but the other has developed atomic rockets and is thinking about an eventual war of conquest against the other world. OK, let's use ATOMIC ROCKETS MAKE CONQUEST POSSIBLE as our Technology aspect."

Next Andrea looks up the R+1 rating. "One significant export. Hmmmm. THE SYSTEM HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER SOUNDS like a pretty good aspect. I'll let the PCs discover in play exactly *what* the system has to offer."

For the E+2 rating, she decides that the aspect will be TWO WORLDS, MULTIPLE CONFLICTS. She reasons that while both worlds are "survivable", at least one of the two is politically Balkanized, leading to multiple political conflicts over resource scarcities.

Finally Andrea needs a system name. She ponders it for a while and thinks about an ancient myth, a classic SF star system, and an SF character she has always liked. Andrea decides to name the system Romana.

She puts everything together like this:

ROMANA T0 E+2 R+1

Aspects: ATOMIC ROCKETS MAKE CONQUEST POSSIBLE, TWO WORLDS, MULTIPLE CONFLICTS, THE SYSTEM HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER.

Brief Description: Romana is a recently rediscovered human colony system. Settled long before the Great Collapse, the system is located in the lawless Zuran Expanse and has two survivable worlds. Romana II is politically unified and has designs on its politically divided neighbor, Romana III. While both worlds experience scarcities, the system has at least one resource of potential value in the Zuran Expanse. That resource is waiting to be discovered on the already divided world of Romana III.

THE LOCAL HYPERSPACE NODE NETWORK

Sometimes, a GM may just need an individual star system to insert into a story. The rules above give the GM everything needed to do just that. However, the GM may want to create a set of star systems that are connected through hyperspace nodes to each other. That's a good way to begin a **Strange Stars** campaign. Our Local Hyperspace Network sub-system allows the GM to do that; the rules are based on the "Linking Systems" mechanics in the *Diaspora SRD*.

A local hyperspace network brings together 5-6 systems that will serve as the primary campaign starmap. Here are the steps:

1: Start the Map and Choose an Anchor World. The GM draws a number of circles on a sheet of paper corresponding to the number of star systems that will be featured in the campaign. Five or six systems is sufficient, but maybe you're ambitious and you want more. Leave a good inch or two between the circles.

The GM selects one star system from the **SSGSB** to serve as the point of connection to the established **Strange Stars** setting. **Optional:** The GM can have a discussion with the players about which official **Strange Stars** system seems most interesting to them, if a more collaborative approach to setting creation is being used.

- Pick one of the circles in the chain of systems on the sheet.
- Write in the name of the world just above the circle.
- Write the system's T-E-R values inside the circle.

2: Star System Creation. The GM (or the group of players, taking turns) creates the other systems, one per empty circle, using the rules described in the Star System Creation section up above. Fill in the remaining circles on the sheet of paper starting at the left hand side and moving toward the right. Detail each circle as described above. **Optional:** All of the star systems created can be assumed to be in the same region of space (e.g., the Zuran Expanse or Alliance space) as the Anchor World. Alternatively, the systems may straddle one or more regions of space. The GM can either decide this, or have a discussion with the players to determine whether the systems occupy one region of space or span different regions.

3: Hyperspace Nodes and Connections. Most starships traveling among the **Strange Stars** do not have FTL drives. The art of building superluminal drives has been lost since the fall of the Archaic Oikumene. Instead, most starships use sublight drives and access an ancient hyperspace network to jump between worlds. Each star system has the potential for hyperspace nodes connecting it to one or more systems. In this step, we create a local hyperspace network whose nodes link one local system to another. Other hyperspace nodes exist, creating connections to more distant systems, but our primary focus here is on creating a local hyperspace network for a specific series of worlds to be used as a campaign setting.

The GM starts the process by rolling 4DF for each system represented by a circle on the paper. Alternatively, the GM rolls for the first circle and then asks a player to roll for the next system in the chain. For each successive system, do the following:

- If the result is **negative**, connect the system whose node was just rolled to the next circle (system) in the chain by drawing single line between the two circles. The line is a hyperspace node connecting two systems.
- If the result is a **zero**, connect the system to the next immediate circle (just as in a negative roll), but also, if a system further down the list has no connections yet, connect the system rolled to that first additional neighbor with no connections.
- If the result is **positive**, follow the directions for a zero result. If another system further down the chain of circles has no connections yet, also connect to that neighbor.
- Continue for each successive system in the chain until all are connected to a neighbor. The second to last, and last systems never need rolls. The second to last system forms a hyperspace node with its last neighbor. That is it, unless additional nodes (usually connecting to another network of systems in the **Strange Stars**) are discovered.

4 (Optional): The GM makes an additional 4DF roll for each star system. GMs may want to keep these results secret, at least initially.

- A **negative** result means that there is at least one hyperspace node connecting that system to another star system outside the local hyperspace network. However, the existence of the node is either inactive (unknown), or the node is an active but secret "black gate" whose access controlled by a particular group or faction. Restricted gates controlled by a military force would also fit in this category.
- A **zero** result means there are no active hyperspace nodes connecting that system to other stars outside the local hyperspace network.
- A **positive** result means that at least one active hyperspace node connects that system to another star system outside the local hyperspace network. This node is well-known to star travelers visiting the system.

For full details see the **Cluster Creation Example** on page 47.

STRANGE STARS GAZETTEER

The following are but a small sample of the star systems found in the **Strange Stars**. Page references are included for descriptions in the **Strange Stars Game Setting Book**.

AYGO & ERG
(T+1 E+2 R+2)
SSGSB 19

Aygo Aspects:

A DOMED ZHMUN CITY RULES THE SYSTEM
MINING RIGHTS TO THE SYSTEM'S THREE SUPEREARTHS
DEFENDED BY SHIP-SIZED MORAVECS

Erg Aspects:

POOR STEPSISTER OF AYGO
RUNDOWN SPACEPORT, MINING CAMPS, AND SHANTYTOWNS
DESPERATE AND DOWN-AND-OUT OFFWORLDERS

BOREAS
(T-1 E+1 R-1)
SSGSB 9

Aspects:

AN ICE-COVERED OCEAN MOON WITH MONSTERS IN THE DEPTHS
BLUE-SKINNED ULDRA COLONISTS SHELTER UNDER THE ICE
SLOW, COLD MINDS WAGE WAR WITH THE ULDRA

CIRCUS
(T+3 E+3 R+2)
SSGSB 13

Aspects:

INTERZONE, A VAST FREE CITY WITH A HUGE SPACEPORT
A VAST RING STRUCTURE THAT MAY PREDATE THE ARCHAIC OIKUMENE
TRADE HUB FOR THREE INTERSTELLAR CIVILIZATIONS

DESHRET
(T+3 E+1 R+1)
SSGSB 19

Aspects:

A SKY CITY OF UPLOADED MINDS, DISASSEMBLED INTO DUST
DESERT WASTES HAUNTED BY DJINNI AND BODY-THIEF DYBBUKS
SANDMINERS SIFT RED DUST FOR CODE FRAGMENTS AND ARTIFACTS

FORTUNA SYSTEM
(T+3 E+3 R+3)
SSGSB 9

Aspects:

CASINOS, BORDELLOS, AND OTHER PLEASURE STATIONS
DIAMOND PLANET WITH A LEGENDARY DATA VAULT
FORTUNES WON (OR LOST) ON A ROLL OF THE DICE

GAEA
(T-4* [*There's a secret!] E+2 R 0)
SSGSB 15

Aspects:

AN EXACT REPLICA OF OLD EARTH DOWN TO THE LANDMASSES
WHY IS GAEA INTELLIGENT AND WHAT DOES SHE WANT?
PRIMITIVE, HUMANOID PLANT-ANIMAL HYBRIDS

GOGMAGOG
(T+3 E-1 R+1)
SSGSB 9

Aspects:

SPECTACULAR GIANT ROBOT COMBAT
LOW GRAVITY IS GOOD FOR BIG RICKETY STRUCTURES
BOT BREAKER GANGS VS. VON NEUMANN MACHINES

LIBRARY OF ATOZ-THELN
(T+3 E+1 R-1)
SSGSB 19

Aspects:

LARGEST REPOSITORY OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE KNOWN GALAXY
BUILT INSIDE A DWARF PLANET BEFORE THE GREAT COLLAPSE
A HAVEN FOR SCHOLARS IN THE LAWLESS ZURAN EXPANSE

MINGA
(T-2 E+2 R+1)
STRANGE STARS INDEX*

*This world is described in the **Strange Stars Index** here: <http://sorcerersskull.blogspot.com/2014/03/the-soft-conquest.html>

Aspects:

SOURCE OF THE GALAXY'S MOST SUBMISSIVE AND COMPLIANT SLAVES
EXACT LOCATION KNOWN ONLY TO THE SLAVERS AND THEIR THRALLS
THE SLAVERS THINK THEY'RE IN CHARGE...

MORRGNA
(T+3 E+2 R+1)
SSGSB 19

Aspects:

MOON-SIZED ARTIFICIAL HABITAT
A SINGLE HIVE QUEEN RULES AN ALL-FEMALE CLONE CLADE
MERCENARIES, OUR SOLE EXPORT

NARAKA
(T+3 E+1 R+3)
SSGSB 23

Aspects:

PREVIOUSLY, A RADIANT POLITY PRISON ASTEROID
NOW, THE ZAO PIRATE HOMEWORLD
DEFENSIVE DUST SHROUD

ORICHALCOS
(T+3 E+3 R+4)
SSGSB 15

Aspects:

PREEMINENT ECONOMIC POWER IN THE COREWARD REACH
AUSTERITY AND INEQUALITY ARE POWERFUL MOTIVATORS
GLITTER DOMES FOR THE MOST HIGH, ORBITALS FOR EVERYONE ELSE

RUNE
(T-3 E+2 R 0)
SSGSB 15

Aspects:

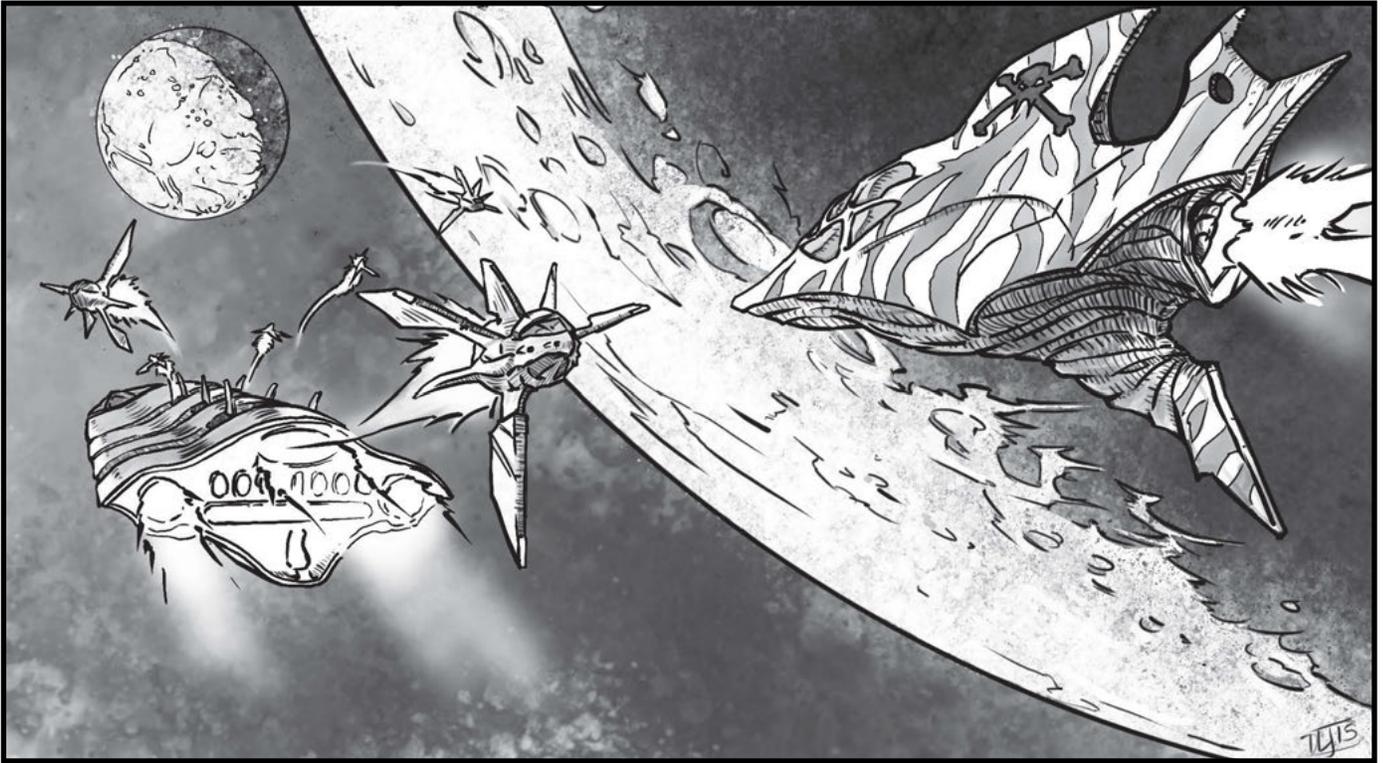
"MIEVEAL" WORLD OR WORK OF ART?
RULED BY WIZARDS, BEDEVILED BY MONSTERS
HERE BE DRAGONS

TENEBRAE
(T-4 E+1 R+1)
SSGSB 19

Aspects:

THREE LABYRINTHINE STRUCTURES, THE SIZE OF SMALL CITIES
DARKENED SKIES, LIFELESS WASTES
WHISPERING ARTIFACTS AND DWARFISH SKULKERS

07: FACTIONS



Factions in **Strange Stars** are built similarly to characters. They have aspects, approaches (which work just like a PC's skills!), stunts, consequences, refresh, and fate points.

Factions also have a unique attribute called **scale**, which sets some parameters around the circumstances in which organizations can attack/defend against each other.

Factions do not have stress tracks.

BUILDING FACTIONS

Scale: Each faction has a scale. This is a numerical score indicating the operational capabilities of the faction in terms of its reach and scope:

- **Scale 0** organizations are limited to one location, such as a city or space station;
- **Scale 1** organizations act on an entire planet;
- **Scale 2** organizations act on an entire star system;
- **Scale 3** organizations act across a cluster of several systems;
- **Scale 4** organizations act across an entire region of space, such as the Alliance, Vokun Empire, or the Zuran Expanse;
- **Scale 5** organizations act across the entire Strange Stars setting.

Factions can act on other organizations that are within +/-2 of their own scale. For example, a local Scale 0 organization can act on factions of up to Scale 2 (i.e., on organizations across

their entire solar system), but not on Scale 3 or above that. A Scale 2 organization in contrast may act on factions of Scales 0 to 4.

Aspects: Each faction has a high concept and a trouble aspect, a modus operandi aspect, and up to two other aspects. The high concept and trouble aspects play the same role for factions as for characters: they highlight the most important thing about the faction, and what gets the faction in trouble. The **modus operandi (MO) aspect** suggests something about how the faction handles challenges, solves problems, or otherwise manages its affairs. MO aspects might include: PYRAMID SCHEME, PIRACY AND MURDER, or SECRECY IS OUR WATCHWORD.

Approaches: Factions use approaches similar to those in *Fate Accelerated Edition*, rather than the more granular skills found in *Fate Core*. Approaches represent organizations' broad problem-solving capacities. There are six of them:

- **Covert:** Activities best not traced back to the organization, whether assassination, kidnapping, sabotage, or other dirty tricks. The Covert approach is about deeds; when words, memes, or ideas are used, that's the Propaganda approach. Use Covert to overcome an obstacle, create an advantage, or attack.
- **Finance:** Buying, selling, investing, and trading — the economic power and resources that a faction has at its disposal. Use to overcome an obstacle, create an advantage, attack, or defend.

- **Innovation:** The capacity to develop unique responses to emerging challenges — the development or deployment of a new technology, or a new social, economic, or political response that changes the playing field in some way. Use to create an advantage or overcome an obstacle.
- **Intelligence:** Information and data-gathering ability — a faction's ability to make sense of the information at its disposal, anticipate rivals' next actions, as well as dig up dirt on opponents. Use to Overcome an Obstacle or create an advantage.
- **Might:** Physical assets deployed to attack enemies or defend oneself — the application of military force to address a challenge. Use to create an advantage, attack, or defend.
- **Propaganda:** Persuading others to support the faction's viewpoint, policies, leaders, and goals. Use to overcome an obstacle, create an advantage, attack, or defend.

Each approach is assigned a numerical score, just like skills in *Fate Core*. Factions generally have one approach at +3, two at +2, two at +1, and one at 0. This represents the reality that most organizations are particularly good at something, have middling capacity in several other areas, and are particularly poor at something.

Stunts: Factions get one free stunt, and after the free one, reduce their starting fate points by one point for each additional stunt taken. Here are a few sample factional stunts:

- **Archaitech Caches:** The faction has caches of technology dating back to the Archaic Oikumene. Take +2 to its Innovation approach in situations where the introduction of ancient technologies could produce a breakthrough.
- **Black Gates:** Because the faction has access to secret hyperspace nodes, it may readily surprise its adversaries. The faction takes +2 to its Might approach when using its fleets to attack another faction.
- **Diplomatic Corps:** Because the faction has expertise in diplomacy, it takes +2 to its Intelligence approach to overcome an obstacle through negotiation and persuasion.
- **Early Assets:** The faction has access to a cache of Radiant Polity technology with the capacity to mass produce clones of the ancient supersoldier Hannibal T. Early. Spend 1 fate point to increase the faction's Might by +2 for the remainder of the Scene.
- **Hot Nodes:** Because the faction has access to the fastest hyperspace nodes, it can always create an advantage by declaring that its incoming fleets arrive in a system before its rivals.
- **Memetic Engineering:** Because the faction has the ability to memetically reinforce social cooperation, it takes +2 to its Innovation approach when seeking to create an advantage or overcome an obstacle through social innovation.
- **Memetic Subversion:** Because the faction has the ability to subvert a variety of media with its own subtle and invasive memes, it takes +2 to its Propaganda approach in attack actions targeting another faction's bad ideas.
- **Money Talks:** Because of the vast resources at the faction's disposal, it may take +2 to its Intelligence approach in an overcome an obstacle action paying handsomely for deeply guarded secrets.
- **Ubiquitous Spies:** Because the faction has many spies, it takes +2 to its Intelligence approach when trying to create an advantage against an enemy that can be infiltrated.

Consequences: Each faction can take three consequences: one mild consequence (absorbs two stress), one moderate consequence (absorbs four stress), and one severe consequence (absorbs six stress).

Recovery Rolls: To relieve consequences, use Finance, Innovation, and Propaganda. These three approaches are the ones with the greatest potential to restore damage of various kinds, replenishing resources and rebuilding infrastructure (Finance), developing ways to adapt to hardships and adverse circumstances (Innovation), and shore up political support (Propaganda).

Refresh and Fate Points: Refresh is not used with factions, since factional play (see below) is designed for a few turns of action. Major factions start play with 3 fate points. Minor factions start play with 3 fate points if being run by a player, or use the GM's pool of fate points, if being run by the GM.

FACTIONAL PLAY

Factions can be run very similarly to characters in a time-limited simulation. You can use factional play as a thought experiment to set the stage for a roleplaying adventure or campaign. The table can explore together "what might happen" in a specific situation, such as two or three factions discovering a long-lost star system which also has its own local political faction(s).

Factional play should be set in particular world or star system. The GM sets the local stage where the factional play occurs by using index cards, sticky notes, or dry erase flashcards to write down some world aspects and parameters, as described in the **Worlds Chapter**. These world aspects can be invoked in factional play by spending a fate point.

The GM may:

- Create a world and select the factions to be used in advance of play
- Co-create the world and either select or create new factions with the players
- Assign factions to specific players or have the players choose which factions they will play
- Come up with a scenario in which factions interact in a specific system or world
- Engage the table in defining a scenario for factional play

Each player runs a faction, but players shouldn't get too emotionally attached to the faction they are playing. This is group exploration, not a wargame! (Even when it involves war.) That is especially important to remember unless you have the agreement of the table to play a high stakes, high conflict game.

Players can make suggestions to each other about what action a faction might take, and they should listen to each other's suggestions about how factions might behave in a given situation. These should be in keeping with descriptions in the **Strange Stars Game Setting Book**, and the aspects for the **Strange Stars** factions featured in this chapter.

Three or four turns for each player is often enough for this purpose. Turns are a very abstract units: they just represent time and agency. Turns may represent what factions do over a few days, weeks, or months of time. Action proceeds in much the same way as it does with player characters. Players take turns acting with the faction that they control. On their turn, they use one of the four actions, or narrate a story detail by spending a fate point.

Players running major or minor factions start with 3 FPs. The GM gets a pool of FP to use for NPC factions based on the number of players at the table. So if there are three players plus the GM, the GM gets 3 FP to use for any major or minor factions they will run during the game.

Each exchange starts with the GM presenting a brief news update sharing 1-3 political, cultural, or economic developments since the last turn. This is a chance to introduce some new situation aspects onto the gaming table, or put a new NPC minor faction into play. After the GM's briefing, players can go around the table in clockwise order from the GM, giving every player a chance to act. Alternatively, factions can act in the order of their Intelligence, highest to lowest.

Factions don't have to fight each other. Overcome and create an advantage actions can change a political landscape too. Factions can also cooperate. Factions can also cement bargains with each other. Whenever two or factions strike an agreement (other than a concession), both factions receive a fate point. Subject to GM approval, the players of factions can spend 1 FP to add a narrative detail.

If factions do enter into conflict with each other, they use their approaches to deal each other stress. This might be warfare in the form of a Might attack, or economic or ideological subversion in the form of Finance and Propaganda attacks. Every faction gets to defend using one of its approaches. Feel free to be creative.

A faction can break the scale rule for one exchange, and attack a rival faction of any scale. This costs one fate point. Here's the trick: when a faction breaks the scale rule, it is vulnerable to a reprisal attack on the rival's next turn. This represents the action and response cycle of spectacular terrorism followed by massive repression.

All stress resulting from conflict needs to be immediately absorbed as consequences, since there are no stress tracks with factions. When a faction has taken three consequences it is taken out. A faction can always offer a concession instead of being taken out however. That allows the player of the faction some say in how their faction exits the conflict.

Once three or four turns have been played, the GM should engage the players in coming up with 2-3 sentences describing what happened. Then the group should agree on 3 aspects that define the emerging situation. Character generation and roleplaying then begins.

Since this is a storytelling tool, GMs and players can also take a break from roleplaying and insert a few turns of factional play

when an important political, economic, military, or ideological turning point occurs in a campaign. Say a war has broken out, or civil strife is brewing. The table can use factional play to explore what happens, and then return to roleplaying when they have a clear idea about those factional conflicts are resolved.

PLAYER CHARACTERS AND FACTIONS

During roleplaying, the GM ordinarily controls all factions. Players can influence the behavior of factions through the actions of their characters.

Invoking a Faction for an Advantage: If a character or major antagonist NPC has an aspect tying them positively or negatively to a faction, that character may invoke the faction as if it were an aspect in an action they are taking. The PC spends 1 FP and suggests to the GM how their relationship with faction provides them with a benefit. Note that the faction itself may or may not be aware that it is being invoked, although it often will when its resources and reputation are being leveraged! The details of the invocation (i.e., how the PC benefits) is always subject to GM approval.

Leveraging Factional Intervention: Factions can also be invoked in such a way that they are moved to intervene in a situation by the actions of the characters. A PC or major NPC can invoke a faction's intervention in two different ways:

- **Provocation:** A PC or NPC takes an action that effects the faction's reputation, resources, or interests in some way, provoking the faction to intervene in a situation. This usually happens when players do something in character such as attacking a faction's base, reputation, or assets. The GM determines the nature of the faction's response. The faction may attempt to make life difficult for PCs by placing a new aspect on a scene. Some responses may be even more durable, such as placing an aspect for a scenario or entire campaign.
- **Pulling Strings:** A PC can attempt to call-in a favor from a faction as long as that they have an aspect that creates a positive tie to that faction. This is typically a request for a big favor in the form of a ship, a loan of credits or equipment, or intervention against another faction. The player describes the specific action or favor sought from the faction, but the player character still has to do something to leverage their desired result. The PC uses a specific skill (e.g., Contacts, Rapport, or Social Systems) in an Overcome action to persuade their faction to take the desired action. The organization's Scale is the target for the PC's attempt to influence its action. If the attempt fails, the faction may still act, but does not do so in the particular way that the PC requested. Instead, the GM determines what the faction does.

Now let's take a look at the some of the most important factions in the **Strange Stars** setting!

ALLIANCE
SSGSB 10-11

Scale: 4

Aspects:

High Concept: INTERSPECIES COOPERATION ON AN INTERSTELLAR SCALE
Trouble: THE STRANGE STARS ARE A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD
Modus Operandi: WORK TOGETHER
Aspect: SEVEN MAJOR SPECIES DISPLACED BY THE GREAT COLLAPSE
Aspect: EACH WORLD SURRENDERS A BIT OF ITS OWN SOVEREIGNTY

Approaches: Covert +1, Finance +2, Innovation +3, Intelligence +2, Might +1, Propaganda 0

Stunts: Diplomatic Corps: Because founding and sustaining the Alliance has required considerable interspecies cooperation and diplomacy, the Alliance takes +2 to its Intelligence approach to overcome an obstacle through negotiation and persuasion.

AUROGOV
SSGSB 18

Scale: 4 (Use Scale 2 for a protocol advancement team)

Aspects:

High Concept: QUASI-RELIGIOUS VOLUNTARY TYRANNY
Trouble: DEFECTORS SLANDER OUR GOOD WORKS
Modus Operandi: SELF-HELP THROUGH NEUROWARE
Aspect: SHARE THE PROTOCOL
Aspect: LED BY THE ASCENDED MASTERS

Approaches: Covert +2, Finance +1, Innovation +1, Intelligence +2, Might 0, Propaganda +3

Stunts: Open License Self-Help Software: Take +2 to Propaganda approach to mobilize all available faction membership to attack an enemy of the cult.

EDEN SEEKERS
SSGSB 11

Scale: 1

Aspects:

High Concept: SAPIENCE-REJECTIONIST HYEHOON
Trouble: WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION FOR TERRORISM
Modus Operandi: OVERTHROW OMU'S SOCIAL STRUCTURE
Aspect: RETURN TO OUR PRE-SAPIENT AVIAN SELVES
Aspect: PURGE ALL HOMINID GENES

Approaches: Covert +3, Finance 0, Innovation +2, Intelligence +1, Might +2, Propaganda +1

Stunts: Terror Tactics: Take +2 to Propaganda approach to create an advantage by resorting to terrorism.

INSTRUMENTALITY OF AOM
SSGSB 12-13

Scale: 5 (Use Scale:2 to represent a mission task force of the Instrumentality)

Aspects:

High Concept: SYNCRETISTIC THEOCRACY FOUNDED IN RADIANT POLITY DAYS
Trouble: SOMEWHAT OPPRESSIVE
Modus Operandi: USE PEACEFUL CONVERSION WHERE POSSIBLE
Aspect: AGGRESSIVELY EXPAND THE FLOCK
Aspect: SINGLE ORTHODOXY WITH A RIGID HIERARCHY

Approaches: Covert 0, Finance +1, Innovation +2, Intelligence +2, Might +1, Propaganda +3

Stunts: Malleable Message: While the Instrumentality of Aom's doctrines have been consolidated into a single orthodoxy over the centuries, the hierarchy authorizes revisions in doctrine when necessary to win converts. The Instrumentality takes +2 to its Propaganda approach to overcome obstacles such as cultural barriers when encountering a new peoples for the first time.

PHARES MID CRIME SYNDICATE
SSGSB 25

Scale: 1

Aspects:

High Concept: ONE MAN MAFIA
Trouble: FACIAL TATTOOS ARE A GIVEAWAY
Modus Operandi: CLONE-BASED CRIME SYNDICATE
Aspect: MANY BODIES, ONE TEMPLATE MIND
Aspect: BORN OF SMARAGDOZ TECH

Approaches: Covert +2, Finance +3, Innovation +1, Intelligence +2, Might +1, Propaganda 0

Stunts: Homeworld Advantage: Masters of the noosphere and the connected networks, the Pharesmid Crime Syndicate can use Intelligence in place of Might to attack an adversary.

SCAVENGERS
SSGSB 22

Scale: 2 (On the move, one system at a time)

Aspects:

High Concept: OPPORTUNISTIC PIRATES WHO FOLLOW THE LOCUSTS*

Trouble: OBVIOUS AND FRIGHTENINGLY PRIMITIVIST CYBERNETICS

Modus Operandi: PERFORM HIT AND RUN RAIDS BEFORE THE SWARM HITS

Aspect: MIGRATORY PREDATORS JUST LIKE THE SWARM

Aspect: THE LOCUSTS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY, NOT A THREAT

*An all-consuming swarm of von Neumann machines.

Approaches: Covert +1, Finance +2, Innovation +1, Intelligence +2, Might +3, Propaganda +1

Stunts: Swarm Prediction: Because the Scavengers know so much about the Locusts' behavior, they can take +2 to Intelligence to create an advantage in anticipating its movements and behaviors.

VOKUN EMPIRE
SSGSB 16-17

Scale: 4 (Use Scale: 3 and modify the aspects to represent the faction of an individual Vokun Lord)

Aspects:

High Concept: A VAST AND DECADENT STAR EMPIRE

Trouble: AN EMPIRE PREOCCUPIED WITH DECADENT GAMES

Modus Operandi: DIFFERENT DUTIES FOR DIFFERENT RACES

Aspect: DISTRUST OF AIS

Aspect: ELDER VOKUN RULE, YOUNGER VOKUN HANDLE THE DETAILS

Approaches: Covert +1, Finance +3, Innovation +2, Intelligence +1, Might +2, Propaganda 0

Stunts: Manipulate Species: The Vokun Empire manipulates the genetics of entire species to create the different kinds of servitors and experts that the Empire needs. The Empire takes +2 to its Innovation approach to create an advantage in finding a useful role for any newly discovered species or clade.

ZAO PIRATES
SSGSB 22-23

Scale: 5 (Use Scale:3 to represent a Zao pirate fleet rather than the entire Zao pirate nation)

Aspects:

High Concept: INFAMOUS SPACE PIRATES AND SLAVERS

Trouble: ANYONE CAN CALL THEMSELVES A "ZAO PIRATE"

Modus Operandi: BRAZEN CRIMES AND THEATRICAL FLAIR

Approaches: Covert +2, Finance +1, Innovation +1, Intelligence +2, Might +3, Propaganda 0

Stunts: Secret Hordes: When the Zao Pirates tap their secret treasure hordes, they take +2 to their Finance approach to overcome an obstacle requiring more resources.

MINOR FACTIONS

BELTER PIRATES:

Scale: 2

Aspects:

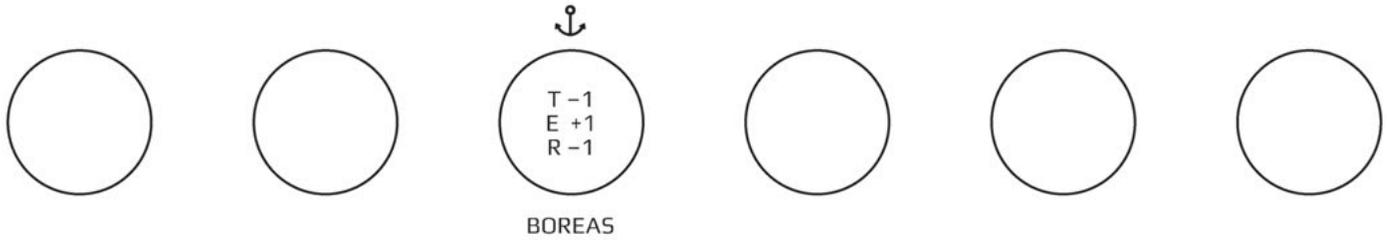
BELTER PIRATES (HC), RADIATION-DRENCHED CANNIBALS (T), AMBUSH PREDATORS (MO); +2 Might, -2 Other approaches; 1 Moderate Consequence

LOCAL PLANETARY GOVERNMENT:

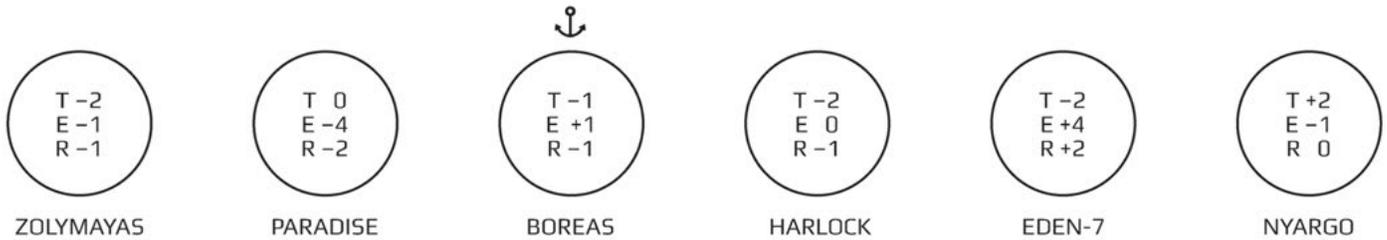
- Use the mechanics in the Worlds chapter to generate T-E-R rating and aspects
 - Give the planet or system a name
 - Assign Scale 1 or 2
 - Assign the government's approaches
 - Weak governments get a Mild Consequence, stronger governments also get a Moderate and a Severe
-

CLUSTER CREATION EXAMPLE

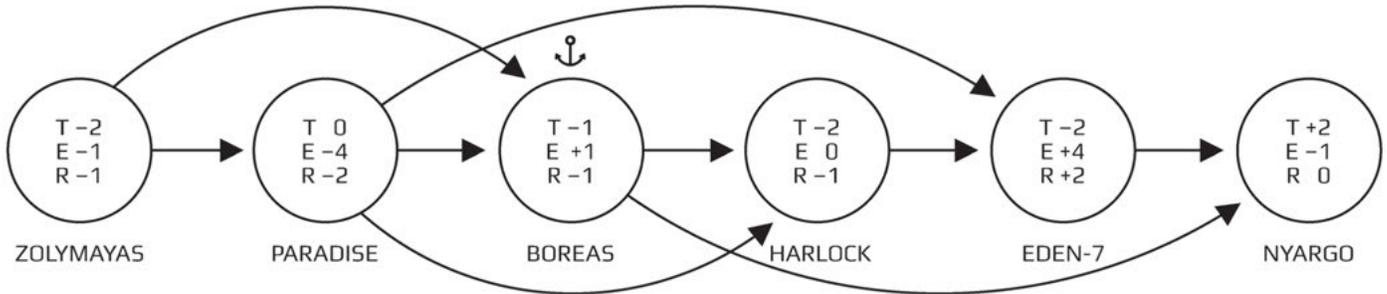
STEP ONE: Draw 5-6 systems as a series of circles and pick a world to serve as the anchor world from the **Strange Stars Gazetteer**.



STEP TWO: Roll 4DF to generate TER ratings for the other systems in the cluster and create the systems as per "Star System Creation."

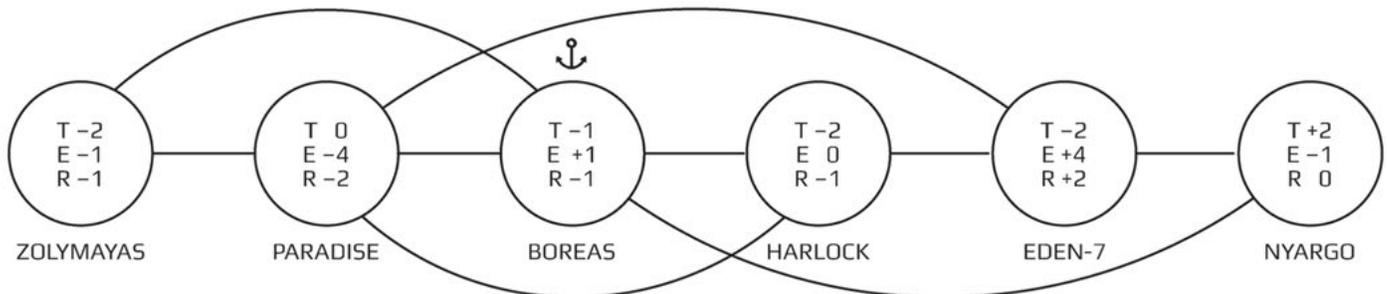


STEP THREE: Create the hyperspace network connections by rolling 4DF for every system and noting the result as positive, negative, or zero as described in "The Local Hyperspace Node Network."



The arrows above show the steps:

- a: The roll for Zolmayas was zero, so it connects to Paradise and Boreas.
- b: The roll for Paradise was positive, so it connects to Boreas, Harlock, and the next unconnected system, Eden-7.
- c: The roll for Boreas was zero, so it connects to Harlock and the next unconnected system, Nyargo.
- d: The roll for Harlock was negative, so it connects only to Eden-7.
- e: As next to the last in the chain, no roll is needed for Eden-7. it connects to Nyargo.



STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL): The GM makes an additional, secret 4DF roll for each system, noting the results:

- Zolmayas, Boreas, Harlock, and Nyargo - Positive. There is at least one publicly known node connecting it to another cluster.
- Paradise - Negative. Either a secret, black node connecting it to another cluster or an unknown, inactive node.
- Eden-7 - Zero. No connections to other clusters.

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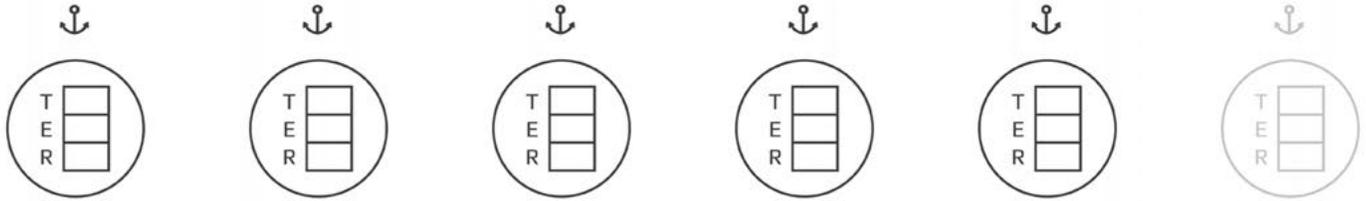
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STRANGE STARS CLUSTER SHEET

CLUSTER NAME:	REGION OF SPACE:
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CIRCLE ONE ANCHOR SYMBOL TO INDICATE YOUR ANCHOR WORLD

SYSTEM NAME:					
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SYSTEM NAME:	SYSTEM NAME:
TECHNOLOGY	TECHNOLOGY
ENVIRONMENT	ENVIRONMENT
RESOURCES	RESOURCES

ASPECTS:	ASPECTS:
-----------------	-----------------

NOTES:	NOTES:
---------------	---------------

SYSTEM NAME:	SYSTEM NAME:
TECHNOLOGY	TECHNOLOGY
ENVIRONMENT	ENVIRONMENT
RESOURCES	RESOURCES

ASPECTS:	ASPECTS:
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NOTES:	NOTES:
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SYSTEM NAME:	SYSTEM NAME:
TECHNOLOGY	TECHNOLOGY
ENVIRONMENT	ENVIRONMENT
RESOURCES	RESOURCES

ASPECTS:	ASPECTS:
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NOTES:	NOTES:
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STRANGE STARS CHARACTER SHEET

CHARACTER NAME:	CLADE:
HOME WORLD:	SOPHONT TYPE: <input type="radio"/> BIOLOGIC <input type="radio"/> MORAVEC <input type="radio"/> INFOSOPHONT

FATE POINTS:

REFRESH:

ASPECTS	SKILLS
HIGH CONCEPT:	SUPERB [+5]
TROUBLE:	GREAT [+4]
STRANGENESS:	GOOD [+3]
OTHER ASPECT [CROSSING PATHS]:	FAIR [+2]
OTHER ASPECT [CROSSING PATHS AGAIN]:	AVERAGE [+1]
STUNTS	EACH CHARACTER STARTS WITH 1 GREAT, 2 GOOD, 3 FAIR, AND 4 AVERAGE SKILLS.
NAME: DESCRIPTION:	STRESS TRACKS
	PHYSICAL 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	MENTAL 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	CREDIT 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
EXTRAS, EQUIPMENT AND NOTES:	CONSEQUENCES
	2 MILD:
	2 MILD:
	4 MODERATE:
	6 SEVERE:

STRANGE STARS THREAT SHEET

NAME/DESCRIPTION:	CLADE/HOME WORLD:
THREAT FACTION:	THREAT TYPE: <input type="checkbox"/> NAMELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING <input type="checkbox"/> MAIN
ASPECTS	STUNTS
SKILLS	STRESS
	STRESS BOXES:
	CONSEQUENCES:

STRANGE STARS FACTION SHEET

FACTION NAME:	SCALE: MAJOR FACTIONS START PLAY WITH 3 FATE POINTS
ASPECTS	STUNTS
HIGH CONCEPT:	
TROUBLE:	
MODUS OPERANDI:	
OTHER ASPECTS:	
APPROACHES	CONSEQUENCES
COVERT: FINANCE: INNOVATION: INTELLIGENCE: MIGHT: PROPAGANDA:	MILD [2 STRESS]: MODERATE [4 STRESS]: SEVERE [6 STRESS]:
<small>EACH APPROACH IS ASSIGNED A NUMERICAL SCORE, JUST LIKE A CHARACTER. ASSIGN ONE APPROACH AT +3, TWO AT +2, TWO AT +1, AND ONE AT +0</small>	



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