



THE LAST PARSEC

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Written by Clint Black, Timothy Brian Brown,
Matthew Cutter, Shane Hensley, Norm Hensley

Edited by Matthew Cutter

Graphic Design and Layout by Aaron Acevedo,
Ben Acevedo, Emma Beltran, Matthew Cutter

Cover Art by Max Davenport

The Last Parsec Brand Manager — Timothy Brian Brown

Art Director — Aaron Acevedo

Interior Art by Dennis Darmody, Max Davenport, Grosnez, Reza Ilyasa,
Irina Kovaljova, David Lecossu, Eric Lofgren, Chris Malidore, MK Ultra,
Grzegorz Pedrycz, Lorenz Hideyoshi Ruwwe, Bryan Syme, Jon Taylor,
Tomek Tworek, Igor Vitkovskiy, Cheyenne Wright

Savage Worlds created by Shane Lacy Hensley

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CHAPTER ONE: THE KNOWN WORLDS

The history of the Known Worlds is inseparable from the history of the mother world that spawned its most prodigious race. Earth is the ancestral birthplace of all pure-blooded humans; their DNA evolved in its oceans and spread to the stars by their own ingenuity.

Other humanoids—bipedal sentients with vaguely similar physiology from other far-flung planets—do not share that distinctive legacy. *Humanoid* is an all-encompassing term in the Known Worlds that includes humans and many other independently evolved bipedal beings of similar size and basic physiology. All humans are humanoids, but not all humanoids are humans.

Earth's pre-spaceflight history is a colorful pastiche of violent multiculturalism, now largely forgotten, its nations, religions, and economies

long vanished in the wake of unfolding science and interstellar expansion.

Still, what Earth is today is built upon the bones of its formative 20th through 22nd Centuries, when the massive destructive power of emerging technologies put humans and their fragile world to the test many times over. In those days, despots rose and fell, populations roiled and clashed, philosophies wrestled with science and lingering mysticism. It was a bloody epoch that ultimately wiped the Earthly slate clean for more promising times to come.

During those dark, violent centuries, uniquely human optimism clung precariously to the edge of the precipice. Foundations gathered resources and minds and hid themselves away where they might survive and plan for a better future. Some governments did the same, the most forward thinking devoting a portion of their economies to science that might give them an edge against their enemies.

Idealists pressed on against the prevailing wisdom that humanity was doomed to its own foibles, convinced that their race's future was in fact quite bright, and ultimately it would blossom beneath the warm light of distant suns.

COLONIZATION

Earth's first tentative outposts in the solar system proved to be remote scientific endeavors, at best. Lacking vital terraforming technologies, these bases never grew beyond domed, enclosed environments forever dependent upon their home planet for vital resources and replenishment.

Mars appeared most promising, but despite several costly colonization efforts the planet staunchly resisted human domination for centuries. The learned knew that humanity's desperately needed new frontiers lay beyond the great gulfs of space, beyond the many light years that still dwarfed their primitive spaceflight technologies.



Yet the intrepid dared challenge those unimaginable distances in three separate monumental efforts.

FIRST ATTEMPTS

The first to reach beyond the Solar System were a series of ambitious slower-than-light craft sent out upon the six cardinal galactic directions (two to coreward, and one each to rimward, spinward, antispinward, z-positive, and z-negative). These ships carried frozen or embryonic explorers and colonists to deposit fledgling human settlements on distant worlds, over many decades and centuries.

The dozen or so successful colonies they established eventually terraformed their worlds into the primary human planets of today's Known Worlds. Without their legacy the Known Worlds would now be a very different place.

INTO HYPERSPACE

The second great human effort to reach distant stars emerged in the earliest days of hyperspace technology's development—the early 27th Century. Many decades elapsed between the mastery of hyperspace travel and the more delicate technology of keeping something alive through the process; the rigors of hyperspace proved unvaryingly fatal for some time.

Still, robotic probes sent to promising stars confirmed the existence of worlds around other suns worthy of exploitation. Thousands of uncoordinated exploratory missions launched from Earth into the vast volumes of space in all directions, exploring and reporting. Many other races' first contact with Earth was through their constructs rather than with flesh-and-blood humans.

LINK UP

The third great human expansion starward occurred over the long period after the so-called "Link Up" event of the early 28th Century, which was, ironically, not initiated by Earthly technology but by the Canopan civilization.

Seeded from Earth by the slower-than-light program, human Canopan scientists flourished and surpassed those on Earth, perfecting human-survivable hyperspace travel before their Earthly counterparts.

In a matter of a few short years, virtually every human-colonized world sprinkled out in the enormity of Known Space—until then isolated and independent—was "linked up" again by Canopan-piloted starships. An enormous human civilization joined hands, so to speak, and spread out quickly into the volume of space around them.

Not surprisingly, Earth did not immediately take a lead role in the emergent human civilization of the Known Worlds. Important in its local cluster of worlds, it was clearly no longer the technological giant among human planets (the Canopans had proved that), nor was it the most-populous world (fully five other human-seeded worlds surpassed Earth).

In the next hundred years after Link Up, Earth settled into its now-familiar role as one human world among many, historically significant and steeped in lore and legend, but otherwise something of a backwater that comparatively few humans visited or offered allegiance.

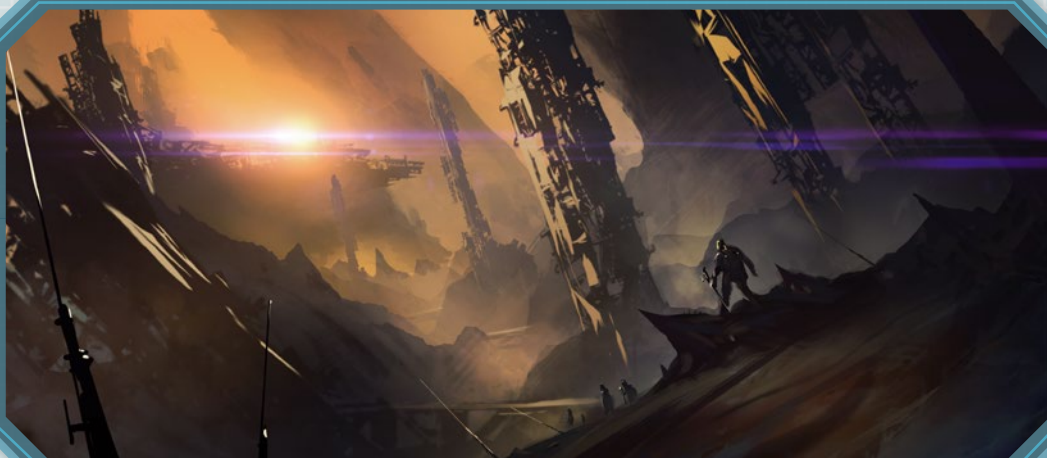
THE COALITION WARS

The backlash against that loss of supremacy was not difficult to predict, and it soon sparked the Coalition Wars. Technically a number of

CLASSIFICATION OF MAIN SEQUENCE STARS

This table lists stars' characteristics in relation to Sol, a G-class star. An A-class star, for example, is roughly 1.7 times larger, has twice the mass, and shines about 20 times more brightly than Sol.

Spectral Type	O	B	A	F	G	K	M
Temperature	40,000K	20,000K	8,500K	6,500K	5,700K	4,500K	3,200K
Radius (Sol = 1)	10	5	1.7	1.3	1	0.8	0.3
Mass (Sol = 1)	50	10	2	1.5	1	0.7	0.2
Luminosity (Sol = 1)	100,000	1,000	20	4	1	0.2	0.01
Lifetime (million years)	10	1,000	1,000	3,000	10,000	50,000	200,000
Abundance (percent)	0.00001	0.1	0.7	2	3.5	8	80



small, regional conflicts among worlds no more than 100 light years from Sol, the Coalition Wars were the only significant interstellar civil conflict among humans.

More often than not, any individual battle traced its roots to the prevalent economic realities of the time and place, but were waged beneath the banner of Earthly dominance. Ultimately the Coalition Wars wound down quietly as Earth and its population resigned themselves to relegation as a significant but not dominant force in human interstellar affairs.

A visitor to Earth today finds a thriving world trading largely on its history and undeniable claim to being humanity's "most perfect" world. Humans flock there for tourism and research. Earth still holds claim to "the sun" and "the moon," the seas and shores from which intrepid human explorers once set out in tiny vessels to travel into the great beyond.

Even so, Earth's human civilization is not ranked among the most influential. That honor resides with other planets and civilizations, as shown in the following pages' tour of the most prominent Known Worlds clustered around Sol.

CAROLIA (COR CAROLI)

Carolia is an exquisitely earthlike planet in the Cor Caroli star system, also called Alpha Canum Venaticorum, 110 light years from Sol in the Z-Positive axis of the Milky Way in the constellation Canes Venatici. A slower-than-light ship first probed and colonized the planet in the late 23rd Century by old reckoning, after a long journey taking it from system to system through that region of space.

Carolia was named for its mother star, which is easily visible from Earth and traditionally called Cor Caroli, meaning "Charles's Heart," after the 17th-Century King Charles I of England. It offered the colonists a garden paradise easily nudged to earthlike perfection with minimal terraforming.

CAROLIAN BEGINNINGS

The fledgling Carolians adopted strong, worldwide democratic traditions that they have maintained with only minor interruptions over the intervening 600 years, thanks in large part to an inherent cultural bias in favor of a strong civil service bureaucracy.

Carolians not only built strong civil institutions like those that tamed their new world, but adopted strong societal and familial bonds that encouraged progress and innovation while discouraging stagnation and corruption.

Traditional Carolian families specialize in specific civic functions—governance, trade, diplomacy, labor relations—becoming so entrenched that to outsiders they appear to have a rigid caste system.

CAROLIANS

Physiologically, Carolians are barely distinguishable from their Earthly human brethren. Long periods of selective genetic modification (primarily in the name of fashion) make metallic eyes and skin tones common, as well as stark, primary hair colors (orange, yellow, violet).

Psychologically, they are more easily given to accepting their lot in life, devoting themselves wholeheartedly to any enterprise that seems in keeping with their cultural or, especially, family

traditions. Carolians are mild-mannered, for the most part, and are seldom quick to draw conclusions or react with anger. They are prone to taking longer than usual to gather their thoughts and make a response in conversation.

Carolian governments and institutions draw strength from these characteristics, and so are especially long-lived by human reckoning. Their present planetary democracy can point to an uninterrupted string of leaders stretching back over 300 years, while many of its businesses and civic institutions are older still.

However, where these strengths bolster their activities in their homeworld's sphere of influence, the same characteristics leave Carolian business ventures slow to adapt to more rapidly changing conditions among human populations elsewhere in the Known Worlds. Few Carolian enterprises thrive far from Cor Caroli.

Still, owing to their reputation for long-term success within their own sphere, Carolian advisors are highly sought after among other human governments, worlds, and businesses. And where an advisor appears within a distant planetary council or corporation's board of directors, the Carolian most often brings along his entire immediate family and much of his extended family, all seeking employment in the same field of endeavor.

Where they settle, Carolians adapt easily to local culture, but being strong traditionalists, adopt colorful and sparkling wide-shouldered garb during leisure time.

CANOPAN (CANOPUS-4)

The Canopus star system lies 310 light years from Sol in the constellation Carina, in the antispinward direction along the galaxy's Orion Arm. The fourth planet orbiting the F-type star was first visited and colonized by a slower-than-light generation ship in the mid-26th Century by old reckoning, though that fact was lost to its struggling population after the first of two near-extinction-level catastrophes, only to be rediscovered during Link Up with other human worlds just 200 years ago. Canopus-4 proved to be a particularly difficult world to colonize, giving rise to a stubborn, self-reliant human civilization.

DISCOVERY

Upon discovery, only the rugged planet's highest mountain peaks rose sufficiently high in its thick atmosphere to justify human colonization. An intensive terraforming effort eventually thinned the corrosive atmosphere and reduced its pressure and intense heat to the point where humans could expand into the more fertile slopes and valleys.

Early in that process, an accidental chemical reaction in the atmospheric cleansing operation wiped out 90% of the colonists, and within a few generations their world was nearly devastated by a significant asteroid impact. The survivors of those twin calamities prized caution and personal fortitude, attitudes that mark their civilization to the present day.

CANOPANS

Canopus-4's gravity is slightly higher than Earth's, which has slowly changed the physiology of its human population over their 400-year residence there (though they are still an exact genetic match to their terrestrial cousins). Canopans are shorter than standard humans by an average of six inches, with sturdier builds and denser, thicker bones. They have somewhat greater motive strength and significantly greater cardiovascular strength.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

As the core reference for *The Last Parsec* setting, this book provides all the milieu-specific information a Game Master needs to create adventures detailing an intrepid JumpCorp team's travels among the Known Worlds.

For all the necessary game mechanics, racial abilities, armor, weapons, gear, robots, starships, xenos, a world generator, and a dazzling variety of other vehicles and character profiles, consult the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*, available where you bought this book or online at www.peginc.com.

KNOWN WORLDS CHRONOLOGY

Humans abandoned the traditional counting of the Julian calendar in its 28th Century, starting over with New Era Reckoning (NER). Events in *The Last Parsec* take place in the 3rd Century NER, which is the 30th Century by old Earth reckoning.

Century	Event
21st–22nd	STL colony ships launched from Earth
22nd–27th	Human STL colonization of Orion Arm
28th/1st NER	Canopan discovery of FTL hyperspace drive; “Link Up” of human civilizations
1st NER	Coalition Wars (human)
1st–2nd NER	FTL hyperdrive saturation of Known Worlds
2nd NER	Discovery of FTL superluminal drive
3rd NER	Present day

Culturally, Canopans respect ruggedness and endurance, and they see physical weakness as something that should be changed or even repaired. Preparedness and a stoic acceptance of change and adversity are taught and cherished.

Canopans are numerous and widespread throughout the Known Worlds. Other humans find them well suited to difficult and long-term occupations, such as asteroid mining, deep space freight services, guard and garrison details, and so on. They can be innovators, but proceed cautiously into unfamiliar practices and conditions.

Canopan humor tends toward the tragic, their food either bland or blazing, their fashion practical, their celebrations more private than public. Thanks and rewards are not easily given,

and those received from other humans can seem to them unnecessary or even contrived.

Despite a most turbulent history, Canopan ingenuity thrived. Originally colonized from Earth by a slower-than-light spacecraft, they sent out a series of their own “sleeper” missions that established more than a dozen other human colony worlds within 40 light years of Canopus.

It was Canopan engineers who were first among all humans to unlock hyperspace technology, leading to the rapid faster-than-light Link Up event that reunited most human civilizations. Canopans were the fathers of the Known Worlds. Canopan scientists are highly sought after, but they have no special cognitive advantage, only one of determination and a willingness to put in the long hours that success demands.

OPHIAN (EPSILON OPHIUCHI)

A long-leap embryo colony ship launched from Earth in the direction of the constellation Ophiuchus had as its first objective the bright yellow G9 star Epsilon Ophiuchi, just 108 light years distant. The colony ship arrived in that system in the late 25th Century and left twin polar colonies on the deep oceaned, dense atmosphere world they found there, Epsilon Ophiuchi-2.

During the centuries-long terraforming effort, those colonies branched out beneath their new world’s oceans. So, EO-2’s continental shelves spawned enormous undersea habitats housing many millions long before colonists could thin the planetary atmosphere sufficiently to allow colonization of the polar continents.

BALKANIZATION

Unfortunately, the Ophian colonists balkanized quickly as they spread across the planet—as humans are wont to do—leading to destructive and disruptive wars and needless economic and social competition that gnawed hungrily at every nation’s resources.

The annals of Ophian history contain tales of every type of government, tyranny, and oppression. Theirs is a dark past only quelled by the emergence of several “sensorial” philosophies that took hold over the past 500 years. National pride has given way grudgingly to internal peace and universal brotherhood, all centered upon meditation and the widely encouraged visceral embrace of sensory pleasures.

OPHIANS

EO-2 differs only slightly from Earth's gravity, and its star generates a similar light, so the generations of humans who have flourished there show no marked differences from their terrestrial counterparts.

Psychologically, though, they affect a more refined disposition, speak in carefully crafted, complete sentences, rarely use slang or obscenities, and keep themselves and their surroundings neat and tidy. An iconic Ophian offers complete attention during a conversation, blocking out distractions as a matter of courtesy, and can be offended when other humans do not reciprocate.

Ophian work habits are seen by other humans as sub-par. They typically work shorter hours and take more leisure time than other human societies, which can cause jealousies.

In fact, an Ophian's method of banishing distractions fosters many efficiencies. They are culturally driven to experience the highest highs, see the most exotic things, visit the strangest places, taste the most wondrous dishes. Ophians are epicureans, seekers of pleasure, lovers of life, though individually they seem to relish those pleasures reservedly. Each new sensation is taken in as a deeply personal experience; they are loath to share joys in open public celebrations, as these go against conventional Ophian thinking.

Ophians navigate the Known Worlds in every possible role, but are often thought of as ideal guides or entertainers. Many of the finest chefs, artists, actors, poets, orators, architects, and executive assistants are Ophians.

To have an Ophian mate can be considered quite decadent and exciting. For the most part, the exoticisms attributed to their kind are overblown, but most are rooted in simple truths essential to their shared sensorial philosophies.

Despite their difficult, war-torn past, it was Ophian ambassadors and diplomats who aggressively sought and put an end to the Coalition Wars that plagued the human worlds after the advent of faster-than-light travel and connection. The Known Worlds would be a very different region of space today were it not for the Ophians' influence.

SERRA (SIGMA SCORPII)

The so-called "elves" come from a lush, green world they call Serra, originally colonized by a slower-than-light ship launched from Earth. The Sigma Scorpii star system is 568 light years from Sol—in the constellation Scorpius, roughly coreward from Earth—but the colony ship inexplicably achieved speeds almost three times the speed of light. The journey passed in just two centuries, establishing orbit around Serra in the late 24th Century old reckoning.

Some speculate that the craft passed through a wormhole or received aid from alien technology, but this cannot be corroborated. The unique civilization that spawned there flourished independently until reconnected to the human community by hyperspace-capable explorers just three centuries ago. Serrans are humans, genetically identical to their terrestrial brethren, and any physiological differences are due to producing more than 200 generations on an alien world.

The magnificent garden world Serra orbits one star of a binary or double-star B1 III/B1 V pair, making it Sigma Scorpii A-5, just one of many dozen small worlds, gas giants, and asteroid belts in its star system.

Orbiting all of this at a much greater distance is a remote white dwarf star, Sigma Scorpii C, a distant sentinel in the deepest reaches of space and easily ignored by the original colonists. Sigma Scorpii C is no ordinary white dwarf star, but was in fact touched by strange super-technology in the remote vastness of time and brought to unnatural, unusual intelligence.

The white dwarf's vast, unfathomable intelligence was touched by the minds of its new neighbors on Serra...and it reached out to touch them back. The white dwarf's influence nurtured the latent psychic abilities of the early colonists.

SERRANS

All Serrans have at least some latent psychic ability. Most have developed much stronger abilities, such as precognition, telepathy, or even pyrokinesis. Their psychic talents are rooted in meditative mysticism, and accepted practices dictate that such powers be used altruistically rather than selfishly.

PRECOGNITION

In *The Last Parsec*, the following Trappings for the *divination* power replace those in *Savage Worlds*.

Divination

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 1

Range: Self

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Concentration

Only Serrans are currently known to have this power, which grants the unique ability to “feel” different probability paths. These aren’t clear visions, and they aren’t set in stone, but by using this power a Serran can gain significant insight into several outcomes of a specific decision.

This is an incredibly taxing process. Besides the Power Point cost, Failure means the Serran suffers a level of Fatigue which is only recovered after an hour of sleep. A Serran Incapacitated in this way falls into a coma for 1d6 hours.

Success on the Psionics roll means the Serran has a general good or bad feeling about several possible outcomes. A raise indicates more specific information such as, “This decision feels of certain death,” or “Landing on this planet triggers a tragic chain of events, but a great and forgotten knowledge may be found along the path.” Of course such descriptions are up to the Game Master and what she feels are the most likely events of the adventure.

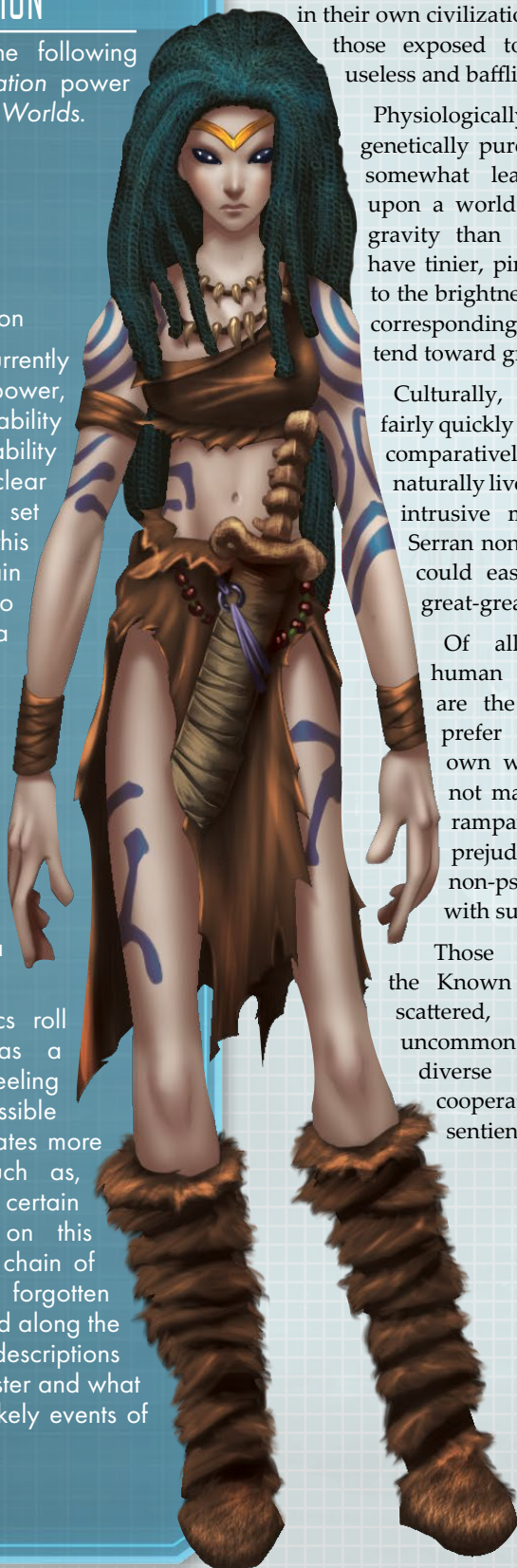
Dishonesty is a difficult concept for most Serrans since telepathy has rendered it ineffective in their own civilization for many centuries; those exposed to dishonesty find it useless and baffling.

Physiologically, Serrans are genetically pure human stock, made somewhat leaner by generations upon a world with slightly lighter gravity than Earth. They tend to have tinier, pinpoint pupils—owing to the brightness of their star—amid correspondingly large irises that tend toward grey and blue.

Culturally, the young mature fairly quickly and begin families at a comparatively young age, and they naturally live well past 100 without intrusive medical assistance; a Serran nonagenarian (in his 90s) could easily be a great-great-great-grandparent.

Of all the star-spanning human civilizations, Serrans are the most insular. Most prefer the comfort of their own world where they are not made uncomfortable by rampant dishonesty or the prejudices held by many non-psychics against those with superior mind control.

Those Serrans who travel the Known Worlds are widely scattered, a distinct and uncommon minority amid the diverse menagerie of cooperative and competitive sentient beings.



GAIA (HIP 107445 CYGNUS)

Gaia's colonists who arrived by slower-than-light craft spent nearly 600 years in dark space between Sol and the promising G8III star HIP 107455 just short of 500 light years distant.

They arrived to find a near-perfect world ripe for exploitation orbiting in the fifth planetary position around the bright star that, from Earth's perspective, sparkled in the constellation Cygnus farther ahead in the direction of galactic spin in the Orion Arm.

Its continents stretched out in verdant plains amid towering mountains, so encouraging the newcomers that they named it Gaia in honor of Earth's personification in ancient Greek myths.

The HIP 107455 Cygnus star system lay on the fringes of distant space visited by slower-than-light missions prior to the invention of hyperspace technology. Gaia's colonies managed only 15 generations or so before the 28th Century Link Up with all the other burgeoning human civilizations, meaning in a sense they cultivated the most Earthlike civilization, having had comparatively little time to evolve something more unique.

In that time, however, with such a rich planet to expand upon and successive governments eager to do so, the Gaians managed to expand their population to more than three billion, which required a quadrupling of their population with each passing generation.

GAIANS

Despite the similarity between Sol and Gaia's yellow sun, the planet's upper atmosphere blocks a considerable amount of incoming radiation, leaving its human population quite fair-skinned, pigmented nearly pure white in most cases. However, their eyes and hair tend to be strikingly dark brown or even black by contrast.

Psychologically, Gaians are indistinguishable from other humans. Ironically, their relatively great distance from Earth contributed oddly to a closer personal association with the mother world; Gaians feel a much stronger affinity for Earth than other major human civilizations, akin to those systems much closer to the homeworld such as Alpha Centari, Tau Ceti, and Beta Canum Venaticorum.

GAIAN CULTURE

Other humans unfamiliar with Gaian culture typically hold two misguided, seemingly incongruous beliefs: that Gaians are fixated upon reproduction and that they consider themselves to be superior humans.

The first misconception derives directly from their longstanding cultural acceptance of large families. The second is more media driven than based in fact; popular myth that Gaians are standoffish and contemptuous of other humans is perpetuated in entertainment, and since Gaians are relatively rare in most of the Known Worlds few others have firsthand acquaintances to dispel the falsehoods. Gaians are proud of their world and heritage, but no more so than any other human civilization.

Faced with unusual prejudices among other genetically identical human cultures, however, Gaians have traditionally turned to the other sentient races more readily for personal, business, and societal relationships.

For instance, the Gaian government has stronger trade agreements with nearby kalian, rakashan, and saurian worlds and enclaves than most other human planets enjoy (close relationships that sometimes fuel the notion that Gaians consider themselves the superior human society).

Gaian children are taught multiracial acceptance from a young age—alien tutors and caregivers flock to Gaia where they find lucrative employment—and their place in interstellar relations is far stronger for it.

ADEE (88 AQUARIUS)

What the world discovered orbiting the K-star 88 Aquarius lacked in water and breathable atmosphere is more than made up for in mineral wealth. The original colonists—a relatively small group of human scientists brought there by a later, purpose-built slower-than-light mission in the 26th Century—clung desperately to the shaded crater floors of their desolate world until advanced terraforming technologies could fill larger and larger domed habitats to accommodate them.



Harsh and unforgiving, the remote planet Adee—lying 234 light years generally in the galactic Z-negative direction from Sol—forced its inhabitants to scratch out a rugged existence completely cut off from terrestrial aid.

Now a planet of several billion and recognized as a premier Known Worlds human civilization, Adians are proud of their difficult home which even now is barely half remade to nurture human life on its barren surface. Their many centuries of struggle are legendary: terrible shortages of life-giving resources punctuated by catastrophic setbacks.

Most often, only the harsh measures of their strong central government stood fast against the colony's extinction. Today's citizens accept mandatory terms in government service, and many commit their entire lives to careers in Adian civil institutions, including their strong space corps, dedicated to protecting the world their many generations worked to hard to tame.

ADIANS

Adians are physiologically identical to terrestrial humans, having tailored their extensive artificial environments perfectly to match Earth's conditions. In size and appearance, they are indistinguishable.

In manner, however, Adians are uniquely regimented, organized, and subservient to their people and its government. Not only is civil service mandatory, the notion of anyone shirking or even questioning that responsibility is regarded as psychological imbalance or worse.

Adians teach their young to conform to an accepted pattern of existence that begins with quasi-militaristic youth groups and continues through primary education and into the civil bureaucracy. Any other sort of existence is unthinkable.

For all its regimentation, the primary objective of the Adian bureaucracy is positive and unwavering: the protection of Adee and Adians against all threats, environmental and otherwise. Adians buy into that objective as a matter of course, and while they are generally cordial they view all outsiders as potential enemies.

An Adian at large in the Known Worlds finds it difficult to take part in an enterprise that cannot be directly correlated to the protection of their people or world. Without explicit instructions from some authorized Adian agency, they are loath to take part in a possibly dubious venture.

When engaged in some personal matter, any directive from a legitimate government office might reassign them in an instant, in which case an Adian complies without hesitation or complaint.

The Adian Space Corps maintains an enormous active-duty fleet that never strays far from its mother world. Other human worlds nearby keep a wary eye on the ASC, but are used to their presence, while more distant human worlds regard them as an asset that could be called upon as protection against any large non-human threat to the Known Worlds.

Adian uniforms and insignia are ubiquitous, widely recognized because of their many emissaries throughout human space, and also reinforced by popular media where they are portrayed as duty-driven martial experts.

FASTER-THAN-LIGHT TRAVEL

Historically speaking, the pursuit of faster and faster spacecraft propulsion was not a uniquely human endeavor. Every race has its legacy of primitive spaceflight, from breaking free of their homeworld's gravity into their star system and visiting other planetary bodies there, to ultimately standing upon the edge of the vast gulf of space between star systems, stymied by its vastness.

Most races never conquered that barrier, never developed a faster-than-light drive of their own, yet managed to fully explore, utilize, and colonize their entire home star systems. For most, the blessing of superluminal travel came from without, a powerful gift brought by alien hands.

Several human species successfully employed slower-than-light alternatives with varying effectiveness. They placed human colonies as far as 500 light years from Sol. Although some of these became thriving human civilizations, roughly half of these early colonies either failed to flourish or died out entirely.

Earth launched a few other STL colony ships after that, reaching Serra and other worlds. Concurrently, kalian slower-than-light exploratory craft placed several scientific outposts in systems near their homeworld.

Rakashan engineers sent robotic STL missions into space, but they never used spacecraft so equipped to establish populations on other worlds.

MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS

As it turned out, the elusive technology to travel safely at faster-than-light velocities had not just one solution, but at least two.

Both successful methods—hyperspace and warp-bubble, or “superluminal” drives—were postulated by those races curious enough to pursue them long before they were mastered.

In both cases, successful experimentation with robotic craft predated safe application with living occupants. Going faster than light is one thing, but living through the experience is quite another.



HYPERSPACE TRAVEL

Hyperspace faster-than-light technology places the vessel into an alternative region of extra-dimensional space that coexists with our own. Within hyperspace, the ship is not moving at faster-than-light velocities, but because of the nature of that extradimensional space, it crosses physical space much more quickly.

While a starship is in hyperspace it does not also exist in our dimensions; it is entirely absent along with its occupants. There is no sensation of movement, and no interaction with the physical space being crossed. One cannot look out the window and watch the stars go by.

It was hyperspace-capable starships—developed by the human civilization on Canopus—that achieved Link Up in the 26th Century NER. In the heyday of hyperspace-enabled exploration that followed, most ships traveled through space at an effective speed of roughly one light year per day. The fastest vessels achieved one light year per hour.

WARP-BUBBLE TRAVEL

Warp-bubble, or “superluminal” faster-than-light travel, is a significant improvement in speed and reach for starships. It took two more centuries to perfect this method.

The initial theories around warp-bubble technology date back to pre-star travel researchers on Earth, Kali and Tazan who speculated space could be contracted in front of a bit of space configured with a lower energy-density field than normal vacuum, while the space behind it could be simultaneously expanded, forcing the bubble from place to place at faster-than-light—or superluminal—relative velocities.

That research was largely abandoned after the advent of hyperspace drive, but its promise of much faster space travel kindled the research flame. After Link Up, when human, kalian, and rakashan scientists finally pooled their knowledge and resources, the first small-scale warp-bubble experiments succeeded—primarily because the warp bubble was actually created within the hyperspace dimensions, something that had not been attempted until then—ushering in the modern star travel paradigm and making for a truly interspecies endeavor.

Superluminal star drives still essentially “jump” (parlance carried over from the long hyperspace era) from the starting point to the destination in a single motive event, but at such speeds that vast intergalactic distances can be traversed in a matter of days. Safe superluminal travel is dependent, however, upon astronavigational beacons at the destination to guide the starship with the necessary precision.

A superluminal starship without benefit of an astronav beacon at its destination must rely upon astronomical navigation data collected from a distance, which is imprecise and ever-changing. Any error can lead to a much greater travel time—even months or years—which cannot be interrupted or changed without beginning anew.

Once a superluminal drive is activated, it cannot be interrupted mid-voyage, so no matter how long the journey takes the ship and its passengers are committed for the duration. Theoretically, one superluminal vessel could catch up to and parallel another, and the two could interact with one another around the expanded and contracted space around them, but this has never been successfully accomplished.

Superluminal drives propel virtually all starships active in the modern Known Worlds, but old technologies die hard. Industries and ventures not reliant upon speed or with well-maintained assets and still-functioning hyperspace drives still plod along contentedly between the stars at the more leisurely pace of that bygone age. Indeed, historical enthusiasts who value classic starships and designs collect and congregate around their shared affection for the hyperspace era.

Kalian superluminal drives are considered the most finely crafted in the Known Worlds, with three primary manufacturers—Keryutyne Systems, Algohr GHH, and Turbonix Star Drives—dominating the higher-end market. Much to their chagrin, many Tazanian warships from several of their worlds quietly use rebranded kalian drives for dependability and durability, even though their own factories make a variety of reputedly less-reliable warp-bubble systems.

The Canopan firm HyperlumaCorp, with strong business ties to JumpCorp, makes a wide range of starship components, star drives and associated astronavigational beacons—as well

as robotic deep space systems for the long-range placement of beacons where they do not already exist—contracting with many planets in the Known Worlds.

OTHER METHODS

Hyperspace and superluminal star drives are not the only means to achieve faster-than-light speeds, but they are the only ones mastered by the many sentients of the Known Worlds. Recognized ancient sites indicate that civilizations traversed local space regularly many eons ago using technologies now lost.

Some white dwarf stars that exhibit a unique intelligence of their own have been observed to not only alter their own trajectories within the spin of a galaxy, but also to “wink out” and reappear many parsecs distant by an as-yet-unknown mechanism.

Wormhole travel is theoretically possible, and researchers still explore this possibility, but it remains unmastered. Instantaneous transportation—taking no time to get from one place to another—remains a theoretical dream, but not an impossibility.



SENTIENT RACES

AURAX

Auran is a massive world of rolling hills and great, golden plains in orbit around the K2 variable star Kappa Lyrae, 238 light years from Sol in its constellation Lyra. The Kappa Lyrae star system has three enormous gas giant worlds, each with its own extensive system of rings and moonlets, as well as eight rocky worlds within just a few astronomical units of the parent star.

Auran is the fourth planet furthest out, making it Kappa Lyrae-4. The world lies within its reddish-orange sun's habitable zone, where surface water is found in solid, liquid, and gaseous form depending upon location and the gradual change of seasons driven by the star's natural fluctuations of energy output.

Auran's planetary accretion is thought to have included a typical long period of carbonaceous comet impacts that ultimately touched the world with life-generating biological molecules.

The world eventually teemed with life in its several oceans and across its wide, flat continents. Aurax evolved from large herbivore stock, one of numerous species of truly enormous eaters of the world's tall grasses and tangled, viney trees, when long periods of drought challenged their natural habitats. The aurax forebears learned cooperative defensive measures against the planet's many predators, leading to communication, tool use, and expanded intellectual capacity.

To humans, aurax look like a cross between a humanoid and a terrestrial elephant seal or hippo. Their four powerful, hoofed hind legs provide strong locomotion and disperse their massive weight evenly even on soft surfaces. Their upper body and forearms share similar



physiology with those of humanoids, the arms ending in thick two-fingered, single-thumbed hands.

An aurax's squat head sits close upon its shoulders with no discernable neck, and can defensively retract even a bit further into the body cavity in times of danger. Their jaws have evolved smaller and smaller to accommodate their more omnivorous diets. An aurax's four eyes give it double-stereo vision particularly adapted to sensing motion in a wide spectrum of light, proof against threatening predators in prehistoric times.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

Before spaceflight, nomadic aurax tribes spread first across their native continent and later, using primitive rafts, across narrow straits to occupy all Auran's major landmasses. Frequent migrations kept them constantly on the move, so unlike early human civilizations that became sedentary and isolated from one another, aurax communities continued to mingle to trade and communicate through its primitive epochs.

Permanent settlements only sprang up in geologically advantageous locations, such as at the mouths of mighty rivers—facilitating trade—or in vales rich with continuous foliage and blocked from adverse weather. Aurax family relationships trumped any geographical or national relationships; blood kinship regulated their interpersonal relationships.

As a result of their evolution, aurax are ferocious warriors but not wanton killers. The prehistoric need to simply drive off predators rather than exterminate them influences their modern psychology. Aurax enjoy a good battle, but are content to win a contest bloodlessly, and equally willing to accept defeat and its consequences without a fight to the death. Fighting and violence are commonplace among them, but killing is considered a last resort.

Herein also lies the roots of their oral tradition of epic tales of war, comradeship, and love. Aurax poetry stirs something quite ancient and visceral deep in their consciousness, and it drives them more passionately than any humanoid can experience. Despite comparative harmony among the aurax family groups over the centuries, differences among them do exist, primarily based on what to humans are esoteric, nearly indistinguishable attitudes.

One primary division completely unknown by most other sentient beings is one of family cohesion, a division between those aurax culturally obliged to continuous contact with their immediate or extended family members and those who are comfortable with distance.

The latter, thought of as mentally unfit “willful wanderers” by other aurax, are the only ones who have ever left their homeworld Auran. Few humans have ever met more sedentary aurax, something only possible as part of a massive encounter on their home planet taken up with lengthy introductions to dozens if not hundreds of close relatives.

AURAX TODAY

Aurax are not by nature a technological race, and the pace of their development through agriculture to primitive metallurgy is the slowest of the major Known Worlds' sentients. The aurax never independently developed hyperspace drives—or any space travel even within their own rich star system—but were instead visited in a “first contact” encounter by Canopan explorers just after Link Up 200 years ago, an event that elicited surprisingly little interest among most of Auran's aurax.

At first, only a handful of willful wanderers accepted passage aboard human starships into the Known Worlds community. They are nomads and not a technological people, having been uplifted to space travel by other races, but a rare few are curious and gregarious enough to travel to the stars—something most sedentary aurax shun vehemently.

There are no significant manufacturing facilities on Auran to this day, as their technology lags unconcernedly far behind the regional norm. Accoutrements necessary to spacefaring life are either fashioned for other races or specially ordered from off-Auran suppliers to fit their unusual body shape. Still, even willfully wanderer aurax proudly display decorative symbology of their beloved home planet, be they jewelry, body, or the humming of heroic songs of historic racial glory.

Aurax communication evolved as part of cooperative defensive measures against large or numerous predators, and as such is more reliant upon silent gestures—soundless exchanges that would not alert those very predators.

The aurax throat creates a high-pitched, breathy voice that changes more by the shape and manner that it holds its mouth than the manipulation of their lips, which are tight and inflexible. As a consequence, the aurax language is mostly vowel sounds, and they have some difficulty mimicking consonants. Their voices sound something like a bassoon or piccolo.

The aurax written language is based on a series of three-lined geometric shapes (originally drawn simultaneously in the dirt by the nails of each digit), combined and recombined to convey more elaborate concepts.

The primary aurax contributions to the Known Worlds are cultural and artistic rather than technological. They are unabashed bon vivants who draw even their non-aurax companions into elaborate observances upon the completion of relatively mundane tasks.

The aurax habit of boastful singing and carousing in jubilant celebration is gaining wider audience among Known Worlders near and far. This is especially true among human senior populations and even business leaders, who strive to emulate the aurax's unapologetic enthusiasm for a job well done. Further, the depth and passion of traditional epic aurax heroic tales—sung and recorded in their native language—are lauded far and wide, shared virally among music aficionados and casual listeners alike.

A handful of homespun items and devices have made their way off Auran and into the Known Worlds. The prototypical willful wanderer takes passage on an alien vessel with nothing but what he can carry upon his (ample) back and a native fracheen blunderbuss across his shoulders. Fracheeneers use their large caliber, half-mortar weapons to good effect, and off-worlders buy them for sport shooting and hunting. Aurax hoof-wear, perfected over centuries on the plains and every terrain and urban setting, is so efficient and well designed that it serves well with numerous draft animals employed on lower tech worlds.

Today, nearly all of the aurax population still lives on their homeworld of Auran in the Kappa Lyrae system. For most, they may as well not be part of the Known Worlds at all, still living their lives as they have for many generations on a world seldom touched by alien hands.

Those willful wanderers who make their way beyond their home system find curious acceptance among humanoids, rakashans, and other aliens. They are unlike any other common spacefaring species.

Aurax take employment where their strength can be put to best advantage while their unfamiliarity with technology is no hindrance: They make fine soldiers, security personnel, laborers, and factory workers. Aurax bodyguards prefer powered melee weapons, particularly maces and mauls.

Not surprisingly, aurax laborers are often hired to manage teams of less- or unintelligent beasts of burden, but this often goes awry since they have no special kinship with such animals nor any cultural familiarity as teamsters. In their early history, the aurax served their own needs for heavy labor and drudgery.

Emissaries from distant worlds live among the largest of the auran family groups upon Aurax, setting up trade agreements and offering technologies in exchange for agricultural and mineral products. Instances where advanced technology has been introduced without proper safeguards or too quickly into an auran population have gone badly in the past, either severely disrupting the local social status quo, or worse, costing auran lives unnecessarily. So most family groups are wary of imported tech and only allow it under close controls. Nothing raises a native aurax's hackles more quickly than smuggling uncontrolled, unregulated technologies into his family without authorization.

PARASTEEN (DEADERS)

Parasteen are intelligent parasitic creatures native to the 29 Orionis star system, 174 light years from Sol in the terrestrial constellation Orion. The system's bright G star warms a half dozen planets either within or on the fringes of its habitable zone, including the parasteen homeworld 29 Orionis-6, a large, somewhat heavy gravity world of towering mountains and deep valleys all continuously reshuffled by massive tectonic activity, orbiting amid a young solar accretion disc still swarming with extinction-level comets and asteroids.

29 Orionis-6 is a violent world given rise to violent races and civilizations, all flickering in and out of existence over epochs, only to be controlled and ultimately dominated by its parasitic masters.

Other competing sentient species evolved on 29 Orionis to battle each other and the harshness of their world: tripedal insectoids, squat lung-squids, even avian cloud floaters spawning and dying having never touched even the rugged mountain peaks, among others.

Each, in turn, achieved planetary mastery, only to fall, feud, struggle, war, rise, and then fall again. But among the corpses that at times filled entire deep valleys, unbeknownst to the self-important dominant races the proto-parasteen stirred, awash in blood and gore. The earliest forms merely fed off the fallen, but later stages improved their survival by connecting neurally to a body and prolonging its death.

When the fully evolved modern parasteen emerged—able to survive, manipulate, communicate, and advance technologically by controlling other dead creatures—they quickly took absolute ownership of 29 Orionis-6.

Early parasteen had no natural intellect or psychology, just animal instinct to attach to a host to survive and reproduce. The latter was accomplished through egg laying in rotting flesh (or as done today in a controlled protein solution rather than in the wild).

Touching different, exotic brain and neural tissues stimulated rapid intellectual development, rushing the species through an eon of psychological evolution in just a few million years, until they matched the best (dead) minds of the rival races.

Physically, they changed little—still six-inch long parasites that attach by tendrils near the locus of a host's neural network (at the back of the skull on a human host, for instance)—but the parasteen quickly took to the newfound advantages of communication, locomotion, and free will.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

The parasteen are creatures of their homeworld, evolved through generation after generation gathering hosts from among 29 Orionis-6's other species. They move easily from species to species from their native world, who all share similar physiology and psychology, from the most intelligent to even beasts and exotic wildlife (these mainly for labor or recreation).





Two thousand years ago, the parasteen had completely eradicated the free will of all other species on their planet, so that nothing walked upon it that wasn't host for a parasite that controlled it. Nothing, that is, but for a collection of stock for the other species necessary to breed and perpetuate the host herds.

The parasteen ruled over their world and its other species by right of evolutionary passage, having achieved dominance just as other sentient races eventually dominated their own worlds. They thought no more of maintaining host herds than early humans thought of keeping livestock.

Parasteen maintained the modest technological advancements made by their host races prior to domination, based on fossil fuels and manufacturing, advanced chemistry and agriculture, and even advanced a few of these sciences a bit further purely by the product of their parasitic minds operating host bodies.

However, they did not achieve spaceflight nor any faster-than-light engines of their own. First contact came when human spacefarers arrived in the 29 Orionis system just 175 years ago, an event heralded by the parasteen but reviled by the humans for what they discovered there. The

visitors were repulsed by the wanton breeding of sentient beings for their use as host bodies, something the parasteen deemed morally acceptable.

The world was immediately quarantined amid public outcries for the possible extermination of the parasteen as a universal galactic threat. This was made worse when it was revealed that the parasteen not only could but expected to make hosts of humans who had no further need for their bodies.

After considerable debate and intensive study of the parasteen and their parasitic lifestyle, the spacefaring races reached a compromise. Parasteen would be allowed to leave 29 Orionis-6 and travel with a dead host body through the Known Worlds only after signing a binding pledge to only control willing hosts.

"Deaders"—as they came to be known among the other races—call their body donors "celebrants," organic beings who sold the rights to their corpse before death for lucrative fees. Some see this as taking advantage of those in need, but most see it as a perfectly viable business transaction. Anthropologically, the parasteen have no problem at all with this arrangement, as

it completely satisfies their survival imperative. If anything, the newfound cooperation between parasite and celebrant hosts creates a more stable, predictable supply of bodies. This furthers their racial goals to experience life with many new host species.

PARASTEEN TODAY

Simply put, parasteen are intelligent, six-inch-long parasites that occupy and animate organic corpses. They do this by connecting with the nervous system and reactivating electrical impulses to the organs and muscles. The host's form is then sealed inside an airtight suit and constantly pumped with chemicals to preserve it.

Parasteen can control the dead bodies of most alien beings, provided they have an opportunity to try and ample time to effect the necessary trial-and-error research. There are deader rakashans, aurax, kalians, insectoids, and yetis. For several reasons, there have never been successful parasitic unions with saurians, and some other minor races simply defy neural domination.

Coming upon an entirely new species host, one with no backlog of established techniques and guidance shared by their predecessors, a parasteen needs many hours to establish a neural hookup, during which time the potential host body may spoil, depending upon conditions.

Parasteen need not pair with an intelligent species, and they can thrive physically on virtually any host of medium size or larger. However, a parasteen without a host starves and dies in a matter of hours, so dependent are they on the nutrients of the host body's circulatory system.

Physiologically, a parasteen is unremarkable. Its tiny body is a soft fleshy bag, either brownish-yellow or olive in color, covered with fine cilia along the back. It has a cluster of tendrils beneath, between two and six inches long and ranging in thickness from a whisker to a fine straw, used to attach to the host to control its neurons and brain functions, and also to draw upon its nutritious cardiovascular system, upon which it is completely dependent for sustenance.

Parasteen reproduce by laying eggs in a rotting corpse or some equally nutrient-rich medium, later fertilized by a second parasteen to hatch a clutch of several dozen young after 20 standard days. They are hermaphrodites, with the sex organs of both male and female, contributing to

their confusion about gender roles among other species and the propensity of aliens to assign deaders a gender matching that of their host body.

Modern deaders preserve their host bodies within specially made sealed suits that preserve the tissues and maximize duration. Style and nuance vary, but basic function is fairly standard across the Known Worlds. Moisture is preserved and recycled within the suit, but other waste materials are collected and must be expelled from the suit periodically.

Enriching nutrient infusions—readily available on any civilized world—help preserve the host body and keep it active. Commonly available preservation suits are made to fit the host bodies of all the major alien races. For any other host body a suit must be specially designed. Tailoring a preservation suit to a species for which it was not designed is a monumental task.

Celebrant contracts are fairly straightforward. Parasteen post desired profiles on public and private forums at starports and on populous worlds where they work or travel, while living sentients similarly post their potential availability.

For the latter, the contract stipulates the transfer of ownership of the celebrant's body to the parasteen—either directly or to its representatives—when the celebrant is done using it. Prices vary, but a human celebrant can expect as much as C\$100,000 to use during the remainder of her life as she sees fit.

Of course, the celebrant cannot guarantee when her body will be available, and so this often occurs at times inconvenient for the parasteen licensor. On high tech worlds, a celebrant's body can be preserved cryogenically until the parasteen can take control of it, but sometimes host bodies are simply lost or tangled up in legal action by family members who disapprove of parasteen "necromancy."

Once occupied, however, a host body can easily last from two to four years. Since a parasteen is likely to live nearly 50 years, it can expect to control between 12 and 25 host bodies over its lifespan.

Deaders are common throughout the Known Worlds, using a variety of host bodies. They are intelligent, sentient beings, and become even more so once they tap into their host's brain for additional storage and processing power.

They are emotionally remote, however. They don't understand the pleasure and pain of most other beings, though many strive constantly to do so. Because of their intelligence and emotional detachment, they are highly prized as science officers. Parasteen must always deal with the natural prejudices of living beings against the reanimation of their race's dead bodies, one held more deeply by less cosmopolitan citizens unused to the spacefaring life.

FLORANS

The Known Worlds' sentient plant-based lifeforms are called florans, though those from particular worlds prefer those monikers instead. Florans encompass a variety of separately evolved species, ranging from sentient succulents to moss-like swamp dwellers.

There are dozens of floran species evolved on different worlds, but the most common variety, far and away the most numerous among the other spacefaring races, evolved in the Lambda Equulei system, an F8 double star some 332 light years from Sol in the constellation Equuleus.

The second planet orbiting its first star—Lambda Equulei A-2—is an especially lush world awash in wide oceans dotted with tens of thousands of verdant islands.

Lambda Equulei A-2's various plant species evolved in its wide, shallow oceans, creating a thick planet-wide Sargasso of enormous volume and complexity roiling and changing over eons. Free-moving species evolved beneath that thick covering, to exist far away from the light of their world's twin stars and the enriching oxygen of its thick atmosphere.

Photosynthesizers dominated the surface world, growing out over its many islands. They changed and evolved until they managed to draw surface nutrients selectively, uprooting themselves to move freely from place to place. Free-moving plants ruled Lambda Equulei A-2, led by an inquisitive and adventuresome species whose name is an odor rather than a spoken word.

Lambda Equuleites—also called "leeks" or florans by the other intelligent races they congregate with in the Known Worlds—are self-aware photosynthesizers. All free-moving plant creatures like florans still rely upon the three primary components of photosynthesis to survive: sunlight, water, and soil nutrients.

Civilized florans enjoy ample fresh water and consume their nutrients in pill or other easily absorbed form. For sunlight, each floran requires regular exposure to the spectrum of its native star, which can vary widely from the infrared to ultraviolet and beyond. While they prefer natural sunlight, suitable lamps are common and effective.



Whenever possible, leeks enjoy gathering nutrients and water from natural sources beneath the light of an F or G star, much like their human counterparts enjoy time away from pressurized enclosures on green worlds in the fresh air.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

Leeks rid their world of its most troublesome herbivores many thousands of years ago, leaving them to struggle somewhat gently and patiently with one another for superiority. Different subspecies of leeks—separated by slight variations in seed and leaf shape, but primarily in scent and color indistinguishable by casual observers—competed gradually for the richer equatorial islands and those with more exotic soils fed by warmer tides. These “wars” continue unabated, never completely won or lost, emotionally stirring among those involved, while seemingly nonexistent when viewed from afar.

Territory and chemistry are important to florans, as are the right and ability to reproduce and thrive, the struggle against herbivores they view as cruel barbarians, and the preservation of natural resources such as soil and water. Collectively, they see the vast acreage of alien worlds as a call to a sort of manifest destiny: Any unoccupied good, moist ground beneath a warm sun is a waste, and some intrepid leek should find it and plant his seeds, literally.

Leeks have a vaguely humanoid appearance, standing upright upon two of their eight fibrous limbs. The others, evolved originally to carry leaves or petals, are multijointed to coordinate the manipulation of objects.

Their sensory apparatus—for sight, hearing, and primarily smell—are part of the base stamen of a leek’s highly evolved main flower. Its nervous system spreads from that central location throughout the rest of its body. Leeks have no sense of taste, just an awareness of what is nutritious and what is not.

Like most florans, leeks reproduce through seed creation, germination, and growth. Their sprouts emerge with instinctive intelligence that advances while completely unattended.

No floran race achieved spacefaring technology on its own. Leeks were discovered and brought into the Known Worlds’ fold just 100 years ago by an Ophian survey vessel.

The initial meeting was made tense, however, when the leeks turned suspicious and eventually

violent when the human explorers would not submit to examination to prove they were not herbivores. Only after considerable dialogue did leeks allow the humans to make further survey of Lambda Equulei A-2 and establish a science base. They took ambassadors offworld back to Epsilon Ophiuchi, and a large number of leeks have left their home planet permanently in the years that followed.

FLORANS TODAY

Leeks are uncomfortable around plant eaters and strongly suggest that their human, aurax, kalian, and other associates adopt a purely carnivorous diet. This is no problem at all, of course, for rakashans. Failure to comply is not a deal breaker, generally, and a leek will continue to associate with a herbivore or omnivore, but it will reserve its deepest friendship for those who make that concession.

Leeks have visited many other worlds where different species of intelligent florans have independently evolved and helped welcome them into the Known Worlds with gifts of technology and advanced science. Back on their homeworld of Lambda Equulei A-2, the population readily accepts its part in a cosmopolitan community of alien races and worlds.

The leek language, however, proved a difficult barrier to initial communication with aliens. No off-worlder can duplicate it because it is based not on sound but rather odor. Leeks emit a complex variety of airborne chemical compounds that carry vast amounts of nuanced meaning and data.

To a human, all this just smells like “pretty flowers,” but to another leek a single scent emitted by a companion could be as involved as a sonnet or a technical manual. Existing translation technology had to be scrapped and redesigned to accommodate communication between leeks and the Known Worlds’ other sentients.

As troubling as this complex chemistry made communication, though, it has opened the doors for leeks to become some of the more intuitive chemists and chemical engineers in the Known Worlds. Leek-inspired pharmaceuticals have greatly improved the lives of many different species. Their air-purification systems and environment filters are of inspired design.

Commercially, leek firms dominate a large portion of the lucrative terraforming industry that labors to alter useful but somewhat imperfect

planets. They also market unique cosmetics and perfumes, as well as organic materials useful in clothing, manufacturing, and starship design.

A leek's mannerisms can be off-putting to their alien companions. For instance, while they are quick and dexterous when called upon, for the most part their movements are extremely slow. Unless otherwise motivated, a leek's limbs move slowly, like a vine gradually turning toward the sun.

They have no mouths with which to eat or speak, and dine by putting their leafy extremities into water or nutrient rich solutions that are basically mud. On their own world or ships, a leek will immerse itself up to its flower-head in such mud to take sustenance, either individually or communally, and aliens are welcome to join them. They don't like agriculture, as a rule, and are diligent adherents to fire prevention.

Leeks still dominate their home planet of Lambda Equulei A-2, and they have established a dozen strong colony worlds all in systems within 30 light years of their home star. Like other species, enclaves on alien worlds tend to be at least passively insular. They gather in leek communities where they can grow and photosynthesize among their own kind, often in the wilderness among the alien world's exotic flora. Orbital habitats are popular as well, isolated and open to the nourishing light of alien stars.

So long as there is a functional translation device on hand, leeks occupy all manner of occupations on alien worlds and starships. Leeks make fine navigators and engineers, owing to their slow, meticulous nature. They are not well suited as medics for non-floran species, where they find it difficult to muster the genuine passion to save the life of what is, after all, probably a plant-eater.

Diplomatically, leeks are advocates for their own kind and other floran species, always advocating photosynthesis as the only morally acceptable means of biological energy; eating other creatures, stealing their biological energy, is simply wrong.

Many floras view agriculture practiced by other intelligent races suspiciously, even disapprovingly, preferring worlds where the native flora grows lush and wild. They are indifferent to wars, especially those among plant-eating aliens that won't threaten their native environments. To leeks, it is the natural order of things for fauna to prey upon one another,

regardless of technology. Subconsciously, bloodletting among animals is a comforting, nourishing activity, though a civilized floran would never admit to that among his alien companions.

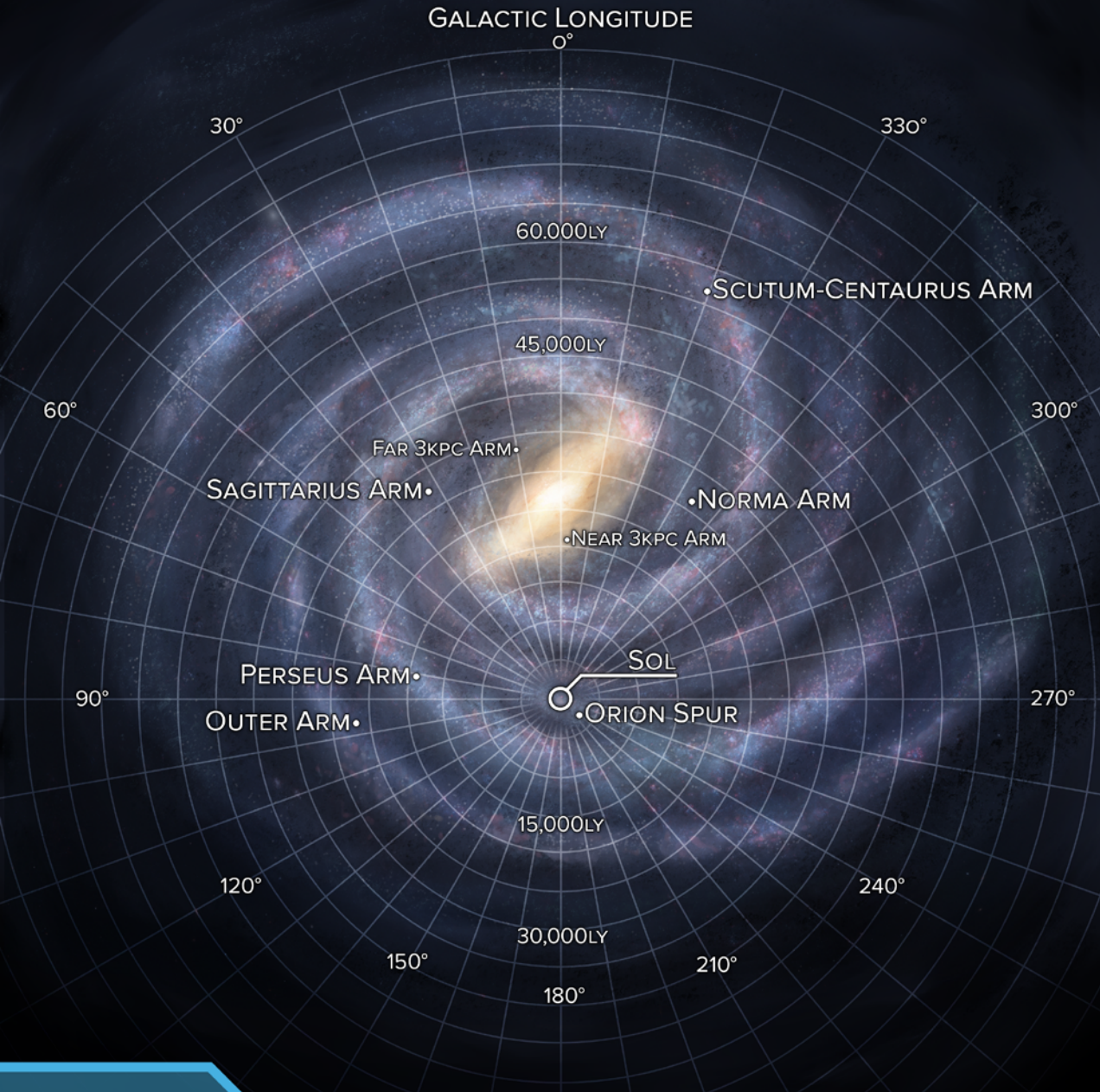
Leeks and rakashans are uniquely suited to coexist, primarily based on diametrically opposed dietary needs. There are rakashan enclaves on most leek and other floran worlds, and vice versa. Both races enjoy similar environments and the visceral comfort of wide-open spaces beneath broad skies.

Other races enjoy leek and floran worlds on a purely botanical level. Gardeners and botanists find kindred spirits among the leeks where they enjoy study, splicing, planting, arrangement... their worlds are floral paradises of sorts. Aliens who mistakenly think that floran worlds hold agricultural bounty, however, are sorely mistaken, and can be heavily fined or worse for barbarically eating the native flora.

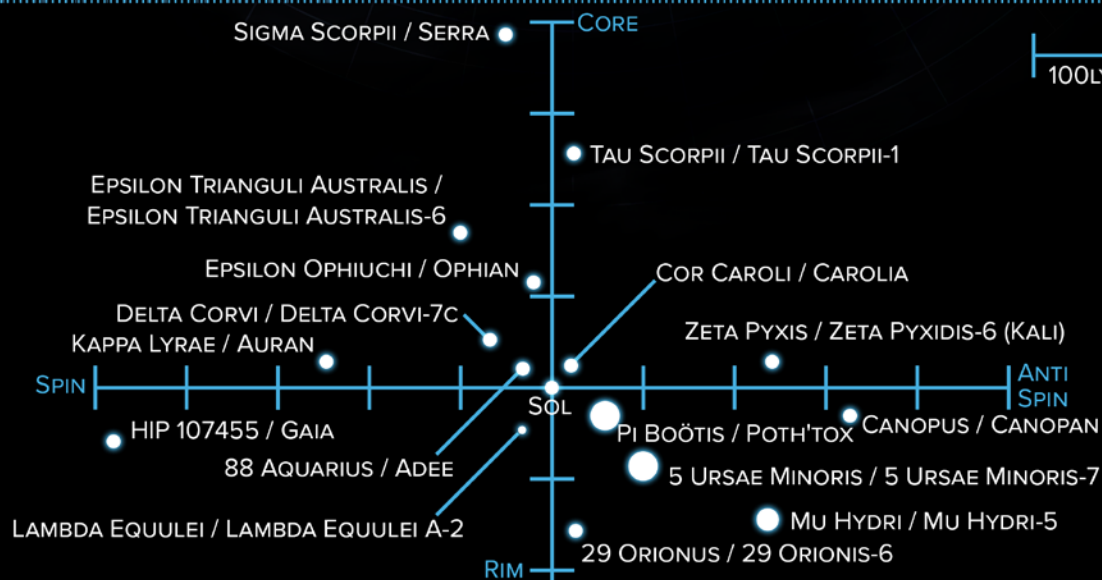
INSECTOIDS

One of the most varied and widespread racial groups in the Known Worlds is collectively called the insectoids. As a species group, insectoids are so adaptable that virtually any planet within a solar system's so-called habitable zone—and a good margin on either side of it, both nearer to and further from the star—might spawn them. The vrigol civilization, for instance, spawned upon the icy, gravity-churned world Delta Corvi-7c, a gas giant's moon in the Delta Corvi star system 88 light years from Sol in the constellation Corvus. The kroach evolved in the honeycombed, hellishly hot world Tau Scorpii-1, hugged close against bright Tau Scorpii, 430 light years from Sol in the constellation Scorpius. Two entirely different worlds yielded two similar races.

In fact, insectoids are many different races that evolved on different worlds but share two primary defining characteristics: exoskeletons and self-aware intelligence. The evolutionary path to the former begins with a difficult environment that requires either protection from consistent external crushing or impacts, or a density of superstructure that wards off damaging radiation. Where these conditions exist, a thick exoskeleton becomes an adaptive advantage. Intelligence, as with other species, tends to emerge as a response to increasingly complex stimuli, such as a rapidly changing environment, more dangerous predators, or



THE KNOWN WORLDS



other events that encourage cooperation and manipulation—especially of tools.

When categorized by humans, insectoids are often compared in appearance to terrestrial insects, from mantises to beetles to ants, though they have no genetic connection or shared behavior with any of these. Some insectoids are very large, strong, and well-armored while others are frail, and some seem to have psychic links to others of their kind.

Vrigol are roughly man-sized, somewhat resembling six-limbed grey crickets, for instance, while kroach are a bit larger, chitin-shelled beetle-like beings. But that is where their similarity to terrestrial insects ends: Vrigol give birth to live young that swim in shallow pools before developing their exoskeleton, and kroach

are extremely solitary, defying the hivemind stereotype.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

Primitive insectoid civilizations arose on dozens of different planets within the current boundaries of the Known Worlds. Each competed with its world and other lifeforms to achieve dominance. For the vrigol insectoids of Delta Corvii-7c, all life originated in gravity-churned oceans deep beneath the icy surface, where their racial progenitors perfected cooperative hunting and eventually shaft burrowing to reach the surface and expand.

The kroach of Tau Scorprii-1 evolved their thick outer shell not for protection from predators, but to guard against the harsh radiation bombarding their world's stark surface.

Other insectoid races scratched their way to planetary dominance in like manner, utilizing the inherent strengths of their shared physiology.

Other races often find insectoids strange or off-putting. Sometimes it's because of their diets—some consume other, non-sentient insects, sometimes alive, while others consume only carrion. Some also lack typical vocal cords and can only communicate via arcane clicks or hand motions.

The vrigol language, for instance, is especially fast, and even with effective translation equipment they can become bored by slowing to the pace of human comprehension. Also, they prefer a much colder climate, keeping their ships and habitats well below zero degrees. Traditional kroach diets are a squirming mass of slugs and foul-smelling larvae, quite appetizing to their kind but universally repulsive to others.

Vrigol and kroach are the only insectoid groups to independently discover



spaceflight technology prior to contact by human explorers. The kroach never managed to reach superluminal velocities, but they did make and launch several slower-than-light biological, semi-living exploratory craft that reached a number of nearby star systems, but no permanent offworld colonies were ever established.

Vrigol scientists mastered simple hypespace technology 100 years before the Canopans did so, but a basic lack of popular interest in the project limited its application. They went on to establish a handful of scientific research outposts in some nearby star systems, but no large-scale colonization effort was ever undertaken.

Still, it was human explorers who first came upon the insectoid worlds, first the vrigol scientific outposts and then the other non-spacefaring insectoid races in turn. Initial contact with the vrigol was uncertain at best: Even their scientific vessels were rather enormous and imposing.

But direct conflict was averted and the races, along with the kroach, have been cooperative ever since. Other insectoid races have also been uplifted to the spacefaring community of the Known Worlds, but a handful have taken the offered technologies and turned them to deadly force, creating small but brutal empires or turning to what has become a favorite insectoid criminal enterprise: slavery.

INSECTOIDS TODAY

As complex as interspecies communication can be, some basic concepts simply do not translate well between insectoids and the other Known Worlds sentients. Legality, for instance, is a completely foreign concept to the insectoid mind. To them, anything that furthers the group or individual is acceptable behavior, and there are no other considerations.

Human concepts such as morality or justice are foreign to them, though through education and considerable effort an insectoid can learn to accept and practice, if not fully understand, these social imperatives. Basic emotional responses among the insectoids are also limited, from a human perspective, ranging only from serenity to rage.

Joy and love, sorrow and pity, these are concepts never necessary to the insectoid mind. But like the gifts of technology, the gifts of emotion wend their way through insectoid societies where the individual picks and chooses among them,

adopting whatever interests them. Insectoids are recognized as emotional amateurs, however; those that dabble in them welcome coaching and instruction from “soft shells” like humans and kalians.

Insectoid technology runs the gamut of sophistication and lethality, as varied as their many independently evolved worlds. However, as a rule, they tend toward a life-based technological union rather than use strictly mechanical tech developed by other races.

Wherever appropriate, insectoids learned to grow the primary components of their contrivances. In the simplest terms, they adapt an existing living organism to their needs, grow it for a specific purpose, and then harvest it for their use. More often than not, the shell of a weapon or even a starship is the super-tough carapace of a specially designed creature, harvested and hollowed out to accommodate other components. They do not generally employ living tech items—though they are not entirely unheard of—but rather their inanimate tools are pieced together from once-living organisms.

Among the modern Known Worlds, the vrigol and kroach homeworlds remain the primary insectoid planets, both in terms of widespread influence and overall population—which in both cases is in the trillions (insectoids are prolific!). A human who has met an insectoid face-to-face in peace has most likely met a vrigol or kroach.

In conflict, however, there’s no end to the petty insectoid warlords and bandits who gain media notoriety and interstellar arrest warrants, and these generally hail from the lesser insectoid worlds. Despite the best efforts of the larger insectoid civilizations to coexist responsibly within a community of worlds and races, the pirates and rogues among them garner media attention that fuels the impression that all insectoids are irresponsible, dangerous barbarians.

That attitude has generated an unwelcome backlash against insectoids across much of the Known Worlds. The difficulty of communication, lack of common emotions, and reputation for lawlessness creates a prejudice that is difficult to refute. Individual insectoids working among other races must face that prejudice every day, fueling the desire to master emotions and in so doing better represent themselves and their peaceful intentions. Their non-insectoid friends or associates must also endure the

suspicious glances and denial of services often institutionalized against them. Like many prejudices, the more remote and insular the location the more embedded the misgivings and intransigent the population.

Where they find acceptance, however, insectoids become valuable assets. They make excellent soldiers and security troops. In the mercenary trade—an honorable profession practiced on many worlds and in many conflicts—insectoids are uniquely unhindered by emotional conflicts, happy to work for whoever is paying the bills.

Insectoids are naturally well suited to space environments—many are better equipped to survive, at least temporarily, in vacuum, and those from hive-like origins are more at home in zero-G settings. Insectoids can fill any role on a starship, from pilot or navigator to engineer or away-team member.

KALIANS

The four-armed humanoid race that terran explorers named kalians evolved independently on Zeta Pyxidis-6, a world on the fringe of Zeta Pyxis's habitable zone, a warm G5III star 236 light years distant from Sol in the constellation Pyxis. The human explorers named their world Kali, after the four-armed Hindu goddess of destruction, to honor its unusual inhabitants, and also because the warring, balkanized kalians had hundreds of names for their world and no consensus on any one of them.

Kali is a surprisingly pleasant world, slightly larger than earth, with a single large continent and two roughly circular polar seas. The taint in its atmosphere, poisons in its seas and scorched landscape are all wrought by its denizens.

Few would deny that kalians are the most hotheaded of the known humanoid races. They grudgingly accept this outwardly imposed name when dealing with other races, but use a variety of other planetary and national names among themselves. An old kalian proverb says, "Two of us are a couple, three or more a nation."

Evolved from bipedal scavengers, modern kalians are the product of thousands of bloody generations forced into savagery by successive ice- and heat-ages. Cooperative hunting (hunting other kalians, for the most part) led to language and the invention of primitive tools, mostly weapons of war like jointed spears and slings. Further progress has not stemmed their penchant for violence.

Kalians are four-armed, upright bipeds that display remarkable parallel evolutionary development with standard terrestrial humans. Their natural body coloring is silvery blue or even darker to a deep purple bordering on black. They have eyes, ears, noses, and their senses are equivalent to the human norm. Their upper arms are somewhat stronger than their lower ones, with larger, more developed shoulder muscles, but the difference is slight. Kalians have long, adaptive fingers with remarkable strength and dexterity.

Traditional kalian garments are skintight to flatter their muscular definition, a holdover of their violent past. Back then, dances and displays of prowess were the only means to avoid direct conflict, and even then only occasionally.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

Kalian brains think very quickly, an adaptation stimulated on their primitive homeworld by their four agile limbs and the need to fend off numerous speedy predators, predators that often included other kalians. As scavengers, cannibalism was common in their early conflicts.

The history of kalian civilization is a list of bloody wars and devastating campaigns between tribes and factions. As a race they are quick to anger and easily swayed toward conflict. They only developed agriculture in the last few centuries, having been preoccupied with war and scavenging its aftermath. No nation or confederation of factions extant upon Kali today can trace its history more than a few decades; political fortunes change quickly, banners raised, lowered again, and forgotten in short order.

All that conflict bred a race primed for war. Kalians are quick and agile, generally lean and aggressive. Psychologically, they are slow to trust and quick to anger, argumentative and generally negative, at least as seen by other Known Worlds sentients.

Any of them familiar with recent kalian history might think them irrepressibly warlike, and in a sense that's correct, but it is primarily focused against others of their kind. Kalians see other kalians as eternal rivals and focus upon any differences—background, philosophy, trade—as reason for conflict. But this does not generally transfer over to other aliens. A lone kalian on a starship crew is an asset, but most captains know that if he gets two or more he's eventually going to have trouble with them.

The divisions within the race are too numerous list and mostly impenetrable to a non-kalian. Blood feuds rage over subtle differences only they can detect—ancient insults, old scores, family hatreds, business rivalries, and so forth.

In the broadest sense, the two most relatable divisions other sentients can key upon center upon technology and mythology. The former pits traditionalists against those who embrace tech, especially with regard to weaponry. They make excellent swordsmen and marksmen, overwhelming foes with a flurry of attacks that few other species can hope to match.

But a traditionalist would only wield swords whereas a technologist prefers a laser, and should the pair meet, watch out. Regarding mythology, ancient legends of heroes and creation run afoul of science and reason; adherents on both sides regard the other contemptuously.

KALIANS TODAY

Kalians are technologically proficient, having mastered hyperspace travel almost simultaneously with humans. In fact, kalians quickly migrated to nearby star systems to establish colonies that were ultimately stifled by further racial conflict. If not for their continuous warring, kalians might have spread throughout the region of the Known Worlds and become the dominant humanoid race. Their ships tend to be small, with small crews who won't quickly find reasons to fight among themselves. They prefer weapons and equipment of their own design and manufacture.

Finding other intelligent races that did not so quickly irritate or enrage them came as a welcome relief to the citizens of Kali. Alien diplomats were quickly enlisted to negotiate peace among warring tribes and factions. This effort led to a comparatively peaceful period in their history, though still quite violent by the standards of other, more forgiving species.



Kalians recognize the wisdom of negotiated settlements and cooperation rather than conflict, but cannot easily accomplish them without outside influence. Aliens are generally held up as comparative sages, and the most successful among them are revered by the entire kalian race as miracle workers.

The kalian spoken language is as fragmented as their politics; universal translation devices are necessary to pick through the many dialects. The syntax is quick, sentences short, and synonyms and homonyms many, leading to even greater tension and potential for misunderstandings. Some kalians simply will not speak a particular dialect because of long-held hatreds.

Kalian oaths and promises—especially those spoken in their most ancient tongues—are culturally binding. Often these are accompanied by strict rituals involving fire, feasting, and drinking. Kalian insults tend to be crude and personal.

Kalian security and surveillance technology is among the best in the Known Worlds. The technologists among them are not above wielding ancient weapon types, such as swords, that are fashioned with modern manufacturing techniques and materials. “A kalian blade cuts deep,” goes the saying, especially one tempered with a molecular edge.

Part of the four-armed kalian mystique across the Known Worlds is tempered by mass media portraying them as dangerous and exotic. Dramatic depictions of the troubled kalian who is contemplative and not so quick to anger temper their violent reality.

To have met a kalian or, better yet, to have one as a personal acquaintance is considered quite chic in some circles. They are prized as personal assistants and caretakers. Troops of kalian acrobats—especially entertaining because of their unique body geometry—travel on other humanoid worlds amid fanfare and acclaim.

Off Kali, the race mixes more easily with other humanoids than they often do with their own kind. So there are few large enclaves of kalians elsewhere in the Known Worlds. Even on Earth, where there are nearly a million kalian expatriates in residence, there are no “kali towns” or segregated communities.

The exception is among the domed cities of Canopus—a world of genetic humans—where several hundred thousand kalians must agree

to regular medication to temper their violent behavior. So controlled, these kalians live and work with others of their species in complete peace and harmony, though outsiders view the practice with disdain or suspicion.

Other Known Worlds governments and planets have a hard time dealing with the fragmented populations of Kali. Setting up trade with one group enrages another, where signing a treaty with one faction connotes war with another, and the native kalians are not above shedding some blood to make their displeasure known. Such are the dangers that many relationships with kalian nations or groups are conducted entirely in secret, or are ritually hushed up in such a way as to save face.

So long as a negotiation is conducted in private and not generally known to the masses, the kalian powers that be can let certain rivalries slide in the name of commerce. Covert travel and meetings occur all the time. These shadow relationships present an interesting cat-and-mouse environment where it is against custom to shed any actual blood, but interference on all other levels is perfectly acceptable. Disrupting travel or communications, kidnappings, and theft—anything short of murder is fair game to disrupt an enemy’s covert agreements.

RAKASHANS

A number of worlds have given rise to intelligent predator species. In the Known Worlds, the most prominent rakashan civilization is the Tazanian Empire, spawned from a relatively small world orbiting Mu Hydri-5, a warm G-class star that is 292 light years from Sol in the constellation Mu Hydrus. By chance, Mu Hydri-5 (or Tazan in their language), the fifth-most-distant world, was not the only planet in the star system to evolve life, a characteristic shared with the further gas giant’s eighth moon, Mu Hydri-7h. Tazanian scientists discovered the more primitive life forms telescopically and using probes before they traveled to that world. In a matter of a single decade, they nearly extinguished their rivals and took the world for their own, beginning a long pattern of aggressive expansion.

Humans call most intelligent predators rakashans, because of their often shared feline appearance or mannerisms, after the legendary catlike humanoids of Earth. Most live up to their heritage, being fierce and cruel opponents in battle. In their prime, they are strong, agile, and cunning. Their militaries are usually ruled

by the strongest of the pride and are relentless and terrible in warfare. Their armies consist of fearsome, independent, self-reliant, and highly motivated warriors.

Tazanian evolution followed the typical rakashan pattern: Evolve to be one of several successful predator species upon their world, a planetary cataclysm (in their case, a comet impact) wipes out most prey, forcing the predators to evolve cooperative hunting and communication, which leads to communication and tool use—or their demise.

The Tazanian Empire is a large, powerful, and extremely efficient dominion with thousands of conquered planets. Subject populations toil beneath the lash of local governors and warlords, surrendering vast wealth and materials that keep the Empire vital and its spacefleets strong. Rebellions are common but most often brutally suppressed.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

Rakashans like the Tazan are bred to the hunt. They manage terrific strength and bursts of speed to unleash their powerful, sharp teeth and claws on the unwary. A rakashan's stealth is unmatched by other intelligent creatures. But what they manage in quickness they lack in endurance. Rakashans struggle to maintain heavy exertion for more than an hour or so; long-distance running at the kinds of speeds they can manage in short bursts is simply out of the question. They must also take nourishment and hydrate more frequently than humans and most other sentients, though this is easily mitigated and hardly noticeable while in civilized surroundings. This trait reflects

their racial heritage of making several small kills every day in the wild.

In the case of the Tazan, the journey toward civilization and technology advanced quickly down the paths of ritual cooperation, but quite slowly in the direction of military hardware. As owners of such deadly natural weaponry, they discovered early on to temper their personal



battles, inventing and strictly adhering to a series of warnings, threats, counter warnings, and granting of permission before baring their claws to one another.

Rakashans find killing by means other than tooth and claw especially unsatisfying; shooting someone with a laser from a distance may be effective, but it does nothing to relieve the blood tension of combat. Their companions find the rakashan practice of taking a final bite out of a fallen enemy somewhat disturbing, though to the rakashan it brings necessary closure to the act of violent confrontation.

All of this makes a rakashan seem reserved and formal while at the same time incredibly dangerous. One put in a potentially deadly situation—stalking a suspect or arguing with an enemy—seethes and even trembles with pent-up but controlled rage, baring his teeth and extending his claws reflexively, taking short breaths, tensing his muscles and putting back his ears.

Even in a situation where no fight ensues, a rakashan puts on a reflexive display that can be quite intimidating. Still, within the hierarchy of his situation, a rakashan follows his orders, bows to the authority of his superiors, and does not unleash his deadly aggression unless he has permission to do so.

RAKASHAN RACIAL ENEMIES

Rakashans are inherent expansionists and make many enemies as they conquer and explore new galaxies. Closest to the original Rakashan home system, a long and brutal war with the kalians has made that race the most common target of their rage. Rakashans suffer a -4 Charisma when dealing with kalians. Unless fettered by other authorities or common goals, rakashans typically attack them on sight.

Farther out, splinter groups compose a new racial enemy—other rakashans! These rogue felines, whether originally from the rakashan homeworld of Tazan or evolved from a different species, are seen as “needing their tails clipped.”

RAKASHANS TODAY

Tazan are the dominant rakashan species in the Known Worlds, but they are divided along factional lines that date back to prehistory. The other sentient races owe their very existence to these factional divisions, since without them a completely unified Tazanian Empire would have easily swept over this entire region of space and subjugated all other civilizations.

As it is, the Empire is dependent upon the goodwill of numerous warlords and nobles spread across continents and worlds, all bickering rivals who keep the Emperor’s power constantly checked. Tazan welcome other rakashan races—evolved on other worlds who share no genetic link but fit well into the intelligent carnivore mold—into their fold more warmly than other non-meat-eaters.

Tazan scientists perfected the hyperspace jump drive 300 years before humans on Canopus stumbled upon the same formulas, but the device became embroiled in political scheming and rival posturing for many decades before it was put into wide use. Even then, their exploration and inevitable domination of nearby habitable worlds proceeded in fits and starts as competing factions argued and warred over territorial rights to new planets.

Protecting one’s claims on new worlds became paramount, so much so that no Tazan dared reach out to a new planet until the last one was absolutely established and fortified. Woe to the alien who happened upon a suspicious Tazan outpost, its ears back and ready to protect itself with deadly force.

Such was the fate of an early Canopan expedition into Tazanian space, one that mistakenly thought it had negotiated a peaceful relationship with the entire empire. The *Thestus* found itself unexpectedly surrounded, captured, and its crew imprisoned, questioned, and even tortured by rakashans they assumed would be friendly. That incident still colors popular opinion about the Tazanians, at least, around the wider Known Worlds. All rakashans are thought of as potentially untrustworthy killers, to be dealt with only cautiously.

The Tazan language betrays their bloodthirsty past. Terms for enemy and food are synonymous, as are the linguistic concepts for justice, dominance, and meat consumption, all indistinguishable ideas to their thinking. Their



extensive rituals rely upon precise terms and turns of phrase. Computer translators are fairly effective for everyday interactions, but may not be completely effective during delicate negotiations, when a native speaker is indispensable.

Tazan speech is vowel heavy and somewhat musical, interspersed with growls that seem more threatening than they usually are. Other rakashan species have completely different languages and linguistic apparatuses; they can no more easily communicate with each other than with alien species.

Advanced Tazanian military hardware mimics their physiology. Warships, vehicles, and starships rely upon stealth, quick assault, and deadly firepower to overcome opponents quickly. Their military doctrine is to overwhelm and destroy as quickly as possible, reasoning there is plenty of time to sort things out after a battle's conclusion.

Scouts are never employed; a Tazanian warrior is his own scout, ready to deal with any threat as it is discovered. Not surprisingly, Tazanian strategies are marked by poor preparation and supply trains; by their very nature they are unaccustomed to the preparation and planning for an extended military campaign, reliant instead upon quick strikes and rapid conclusions.

Most rakashans—Tazanian and otherwise—live up to their heritage, being fierce and cruel opponents in battle. In their prime, they are strong, agile, and cunning. Their militaries are usually ruled by the strongest of the pride and are relentless and terrible in warfare. Their armies consist of fearsome, independent, self-reliant, and highly motivated warriors.

While most spacefaring rakashans are omnivores, at heart they embrace their carnivorous roots. They have numerous hunting planets, and on some the sentience of the prey is simply not a consideration.

Most other alien races in the Known Worlds welcome rakashans as friends and companions. They hold a special kinship with the different floran species, who welcome their carnivorous diets as no threat to their leafy kind. Of course, rakashans of the brutal Tazanian Empire, adorned in traditional garb and always outfitted in martial splendor, are eyed more suspiciously than others, as their reputation for conquest and subjugation precedes them wherever they travel. No human, yeti, kalian or other sentient wants to end up beneath the Tazanian lash, but so long as they keep to their own sphere of stars there is no reason not to negotiate and trade.

SAURIANS

Reptilian-looking creatures are referred to as saurians. Many unique saurian species have evolved on different planets within the Known Worlds, the most populous and diverse being the s'susth race of Venus-like Epsilon Trianguli Australis-6, 216 light years from Sol in the constellation Triangulum Austale.

Second to these are the quite-different wandering saurians of the now-destroyed world Poth'tox, originally known as Pi Boötis A-3, 317 light years from Sol in the constellation Boötes. Exploration and scientific inquiry have established that saurians can evolve on widely disparate worlds and grow toward intelligence from a variety of stimuli.

Saurians come in many shapes, sizes, and colors—from camouflaged brown or grey to brilliant orange and violet—evolved from various worlds. Some even have the chameleon-like ability to change skin color. Most have spines and tails of some sort, and a few can regenerate and grow new limbs should misfortune deprive them of one.

All are cold-blooded, reliant upon external heat sources to maintain optimum body temperature, and become much more lethargic on cold planets or the typically frigid halls of space stations and ships.

S'susth are long-necked, longer-tailed slender snakelike bipedal saurians that tend toward bright green or even yellow. Poth'tox are more squat, short-limbed and flat-headed saurians

with especially quick and adaptive natural chameleon skins.

Saurians are not slow witted, as one might expect. When properly stimulated and warmed they can be as intellectually adept as any humanoid. They are susceptible to temperature variation, though, and most of them cannot function physically in temperatures far below their optimum level. Saurian bone structures are quite rigid, and their hides are thick enough to absorb quite a bit of punishment, though bruises and lacerations generally take longer to heal than those on human skin.

Most saurian reproduce by laying eggs, often in clutches, which they vigorously hide and protect. More often than not, a hatchling has no particular attachment to its parents and is raised collectively by the family or local group.

PRE-CONTACT/ SPACEFLIGHT

The s'susth civilization of Epsilon Trianguli Australis-6 rose slowly to prominence over all other species on their dense-atmosphere world. They choked off all directly competitive lifeforms and then, more gradually, even those indirectly competitive, until they flourished uncontested but for a handful of nutritious livestock. At one point their crowded world was virtually encased in a thick, squirming layer of s'susth.

The curious and adaptive poth'tox faced a quite different fate, gradually losing their tenuous hold upon planetary dominance to increasingly virulent and poisonous



competitors despite their advancing technology. In their case, the poth'tox managed spaceflight and a chance to escape their homeworld just in the nick of time.

Saurians tend to evolve as predators or scavengers, reliant on physical toughness rather than intellect for survival. For them, the rise from simple animal intelligence to true sentience was a gradual and solitary exercise. Saurians are loners, for the most part—the s'susth being one notable exception—born or hatched in clutches but otherwise destined for a life as remote individuals.

Cooperative hunting is contrary to that nature, so communication tends to be less necessary through their development, and the sharing of technological innovations such as simple tools and weapons spreads slowly, if at all. Archaeological evidence suggests that the poth'tox perfected the use of fire in several different locales in widely separated eons—discovering it and then forgetting it again—before the practice became universal.

These long, slow paths toward intelligence shape saurian intellect and personalities. They are slow learners, which can be aggravating, but once they have mastered a task they never, ever forget it. They do not, however, make good teachers, even of tasks they have mastered. As part of an enterprise or expedition they need constant management to keep them working as part of the whole rather than venturing off on their own to singlehandedly accomplish the group's goals.

Saurians are less troubled by the loss of companions, which makes them appear cold and unfeeling. On the plus side, they pour themselves wholeheartedly into a task and are seldom distracted from the pursuit of important goals.

SAURIANS TODAY

The s'susth saurians of Epsilon Trianguli Australis-6 engage in the odd practice of chemically induced reverse evolution, especially among females, adapting their bodies to a limbless form that is considered more nurturing and desirable. On their homeworld, nearly half of the females are so altered.

The poth'tox, having barely escaped their planet ahead of biological annihilation, apparently took the most drastic measures to protect themselves as a species, initiating a core fusion reaction that blew Pi Boötis A-3 to bits. Exactly who made that decision and caused the destruction

of their homeworld is not entirely clear, but the wandering poth'tox generally regard it as a necessary action that preserved their species and culture.

The only saurian species to independently discover hyperspace technology was the s'susth, having accomplished that task just 100 years ago, but before any other alien species had happened upon their home system. They spread their kind to several nearby worlds with suitable atmospheres and temperatures, covering each in a layer of their kind in their inimitable fashion.

S'susth orbital habitats are common among their systems, which to an outsider appear to be nothing more than enormous transparent spheres packed to capacity with slithering saurians and their livestock. The poth'tox welcomed first contact by human explorers and quickly accepted transport away from their home system to wander far and wide among the Known Worlds. They seem happiest to accept employment or transportation that takes them as far as possible from their home system of Pi Boötis.

Saurian physiology is the only stumbling block to verbal communication with other species of their own kind and with aliens such as humans and rakashans. As atmosphere breathers, they have lungs and the ability to make sounds and

SAURIAN RACIAL ABILITIES

S'SUSTH

Use the saurian Racial Abilities in the *Science Fiction Companion* for s'susth.

YAHLO

Drop Keen Senses; add Size +1, Toughness +1, Attribute Increase (Strength), and Attribute Penalty (Spirit -1).

POTH'TOX

Drop Natural Weaponry; add Slow and the following new Racial Ability:

Camouflage (2): With chameleon skin, distracting pheromones, or some other misdirection, the being gains +4 on Stealth rolls to hide when she does not move.

shape them by mouth, though to what extent they can manage particular sounds depends upon the details of their mandibles and lips. Humans can learn and understand saurian languages as well, and imitate them to an extent. This is greatly respected among the poth'tox and some other saurian species, though computer translation is far easier and more effective.

Saurian vocabulary betrays their relatively simplistic lives, and most language reflective of emotion, innovation, and higher-tech gadgetry uses words borrowed from alien tongues. For their part, saurians are not avid communicators, content to sit still and quiet for long periods without uttering a word.

In most cases, intelligent saurian races are tough-minded individualists who, nevertheless, care less for the lives and safety of the individual so long as the society or species is protected. Their military technology reflects this, as defensive measures traditionally lag behind offensive developments. A slug-thrower-armed saurian may wade into battle without benefit of any armor save a helmet, relying instead on its tough hide against formidable weaponry.

Vehicles and starships are similarly designed, with defensive measures reliant on nothing more than heavy armor with few exotic measures to help fend off incoming fire. That being said, saurian armor is some of the toughest around, backed up by superior materials technology.

Saurians possess saintly inborn patience. Their minds are active, but they do not require constant stimuli or entertainments. To other intelligent races, saurians seem to be able to shut themselves down for long periods, much like a construct. One might enter its quarters for a week-long space voyage and simply sit quietly, resting, the entire time. In that manner they conserve energy and resources for when they are more critically needed.

Poth'tox are especially creepy, by some standards, because they can fall into deep rest or even sleep in any position (even standing) while their eyes remain open the entire time, something they do often when immediate action or attention are not warranted.

The s'susth of Epsilon Trianguli Australis-6 are far and away the most numerous saurians in the Known Worlds, but the wandering poth'tox who originated in the Pi Boötis star system no longer

have a home planet and are, therefore, more frequently encountered throughout space.

The yahlo saurians are also noteworthy, a subjugated slave race discovered and dominated by the rakashan Tazanian Empire, bred for heavy labor and utilized widely across their many worlds and in their spacefleets. Many other planets where saurians had evolved independently were discovered by human explorers during the Link Up, and the most peaceful of these were uplifted and welcomed into the Known Worlds' fold.

The hyper-poisonous and unquenchably aggressive schlangevolk of Beta Comae Berenices—just 30 light years from Sol—remain isolated and quarantined to their homeworld to this day by intersystem treaties.

YETIS

The perpetually frozen homeworld of the so-called yeti race orbits on the outer fringe of its dim K-star's habitable zone. The planet 5 Ursae Minoris-7 lies 345 light years from Sol in the constellation Ursa Minor, where it receives just enough light and warmth from its sun to keep the planetary average temperature barely above the freezing point of water.

Only its equatorial regions have open oceans and shores upon frigid continents, and these only for a portion of their long year. The remainder of the planet has been largely uninhabitable and lifeless throughout its evolutionary history, but the introduction of modern techniques may break that pattern once and for all.

Yetis are enormous, fur-covered humanoids who evolved amid their world's perpetually recurring ice ages. The yetis themselves have only a vague idea what the Earth term "yeti" actually means, and they bristle at that moniker, preferring their own racial name k'ho (which many humans think sounds more like a cough than a word).

Their intelligence, oddly enough, emerged from a cooperative relationship with a common yet immensely helpful dark fungus that grew in miles-wide patches upon the ice. Primitive k'ho migrated to follow these ever-changing dark fungus patches to benefit from the regional warmth generated by their lower albedo. Mindless migrations gave way to gradual understanding, then to dominance and agricultural master of the dark fungus, stimulating associated learning and native intelligence among the primitive k'ho populations.

Regardless of their difficult evolution and the harshness of their native planet, yetis are a peaceful, joyous, and optimistic race. Once past their rugged, gruff exterior—with their hulking, fur-covered bodies, massive clawed hands and fingers, and fierce-looking faces—they can be quite gentle.

Yetis are often seen as gruff warriors, but just like any other race they breed scholars, academicians, and other sophists. They tend to be eager and enthusiastic, willing students of new experiences and pleasures. In terms of evolution, they advanced into intelligence more by cooperative agriculture than by struggles against enemies or predators, and their nature reflects this.

PRE-CONTACT/SPACEFLIGHT

K'ho tribes rapidly spread across the entire equatorial portion of their world upon mastering dark fungus albedo, though its effects were insufficient to make the further polar regions habitable. From agricultural tools they developed shelter and clothing, mastered fire, created weapons for the hunt, and advanced rapidly into a settled and prosperous civilization.

Yetis have never preyed upon one another, and tribal differences have traditionally amounted to little more than rivalries between partner groups. Wars were almost unheard



of, so they have no cultural bias either for or against them. They developed few mechanical contrivances, though, beyond the axle and wheel, keel and sail, content to live a primitive existence on a peaceful world.

All that changed when human starships landed in their villages nearly 200 years ago. Unfettered by any regulations against it, the initial human explorers and traders openly flaunted their technology and revealed the existence of all the other races and planets of the Known Worlds.

To the wide-eyed primitive yetis, this all seemed impossible, perhaps even threatening, but the genie was out of the bottle. Then as today, the yetis joyously embraced the interstellar community of the Known Worlds, so much so that they have virtually depopulated their homeworld, shunning its harsh rigors to spread out among the stars.

Yetis have proven remarkably adaptable in their quick transition from a primitive culture to the high-tech, cosmopolitan Known Worlds. In the case of humanoid civilizations discovered by hyperspace-capable aliens, most often it takes decades of careful, selective training and education, as well as psychological and anthropological support to slowly lift them from

primitives to the barest-minimum spacefaring technologies.

Not so for the k'ho. They embraced the concept of a galaxy-spanning collection of worlds and all its ultra-tech gadgetry without so much as a cultural hiccup. Individually and racially, they are not at all intimidated by advanced machinery, practices, or by the more advanced races that discovered them.

YETIS TODAY

Yetis adapt quickly to new equipment and social environments. Given even minimal training on a new device, for instance, a yeti absorbs those instructions and never forgets them. That's not to say that they can expand upon their instructions, which turns out to be a racial shortcoming.

Left to their own devices, they will not go beyond training to discover new uses or features on their own. Those have to be taught as well. This also holds true for languages.

Yetis take in and memorize new vocabulary quickly, and in a short period of exposure adopt a new language's correct syntax. But, as with mechanical contrivances, they cannot expand beyond what they are taught or exposed to. Commonly, a yeti is fluent in the language surrounding a specific device or task, but unable to communicate outside of that.

Yetis are fascinated by technology but aren't typically as adept with it as most others. Their digits aren't well-suited to keyboards or touch screens (which they break with alarming frequency). They have no manufacturing facilities of their own, and no human, rakashan, or other alien tech is specifically designed for yeti hands.

Special orders are possible from most manufacturers for items completely suited to their needs, but at a considerable increase in cost, and only near populous core worlds. Yetis on the frontier are on their own.

Interestingly, back on their nearly depleted homeworld of 5 Ursae Minoris-7, from which most k'ho have emigrated to other worlds, those who remain are successfully terraforming the planet. Solettas, atmosphere enrichment, and improved moss growth are warming the world into a yeti paradise that most of them will experience briefly, but few of them will ever enjoy in the long term.



For the most part, yetis in the Known Worlds operate individually. Their instinctive desire to witness and experience every aspect of interstellar life compels them to wander and spread out quickly. They may travel in pairs or small groups, but this is the exception and not the rule.

Few humans or kalians have more than one yeti acquaintance, or will meet more than a handful even after a busy traveling lifetime. There are no large enclaves of yetis extant upon any alien worlds. As depleted as it is, the remaining yetis on their homeworld of 5 Ursae Minoris-7 constitute the largest yeti assemblage in the Known Worlds.

Yetis are welcome companions on any expedition or starship crew. Despite their media depiction as awkward and clumsy fur-bags, their reputation as dedicated and capable associates cannot be denied. Their bulk alone makes them ideal security guards or soldiers, though in the close confines of a starship or enclosed habitat their size can be a drawback.

They are more at home in the open air, upon a planet's surface, tasked with protection or operation of a device or emplacement. The only time a yeti complains is when they have no specific task. They want to feel needed and important to the overall operation, or else they would prefer to move on to some new experience.

One aspect of yeti biology eventually interrupts their wandering natures: reproduction. Every decade or so, an adult yeti is biologically compelled to seek a mate. Moreover, they must participate in the birth of their young and their upbringing for a period lasting roughly two terrestrial years. From a human point of view, the process is quite efficient, not dependent upon anything like romantic involvement, but hormonally unstoppable.

This nearly always happens on 5 Ursae Minoris-7, which remains the nursery for their race. The process cannot be circumvented, only delayed, as the yeti feels the tug of its home system grow stronger until it can finally participate in this biological imperative. If that can somehow be accomplished elsewhere in the Known Worlds, this satisfies the paradigm.

THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Milky Way Galaxy is immense and unimaginably ancient.

It measures some 100,000–120,000 light-years in diameter. The Solar System—birthplace of the human race—is about 27,000 light-years away from the Galactic Center (Sagittarius A, a massive 14-million-mile-diameter black hole around which the galaxy swirls), on the inner edge of one of the spiral-shaped concentrations of stars called the Orion Arm.

The entire Milky Way contains about 200 billion stars, of which the Known Worlds is but a tiny fraction. The Milky Way's nearest neighbors are the large and small Magellanic Clouds, and the Andromeda Galaxy, all part of the Virgo Supercluster, a group of galaxies within 150 million light years, all of which are reachable by intrepid voyagers who dare blind jump intergalactic distances.

In terms of age, the Milky Way has been around for 13.2 of the universe's 13.8 billion years, while Sol (a typical main sequence star) has been around about 5 billion years, or just half of its expected 10-billion-year lifespan.

In the enormity of time, civilizations have come and gone like the twinkling of the stars, and some have left clues and remnants in their wake.

CHROMO-SPORES

A dangerous plague of fungal spores lurks on the fringes of the Known Worlds, one capable of absorbing, altering and controlling other life forms and their equipment. It's especially hardy, capable of surviving indefinitely in the vacuum and frigid cold of space, and until recently dormant and long undisturbed. Unfortunately, unwitting spacers have reawakened the spores and pointed them in the direction of the burgeoning Known Worlds.

The chromo-spores spread slowly as a simple green fungal growth that can emerge in flowers to draw energy directly from sunlight. They often take over patches of indigenous flora and hide among them.

The chromo-spores were originally a failed life-extension biochemical experiment gone awry in a long-dead civilization in a distant part of the galaxy. It inadvertently wiped that civilization from existence and spread to many others. The

affliction is sub-viral, rearranging chromosomes within living cells and forcing immediate cellular transformations in what are usually fatal experiments to produce longer cell life or greater reproduction. Within hours of infection, a life form is analyzed and transformed, seemingly at random. A human might be reimagined with larger lungs or eight spleens, reformed with alien organs learned by the spores from centuries past, even turned into a hermaphrodite or switched to the opposite sex. They are indifferent to the survival of the subject creature. Once data is gathered, the chromo-spores move on.

The chromo-spores can also take over data-dependent devices, substituting their sub-viral impulses into the program and circumventing them for their own purpose, which is further survival and experiments on more and more alien creatures.

A plague of spores unleashed upon an unprepared world could spread quickly and devastate the population. Only the spores themselves can infect a new creature—those affected non-fatally are not carriers, unless there are chromo-spores upon them. More likely, the spores infect equipment and vehicles with their mold and spread themselves across the planet in search of new experimental victims.

LIBRARIANS AND COLLECTORS

A relatively recent galaxy-wide civilization—but still so ancient that there is no direct recollection of it among the Milky Way's current denizens—left behind just two direct clues to its millennia-long existence. One is a collection of immense libraries and the other is a circuitry-based lifeform called the stringers.

The libraries—enormous orbital stations that served and entertained millions of citizens—are now lost, malfunctioning, and dying. Their super-

technology—once capable of solidifying and reinforcing its existence and compiled knowledge in the minds of mortal creatures, as well as displaying recorded historical events in time-defying semi-reality—is

failing and nearly extinguished forever. Once the libraries began to degenerate, worn down by the grinding action of millenia, their artificial intelligences began to actively *mask* their existence from sentient minds. When they finally wink out of existence, the last traces of countless fantastic civilizations will be gone forever.

The stringers—strangely evolved, long-lived electronic beings who are themselves remnants of that enormous, long-dead civilization—still serve two distinct roles in the galaxy: librarians and collectors.

The Librarians serve as caretakers for the last remaining libraries. They maintain the enormous





space station facilities and protect the integrity of the information and technology still saved within them.

They monitor visitors and keep them from damaging the libraries, and they also keep visitors from directly stealing items from alternate realities—across time and space—that might damage the modern-day universe. Modern travelers will only meet the Librarians at one of their nearly impossible-to-locate libraries tucked away in distant regions of the galaxy.

The Collectors operate elsewhere in the galaxy, in secret, ever watchful for dangerous and powerful artifacts still lingering from the ancient civilizations—hiding in asteroid belts or on long-forgotten worlds. When they learn of such things, they employ agents to seek them out and secure them.

Once safely gathered, the Collectors deactivate, destroy, or hide them away where they can do no damage to the galaxy at large. The Collectors may reach out to modern adventurers to help them secure such artifacts, remotely offering financial and material means to accomplish the mission, but never reveal themselves or their true objectives.

HEROES OF THE KNOWN WORLDS

The Last Parsec's heroes are assumed to be agents, personnel or contractors of JumpCorp, which is described in detail in the following chapter. But first and foremost, they are competent professionals from a wide range of fields and disciplines—pilots, soldiers, scientists, salvagers, miners, space station personnel, or others living a perilous life and seeking their fortunes among the Known Worlds.

ARCHETYPES

Here are some general character types common among the Known Worlds to prime your imagination. Of course, nearly any character you can imagine might be found in JumpCorp's employ.

Bounty Hunter: In the vast reaches of Known Space, lawbreakers and bail jumpers have plenty of places to hide, most of them far from the long arm of JumpCorp law. Bounty hunters track these criminals to their hidey-holes and bring them back dead or alive—usually for a tidy sum of credits.



Diplomat: With so many cultures interacting in the Known Worlds, and new ones being discovered every day, JumpCorp always has a need for well-spoken representatives to establish new trading partners and mend fences when tribes go to war.

Engineer: Technicians and repairmen with the skills to design and build starships, orbital stations, and mining operations—and to keep all their myriad components in tip-top working order—are always in high demand.

Entertainer: Actors and singers are common in swankier locales throughout the worlds. If you can put on a show people will pay to see, chances are a club owner will hire you. And most entertainers have a few personal skills useful to those who find themselves in dangerous surroundings.

JumpCorp Executive: Bureaucracy's spinning wheels keep the Known Worlds running. JumpCorp has countless executives of varying ranks and specialties on hand to cover any possible eventuality—analysts, consultants, managers, statisticians, actuaries, accountants, underwriters, attorneys...all of these and more keep the wheels turning.

JumpCorp Security: JumpCorp Security guards bureaucracy's wheels against interference. Undercover JumpSec agents are assigned to hundreds of posts to collect information on criminal activity and undermine JumpCorp's rivals. Most JumpSec personnel have military training.

Laborer: No matter if the job is dispensing ore packets, waiting tables in a space station's nightclub, running trinary bulk-lifters on a salvage ship, or fishing for hydrogen from a derrick vessel, laborers do the work. And even the most humble laborer can be a hero.

Medical Personnel: Doctors, nurses, and various specialists are necessary for survival on dangerous missions.

Mercenary: Not all warriors work for JumpCorp; some pledge allegiance to the highest bidder. Mercenaries can find work through legal channels in the Twin Star Mobile Infantry or Ray's Riflemen, given sufficient prior experience. Ex-mercenaries are highly sought after for JumpCorp work.

KNOWN WORLDS SLANG

A billion stars: The odds are long, but there's a chance. As in, "There are a billion stars out there, so the odds are one contains what we're looking for."

Dirtside: Planetside. On the surface of the planet.

Drift: To let one's spaceship continue moving in space without yet knowing its destination.

Drop a rock on it: Destroy something utterly. The term originates from warfare where asteroids are diverted to crash into a planet, or large rocks are used as ammunition for similar effect.

Go AB: To "go afterburner," or move as fast as possible.

Go atmo: To "go atmospheric," or enter the atmosphere of a planet.

Phreak: A derogatory term for a person with psychic abilities.

Sape: A sapient or sentient being; as opposed to a non-sapient being such as an animal. The exact definition of either is often used incorrectly, but "sape" has come to mean a being that is self-aware. Among most, this means it is not an "animal."

Space: To force someone off a spaceship in vacuum (usually resulting in death).

To the stars: A toast to one's ancestors, gods, or fortune.

To the last parsec...and beyond: "To the end." Often used to express loyalty, such as "I'm with you to the last parsec, and beyond."

Xeno: Technically, any uncatalogued species of creature or being. In more common usage, it's a slightly derogatory term for anyone the speaker doesn't "get" or understand.

Merchant: Exporters, foodstuff importers, retailers, nightclub owners...you get the idea. Anyone running a business to increase his or her profits and get along in the universe is what you'd call a merchant—and there are plenty of them doing business among the Known Worlds.

Miner: Known Space is rife with ores both common and rare, exotic elements, and other natural resources. Someone has to be willing to climb into a mining pod, ride it into the heart of an asteroid belt, work her guts out for several days, and be extracted before the oxygen and supplies run out. Miners are those hardy souls.

Pilot: Known Space swarms with starships: mining ships, salvage vessels, JumpCorp fighters and warships, hydrogen derricks, and all sorts of galactic freighters are common. Every one of them needs a brash space jockey at the helm.

Pirate: Some make a living stealing from others rather than by earning their own keep. When they gather in a gang and congregate on a ship, they're called pirates. No one knows exactly how many pirate gangs are active in the Known Worlds—the Oneiades pirates are one of the best-known outfits—but hundreds would be a safe estimate.

When *ex-pirates* look for employment, JumpCorp is usually willing to contract with them...and to make use of any knowledge they might have about their previous employers!

Planetary Surveyor: Whether they're called surveyors or explorers, these hardy souls aim to go where no one's yet gone. In the Known Worlds, this means charting the vast area covered by the galaxy's outermost frontiers.

Psion: Although they are rare, people with preternatural mind powers are found throughout the Known Worlds. Some wield their powers for hire, while others bend them toward a chosen career.

Most keep their powers a secret, and with good reason: The galaxy is never without spasms of violence directed toward "unnatural" things. A few of those incidents have involved psions... so psionic spacers tend to keep their senses in 360-degree mode.

Salvager: Space holds hold more than just metals and exotic elements—some of those asteroids are actually debris from ancient civilizations. That's not to mention the countless derelict starships and vehicles strewn in the wake of explorers and societies long gone. When those fragments contain actual artifacts—able to enact effects unexplainable by conventional science—they're worth quite a bit indeed. Salvagers are out to make a few credits from the remnants of the past.

Scientist: JumpCorp employs all manner of researchers, applied scientists, and speculative investigators. Scientists map Known Space, analyze future exploration patterns, and devise new technologies. Some of them study alien relics.

Smuggler: Although JumpCorp takes a dim view of pilots who scoff at intersystem trade regulations, they often have need for pilots with a talent for doing so. If they're willing to work for the company instead of solely enriching themselves, smugglers can go far.

Spy: With so many charters and conglomerates competing with one another—and sometimes going to war—intrigue is common. And where intrigue thrives there are spies, rooting out information for their masters by hook or by crook.





CHAPTER TWO: JUMPCORP

It is almost easier to talk about what JumpCorp *isn't* than what it is.

JumpCorp isn't the typical dystopian megacorp. It's not inherently corrupt or evil, though parts of it certainly can be. It's not a police force, but it offers police-like and even military security forces for hire. It's not a government, but it governs where needed. It's not a mining outfit or a trading corporation, though it engages extensively in both of those industries.

JumpCorp is not run by a single set of rules and regulations. That would be nearly impossible given the vast number of situations, physical circumstances, and races it must deal with across countless systems and even galaxies. What is strong throughout most JumpCorp operations, however, is precedent. Each new "charter" is built by founders approved by JumpCorp's home office, who have matriculated through a previous charter, which was built by the one before that, and so forth. This has resulted in a very similar corporate culture across galaxies, but with enough variance between charters to allow for local circumstances.

JumpCorp is really more of a collective resource of personnel and expertise scattered throughout the reaches of the Known Worlds and the vast reaches of space they've helped explore. Or as JumpCorp is fond of saying, "To the last parsec... and beyond."

JUMPCORP PRIME

JumpCorp Prime acts as a hub for all its franchises. It doesn't control all of these "charters," but does act as the locus for data and record keeping, as well as arbitrator when charters cannot reach an accord.

The company's records are spread among many storage centers, including several roving "dataships" that travel the Known Worlds constantly gathering, storing, and transmitting the data of its charters and associates.

The vast majority of company policy is left to the individual charters. Only a few hundred regulations, primarily concerning internal company policies and revenue sharing, are officially and regularly applied to charters.

JumpCorp has no Chief Executive Officer. The core of the company is instead run by the Corporate Executive Committee (or CEC). CEC members are chosen for their ability to apply common sense to the many issues that cross their datascreens. They are attended by contract advisors chosen for their particular expertise. If the company wants to disseminate new hyperdrive designs to its various charters, for example, engineers familiar with the technology are hired to test and report on the drives, create blueprints for their production, and then handle any issues or feedback from the charters.

CHARTERS AND CONGLOMERATES

JumpCorp charters are typically limited to a given star system, but any number of systems within a galaxy may join together to form a galactic conglomerate. The universal megaconglomerate is usually just called "JumpCorp."

Just how big a charter or conglomerate is depends far more on the number of active operations under its control than it does on the size of territory covered. Some JumpCorp charters provide services for just a few planets in a single system. They may be relatively new to the region, there may not be enough resources to make a large presence profitable, or there may be so much work focused on a few key regions that it requires the corporation's entire focus—at least until it has enough time to expand appropriately.

Once charters grow large enough to form conglomerates, they find themselves servicing a mix of active and empty systems. They might provide escorts to fend off pirates in the busy shipping lanes of one system, mine the lonely asteroid belt on its fringes, and visit the unexplored planets of the next system over.

CHARTER LEADERSHIP

Each charter has a Board of Directors, led by a System Administrator who is typically elected once every cycle (roughly one Earth year, depending on local circumstances). The exact responsibilities of the Administrator, checks and balances on her power, budget, and authority, are set by the board, though most follow long-established precedents.

In a conglomerate, the System Administrators choose an Executive Administrator to serve above their own station. These men and women are usually former System Administrators who have proven their leadership and non-partisanship during a previous term.

BUREAUCRACY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

JumpCorp charters have all the mundane divisions any other corporation does—human resources, network technology, training, management, logistics, transportation, and so forth. But charters often operate outside planetary governments' jurisdictions and therefore must maintain their own banks, financial services, and even courts.

One of the few JumpCorp constants is the agreement to honor and maintain these services between charters. In fact, it is largely because of JumpCorp's pan-galactic stability that credits are accepted and have the same relative value in most of the Known Worlds.

TITLES, RANKS, AND SENIORITY

JumpCorp's various hierarchies are generally independent of each other's structures with the exception of the Administration Division. Its less-than-flashy name underlies its importance to each charter or conglomerate, for the "AD" is effectively in charge of an individual charter, which can often number millions of employees and contractors. The Executive or System Administrator sits at the top of this chain, then the Board of Directors, the President of each major division, then the presidents of lesser divisions, and finally directors of localized operations.

Of course, corporate structure is suborned in emergencies. In those cases, the person with the most relevant job title must take responsibility for the safety of all other personnel and the mission. In space, for example, a ship's captain is master of his vessel—as long as it remains within its mission parameters. Similarly, a security person



(IN)FAMOUS CHARTERS

Although most people think of JumpCorp as a single entity, charters occasionally show their differences. Here are a few of the most famous—and infamous!

THE ARCHON CHARTER

One of the oldest charters in the Milky Way Galaxy, where JumpCorp originated, is JumpCorp Archon. It is considered the model for the corporation's many spinoffs. Training videos, speeches by the current executive team, its latest scientific discoveries, and other announcements are shared to the other outfits.

The current Executive Administrator is a Serran named Michee Vetrís. Her telepathic powers have proven incredibly valuable for the company, but her level-headed and fair-minded policies are her real strength. Michee has been called a model for the rest of the cosmos' corporate entities.

THE CORRODA CONGLOMERATE

A decade ago, two systems under the Corroda Conglomerate's aegis went to war—likely a result of covert provocation by Executive Administrator Tyan Freenze, a cunning kalian who blackmailed, extorted, and assassinated her way to the top. It wasn't the first "civil war" among JumpCorp forces, but it was the longest and bloodiest. Entire worlds mobilized for war, other JumpCorp charters were dragged into the mess, planets were decimated, and some say an entire alien race was exterminated.

It's said Freenze died when her flagship was destroyed, but reports of her appearance surface from time to time, fueling constant rumors of her survival.

After Freenze was eliminated, JumpCorp Prime dispatched security forces from several neighboring systems to revoke Corroda's charter. People, equipment, and information were confiscated, and Corroda was disbanded. JumpCorp now has nothing but a token presence in that region of space.

might take charge of the most senior ADs in the event of a hostile attack. In these cases, it is often a match of willpower as much as areas of responsibility.

Ranks vary by division, but here are some of the most common, in order of seniority:

Exploration Teams: Team Leader, Officer (Security, Science, Technical, Reconnaissance, and Flight Officers are most common), Team Member.

Research & Development: Director, Senior Scientist, Scientist, Researcher, Technician.

Security (Civil): Director, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant of the Watch, Sergeant, Corporal, Constable.

Security (Military): Director General, General, Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant Major, Master Sergeant, Sergeant, Corporal, Trooper.

PERSONNEL

The men, women, and races who make up JumpCorp charters provide a near-infinite range of services, from cooks to janitors to soldiers, explorers, pilots, geologists, physicists, teachers, child care specialists, manufacturers, construction workers, bureaucrats, programmers, and more. Some franchises even have entertainment divisions tasked with making documentaries, movies, series, and computer or table-top games. Happy workers are productive workers.

Most charters have four primary divisions: Exploration, Research & Development, Resource Management, and Security.

EXPLORATION

With the inevitable push outward from the Known Worlds, there is a constant need for experienced exploration teams. Details always vary, but the most common practice on visiting a new system is to send a ship or group of ships to do preliminary orbital scans and create planet profiles. From there, individual teams travel to planets of interest to do more detailed scans. Hazardous worlds typically get short "spot check" visits to any locations of particular note. Geological teams visit dead worlds or those with significant mineral deposits. Diplomatic teams deal with unknown races, if it's deemed wise, and begin establishing basic language and visitation protocols.

There is no rule of “first contact” throughout the Known Worlds, but JumpCorp policy is not to share its technology with less-developed cultures it encounters. Primitive species are avoided where possible so as not to disrupt their natural evolution. Where planetside resources lie near such beings, JumpCorp attempts to isolate their operations with fences, energy fields, and other barricades, and avoid direct interaction if possible. Defending one’s interests against belligerent locals is considered a necessary evil. Offensive actions are a direct violation of corporate precedent and almost always result in career termination of those individuals involved.

JumpCorp charters often hire “sleepers teams,” officially designated Long Range Navigation Engineers. Sleepers are organized in small groups of about half a dozen and shot toward distant, visible star systems. Since this can take years, some teams use cryogenic chambers to pass the time and halt the aging process (hence the term “sleepers”).

Once they’ve arrived at their destination, the engineers seek out available locations for navigation beacons that provide far faster pathways for others to travel.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to their exploration teams, JumpCorp often has first contact with any number of alien species, unknown elements, and phenomena. The vast majority of the findings yield interesting but unprofitable results. One in every few thousand, however, is priceless and can fund a charter for years.

Besides the more exotic finds, JumpCorp charters are encouraged to constantly improve upon current technology for their own use or to sell commercially. They create and manufacture countless items, from improved rations to space weaponry to advanced medical devices.

Scientists and researchers are usually hired for their raw intelligence and creativity. Some of these individuals are what their security and exploration escorts term “high maintenance.” Tales of JumpCorp agents suffering under their auspices, or even betrayed for some greater good, are common—though perhaps more apocryphal than reality corroborates.

(IN)FAMOUS CHARTERS (CONT.)

THE LOST CHARTER

Several decades prior, a long-range team of explorers arrived in the Seetharamula system. They awakened from hibernation, planted a nav beacon, and signaled in JumpCorp follow-on personnel. The system was vast and rich, with numerous habitable planets.

Minerals and other resources were found, as were the ruins from some advanced precursor race. Only a few reports survived, because two years after the system was opened, all communication was lost. The nav beacon stopped functioning and no one from the distant sector was ever heard from again.

New exploration teams have been sent to Seetharamula, but it lies over a decade from the nearest suitable launch site. The Seetharamula charter is now called “the lost charter,” though it is not the first to have vanished across the cosmos, nor is it likely to be the last.

THE RED BAND CONGLOMERATE

During the early expansion of the Known Worlds, JumpCorp exploration teams color-coded bands of expansion. For several decades, the “red band” proved the most dangerous—and the most profitable. Eventually, several of these trailblazing charters joined together to form the “Red Band Conglomerate.”

Red Band is so large it defies any simple description, much like JumpCorp itself. Its various charters participate in everything from galactic defense (they spar frequently with the Tazanian Empire and a plague of pirates called the Oneiades; see page 84) to the usual gamut of exploration, shipping, and R&D.

One of the most infamous areas of Red Band space is Hardluck Rock, a spinning prison-asteroid full of the system’s most malicious offenders (see page 51 for more).

JUMPCORP GOES TO WAR

A decade ago, a JumpCorp charter found itself facing an invasion by the vraar, an aggressive race of insectoids bent on conquering every habitable world in the Andellides System. The Director General of the Military Division gathered all his assorted forces and waged a hard-fought campaign of retreat and attrition with the seemingly unstoppable aliens. Isolated pockets deemed too valuable to lose were protected, and special forces were sent to destroy the vraar flagship.

The flagship was destroyed, but this sent the vraar soldiers already attacking the various occupied planets into an undirected killing spree. Several planets were overrun and millions of lives were lost before the bugs were finally defeated.

The surviving planetary leadership sued JumpCorp for their "negligence." In response, the company simply abandoned the system for another and left the inhabitants to fend for themselves. The last anyone heard, a second vraar invasion fleet had entered the Andellides System. Navigation beacons stopped transmitting soon after, and the conclusion of the Andellides-Vraar War is not yet known.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

By far the most common and lucrative endeavor JumpCorp takes part in is finding, exploiting, and selling natural resources. Teams harvest lumber from massive forest planets, mine ore from asteroid belts, and seek out such rare and priceless objects as comets made of solid diamond.

Planetside transport is most often done through local contractors using whatever vehicular type makes the most sense for the environment—ships on water worlds, hovercraft on ice worlds, wheeled tractor trailers on planets with cleared roads, and so on.

Offworld transportation is usually provided by JumpCorp itself using massive bulk freighters pulled by short and long-haul tugs. Few worlds sell their goods outside their own system—the

expense is great and resources can usually be found closer to home. When they can't, JumpCorp can easily move goods anywhere in the universe.

SECURITY

JumpCorp offers security details to its own personnel as well as wealthy individuals, corporations, governments, and other entities. This might range from a single, well-trained security guard to entire fleets or armies with armor, infantry, ships, air, and orbital support.

JumpCorp is very wary of entering wars. This isn't purely altruistic in all cases; war is simply considered a far less lucrative business than the long-term strategy of gathering, trading, and transporting natural resources. Selling violence can be profitable, but far less so than many, many other activities JumpCorp has mastered. War comes with the risk of direct (and costly) retaliation, lawsuits, death benefits, and loss of expensive equipment.

When JumpCorp does go to war—either to defend itself or to attack an enemy—it does so relentlessly and with overwhelming force. Before such an event, however, JumpCorp attempts diplomacy and maintains special operations teams to handle low-intensity crises.

JumpCorp Armor Divisions (JAD) are typically based around platoons of four main battle tanks, supported by mobile artillery and (if needed) mobile anti-air or anti-orbital assets.

JumpCorp Infantry Brigades (JIB) are usually the highest permanent level of organization (divisions are formed ad hoc if needed). Brigades are made up of four battalions of about 500 men each, divided into four companies of 100 marines (the additional soldiers are support specialists such as command, communications, artillery, anti-tank, anti-air, and logistics).

JumpCorp Fleets are formed as needed and based on the perceived threat, but squadrons typically revolve around a single capital ship (such as a battleship or carrier) and its escorts of cruisers and destroyers.

See page 88 for some sample JumpCorp military and civilian security forces.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Of course any organization this size suffers from corruption. By far the most common problem is a disgruntled worker within some sub-group of the company. Such individuals might do anything from tainting food with

harmless but grotesque biomatter to embezzling goods or funds. In these cases, JumpCorp justice tends to be swift and permanent. Prime fires the individual and circulates his ID code to other charters. These charters can hire the individual at their discretion—but usually don't.

Local authorities handle more severe infractions, typically those that lead to the injury or death of others, if the victims weren't employees of JumpCorp and the charter feels the judicial body is fair and reasonable in its punishments.

Serious crimes that affect only other company personnel are handled internally. There is no capital punishment, but marooning on non-developed, habitable planets, or self-termination by lethal injection is allowed by some charters for murder and other deadly crimes.

Most charters also maintain detention facilities. Incurrigibles are put to hard labor—busting ore on distant and dangerous asteroids, placed in penal battalions, or laboring under other hazardous circumstances. Those exhibiting good behavior are often put into rehabilitation programs and might eventually be allowed to rejoin JumpCorp.

EMPLOYMENT

So what does being a member of JumpCorp mean for your character? First, it means your hero is a valued employee of a large, well-financed, and generally highly regarded company. Not all JumpCorp charters are shining examples of corporate responsibility, of course, but after many long centuries of hard lessons, most are surprisingly enlightened. JumpCorp Prime has always promulgated a long-term view.

This isn't to say JumpCorp is perfect—not by any means. Individual charters stray constantly, as do divisions within charters and teams within divisions. Corruption, incompetence, greed, and selfishness are everywhere. Some franchises have denuded worlds, killed millions of species, or even turned “galactic overlords.” But the core office is very conscious of the organization's image as a whole and takes care of situations as they arise with all available haste.

The end result is that most JumpCorp charters are stable, consistent, and practice common sense in their corporate policies. Both freelance contractors and full-time members of JumpCorp are well-paid. Given that they are often far outside the jurisdiction of any government, they typically make their own rules and provide their own oversight on the job.

OTHER CORPORATIONS

JumpCorp isn't the only star-spanning corporation. Here we present several partners and competitors.

Eclipse Ballistics: Eclipse specializes in high-tech weapons such as lasers. Their slogan is “Lights out. It's an Eclipse.”

Frenip Foods: Few would actually say they *love* the flavored food pastes Frenip Foods manufactures on a variety of worlds, but they are certainly nutritional, economical, and easy to store and preserve.

Halo Engineering: Most large orbital space stations at the Known Worlds' core are built by Halo, a very large and respected firm that employs the best and brightest.

HARDLUCK ROCK

The most notorious JumpCorp prison is officially called Tarpeian System Detention Facility 1. Inmates call it “Hardluck Rock.”

The Tarpeian System is one of 17 under control of the Red Band Conglomerate, one of the largest in the organization. Six of those systems are heavily populated with habitable worlds, goods flying back and forth between them every minute of every day. It is rife with piracy, and under frequent attack by a loose affiliation of pirates named after their leader, Kellan Oneiades (*oh-nee-AH-dees*). Although it is counterproductive to getting targets to surrender without a fight, the Oneiades are murderers, whether a ship surrenders or fights to the last crew. Many of these miscreants wind up at Hardluck Rock.

Hardluck was built on a relatively stable but spinning asteroid hurtling slowly through the Tarpeian System, which it orbits every 120 Earth years. Only the most violent offenders are sentenced here by the very busy Red Band Conglomerate.

There are no guards on Hardluck. Supplies are “shot” to it by the planets it orbits periodically. A particularly long gap between resupply drops that lasts four months is called “winter” by the inmates.

Malik' Ma Motors: Prefabricated factories on a thousand worlds make this land- and hover-vehicle maker ubiquitous.

QuaronCo: This company originated with kilians in the Zeta Pyxis system. They make extremely efficient (and generally very fast) spacecraft and vehicles.

Rigel Arms: "Guaranteed to shoot straight" is the slogan that made this mid-level arms manufacturer successful on a thousand worlds.

Saladin's Foundry: An Earth-based company, Saladin's "blademasters" create powered energy weapons and armor "for the modern warrior."

Tykon Corp: A premium maker of androids, constructs, and synthetic beings. They are also known for their large corporate law team, which advocates on their products' behalf throughout the various governments of the cosmos.

ZeniMart: This massive company sells anything and everything (within local legal guidelines). It prides itself on fast, cheap delivery and discounted prices. "Backwater" worlds usually have a ZeniMart Outpost where goods can be ordered and picked up for those without a permanent address.

GAME MASTER'S INFORMATION

JumpCorp is a device to allow you, the Game Master, to easily send your player characters on adventures. It's big enough and varied enough to do just about anything. It can send them to explore strange new planets all on their own or hover just off-world to lend aid if they need it. JumpCorp can assign them to investigate mysteries, conduct diplomatic missions, protect strange species or populations, or gather flora, fauna, or alien artifacts from across the galaxy.

CLIENTS

Since JumpCorp is a company, it often serves other clients. Perhaps a colony is desperate for some mineral that doesn't exist on its world. JumpCorp is hired to find it, and sends survey (Exploration) teams across the vast system to scout out the various planetoids, moons, asteroids, or other likely sources.

Clients can also serve as a source of corruption, incompetence, or betrayal if you want to keep JumpCorp relatively "clean." Most of JumpCorp's business is thoroughly vetted before it's accepted, but there are numerous exceptions. And sometimes even JumpCorp proves ignorant or greedy as well.

The point is, JumpCorp and its clients are there for you to set up most any type of situation you can imagine.

ASSIGNING MISSIONS

In most campaigns, the player characters operate relatively independently in their group of five or six. They may have assets or backup on call or available if needed, but are otherwise entrusted to assignments a team their size can handle.

The person who gives them their mission might be a relatively low-level administrator granting assignments handed down from his director, an officer or sergeant in a security detail, or even a scientist. As the Game Master, we recommend you create a character with a few interesting personality traits the team can interact with between missions. Some might be trustworthy, some might grossly over- or even underestimate what the group can handle, or the mission granter might simply have some strange character traits that make them memorable, loved, hated, or feared.





Here are some common tropes you might consider based on the type of work the player characters are assigned:

- **Exploration:** The business development, geologic, science, or other divisions decide what should be explored and the resources assigned to it. Administrators assigned to the Exploration Division then choose the team best suited to the task and hand out the assignment.
- **Research:** The team may be composed of one or more scientists, or may simply gather data for the Research Division. Most often, a junior scientist or one of their assistants hands out and explains the mission parameters.
- **Security (Civilian):** If the task is to police an area, the office, precinct, or division is generally run by a Captain, whom the team sees relatively frequently, but assignments are given out by the Sergeant of the Watch. Bodyguard, investigative, or more specialized services are generally directly under the control of a captain or lieutenant trained in that particular task.
- **Security (Military):** The group receives their assignments from a captain or master sergeant. Player characters may have minor ranks as well.

None of these roles are set in stone. A System Administrator may choose the group personally to handle a delicate diplomatic mission, for example. Or they might be assigned to a low-ranking researcher with specialized knowledge of some subject.

See the Mission Objectives Table (page 73) for some sample operations spacers might undertake.

CALLING FOR HELP

One of the great advantages in working for JumpCorp is that the player characters can call in the cavalry when things get too tough. As Game Master, you should make sure the group actually gets that support now and then. They are part of the universe's largest organization, after all.

But...most JumpCorp teams are chosen for their independence and ability to handle situations on their own. Help is usually hours, days, or weeks away, so individuals are expected to know how to fight, survive, and think their way through the most dire situations.

Should a team call for help every time they run into trouble, they'll be passed over for more competent or independent teams, and Commendations will be few and far between. If the problem is systemic, JumpCorp might appoint a new team leader, it might reassign the team to a less-demanding task, or it might simply part ways with the employees.

Player-character-type teams are hired for their self-reliance. They can and should use standard audio and video channels to stay in contact with their leadership, but even in the far future communications are frequently unreliable due to cosmic storms, electromagnetic fluctuations, or even enemy sabotage.

When rescue and reinforcements are available, the Game Master needs to determine how long they take to arrive based on distance and availability. If space travel is involved, use the rules for travel times (page 70) to determine how long it takes help to arrive. The Game Master should also add additional time if the need isn't urgent or the rescuers are otherwise preoccupied.

CHAPTER THREE: GEAR

In this chapter we present a variety of items and weapons available in *The Last Parsec* setting.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The right gear and equipment can make or break a mission. Here are a number of items to supplement the *Science Fiction Companion*.

AURAX HOOF WEAR

The aurax have spent centuries developing and perfecting all-terrain hoof wear. It is so efficient and well-designed that it serves well with numerous draft animals employed on lower-tech worlds. Animals and aurax wearing these treat each inch of difficult terrain as 1.5" instead of 2". (8 lb, C\$200)



BINDERS

Handcuffs come in all shapes and sizes but these binders are made from high-strength polymers. They are designed to be cut open rather than have a mechanical or electrical lock. They have a Toughness of 12 and can only be removed with a cutting tool or weapon (see **Breaking Things** in *Savage Worlds*). They are found mostly with bounty hunters and slavers as they are cheap and easy to use. (1 lb, C\$10)

CONTROL COLLAR

The control collar was originally designed to work with dangerous animals. They are primarily used by xeno-zoologists and animal handlers. The collar overrides an animal's control of its muscles. It is able to jolt the wearer, causing 2d6 stun damage (see **Stun Charge** in the *Science Fiction Companion*). It has a simple mechanical lock (-2 Lockpicking) and is controlled by a remote hand-held unit. The unit has a range of 1,000 yards.

The controller can set over two dozen commands that the collar will make the wearer perform. Commands like *walk*, *run*, *sit*, and *leave the collar alone* are common. The wearer can make a Spirit roll at -2 to resist any command. The controller can set the jolt to trigger under certain circumstances and it normally fires every round until the wearer comes back into range of the control unit. Unfortunately, these collars are also used to keep slaves from escaping and have been outlawed in certain systems. Rigellian slavers use them extensively. (2 lb, C\$500)

ELECTRONIC LOCKPICK

Used by law enforcement and retrieval specialists to open vehicles and starships, an electronic lockpicking system is designed to bypass an electronic lock. This provides a +4 to Knowledge (Electronics) rolls when attempting to open an electronically secured lock or door. (1 lb, C\$1,500)

ENERGY CAGE

The cage is a portable prison cell used by law enforcement. It is two yards cubed and has a Toughness of 14 (6). The lock is electronic and needs a six-digit passcode to open, or success on a Knowledge (Electronics) roll at -4.

When the energy unit is engaged it delivers 3d6 stun damage (see **Stun Charge** in the *Science Fiction Companion*) to anyone reaching between the rails or touching them. The outside of the cage has insulated push bars, so the cage may be moved. Bounty hunters and space rangers sometimes use energy cages to contain deadly fugitives. (50 lb, C\$7,500)

FLORAN SUN LAMP

The various floran species require regular exposure to the spectrum of their native star, which can vary widely from the infrared to ultraviolet and beyond. While they prefer natural sunlight, suitable lamps are common and effective. (2 lb, C\$150)

FLORAN TRANSLATION DEVICE

The floran species rely on odors to communicate. Leeks emit a complex variety of airborne chemical compounds that carry vast amounts of nuanced meaning and data. To most races, this all smells like "pretty flowers," but to another leek a single scent emitted by a companion could be rich in artistic detail or technical specifications. This translation device allows communication between leeks and the other sentient beings in the Known Worlds. (1 lb, C\$2,000)

GRAVITY TRAP

The trap is a small gravity-increasing device that projects a high intensity field. It is powered by a small generator and is a one-yard-square piece of high density metal. The resulting gravity field is powerful enough that a target stepping on or over the field is pulled down to the plate and immobilized.

Once down, the target can be quickly stunned and secured. A Notice roll is required to see the plate and if failed, a Strength roll at -4 is needed to resist its pull. A creature can make an additional Strength roll at -4 each turn until it is free...or incapacitated by whomever set the trap. On the tabletop, it uses a Small Burst Template. (10 lb, C\$5,000)

GRAVITY TRAP, MINIATURE

The miniature version of the gravity trap is handheld. It projects a gravity field that is powerful enough to draw items of 100 pounds or less within a two-yard range. It functions like the gravity trap above but the Strength roll has no penalty. (2 lb, C\$1,000)

ORGANIC GILL

Finding popularity on water worlds, the organic gill allows one to breathe normally underwater. It is a gelatinous "blob" that forms to a wearers face so it is usable by many different species. The gill will also accept a commlink, allowing easier communication while wearing it. The gill has a life span of 2d6 days and will dry out after an hour if removed from the water. (1 lbs, C\$250)

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Shots	Min Str	Weight	Cost
Fracheen Blunderbuss	15/30/60	3d8+2	1	1	d8	15	C\$500
Notes: LBT. Armor counts double against the fracheen blunderbuss as long as it covers the majority of the body. Fracheen balls cost C\$40 and weigh one pound each.							
Net Gun	5/10/20	Special	1	5	—	10	C\$1,000
Notes: SBT. Fires a small, weighted net. With a successful hit, a target must make an Agility roll versus the attacker's Shooting result. If successful, the target gets out of the way. Otherwise the victim becomes entangled in the net and suffers a -2 penalty to Pace and to Strength- and Agility-linked skills until freed. The victim must make a Strength or Agility roll at -2 to get free. On a raise, the victim is free and can act in the same turn. Net refills cost C\$100 for 5 shots.							
Spray Stick	10/20/40	—	1	1	—	30	C\$1,000

Notes: SBT. This single-spray device fills an area with quick-hardening foam. Anyone caught in the area of effect must make an Agility roll versus the Shooting result or be caught in the hardened foam. The foam is permanent until a solvent is applied or it suffers one wound (Toughness 10, vulnerable to blunt or cutting attacks).

PERSONAL DATA TRANSMITTER

A PDT is a type of locator that is surgically implanted into colonists and miners to help locate them in times of crisis. It also provides rudimentary medical information such as vital signs and the condition of the implant.

Some planetary security and military forces use them during battle to gauge the condition and find the location of their soldiers and security members. These are usually built into the armor they wear as opposed to being surgically implanted.

Personal data transmitters have a range of five miles and a lifespan of five years before needing replacement. (— lb, C\$250)

RANGED WEAPONS, PERSONAL

The galaxy is full of deadly weapons designed to stun or kill foes from a distance. The table on page 55 adds a few more to those found in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

ROPE, SYNTHETIC

All explorers need rope and this synthetic cable is light, durable, and affordable. It is thin and comes in 20 yard (10") coils. (5 lb, C\$10)

SYNOPTIC TEACHER

Learning is now easier than ever with the latest in direct learning transfer. This device is easy to wear and operate. Just put in the programming of your choice and let the device teach you the basics in less time than humanly possible. After an hour of use this device grants a Knowledge skill of choice at d4 for one week.

After a week the knowledge fades and the skill is removed. Only one skill may be learned at a time and a new skill cannot be chosen until the first fades. Some of the most common Knowledge skills chosen are Languages and System or Planet Knowledge. Purchasing a program costs an additional C\$100 each. (2 lb, C\$1,000)

ROBOTS

Robots are used throughout the galaxy in place of living beings for civilian and military purposes. Here are some specific robots found in *The Last Parsec*.

★ BODYGUARD ANDROID

This robot's Asimov Circuits are adjusted to allow it to protect clients and corporation members. It is fiercely loyal and capable of independent thought and action, but will always choose the best course of action to fulfill its duty of protection. It is a Wild Card and looks fully human to allow it to accompany its client where ever she may need to go.

Cost: C\$110.04K; **Remaining Mods:** 0

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Gear: Heavy Pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 4).

Special Abilities:

- **Android:** This bodyguard model looks fully human.
- **Attributes (×2):** 10 extra Attribute points.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease; ignores one level of wound penalties.
- **Edge (Brawny):** This android is a physical specimen.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Robots suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.

★ EXPLORATION ANDROID

JumpCorp uses robots that look and feel organic to put crew members at ease. This android is a general-purpose robot designed for dirtside exploration missions. A Wild Card, it is capable of independent thought and action. However, its Asimov Circuits are active; it is not designed for combat.

Cost: C\$110K; **Remaining Mods:** 0

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Driving d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Knowledge (Xenobiology) d8, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Repair d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8, Swimming d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Tool kit.

Special Abilities:

- **Android:** JumpCorp uses the best organic robots.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease; ignores one level of wound penalties.
- **Edge (Woodsmen):** This android is designed for dirtside exploration. This provides +2 to Stealth, Survival and Tracking.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Skills (x2):** Ten additional skill points.

LITIGATION ANDROID

JumpCorp charters require extensive use and knowledge of previous charters. Androids make excellent law researchers and work tirelessly to bring needed information to the table. Although capable of independent thought, this android is not a Wild Card.

Cost: C\$30K; **Remaining Mods:** 1

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Knowledge (JumpCorp Charters) d12, Knowledge (Law) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Personal data device.

Special Abilities:

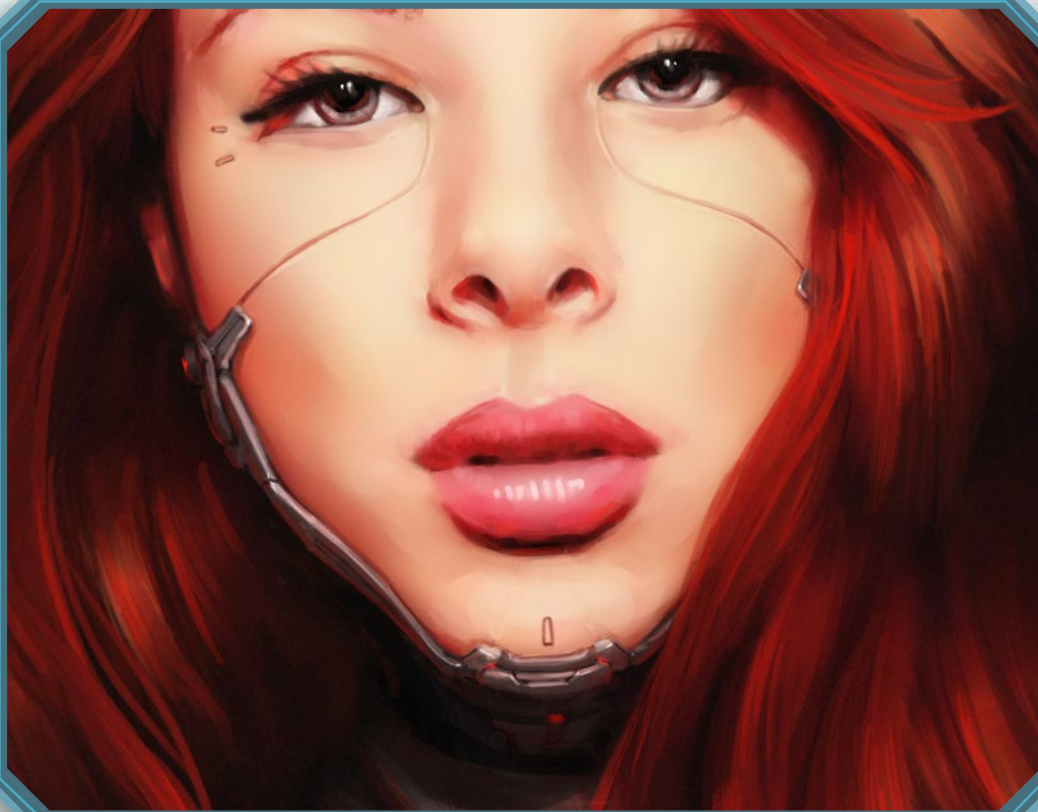
- **Android:** JumpCorp uses the best organic robots.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease; ignores one level of wound penalties.
- **Edge (Scholar):** This android is designed for the boardroom or courtroom. This provides +2 to both its Knowledge skills.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Robots suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Trait Bonus (Persuasion):** Litigation androids are designed to be charming and persuasive. This provides +2 to Persuasion rolls.

✦ **MEDICAL ANDROID**

When a doctor is unavailable for deep space exploration or when casualties are very high on the battlefield, corporations rely on medical androids to fill in the gaps. They can also be found assisting doctors and surgeons in hospitals. This artificial doctor is capable of diagnosing and treating injuries. It is a Wild Card with excellent bedside manners.

Cost: C\$70K; **Remaining Mods:** 1

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4



Skills: Healing d12, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Knowledge (Xeno-biology) d10, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Medi-scanner, medi-gel, personal data device.

Special Abilities:

- **Android:** Medical androids can be found in hospitals throughout the galaxy.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease; ignores one level of wound penalties.
- **Edge (Scholar):** This android is designed for providing medical attention for both humans and alien species. This provides +2 to both Knowledge skills.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Robots suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Trait Bonus (Healing):** Medical androids are equipped with detailed files on human and alien anatomy and are even able to perform minor surgery when necessary. This provides +2 to Healing rolls.

STARSHIPS

Below are specific civilian and military starships found in *The Last Parsec* setting, created using the **Modifications** found in the *Science Fiction Companion*. These ships can be used as written, modified with any remaining Mods, or simply as templates on which to base your own designs.

Size: A reflection of size, energy, efficiency, and capacity primarily used when customizing vessels. This scales logarithmically at higher levels.

Acc/TS: Acceleration and Top Speed in atmosphere as described in *Savage Worlds*. In space, use the same values but increase the scale by a factor of 100.

Climb: The vessel's ability to maneuver.

Toughness: The Toughness of the ship's frame, with its Armor in parentheses.

Mods: The number of Modifications that can be made to the ship based on its Size. Unused Mod slots grant 5'×5'×5' cargo space.

Crew: Space for crew and passengers. Exactly how many crew it takes to pilot the ship and man its weapons depend on the particular vessel.



Large and greater ships include living space, bunks, brigs, medical bays, washrooms, showers, kitchens, food stores, work rooms, relaxation lounges, gyms, and everything else required to live on the vessel for extended periods.

Energy: See **Energy & Provisions** in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

Cost: The price listed in thousands (C\$K), millions (C\$M) or billions (C\$B) of credits.

ASTRONAVIGATIONAL BEACON

"Nav beacons" are the best and easiest way to travel from system to system. They are placed at the outskirts of a system. Beacons do not possess a propulsion system and are unmanned. They are heavily armored and shielded to protect against collisions but are unarmed. Beacons broadcast a signal that can't be detected without the access code. They are normally protected from pirates and the like by drones and have AI-controlled defense platforms surrounding them. See the separate entries for those below.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS —, Toughness 41 (22), Crew —, Cost C\$7.44M, Remaining Mods 17

Notes: AI, 8× Armor, 5× Crew Reduction, Deflector Screens, Electromagnetic Shielding, Galactic Sensor Suite, Shields

Weapons: None

BATTLESHIP

This ship is heavily armed and armored. While not as large as a dreadnought, it has enough armor and firepower to be considered a ship of the line. It is normally accompanied by cruisers, light battleships, and strike carriers for protection from smaller capital ships and fighters.

Gargantuan Starship: Size 24, Acc/TS 15/100, Climb -2, Toughness 75 (33), Crew 3K, Cost C\$1.09984B, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AI, AMCM, 10× Armor, Deflector Screens, FTL, Galactic Sensors, Self-Destruct, Shields, 2× Speed Reduction, Targeting System

Weapons:

- Mass Driver 12
- 4× Dual Linked Mass Driver 6
- 4× Dual Linked Heavy Lasers
- 6× Dual Linked Light Lasers
- 4× Missile Launchers with 24 Heavy Missiles
- 2× Torpedo Tubes with 24 Heavy Torpedoes

DEFENSE PLATFORM, LIGHT

Defense platforms are designed to protect planets and valuable facilities. They can be manned

STARSHIP MODIFICATIONS

Two new starship modifications are found in *The Last Parsec*.

KALIAN FTL DRIVES

Kalian superluminal drives are considered the most finely crafted faster-than-light drives in the known worlds. They are high-end drives known for durability and dependability. They add +2 to Knowledge (Astrogation) rolls when traveling via "hyperspace." For more information, see **Space Travel** on page 69. In addition, if a Kalian FTL system is damaged with a starship critical hit during combat, the Repair roll is only -1 per wound instead of the normal -2.

Mods Half Size, Cost C\$4M × Size

SELF-DESTRUCT

Self-destruct is a mechanism that can cause an object to destroy itself within a predefined set of circumstances. The self-destruct mechanism is usually the most complete way to destroy the object. For that reason the self-destruct mechanism can be used to destroy objects that are meant to be discarded. Most civilian starships do not have a self-destruct mechanism.

Mods 2, Cost C\$1M × Size

or operated by sophisticated AI. This particular platform is designed to protect astronavigation beacons. Although it has a propulsion system, it is not designed for maneuvering during combat and remains stationary except to avoid missiles and torpedoes.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 30/450, Climb 2, Toughness 41 (22), Crew 5, Cost C\$10.16M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AI, AMCM, 8× Armor, Deflector Screens, Electromagnetic Shielding, Planetary Sensor Suite, Shields, 3× Speed Reduction, Stealth System, Targeting System

Weapons:

- 2× Quad Linked Light Lasers
- Dual Linked Medium Laser
- Missile Launcher with 8 Heavy Missiles
- Torpedo Tube with 4 Heavy Torpedoes



FIGHTER, SPACE DRONE

When corporations and planetary concerns want something in space protected, they usually turn to drones. They are a cheap and easy-to-maintain alternative to patrols. They protect astronavigational beacons, space stations, and even serve as planetary patrols when necessary. They have a missile launcher and autocannons to chase down hostiles that approach to within range. Warning messages are broadcast from each drone to potential attackers, ordering them to leave the area before the drone activates. Drones don't pursue attackers beyond preset boundaries.

Small Starship: Size 6, Acc/TS 80/1000, Climb 3, Toughness 20 (5), Crew 0, Cost C\$7.1M, Remaining Mods 9

Notes: AI, AMCM, 5× Crew Reduction, Shields, 6× Speed, Targeting System

Weapons:

- 2× Quad Linked Light Auto-Cannons
- Missile Launcher with 12 Light Missiles and 8 Heavy Missiles

FIGHTER, HEAVY

The United Confederation uses this heavy fighter when extra firepower is needed. It's normally manned by a pilot and co-pilot who also acts as the gunner for the missile launcher.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 65/800, Climb 2, Toughness 37 (18), Crew 2, Cost C\$14.18M, Remaining Mods 3

Notes: AI, AMCM, 6× Armor, Atmospheric, 3× Crew Reduction, Deflector Shields, Shields, 4× Speed, Targeting System

Weapons:

- Quad Linked Heavy Lasers (Fixed)
- Missile Launcher with 12 Light Missiles and 8 Heavy Missiles

JUMPCORP DATASHIP

JumpCorp uses starship servers to gather data from its charters and transport it across the galaxies. These "server farms" collect valuable information and update JumpCorp servers with news and the latest legal information to keep its charters informed.

These ships rely on stealth and speed slipping in and out of a system before they can be spotted by pirates or other unsavory individuals. Once a dataship has made its data dump, it jumps back into hyperspace to the next system. They use sophisticated AI and are unmanned. Rival corporations can gain valuable intelligence about their competition by recovering a JumpCorp dataship.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 55/700, Climb 2, Toughness 25 (6), Crew 0, Cost C\$24.84M, Remaining Mods 10

Notes: AI, AMCM, 5× Crew Reduction, Deflector Screens, Electromagnetic Shielding, FTL, Galactic Sensor Suite, Shields, Stealth System, 2× Speed

Weapons: None

MANUFACTURING SHIP

This ship is designed for a large crew to make immediate use of planetary resources. Freighters arrive at the ship with raw materials, and return with finished goods for immediate sale back to the miners or colonists on the planet. This ship includes six cargo shuttles.

ZeniMart makes extensive use of manufacturing ships. Entrepreneurs can make some quick cash flying discounted goods directly from a manufacturing ship to systems with high-demand end users.

Behemoth Starship: Size 28, Acc/TS 15/150, Climb -3, Toughness 54 (15), Crew 8K+450, Cost C\$1.1089B, Remaining Mods 6

Notes: FTL Drive, 2× Fuel Pods, 5× Mercantile, Speed Reduction, 3× Super Structure (Factory), 3× Super Structure (Hangar)

Weapons: None

SCOUT SHIP

A wide variety of scout ships in the galaxy are used for commercial and scientific exploration or for military intelligence gathering and reconnaissance. This scout ship is lightly armed and armored.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 65/800, Climb 2, Toughness 29 (10), Crew 5, Cost C\$10.29M, Remaining Mods 2

Notes: AI, AMCM, 2× Armor, Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, Planetary Sensor Suite, Shields, 4× Speed, Targeting System

Weapons:

- 2× Medium Lasers

SCOUT SHIP, LONG RANGE

This scout ship sacrifices arms and armor for speed and sensors. It also has an FTL drive and stealth system for slipping into and out of a system unnoticed. This ship excels at avoiding combat.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 65/800, Climb 2, Toughness 65/800, Crew 5, Cost C\$26M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AI, AMCM, Deflector Screens, FTL, Galactic Sensor Suite, Shields, 4× Speed, Stealth System

Weapons: None

TAZANIAN FAST ATTACK FIGHTER

The aggressive Tazanians prefer speed and heavy offense in their fighters over defensive measures. They like to fire off a barrage of missiles before getting in close with their heavy lasers.

Small Starship: Size 6, Acc/TS 80/1000, Climb 3, Toughness 20 (5), Crew 1, Cost C\$10.6M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AI, AMCM, Atmospheric, 6× Speed, Shields, Targeting System

Weapons:

- Quad Linked Heavy Lasers (Fixed)
- Missile Launcher with 12 Light Missiles and 8 Heavy Missiles

TAZANIAN DROPSHIP

Tazanian dropships transport prides of eight talons or 40 Tazanian warriors into battle. They sacrifice defense for speed and weaponry.

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 65/800, Climb 2, Toughness 25 (6), Crew 4+40, Cost C\$16.13M, Remaining Mods 2

Notes: AI, AMCM, Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, 4× Passenger Pods, Planetary Sensor Suite, 4× Speed, Targeting System

Weapons:

- 2× Quad Linked Heavy Lasers

TAZANIAN STEALTH FIGHTER

This fighter is designed for reconnaissance and hit-and-run tactics. It uses the stealth system to get close enough to fire its heavy torpedoes at capital ships and then retreats.

Small Starship: Size 6, Acc/TS 80/1000, Climb 3, Toughness 20 (5), Crew 1, Cost C\$10.6M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AI, AMCM, Planetary Sensor Suite, Stealth System, Targeting System

Weapons:

- Quad Linked Medium Lasers (Fixed)
- Torpedo Tube with 8 Light Torpedoes and 4 Heavy Torpedoes



VEHICLES

In this section we present specific civilian and military vehicles found in *The Last Parsec* setting, created using the **Modifications** from the *Science Fiction Companion*. These vehicles can be used as written, modified with any remaining Mods, or simply as templates on which to base your own designs.

Size: The vehicle's size and customization capacity.

Acc/TS: Acceleration is the number of inches a vehicle may add to its current speed when playing on the table-top. Top Speed is the maximum number of inches a vehicle may move while on the table-top. This represents "operational speed" for tactical battles with miniatures in mixed terrain rather than true top speed. Top Speed is also used in Chases, where the faster vehicle gets a bonus.

Toughness: Base Toughness and Armor (in parentheses). A listing of 15 (4), for example, means it has a base Toughness with 4 points of Armor. If a vehicle has different Armor on its rear or sides, it's listed as Front/Side/Rear.

Mods: The number of Modifications that can be made to the vehicle. Unused Mod slots grant roughly 5'x5'x5' cargo space.

Crew: The number listed in the Crew column is the total number of crew positions or "seats" in the vehicle. This may be altered up or down by Modifications. This is different than the Crew entry in *Savage Worlds*, since we're creating vehicles rather than existing models.

Cost: The cost of a typical vehicle of this type.

CIVILIAN VEHICLES

ANTI-GRAV PACK

The anti-gravity pack or harness—a propulsion unit for low-altitude flight—is a vehicle for the truly daring. Sightseers who want to go where no one has gone before, or those who need a quick getaway from high places, find this vehicle indispensable.

Ultralight Vehicle: Size 1, Acc/TS 30/100, Toughness 5, Crew 1, Cost C\$20.25K, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: Aircraft (Anti-Grav, Climb 2), Exposed Crew

Weapons: None

JET BIKE

Jet bikes are for the very skilled or those who desire an early death. They are usually referred to as "rockets with a seat." They are typically used by bike gangs, street racers, and adrenaline junkies. They have a flight ceiling of 10,000 feet but are normally flown close to the ground during races.

Light Vehicle: Size 2, Acc/TS 40/120, Toughness 9 (2), Crew 2, Cost C\$46.5K, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: Aircraft (Anti-Grav, Climb 2), Boosters, Exposed Crew, 2x Speed

Weapons: None

PRISONER TRANSPORT TRUCK

Rigellian slavers have converted a large number of cargo trucks into vehicles to haul slaves. These trucks are used when Rigellians need to move slaves or bring them to a dropship. The truck has enough room to comfortably fit 50 slaves inside cages, and twice that when needed. The cages have a Toughness of 15 (5) and inflict a -2 penalty on Lockpicking attempts.

Heavy Vehicle: Size 6, Acc/TS 15/35, Toughness 20 (5), Crew 2+50, Cost C\$121K, Remaining Mods 3

Notes: 11x Crew Space, 3x Reinforced Chassis, 2x Speed

Weapons:

- Light Auto Cannon

MILITARY VEHICLES

ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER, HEAVY

This APC is a heavily armed and armored wheeled troop transport. The APC is operated by three crew members: the driver, co-driver, and turret gunner. The dual linked medium auto-cannons are in a retractable turret on the top of the H-APC.

Super Heavy Vehicle: Size 8, Acc/TS 10/20, Toughness 40 (18), Crew 18, Cost C\$762K, Remaining Mods 1

Notes: Amphibious, 2x Crew Space, Four Wheeled Drive, 6x Heavy Armor, 3x Reinforced Chassis, Sensor Suite, Shields, Sloped Armor, Targeting System.

Weapons:

- Dual Linked Medium Auto-Cannons
- Dual Linked Light Auto-Cannons

BATTLE PLATFORM

This enormous weapons platform is rarely seen on the battlefield. Its potential for mass destruction is unmatched. Each weapon is operated independently for maximum coverage. The platform also has four dual-mounted auto cannons to keep infantry from assaulting it in combat.

Goliath Vehicle: Size 14, Acc/TS 3/5, Toughness 71 (37), Crew 20, Cost C\$11.778M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: Amphibious, 14× Armor, AI, 15× Crew Reduction, Deflector Screens, 3× Reinforced Chassis, Sensor Suite, Shields, Sloped Armor, Targeting System, Tracked

Weapons:

- Massive Laser
- 4× Heavy Lasers
- 4× Dual Light Auto-Cannons
- 5× Missile Launchers with 48 Light Missiles and 16 Heavy Missiles

JET BIKE, MILITARY

While the military version sports more arms and armor, it is no safer than the civilian model. Its larger size and heavier frame allow it to

perform as a high speed reconnaissance vehicle with room for up to three passengers.

Light Vehicle: Size 3, Acc/TS 40/120, Toughness 12 (3), Crew 4, Cost C\$250K, Remaining Mods 1

Notes: Aircraft (Anti-Grav, Climb 2), Boosters, Exposed Crew, Sensor Suite, 2× Speed, Stealth System

Weapons:

- Light Laser

MISSILE PLATFORM

This vehicle's sole purpose is to launch swarms of missiles into combat. It has no anti-personnel weapons and must rely on other troops and vehicles to keep it safe during a battle. It carries a massive payload of missiles for engaging ground and air targets.

Titan Vehicle: Size 10, Acc/TS 8/15, Toughness 30 (7), Crew 4, Cost C\$3.51M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: Amphibious, 4× Crew Reduction, Deflector Screens, Shields, Sloped Armor, Speed, Targeting System, Tracked

Weapons:

- 10× Missile Launchers with 96 Light Missiles, 16 Heavy Missiles and 16 Anti-Tank Missiles





SAURIAN "TURTLE" TANK

They say saurians make the best armor in the galaxy. This tank uses it extensively. Many other races have come to call this style of tank a "turtle." What it lacks in speed it makes up for with defensive measures and its super heavy cannon. If slow and steady wins the war, this tank is bound to be on the winning side.

Super Heavy Vehicle: Size 8, Acc/TS 3/5, Toughness 44 (22), Crew 4, Cost C\$1.674M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: Amphibious, 8× Armor, Crew Reduction, Deflector Screens, 3× Reinforced Chassis, Sensor Suite, Shields, Targeting System, Tracked

Weapons:

- Super Heavy Cannon
- Dual Linked Light Auto-Cannons

TAZANIAN TANK

The Tazanians employ four-legged tanks reminiscent of felines. The vehicle is lightly armored but heavily armed, and uses superior handling and speed to get into the enemies flank and do serious damage. Dual linked light auto-cannons deter infantry from assaulting the tank.

Heavy Vehicle: Size 6, Acc/TS 30/65, Toughness 24 (9), Crew 4, Cost C\$1.456M, Remaining Mods 1

Notes: 2× Armor, Crew Reduction, Deflector Screens, Handling, Multi-Legged, Sensor Suite, 4× Speed, Targeting System

Weapons:

- Super Heavy Cannon
- Dual Linked Light Auto-Cannons

WALKERS

Mechanoid bipedal warriors, often called "walkers" or "mechs," are an impressive battlefield technology found in *The Last Parsec*. The basic chassis includes the skeleton, a fully-functioning cockpit—complete with basic sensors and a 20-mile radio—and a power supply. Walkers' other statistics are:

Size: The walker's size and structural capacity.

Pace: The mech's Pace. Mechs roll 2d6 for running dice.

Strength: The Strength of the mech.

Toughness: The mech's combined Toughness and Armor, with Armor listed in parentheses.

Mods: The number of Modifications that may be installed in the walker, based on size and power requirements.

Crew: Walkers are manned by one crewman unless otherwise noted.

Cost: The walker's cost.

SUPER HEAVY WALKER

This is a super heavy walker of the Twin Star Mobile Infantry. It is a newer model, designed to withstand extensive punishment. Both arms are replaced with Mass Drivers and it mounts a heavy autocannon on each shoulder that can fire at targets behind it if necessary. The missile launchers are in the left and right torsos.

Super Heavy Walker: Size 12, Strength d12+10, Toughness 65 (32), Pace 6 (2d6 Run), Cost C\$17.65M, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AMCM, 12× Armor, Deflector Screens, EM Shielding, 3× Reinforced Frame, Sensor Suite, Shields, Speed Reduction, Targeting System

Weapons:

- 2× Heavy Auto Cannons
- 2× Rail Gun 6
- 2× Missile Launchers with 32 Heavy Missiles

TITAN WALKER

This walker is over 120 feet tall and has the heaviest armor a mech can carry. It is rarely seen on the battlefield and when deployed, prefers to hit targets from long range. Both arms have been replaced with Massive Lasers and it mounts two Quad Light Lasers to deal with smaller walkers or infantry. The four missile launchers give this titan a huge range advantage on the battlefield.

VEHICLE MODIFICATION

Here is a new vehicle modification found in *The Last Parsec*.

MULTI-LEGGED (3)

The vehicle has legs instead of wheels or tracks and can climb over small obstacles. Each time this Mod is taken increase Acc by 5 and TS by 10. The vehicle gains four legs and an additional pair each time this Mod is taken. Ignore driving penalties for difficult terrain and treat each inch of difficult terrain as 1.5" instead of 2". On Super Heavy and Titan vehicles this modifier must be taken twice and on Colossus and Goliath taken three times for eight legs total. Vehicles with legs may not take the Speed modifier but may still take Speed Reduction.

Mods: 2; Cost: C\$10k × Size.

Titan Walker: Size 14, Strength d12+12, Toughness 74 (37), Pace 6 (2d6 Run), Cost C\$35.58M, Remaining Mods 0

Weapons:

- 2× Quad Light Lasers
- 2× Massive Lasers
- 4× Missile Launchers with 40 Heavy Missiles





CHAPTER FOUR: SETTING RULES

The Last Parsec uses the **Joker's Wild** and **Multiple Languages** Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds*, as well as those described below.

DEFAULT SKILLS

Characters in *The Last Parsec* begin play with both Knowledge (Native Language*) and one other Knowledge skill equal to their Smarts die type—Knowledge (Electronics) is common. These skills can be increased normally after character creation if desired.

SIGNING BONUS

Characters who work for JumpCorp are generally well paid. They begin with C\$2,000 in starting funds rather than the usual \$500.

REQUISITION REQUESTS

JumpCorp always provides its agents with tools or equipment necessary for the task at hand. Sometimes operatives want more, or prefer heavier armor, weaponry, or other items. If so, the character can make a Requisition Request.

To make the request, have the player write down what he's requesting and why he thinks he'll need it (you'll find an official, form-fillable prop for this at www.peginc.com). Several items can also be lumped together as makes sense (Game Master's call). The player then makes a Persuasion roll, modified by the nature and expense of the request and his stated reason for needing it:

Modifier	Circumstance
-2	The item is expensive, rare, or in short supply.
-4	The item is extremely expensive, rare, or in short supply.
-4	The request doesn't adequately explain the request.
-2	The request would be useful but isn't a clear necessity.
+2	The item would clearly help with the task at hand.

Once the roll is made, compare the total to the results below:

Failure: The request is denied. The items in question may be out of supply or the request just didn't make sense.

Success: The items are supplied "on loan," but JumpCorp expects non-expendables to be returned at the end of the mission. Damaged or lost equipment will be deducted from the character's pay (usually a 25% deduction per payment, to a maximum of around C\$50K).

Raise: The items are supplied as part of the mission's equipment. The employee isn't directly responsible for them (negligence always applies, of course).

COMPENSATION

JumpCorp team members are paid many different salaries in many different ways, but the standard for player characters in the primary divisions falls within the general ranges below. In addition to wages, JumpCorp provides basic counseling services, medical facilities, financial advice, and career guidance. Of course, depending on the circumstances, the appropriate personnel may not always be immediately available.

For more-than-full-time members of JumpCorp, such as explorers, ship crew, or military members, room and board are provided as well.

Required equipment is always provided by the company, but particularly with exploration teams, individuals often opt to buy the personal gear that suits them best instead.

PAY

Individuals in most divisions start at C\$5,000 credits every pay period (30 standard Earth days). Highly specialized or technical divisions, such as the Exploration Division, start at C\$7,000 per pay period.

Base Pay is then multiplied by 5% for each year of service to JumpCorp (using Earth years).

TRAVEL IN THE KNOWN WORLDS

Despite the emphasis on space travel in *The Last Parsec*, the vast majority of sapient beings never travel more than a few thousand miles from their home. The middle class might vacation around their planet, and might go to a nearby colony or planet a few times in their life, but hardly anyone leaves their system, and fewer still venture to different galaxies.

Those who work for intergalactic concerns or space-based militaries are of course exceptions to this rule. Even within JumpCorp, however, over 90% of their employees live on planets or space stations. Only the exploration, salvage, and security teams tend to venture to the stars and beyond.

In game terms, employees accumulate $2d6 \times C\$200$ a month over and above their expenses when working more or less normal eight-hour days. Employees on permanent assignment (such as explorers or soldiers on a mission) enjoy free room and board and thus accrue $4d6 \times C\$200$ while engaged in this manner.

Characters with the Poverty Hindrance halve these totals. Rich characters double their additional income, and Filthy Rich characters triple it. This additional income likely comes from sources besides JumpCorp, such as investments, family money, inventions, royalties, and the like.

In general, players shouldn't have to keep track of all this and should be able to buy minor luxuries or items without tracking their funds, but knowing what kind of reserves are in the bank might come in handy on occasion.

COMMENDATIONS

JumpCorp is slow and steady when it comes to financial incentives like raises, but they have a unique system of Commendations with multiple effects on the characters and the game itself.

Commendations are generally given only to individuals in critical or hazardous situations, but exceptions have certainly been made through the ages.

Individuals who go above and beyond in accomplishing their goals may be granted one of the Commendations listed below.

- **Meritorious Achievement:** A commendation that recognizes particularly hard work or significant achievement.
- **Beryllium Star:** A team member went above and beyond his or her contracted duty in hazardous conditions.
- **Strontium Nova:** A team member went above and beyond his or her contracted duty at great personal risk.
- **Iridium Supernova:** A team member performed above his or her contracted duty at great personal risk and saved many other lives in the process.

Each Commendation comes with a financial bonus equal to a percentage of current base pay, as shown on the table below. The character also gains additional Experience and Resolve (explained below).

Commendation	Financial Bonus	XP Bonus	Resolve
Meritorious Service	10%	1	—
Beryllium Star	20%	1	1
Strontium Nova	30%	2	2
Iridium Supernova	40%	3	3

RESOLVE

Commendations grant characters self-confidence and self-esteem that can be used to power through tough situations. In game terms, we call this "Resolve."

Resolve goes up as characters accomplish great achievements and can be spent on certain game effects as outlined below. Players should track Resolve on their character sheet (or with special tokens). There's no limit to how much Resolve a character can have or use (unless outlined in a specific effect).

Reduce your character's Resolve by one to gain any one of the effects below:

Connections: The character gains a use of the Connections Edge as if she rolled two raises. This may only be used once per session.

Fate: The hero and every other player character in his party receives a Benny.

Fortune: The player draws two additional Adventure Cards, keeping one, and may play an additional card this session.

Seize the Moment: Immediately after Action Cards are dealt, draw three additional cards and keep the card of your choice.

Windfall: Your hero finds a way to earn extra money or receives a windfall of some sort. The amount is equal to double the setting's normal starting funds, unmodified by the character's particular Edges and Hindrances. Each additional point of Resolve used doubles the amount again (two Resolve provides four times starting funds, three provides eight times, and so on).

SPACE TRAVEL

Travel among the stars in *The Last Parsec* is about where player characters can go, not where they can't. Faster Than Light (FTL) travel is achieved via ships with "hyperspace" drives. These vessels venture into extradimensional pathways between points in space using advanced computers to plot courses away from large planetary bodies, asteroid fields, gravity wells, black holes, or other phenomena that might interfere with the jump.

Plotting a jump between systems with open and functioning astronavigational beacons requires a Knowledge (Astrogation) skill roll. Each attempt takes 1d6 minutes is modified by the narrative distance of the jump, as shown on the Astrogation Table (page 70).

Failing the roll means the ship can't jump for another 2d6 minutes. This might be cause for a Dramatic Task to find a new vector if a threat is imminent. Failing a Complication during a Dramatic Task means the drive malfunctions and must be repaired (2d6 rounds, Repair -2). A Mishap (roll of 1 on the skill die) means the required repair is more extensive (2d6 hours).

Success means the ship makes the jump into hyperspace and arrives 2d6 days from its actual destination—the planet, space station, or other specific body it intends to reach. Each raise on the Knowledge (Astrogation) roll cuts two days off the total. The vessel must travel the rest of the distance to its final destination (measured in remaining days) conventionally.

Faster Ships: A spaceship's Top Speed (as listed in the *Science Fiction Companion* or other *Last Parsec* books) is a measure of its thrust and maneuverability as well as raw speed, and therefore isn't factored into the duration of space



travel. Smaller ships that can thrust to high speeds quickly are actually slower over greater distances than much larger vessels, so ignore this when calculating travel times.

ENERGY USE

Jumping into hyperspace requires energy, consuming a number of days from the ship's overall capacity as shown on the Energy column of the Astrogation Table.

A captain can reduce conventional travel time after exiting hyperspace by spending more fuel to burn the conventional thrusters more than usual. Two day's worth of energy reduces travel time one day. A Huge ship that arrives seven days from its destination, for example, can spend 14 day's worth of energy to arrive that day.

Critical Systems: The opposite is more difficult. Ships in system already burn fuel at a very efficient rate given the frictionless nature of space, but it can be maximized further in a pinch. Reducing the ship's power consumption to critical systems and slower maneuvering adjustments allows the captain a Knowledge (Astrogation) roll each day at -2.

Success means the ship effectively conserves that day's fuel and energy. If the ship engages in any other activity, however, such as firing a weapon or an activity that requires a Piloting roll, the fuel is burned as usual.

Also, the lack of recreational systems, reduced oxygen and lighting, and other reductions in normal comforts require a Vigor roll by the crew at a -1 penalty for each day spent under critical systems (to a maximum of -3). Failure results in a level of Fatigue that can only be regained by spending a full day under normal circumstances. This may never cause Incapacitation.

See the *Science Fiction Companion* for more information on ships and their fuel supplies.

HYPERSPACE DURATION

In the *Science Fiction Companion*, hyperspace jumps are basically instant by default, but can be modified for your individual setting and its associated technology. In *The Last Parsec*, the jump itself takes 2d6 minutes within the same solar system, 2d6 hours within the same galaxy, and 2d6 days between galaxies. Of course the Game Master can always add additional time if she thinks the jump is particularly long or difficult for some reason.

ASTROGATION TABLE

Distance	Astrogation Modifier	Jump Time	Energy
Same solar system	0	2d6 min.	½ Size
Same galaxy	-2	2d6 hrs.	Size
Different galaxy	-4	2d6 days	2× Size

JUMPING BLIND

The system above describes jumping between systems with functional astronavigational beacons, but ships can also "jump blind" to systems without beacons. This is very risky, and a Knowledge (Astrogation) roll with the same modifiers as above, but time spent in hyperspace is much longer.

Jumping blind to a different system in the same galaxy takes 2d6 months. Jumping to a different galaxy takes 2d6 years. Reduce time by one month (or year) for each raise on the Knowledge (Astrogation) roll, to a minimum of 1—this cannot be reduced by burning extra energy.

Note that a ship can only jump to a location that can be observed and scanned in significant detail, which is why the Known Worlds are a relatively tight cluster in the Milky Way. So far.

On arrival at the system, the crew must still travel 2d6 additional days to their specific desired location as usual.

Ships can communicate in hyperspace normally, and crew can go "extravehicular" to make repairs and the like along the way if needed. Should a crewman become detached from his vessel, however, he is lost somewhere in the boundless reaches of space, never to be seen again.

DANGERS

A vessel locked in hyperspace for such a long period is subject to many strange events outside its control. Draw a card for each month spent jumping blind in hyperspace. Should a Joker come up, the ship drops out of hyperspace that month and the Game Master should consult the Hyperspace Drop Table below.

Assuming the ship is able to jump again, the entire process must be restarted from scratch (it doesn't matter how many months were already spent traveling to the destination). Jumping blind is a very hazardous and random endeavor.

HYPERSPACE DROP

Ships that jump blind are often shunted out of hyperspace by various changes in the original calculation that started them on their route. This is almost always the result of some massive change in interstellar gravitic forces.

When this occurs, affected ships are dropped out of hyperspace at a random location along the way. For dramatic purposes, draw a card and consult the Hyperspace Drop Table to see what happens. For those draws that put the heroes in a new location, create your own star system or use the **World Maker** in the *Science Fiction Companion*. You can also use the Adventure Generator (page 72) to add something interesting to the delay.

HYPERSPACE DROP TABLE

Card	Result
2-5	Fried: They hyperspace drive is fried and must be replaced. It might be purchased or salvaged from a ship in the same Size category.

6–10 Busted: The hyperspace drive is severely damaged. It can only be repaired with advanced facilities, such as those found at a spaceport. It might also be replaced with a working drive taken from a ship in the same Size category.

Jack Damaged: The hyperspace drive is severely damaged and must be rebuilt. The base time for repairs is 2d6 days. An engineer with the Repair skill at d4 or better may make a roll once every 24 hours. Every success reduces the number of days it takes to repair the drive. When the number of days is reduced to zero, it's functional and the ship may resume its trek.

Queen Spent: Cells within the hyperspace drive itself need 2d6 weeks to recharge. The cells are separate from the ship's fuel.

King Stellar Event: The ship exits hyperspace in the middle of an interstellar event—a star's death, an erupting black hole, or planets colliding. The group must perform a Dramatic Task to reengage the hyperdrive and escape before the event reaches them. If they don't succeed, the vessel escapes but suffers three random Critical Hits.

Ace Graveyard of Ships: The vessel exits hyperspace and may re-engage normally, but 2d6 dead (or near-dead) ships are nearby. Use the Enemies Table in the Adventure Generator (page 77) to determine what's in each, use a foe from the *Science Fiction Companion*, or create something unique.

Joker Space-Time Anomaly: The heroes find themselves in a completely different time and place—without their ship—for a limited time. They might appear in a stagecoach in the Weird West of *Deadlands*, legionaries battling Gauls in *Weird Wars Rome*, or students battling undead in *East Texas University*. After the group fulfills a goal you set for them, reality shifts again and they're aboard their vessel, ready to continue to the destination.



CHAPTER FIVE: ADVENTURE GENERATOR

This chapter presents a series of tables designed to generate simple science fiction encounters or more involved adventures of varying length.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

For simple encounters, draw a card from the Action Deck for each day the heroes travel. On a face card or higher, roll on the table that matches the card's suit.

GENERATING ADVENTURES

These tables can also be used to generate Savage Tales and more complex encounters suitable for an evening's play. This requires a little imagination on the Game Master's part to assemble the results into a logical whole and tailor it to the player characters, but can result in fantastically unpredictable plots and situations.

Alternately, use the tables as lists of ideas to spark imagination as you create Savage Tales of your own. This is especially helpful in cases where the players establish their own goal and a mission objective from JumpCorp wouldn't make sense.

You may choose to tailor every aspect of the adventure to the heroes' plans, or even generate only one or two random elements to add a sense of unpredictability. In short, use or alter the following system however you see fit to create thrilling tales of sci-fi action and mystery.

1. OBJECTIVE

First roll on the Mission Objectives Table to determine the heroes' general instructions. If a given mission demands a specific Focus (see step two), like an object or nonplayer characters, roll on the appropriate table(s) and note the results. If a mission objective calls for a new world, create a planet using the **World Maker** in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

2. FOCUS

Now draw a card to determine what specific people or objects are related to the spacers' objective. If the first card drawn is Diamonds, the adventure might involve some sort of riches or rare resources. Hearts indicates the adventure pivots on a single nonplayer character or group. Sometimes the objective implies a specific focus—a person or object, for example. Roll on the appropriate table to determine the particulars.

3. CONFLICT

Every adventure involves conflict, whether in the form of tenacious enemies or an obstacle for the explorers to overcome. Draw a card to figure out the main source of trouble in your adventure and roll on the indicated table. It could be a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, rivals after the same prize, a gang of bitter enemies, alien ruins, or any number of other surprises.

4. OTHER ELEMENTS

As all adventurers know, achieving their mission objectives is never easy. Draw 1d4 more cards, and roll on the indicated tables to see what other factors might get in the crew's way or factor into the storyline. Configure them into a plotline that makes sense for your game and group.

In some cases—for example, the tale's focus, conflict, and other elements all involve Diamonds—a re-draw might be necessary. Likewise, a space leviathan may not be the best xeno for an adventure that takes place dirtside. Use your discretion.

Finally, some entries appear in the Nonplayer Characters Table *and* the Enemies Table—this is intentional. A nonplayer character can be friend, acquaintance, rival, or foe depending on the circumstances. Enemies are always hostile to the player characters when the tale begins.

Statistics for all character profiles and vehicle types referred to in this chapter are found in this book or in the *Science Fiction Companion*.

MISSION OBJECTIVES TABLE

Roll on this table to determine what mission the heroes receive from JumpCorp or another patron.

d20	Objective
1	Exploration: Explore a newly discovered region, world, or ruins.
2	Surveillance: Obtain information about a person, organization, or object.
3	Recovery: Recover a stolen item or goods.
4	Protection: Safeguard a person or a group of people from harm.
5	Training: Train JumpCorp personnel in a specialized Knowledge or skill.
6	Rescue: Retrieve a person who's been captured, marooned, or otherwise lost.
7	First Contact: Establish trade relations with a newly discovered alien race.
8	Eminent Domain: Secure a target world, region, location, facility, or vessel.
9	Warfare: Defeat an enemy force, or remove resistance from a world or region.
10	Treasure Hunt: Recover relics or unique resources.
11	New Management: Take interim control of a colony, settlement, or JumpCorp charter or conglomerate.
12	Pleasure Cruise: Act as security force for a chartered vessel, safari, or sightseeing trip.
13	Diplomacy: Broker a peace deal between warring species, nations, or charters.
14	Communication: Deliver a message to or from a location that has lost communication capabilities.
15	JumpCorp Run: Win a JumpCorp-sponsored race across Known Space.
16	Salvage: Recover a derelict or crashed ship, or an object on the vessel.
17	Delivery: Deliver resources, supplies, or people to another system.
18	Shore Leave: The crew has a few days off-duty dirtside or on a space station.
19	Law Enforcement: Capture criminals or solve a crime.
20	Overtime Work: Roll again twice on this table, ignoring results of 20.



CLUBS—OBSTACLE

d20 Obstacle

- 1 **It's Complicated:** Roll on the Complications Table.
- 2 **Mechanical Malfunction:** The characters' vehicle or starship breaks down. Success on a Repair roll at -2 and 2d8 hours' work sees the vessel back in tip-top shape.
- 3 **Lost:** Whether due to bad weather, labyrinthine geography, or simple ignorance of the region, the team finds itself hopelessly lost.
- 4 **Minefield:** Mines left behind from some long-ago war. Dirtside, roll 1d6; on a 1-3 they are anti-personnel mines, on 4-6 anti-vehicle mines. In space they are anti-vehicle mines detonated by proximity; a Piloting roll at -4 safely navigates the minefield, or run a Dramatic Task if the crew is being pursued or on a time limit.
- 5 **Meteorites:** Space debris pelts the heroes' ship for 1d6 rounds. Each round the vessel isn't sheltered, draw a card. On a face card or higher, the ship is damaged; without a successful Repair roll and 2d6 hours' work, the ship suffers 3d6 damage in 1d8 days.
- 6 **Commlinks Down:** Neither radios nor commlinks work for the tale's duration.
- 7 **Geological Event:** 1d6 days into the adventure, the team experiences a catastrophe. Dirtside, this is an earthquake or volcanic eruption. In space, a planet ruptures or collides with a comet. The team must flee the region immediately or perish.
- 8 **Disease:** An airborne, Short-Term, Debilitating **Disease** (see *Savage Worlds*) is prevalent in the adventure's primary setting. Each success and raise on a Vigor roll subtracts one day from the sickness' duration.
- 9 **Radiation:** Roll 1d6. On a 1-4, the adventure's entire area is suffused with low radiation. On 5-6, one location central to the adventure is all but glowing with high rads. See **Radiation** in *Savage Worlds*.
- 10 **Space Sargasso:** The heroes' vessel is trapped in an oceanic graveyard of ships mired in alien seaweed, or in a vast field of derelict starships in space.
- 11 **JumpSec Intervention:** JumpSec executives—from the heroes' organization or a rival charter—transmit orders to abort the mission. Their jurisdiction is questionable at best, but they mean business.
- 12 **Gravitational Anomaly:** Dirtside, roll 1d6. A 1-4 indicates Heavy Gravity conditions. On 5-6, the planet has Super Heavy Gravity (see the *Science Fiction Companion*). In space, the system's planets interact in ways that make it impossible for vessels to orbit them.
- 13 **Oxygen Loss:** The adventure takes place in an area without breathable air.
- 14 **River:** Dirtside, this is a wide, deep river—not necessarily of water. In space, gravitational or energy currents form a barrier to further travel and must be bypassed.
- 15 **Checkpoint:** A checkpoint run by whatever passes for local law enforcement or military. Heroes must provide identification and prove their right to be in the area, or risk arrest.
- 16 **Quarantine:** A lethal plague strikes the local inhabitants. The heroes are immune (unless it's their homeworld), but the area is placed under strict quarantine—no exceptions!
- 17 **Blockade:** A blockade of seagoing vessels, walkers, or starships bars the heroes' progress. They must sneak, negotiate, or fight their way past it.
- 18 **Fuel Shortage:** The heroes' vehicle or vessel runs out fuel due to a leak, theft, creatures that feed on the substance, or some other odd circumstance.
- 19 **Storm:** Dirtside, heroes are lashed by torrential weather conditions. In space these are violent energy fluctuations that impose a -2 penalty on Piloting rolls.
- 20 **Unique Phenomenon:** Roll on the Unique Phenomena Table.

HEARTS—NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

2d12 Nonplayer Character

- 2 **United Confederation:** Representatives of the Galactic Naval Task Force. Dirtside, this consists of a dropship, its crew, and 40 UC marines. In space it's a cutter and its crew.
- 3 **Merchants:** Roll 1d6. On a 1–4, this is a system freighter and crew carrying timber or manufactured goods. On 5–6, it's a light freighter and crew carrying precious cargo—roll on the Fortune table to see what it is. Use galactic merchant and starship crew profiles.
- 4 **Military:** Local military forces on patrol or maneuvers. Roll 1d6. On a 1–5, dirtside, this is a dropship, its crew, and 20 soldiers; in space, it's a cutter and crew. On a 6, dirtside, it's a pair of dropships, two crews, and 80 soldiers; in space, a light battleship and crew.
- 5 **Pilgrims:** People migrating to a place sacred to their religion. Roll 1d6. On a 1–4, the group consists of 2d12 citizens of varied ages. On a 5–6 it's the same, but the group also has one member of a type determined by the GM.
- 6 **News Crew:** An Intergalactic News Network galactic reporter (in a small shuttle, in space) requests an interview. The camera operator (a citizen) controls tiny camera drones with a personal data device. Add alien Racial Abilities as desired.
- 7 **Executives/Diplomats:** Roll 1d6. On a 1–3, this is a group of 3d12 JumpCorp executives traveling to a conference or meeting. On 4–6, it's a team of 3d6 diplomats headed to a negotiation. If either encounter takes place in space the NPCs are in a shuttle.
- 8 **Aquarians:** 2d4 water-dwelling aliens. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 9 **Aurax:** 2d4 aliens from a primitive world. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 10 **Constructs:** 1d6 artificial beings. Roll 1d6. On a 1–4, they are androids; on 4–6, they appear like some other race besides humans. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 11 **Parasteen:** 1d6 deaders in their chosen celebrants. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 12 **Florans:** 2d4 plant-like beings. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 13 **Insectoids:** 2d6 insect-like aliens. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 14 **Kalians:** 2d4 four-armed, hot-tempered aliens. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 15 **Rakashans:** 2d4 feline beings. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 16 **Saurians:** 2d4 reptilian beings. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 17 **Serrans:** 1d6 psionic natives of planet Serra. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 18 **Yetis:** 2d4 fur-covered aliens from a cold world. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 19 **Miners/Salvagers:** Roll 1d6. On a 1–4, it's 3d6 miners (in a system freighter if in space) seeking ore; on 4–6, it's 2d6 salvagers piloting a light freighter—use starship crew stats.
- 20 **Mercenaries:** 2d6 mercenary soldiers, led by a mercenary captain who is a Wild Card. In space, they include a mercenary pilot and crew a heavily armed light freighter.
- 21 **Dilettantes/Royalty:** Roll 1d6. A 1–3 indicates 2d6 wealthy pleasure-seekers. On 4–6, it's 3d6 members of a royal family with their entourage. Use the citizen profile; dilettantes have the Filthy Rich Edge, royalty have the Noble Edge. In space they are in a shuttle.
- 22 **Law Enforcement:** Roll 1d6. On a 1–3, it's 2d6 local law enforcement officials. On 4–5, 2d6 JumpCorp security team troopers. On a 6, the heroes meet a space ranger (a Wild Card). In space, they crew a well-armed light freighter.
- 23 **Scientists/Explorers:** Roll 1d6. On 1–4, it's 2d6 scientists. On 5–6, it's a JumpCorp exploration team of 1d6 members with a Wild Card leader. They crew a light freighter.
- 24 **JumpCorp:** Duly appointed JumpCorp representatives. They might be executives, scientists, bureaucrats, security forces, or even members of a rival charter or conglomerate.

DIAMONDS—FORTUNE

d20 Fortune

- 1 **Information:** Valuable data or knowledge worth $1d10 \times C\$1,000$ to the right people.
- 2 **Fuel:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of low-tech vehicle fuel worth $C\$2,000$ each.
- 3 **Derelict Starship:** A disabled, abandoned starship drifting in space or crashed on a planet. Its usable parts are worth $1d10 \times C\$2,000$ credits if salvaged. Roll $1d6$. On a 1–4 local fauna have taken up residence; roll on the Random Xenos table. On a 5–6 the vessel hides another Fortune within its hold; roll again on this table.
- 4 **Robot:** A robot of a type determined by the GM. Roll $1d6$. A 1–5 indicates a damaged robot that requires $2d12$ hours' work and successful Repair roll (–2) to fix. On a 6, the robot is factory-fresh and awaits activation.
- 5 **Alien Artifact:** Remnants of a long-ago species. Either design a unique item appropriate to your campaign, or the item is simply a relic worth $1d8 \times C\$1,000$ to the right buyer.
- 6 **Survival Cache:** Includes $4\times$ all-weather jumpsuits, binoculars, commlink, energy sheet, first aid kit (basic supplies for 10 Healing rolls), flashlight (10" beam), language translator, $4\times$ lifejackets, machete (Str+d6), $2\times$ medi-gel, $60\times$ nutri-bars (food for 4 people for 5 days), rope (10"), rebreather, $4\times$ medium slugthrower pistols, $4\times$ spare 8-round clips, $4\times$ shaded goggles, small sensor suite, $2\times$ smoke grenades, tool kit, 24 quarts water (supports 4 people for 3 days), $2\times$ water purification filters, $50\times$ waterproof matches.
- 7 **Personal Weapons:** Personal weapons and ammo worth no less than $2d10 \times C\$1,000$.
- 8 **Electronics:** Electronic gadgets (selected from the *Science Fiction Companion's* Gear chapter) worth no less than $2d10 \times C\$1,000$.
- 9 **Food:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of fruits, vegetables, meat, spices, or grains worth $C\$1,000$ each.
- 10 **Industrial Parts:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of machinery or components worth $C\$1,500$ each.
- 11 **Manufactured Goods:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of low-end electronics, furniture, or housewares worth $C\$800$ each.
- 12 **Ore:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of coal, copper, lead, or iron worth $C\$1,400$ each.
- 13 **Technology:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of high-end consumer goods such as vidscreens, sound systems, or computers worth $C\$1,800$ each.
- 14 **Timber:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of wood, cut into sheets and boards, worth $C\$800$ each.
- 15 **Precious Metal:** $1d8$ cargo spaces of rare metals or alloys worth $C\$1,500$ each.
- 16 **Rare Minerals:** $1d10$ cargo spaces of precious minerals worth $C\$1,000$ each.
- 17 **Abandoned Vehicle/Walker:** A wrecked conveyance. Its usable parts are worth $1d10 \times C\$1,000$ credits if salvaged. Roll $1d6$. On a 1–5 local fauna have taken up residence; roll on the Random Xenos table. On a 6 the vessel hides another Fortune within its hold; roll again, ignoring this result.
- 18 **Cyberware Cache:** Cyberware modules, replacement parts, and programming instructions worth no less than $4d10 \times C\$3,000$.
- 19 **Power Armor:** $1d4$ suits of functional power armor. Roll $1d6$ to determine type. 1: assault suit; 2: command suit; 3: fire support; 4: longstride; 5: scout armor; 6: Zero-G armor.
- 20 **Heavy Weapons:** Vehicular weaponry or explosive devices worth no less than $4d10 \times C\$100,000$.

SPADES—ENEMIES

d20 Foe

- 1 **Rigellian Slavers:** A squad of six Rigellian slavers. In space they crew a heavily-armed light freighter.
- 2 **Pirates:** A band of 4d6 brigands led by a pirate captain and pirate officer (both Wild Cards). In space they crew a pirate ship.
- 3 **Freebooters:** A team of five adventurers not affiliated with a JumpCorp charter or conglomerate. Create a unique character for each or use profiles from the *Science Fiction Companion*; at least three are Wild Cards. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 4 **Vigilantes:** 2d12 characters of GM-determined types who are looking for swift justice.
- 5–8 **Xenos:** Roll on the Random Xenos table.
- 9 **Military:** Local military forces on active duty and hostile to the characters. Roll 1d6. On a 1–5, dirtside, this consists of a dropship, its crew, and 20 soldiers; in space, it's a cutter and its crew. On a 6, dirtside, it's a pair of dropships, two crews, and 80 soldiers; in space, it's a light battleship and crew.
- 10 **Con Artist:** A character of a type determined by the GM looks to earn the spacers' good graces, but only so he or she can bilk the crew for all they're worth.
- 11 **Terrorists:** 2d8 local saboteurs and revolutionaries attempting to overthrow their government by means of targeted, violent assaults on people and property. Most are thugs or citizens, but the group likely includes a scientist and a spy as well.
- 12–15 **Aliens:** 2d6 members of an alien species. Roll 1d12 to determine type. 1: aquarians; 2: aurax; 3: constructs; 4: parasteen; 5: florans; 6: insectoids; 7: kalians; 8: rakashans; 9: saurians; 10: Serrans; 11: yetis; 12: humans (native to a different world than the crew).
- 16 **Mercenaries:** 2d8 mercenary soldiers, led by a mercenary captain who is a Wild Card. In space they include a mercenary pilot and crew a heavily armed light freighter.
- 17 **JumpCorp:** A team of five JumpCorp contractors who work for a JumpCorp charter or conglomerate that's a bitter rival to the heroes' employer. Create a unique character for each; at least three are Wild Cards. In space they crew a light freighter.
- 18 **Hijackers:** A team of 2d6 seemingly friendly characters are actually desperate to steal the heroes' vessel, vehicle, or other conveyance. Roll on the Nonplayer Characters table to determine type.
- 19 **Spies:** 1d6 spies seeking information for a local or faraway government or world.
- 20 **Tazanian Empire:** A "claw" of four Tazanian talons commanded by a Tazanian officer (a Wild Card). In space they crew a heavily armed light freighter.



BLACK JOKER—COMPLICATIONS

d20 Complication

- 1 **Incognito:** The heroes must pose as someone drastically different from themselves to complete the mission without interference.
- 2 **Ambush:** The spacers' enemies are aware of their movements and attempt to get the drop on them.
- 3 **Communication Breakdown:** Due to a garbled transmission the spacers are given the wrong mission. Roll again on the Mission Objectives Table to determine what the mission should actually be.
- 4 **Flawed Data:** JumpCorp intelligence about the objective is incomplete, flawed, or utterly wrong.
- 5 **Rebellion:** The system or region in which the adventure takes place is torn by warfare. Encounters with revolutionaries or military forces are likely.
- 6 **Sickness:** The player character with the lowest Vigor contracts a minor illness, leaving the spacer Fatigued for 1d4 days.
- 7 **Enemy Mine:** The heroes must ally with their erstwhile enemies to fight another foe. Roll again on the Enemies Table if more foes are necessary.
- 8 **Role Reversal:** In this adventure the heroes' allies are actually villains, and their seeming enemies are victims.
- 9 **Blackmail:** Someone knows one or more of the heroes' or JumpCorp's secrets, and uses them as leverage against the team.
- 10 **Race the Rivals:** Another team of freebooters or JumpCorp contractors is given the same mission as the heroes. Only one crew can win this race.
- 11 **Decommissioned:** JumpCorp will terminate the spacers' contracts if they don't succeed on this mission.
- 12 **Pacifism Required:** The heroes can't use lethal force to accomplish their goal, due to a religious mandate, political accord, treaty, or other limitation.
- 13 **Traitor:** One the heroes' allies is working for their enemies and betrays the spacers.
- 14 **Protectors:** The heroes must safeguard innocent lives while achieving their objective. Roll on the Nonplayer Characters Table to determine who the "innocents" are.
- 15 **Lovestruck:** An ally or NPC falls in love with a random player character.
- 16 **Disgruntled Superior:** A high-ranking JumpCorp exec tinkers with the team's mission. As they're about to reach the objective or execute their plan, they receive a transmission with a change of mission, restrictions on their actions, or some other troublesome order. Whether spacers obey the new orders is up to them...
- 17 **Isn't It Cute?:** One of the characters finds a small animal or xeno that becomes a pet.
- 18 **Magnetic Anomaly:** Magnetic fluctuations play havoc with navigational systems. Knowledge (Astrogation) checks suffer a -2 penalty throughout the adventure.
- 19 **Orphans:** 1d8 children ages four through 11, who've either been abandoned or whose parents have died or been killed. There's no one else to look after them except the team.
- 20 **Everything Hits at Once:** Roll again twice on this table, ignoring results of 20.

RED JOKER—UNIQUE PHENOMENA

d20 Phenomenon

- 1 **Science Run Amok!:** A deranged scientist and his creations are central to the tale.
- 2 **Forgotten Transmission:** The spacers pick up an old or even ancient radio transmission. What information it contains and its relevance to the current mission are up to the GM.
- 3 **Sentient Starship:** The heroes encounter a self-aware starship of a type determined by the GM. The ship's AI has Smarts d12, Spirit d8, and Knowledge (Astrogation) d12.
- 4 **First Contact:** The heroes discover a previously unknown species.
- 5 **Derelict Data Ship:** A JumpCorp data ship, disabled and drifting in space. The ship's AI (Smarts d10, Spirit d8) is offline and the reason for it is a mystery.
- 6 **Refuse:** A vast area of garbage or drifting space junk. Draw another encounter from the Action Deck to determine what hides—or is hidden—within it.
- 7 **Legal Trouble:** Someone files a legal claim against the heroes. Until they deal with it the heroes are at risk of forfeiting their goods...or going to Hardluck Rock!
- 8 **Out of the Past:** If any spacer has the Wanted, Enemy, or a similar Hindrance, it rears its ugly head. Alternately, an unknown person from a hero's past returns for good or ill.
- 9 **Crime Lord:** A local crime boss takes notice of the JumpCorp crew. He or she pesters spacers with attacks and other mishaps as long as they remain in the system or region.
- 10 **Castaways:** 2d6 people marooned on an island, planet, asteroid, or similarly isolated location. Roll on the Nonplayer Characters Table to see who they are.
- 11 **Mysterious Planet:** The crew discovers an uncharted world. Use the **World Maker** (in the *Science Fiction Companion*) to generate it randomly, or create a truly unique planet.
- 12 **Xeno Swarm!:** Roll on the Random Xenos table to determine type. 4d6 are present.
- 13 **Abandoned Space Station:** A space station orbiting a planet or moon, but the crew and residents have vanished. The cause remains an enigma until the spacers puzzle it out.
- 14 **Alien Temple:** A lost chapel or shrine built by a long-dead race, which may possess strange powers or effects.
- 15 **Graveyard:** A vast burial ground dirtside, or many ejected coffins floating in cold space.
- 16 **Celebrity:** A public figure well-known across the galaxy figures prominently in this tale.
- 17 **Memory Loss:** The tale begins with the spacers having forgotten their mission and where they are...or maybe even *who* they are. The starship's recent transmissions have been wiped clean, and JumpCorp fails to respond. The amnesia's cause is left to the GM.
- 18 **Planetary Event:** A disaster of immense proportions is about to take place. The crew has 1d6 days to complete the mission before catastrophe strikes.
- 19 **Black Hole/Wormhole:** Roll 1d6. On a 1–4, a black hole in the region plays havoc with hyperspace travel; all jumps require a Dramatic Task to complete rather than a Knowledge (Astrogation) roll. On a 5–6, the crew discovers a wormhole; with success on a Knowledge (Astrogation) roll at –2 they can plot a course through it. The wormhole's other end is located in a distant region of the galaxy...or perhaps another galaxy entirely!
- 20 **Temporal Anomaly:** Roll 1d10 to determine how the anomaly manifests. 1: multiple iterations of the same day with complete memories of each; 2: multiple iterations of the same day with no memories of each; 3: visions of the distant past; 4: visions of the far future; 5: visions of the recent past; 6: visions of the near future; 7: mental travel to past or future (heroes cannot encounter themselves); 8: physical travel to past or future (heroes may encounter themselves); 9: one hour within the adventure's area equals one minute outside it; 10: one hour within the adventure's area equals 1d20 hours outside it.

RANDOM XENOS TABLE

Use this table to generate random xenos. If you roll a result that's inappropriate for the adventure or your group's Rank, roll again.

d100	Xeno
01-02	Acid Pitcher
03-04	Arc Beetle
05-07	Avrok
08-09	Barbed-Tongue Lizard
10-11	Batspider
12-13	Bleeder Rabbit
14-15	Bombadier Bird
16-17	Bone Spider
18-19	Bone Worm Swarm
20-21	Bristled Gorer
22-23	Crab, Giant
24	Creature From the Id
25-26	Cyber Dog
27	Death Worm
28-29	Decapitator
30	Deep Diver
31-32	Dragon
33-34	Earthquake Beast
35-36	Eel, Giant
37-38	Emotor
39-40	Energy Drainer
41	Energy Elemental, Atomic



42	Energy Elemental, Plasma
43	Energy Elemental, Time
44-45	Fisher Beetle
46	Glitch
47-48	Grazer
49	Gremlin
50-51	Harpooner
52-53	Haze Barnacle
54	Hugger
55	Hunter, Warrior
56	Hunter, Queen
57-58	Impaler
59-60	Insect, Giant
61-62	Ironclaw
63	Lesser Xenos: Roll 1d6. 1: alarm birds; 2: bloodflies; 3: croakers; 4: fireflies; 5: spit skunks; 6: vomit birds.
64-65	Logger
66-67	Monkeys
68-69	Mucus Frog
70	Needlebush
71-72	Orthocone
73	Pendulum Bird
74-75	Pentamouth
76	Possessor
77-78	Psi Beast
79	Psi Blocker
80	Psi Booster
81	Puppet Master
82	Quadrapus
83-84	Radbeast
85-86	Scoopjaw
87-88	Shock Ray
89	Shredder
90	Space Leviathan
91	Spear Tree
92	Spit Worm
93-94	Springtail
95	Stomper
96-97	Umbrella Beast
98	Wire Rat
99	Zombie (Horronaut)
00	Menagerie: Roll three more times on this table. Don't ignore results of 00.

CHAPTER SIX: TRAVELERS AND EMPIRES

This chapter details a wide variety of common allies and enemies found throughout *The Last Parsec*.

TRAVELERS

AURAX BODYGUARD

Aurax are powerful, four-legged humanoid. They are ferocious warriors and make excellent bodyguards, soldiers and security personnel. Most aurax prefer melee over ranged weapons but some carry the fracheen blunderbuss from their homeworld.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (4)

Hindrances: Cautious, Vow (Major—Protect the client)

Edges: Brawny, First Strike

Gear: Body armor (+4), Power battle axe (Str+d8+d6), fracheen blunderbuss (Range 15/30/60, Damage 3d8+2, RoF 1, LBT).

Special Abilities:

- **Low Tech Hindrance:** The aurax homeworld is low tech compared to most developed worlds. They have the Low Tech Hindrance (Major).
- **Size +2:** The humanoid part of an aurax is thick, stocky, and man-sized, while the rear body is the size of a bull. This adds +2 to Toughness.
- **Strong:** The aurax are large, bull-like creatures. They start with a d6 in Strength.

BIKE GANGS

Bike gangs can be found on heavily populated planets. They are typically close-knit groups led by one of their own. The leader looks out for the interests of his gang and puts their welfare above anything else. They can be used as hired muscle, or when a job needs a quick, clean getaway.

BIKE GANG MEMBER

Gang members are typically young and depend on someone telling them what to do. They flee if their leader is removed from combat.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Ace, Steady Hands

Gear: Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), commlink, hover motorcycle.



★ BIKE GANG LEADER

Bike gangs are led by the toughest, quickest, but not always the smartest of the gang.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Minor), Vow (Minor—Protect gang's welfare)

Edges: Ace, Combat Reflexes, Quick, Steady Hands

Gear: Combat armor (+6), plasma pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d10+2, RoF 1), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), commlink, jet bike.

★ CORPORATE TROUBLESHOOTER

When corporations need problems solved discreetly, they call on a troubleshooter. These men and women know how to fix situations with finality and put the corporation back on the road to profits. They specialize in cleaning up messes and tying up loose ends as quickly and efficiently as possible. JumpCorp doesn't normally use troubleshooters, but other smaller corporations like Tykon Corp or ZeniMart make extensive use of them.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Driving d8, Fighting d10, Healing d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Repair d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Tracking d8

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Overconfident, Vow (Major—Serve the corporation)

Edges: Ace, Alertness, Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Connections, First Strike, Investigator, Marksman, Quick, Quick Draw, Thief

Gear: Body armor (+4), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), heavy pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 4), language translator, personal data device, able to call on corporation for any additional gear needed.

Cyberware: Autodoc, Cyberjack, Facechanger, Vision Enhancement

INSECTOID ARMS DEALER

There are many ways—legal or illegal—to purchase weapons in the galaxy. The arms dealer provides both ways to anyone who can pay. Dealers also provide repairs, modifications, and custom-built weapon services. As insectoids typically do not understand emotions, their prices are firm but fair.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Chemical Engineering) d8, Knowledge (Mechanical Engineering) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Repair d10, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Cautious, Quirk (Doesn't negotiate prices)

Edges: Jack-of-All-Trades, Mr. Fix it, Scholar

Gear: Tool kit, top-of-the-line melee and ranged weapons as needed.

Special Abilities:

- **Armor:** Insectoids are covered in exoskeleton or hard carapace. This grants +4 Armor.
- **Cannot Speak:** Insectoids communicate with pheromones and weird clicking noises. Most wear portable screens to translate their speech to others.
- **Natural Weaponry:** The creatures have extremely strong pincers or mandibles, causing Str+d6, AP 2.
- **Outsider Hindrance:** Everything from the insectoids' eating habits to their hive-like mentality is strange and alien to most other races. They have the Outsider (Minor) Hindrance.

KALIAN PILOT

With four arms and the ability to multitask, kalians make some of the best pilots in the galaxy.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Astrogation) d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal, Overconfident

Edges: Ace, Rocket Jock, Steady Hands

Gear: Spacesuit (+1), commlink.

Special Abilities:

- **Additional Action:** Due to their four arms, kalians get one extra non-movement action per round at no multi-action penalty.

- **Frail:** Kilians are of average height, but have very slim builds. This subtracts 1 from their Toughness.

MERCENARIES

Mercenaries are a necessary evil in the galaxy. Many former JumpCorp Security members eventually find themselves in a merc outfit. These professional soldiers are typically motivated by monetary gain but some just enjoy the life of a gun-for-hire. Trained in space combat as well as dirtside actions, these men and women are found anywhere their services can be afforded.

MERCENARY SOLDIER

Soldiers come in all shapes and sizes but these mercenaries are skilled warriors.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6,

Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8,

Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Gravitic Acclimation

Gear: Combat armor (+6), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 2× fragmentation grenades, commlink.

MERCENARY PILOT

Some of the best and brightest still wash out of JumpCorp. These pilots are comfortable alone behind the stick, wheel, or on the bridge of a larger vessel with a full crew.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6,

Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d8, Driving d8, Fighting d6,

Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Astrogation) d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Repair d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (6)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Loyal

Edges: Ace, Gravitic Acclimation, Rocket Jock, Steady Hands

Gear: Combat armor (+6), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), commlink.



MERCENARY OUTFITS

With operations in at least 70 systems, the Twin Star Mobile Infantry are the most well-known mercenaries in the universe. They specialize in dirtside campaigns but have the resources for extended space actions as well. Their units of mechanized battle walkers are unmatched on the field. They have gained a reputation for total ruthlessness and are rumored to be responsible for many heinous battlefield atrocities. Nearly all of the mercenaries in the Twin Star Mobile Infantry have the Bloodthirsty Hindrance.

A much smaller but more specialized group of mercenaries is known as Ray's Riflemen. They are an outfit of disgruntled, former JumpCorp Security specialists. The Riflemen pride themselves on the excellent marksmanship of their members; every soldier in the outfit is a highly qualified sharpshooter and combat veteran. They prefer operations that directly oppose JumpCorp as competing with their former employer allows them some measure of satisfaction. All Riflemen have a minimum Shooting of d10 and the Marksman Edge. Add a scope to their blaster rifles.

★ MERCENARY CAPTAIN

Sitting in the captain's chair aboard his ship or in the cockpit of a battle walker, the mercenary captain is in his element.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Astrogation) d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d6, Piloting d10, Repair d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (6)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Minor), Loyal

Edges: Ace, Brawny, Command, Dodge, Gravitic Acclimation, Level Headed

Gear: Combat armor (+6), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), commlink.

PIRATES

The Tarpeian System is home to some of the most notorious pirates JumpCorp has ever faced. The Oneiades pirates, so named for their leader Kellan Oneiades, are a loose affiliation of violent murderers. Many of them end up at Hardluck Rock, the JumpCorp detention facility.

★ KELLAN ONEIADES

Oneides is a human pirate, but he's as slippery as a baby aurax. His tactics and pinpoint hit-and-run maneuvers are the bane of the JumpCorp Tarpeian fleet and the talk of the system's senior staff.

Some feel he may have an inside contact at JumpCorp that allows him to so accurately predict when and where the most valuable and vulnerable shipments can be hijacked. Others say he is a former JumpCorp Security specialist or maybe even a high ranking ex-administrator.

Regardless of who he was, he is now the most wanted criminal in the Tarpeian system.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Astrogation) d8, Knowledge (Battle) d12, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Knowledge (Tarpeian System) d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d10

Cha: -6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Big Mouth, Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Mean, Wanted (Major)

Edges: Ace, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Connections, Elan, Improved Dodge, Investigator, Level Headed, Rocket Jock, Scholar, Tactician

Gear: Combat armor (+6), power cutlass (Str+2d6), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), commlink, starship (*Sweet Vengeance*).

★ GALAVAX

Galavax is a kalian and Oneiades' right- and left-hand(s) man. He is a skilled swordsman and gunfighter with no qualms about killing anyone who gets in his boss' way. Galavax loathes body armor and taunts anyone who wear it in battle. While his combat skills are without match, he is a poor leader and takes out his frustration on pirates under his command. When he's not leading raids for Oneiades, Galavax can be found losing at cards in seedy dives throughout the Tarpeian system.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d12, Gambling d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d12, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 8, Parry: 11; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Quirk (Quick to anger), Vengeful (Major), Wanted (Minor)

Edges: Acrobat, Ambidextrous, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Counter Attack, Extraction, First Strike, Fleet-Footed, Florentine, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Marksman, Quick, Quick Draw, Rocket Jock, Strong Willed, Two-Fisted

Gear: 2× laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), 2× molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), commlink.

Special Abilities:

- **Additional Action:** Due to their four arms, kalians get one extra non-movement action per round with no multi-action penalty.
- **Frail:** Kalians are of average height, but have very slim builds. This subtracts 1 from their Toughness.

PARASTEEN LICENSOR

The parasteen are intelligent, six-inch long parasites that occupy and animate organic corpses. Modern dealers preserve their host bodies within specially made sealed suits that preserve the tissues and maximize lifespan. Licensors—who are essentially loan sharks—draw up contracts for celebrants and collect their host bodies when they die. Occasionally, a celebrant can get an “advance” of money on his contract before dying. Of course, sometimes the licensor sends someone to collect the host if they are late on a repayment.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6





Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Business) d8, Knowledge (Racketeering) d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d10, Taunt d10

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 3; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Stubborn, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Charismatic, Connections, Rich, Strong Willed

Gear: Commlink, personal data device.

Special Abilities:

- **Clumsy:** The host corpse is stiff and difficult for the parasites to maneuver. They suffer -2 to Agility rolls.
- **Poor Parry:** The slow, deliberate movements of deaders make them easy targets in melee. Parry -2.
- **Slow:** Deaders tend to shuffle as they move, reducing their Pace to 4" and their running die to d4.
- **Outsider Hindrance:** Deaders are frequently looked down upon, and others may be hostile if the parasites "wear" someone they knew.
- **Weak:** Deaders have difficulty using their host's muscles to their full extent. They subtract 1 from Strength-based rolls, including damage.
- **Undead:** AB (Super Powers) Edge: -2 Charisma; +2 to Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; don't breathe; immune to disease and poisons; no additional damage from called shots; ignores one point of wound penalties.

RAKASHAN SCOUT

Not all rakashans are part of the Tazanian Empire. But all rakashans make excellent scouts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Clueless

Edges: Alertness, Danger Sense, Fleet-Footed, Scout, Woodsman

Special Abilities:

- **Agile:** Rakashans have the feline grace of their ancestors. They start with a d6 Agility.
- **Bloodthirsty Hindrance:** Rakashans can be cruel to their foes, often toying with them for simple amusement. They rarely take prisoners and feel little compunction about punishing

captured foes. They have -4 Charisma among “civilized” types.

- **Racial Enemy:** The rakashans are inherent expansionists and make many enemies as they conquer and explore new galaxies. Close to the original rakashan home system, Tazan, a long and brutal war with the kalians has made that race the most common target of their rage. Rakashans suffer a -4 Charisma when dealing with kalians. Unless fettered by other authorities or common goals, rakashans typically attack them on sight. Farther out, splinter groups compose a new racial enemy—other rakashans! These rogue felines, whether originally from the rakashan homeworld or evolved from a different species, are seen as “needing their tails clipped.”

REPORTER, GALACTIC

Someone needs to get the scoop on what’s happening in the galaxy and this intrepid reporter always gets the story. Most galactic reporters transmit their stories to the Intergalactic News Network (INN), which is far from the only news outlet in the Known Worlds, but by far the one with the largest audience.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Intimidation d8, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Stubborn, Vow (Major—get the story at all costs)

Edges: Charismatic, Connections (News agency), Strong Willed

Gear: Commlink, language translator, personal data device with recorder.

✦ SPACE RANGER

An old Earth saying was “one riot, one ranger”. The motto has stuck for a lot of outlying systems. The ranger is typically the highest level of law enforcement in a system and is given leeway when hunting a fugitive or taking control of local law enforcement within that system.

Occasionally, a ranger is seen outside his jurisdiction and hunts a fugitive across the galaxy if the crimes warrant. Psi-knights are a type of space ranger, although they are rarely seen outside their sector of space.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Knowledge (Law) d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d10, Streetwise d8, Survival d6, Taunt d8, Tracking d8, Throwing d8

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Cautious, Heroic, Vow (Major—always gets his man)

Edges: Alertness, Charismatic, Dodge, Investigator, Level Headed, Marksman, Quick Draw, Strong Willed

Gear: Combat armor (+6), blaster pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 1, AP 2), stun gun (Range 5/10/20, Damage –, RoF 1), 3× stun grenades, stun baton (Str+d4, stun charge), handcuffs, commlink.

YETI MECHANIC

The K’ho make excellent workers and with the right training, they can overcome their deficiencies in technology.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d6, Knowledge (Mechanical Engineering) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Repair d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Hindrances: Curious, Loyal

Edges: Brawny, McGyver, Mr. Fix It

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), tool kit.

Special Abilities:

- **Environmental Resistance, Cold:** Yetis add +4 to resist the effects of cold, and have +4 Armor versus cold and ice-based attacks.
- **Environmental Weakness, Heat:** Their thick coats are a liability in extreme heat and humidity. Yetis subtract 4 from Fatigue checks made to resist the effects of heat, and take 4 additional points of damage from heat and fire-based attacks.
- **Low Tech Hindrance:** Yetis often come from less developed worlds. Many are fascinated by technology, but aren’t as adept with it as most others, and their digits aren’t well-suited to keyboards or touch screens (which they break with alarming frequency).
- **Size:** These beings are typically about seven feet tall, very broad, and very dense. Add +2 to Toughness.
- **Strong:** Yetis are large and ferociously strong. They start with a d6 in Strength.

JUMPCORP PERSONNEL

EXPLORATION TEAM

Exploration teams are usually led by a team leader with officers and team members added to the group depending on mission parameters. Exploration teams are well-versed in deep space exploration as well as survival in dirtside hostile environments. First encounters can be delicate, so most exploration teams field an experienced diplomat as well. When exploring known dangers they may be accompanied by a security team in addition to their own security officer and members. JumpCorp team members are loyal and optimistic about the future.

EXPLORATION TEAM MEMBER

Team members come from all different races and lifestyles. Some just want to see the stars, others take the job as a way to leave their home situation. They typically receive minimum training before being sent out into the field.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (one science or Engineering) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Brave

Gear: Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), molecular machete (Str+d6+2, AP 3), commlink, survival gear.

EXPLORATION RECONNAISSANCE OFFICER, AVION

Because they can fly over adverse terrain, avions make excellent reconnaissance officers and scouts.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Quirk (Likes to be alone)

Edges: Alertness, Marksman, Scout, Steady Hands, Woodsman

Gear: Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), laser rifle with scope (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2), molecular machete (Str+d6+2, AP 3), commlink, survival gear.

Special Abilities:

- **Agility:** Avions are dexterous and nimble; they start with a d6 in Agility.
- **Flight:** Avions can fly at their basic Pace and have a Climb of 0.
- **Frail:** Avions have -1 Toughness due to their hollow bones.
- **Low-G Worlder Hindrance:** The avion homeworld has light gravity.

EXPLORATION SECURITY OFFICER, SAURIAN

Typically a loner, the saurian security officer knows his job and performs it admirably. He doesn't allow emotion to cloud his judgment but can sometimes be curt with his fellow team members.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Throwing d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean, Vow (Major—Protect the team)

Edges: Alertness, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Marksman, Steady Hands

Gear: Combat armor (+6), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2), 3× fragmentation grenades, molecular machete (Str+d6+2, AP 3), commlink, survival gear.

Special Abilities:

- **Natural Weaponry:** Saurians' teeth allow them to bite in combat for Str+d6 damage.
- **Keen Senses Edge:** Saurians' lizard tongues can "taste" the air, giving them +2 to relevant Notice rolls. This can stack with Alertness.
- **Environmental Weakness, Cold:** Though not truly cold-blooded, saurians are not comfortable in cold environments. They suffer a -4 penalty to resist cold environmental effects, and suffer +4 damage from cold or ice-based attacks.



★ EXPLORATION TEAM LEADER, HUMAN

Team leaders are experienced explorers and veteran leaders. They are familiar with both the vastness of space and the harsh demands of being dirtside on an unfamiliar planet.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Astrogation) d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Piloting d6, Repair d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

Toughness: 10 (4)

Hindrances: Curious, Heroic, Loyal, Quirk (First in, last out)

Edges: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Command, Explorer, Level Headed, McGyver, Steady Hands

Gear: Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), molecular machete (Str+d6+2, AP 3), commlink, survival gear.

SECURITY TEAM, MILITARY

Security teams add leaders, officers, and members depending on mission parameters. Security teams are trained in melee and ranged combat, Zero-G, and other hostile environments. Missions range from protecting exploration teams to warfare depending on the charter.

SECURITY TEAM TROOPER

Troopers come from all different races and life styles. Some want to explore, while others take the job as a way to escape their situation at home. They are loyal, in good physical shape, and receive extensive combat training before being sent out into the field.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed

Gear: Combat armor (+6), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2), 3× fragmentation grenades, molecular machete (Str+d6+2, AP 3), commlink, survival gear.

SECURITY SERGEANT, FLORAN

JumpCorp sergeants are some of the toughest men and women to put on the uniform. They excel at combat and tactics, with loyalty above and beyond to both each other and those they lead.

This floran is a combat veteran and has regenerated damage that would kill a normal human.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Throwing d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major—Everybody goes home)

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fleet-Footed, Marksman, Rock and Roll!

Gear: Combat armor (+6), laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3, AP 2), 3× fragmentation grenades, molecular machete (Str+d6+2, AP 3), commlink, survival gear.

Special Abilities:

- **Dependency:** This type of plant-based lifeform must bask in sunlight (artificial or otherwise) once per day or suffer Fatigue. This can lead to death. Fatigue is recovered at the rate of one level per hour of sunshine.
- **Environmental Weakness, Heat/Fire:** Florans suffer +4 damage from heat or fire attacks, and a -4 penalty to resist any other effects.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result doesn't cause a wound.
- **High Tech Hindrance:** Florans come from very advanced worlds and find standard tech confusing. They suffer a -2 penalty when using typical electronic systems.
- **No Vital Organs:** Florans' organs are spread out along their strange vascular systems. Called shots do no extra damage against them.
- **Regeneration:** As long as they're not Exhausted from lack of sunlight, florans make natural healing rolls once per day.



★ MICHEE VETRIS

The current Executive Administrator of the JumpCorp Archon charter is a Serran named Michee Vetriss. Her telepathic powers have proven incredibly valuable for the company, but her level-headed and fair-minded policies are her real strength.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12+2, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Business) d12, Knowledge (Law) d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d12, Psionics d12, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Cha: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal, Quirk (By the book), Vow (Major—Protect JumpCorp interests)

Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Psionics), Attractive, Charismatic, Improved Level Headed, Mentalist, Scholar

Powers: *Divination, mind reading, stun, telekinesis.*

Power Points: 20

Special Abilities:

- **Danger Sense Edge:** Serrans have either extremely developed intuition or perhaps limited extra-sensory perception, giving them the Danger Sense Edge.
- **Parry:** Serran ESP increases their Parry by +2.
- **Weak:** Serrans are weak compared to most other races. They suffer a -1 penalty to all Strength rolls.

★ TYAN FREENZE

Tyan Freenze was the most notorious Executive Administrator of JumpCorp Corroda Conglomeration. As a kalian, she has the ability to multi-task and has layers of intrigue surrounding her. She was the aggressor in the longest and bloodiest "civil war" JumpCorp has ever faced.

Early in her career, Tyan liked to get her hands dirty. She is trained in personal combat and counter-espionage, and has a professional doctorate in Business Psychology. She has been officially declared dead...but rumors of her demise are greatly exaggerated.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Business) d12, Knowledge (Computers) d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Knowledge (Psychology) d12, Lockpicking d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Piloting d8,

Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d10

Cha: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Major), Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Ace, Acrobat, Alertness, Assassin, Attractive, Brawny, Charismatic, Command, Connections, Elan, First Strike, Harder to Kill, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Investigator, Jack-of-All-Trades, Linguist, Marksman, Scholar, Strong Willed, Thief

Gear: Body armor (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), commlink, personal data device.

Special Abilities:

- **Additional Action:** Due to their four arms, kalias get one extra non-movement action per round with no multi-action penalty.
- **Frail:** Kalias are of average height, but have very slim builds. This subtracts 1 from their Toughness.

EMPIRES

RIGELLIAN SLAVE FLEET

The insectoid Rigellians are a scourge of cold-hearted wanderers from some distant and long-lost system. They travel the galaxy preying on weak or isolated colonies, killing those who resist and capturing the rest for their massive slave ships. The unfortunate captives are sold to other unscrupulous empires for cheap, short-term labor. Each ship is captained by an overseer, with the fleet's overall commander, the master overseer, stationed on the carrier.

RIGELLIAN SLAVE OVERSEER

Each slave ship is captained by an overseer. Each overseer has his or her own personality and preferences as to how they like their ship managed...but all of them share a ruthless determination to make a profit.

Race: Rigellians use the Insectoid racial template without the Outsider Hindrance.

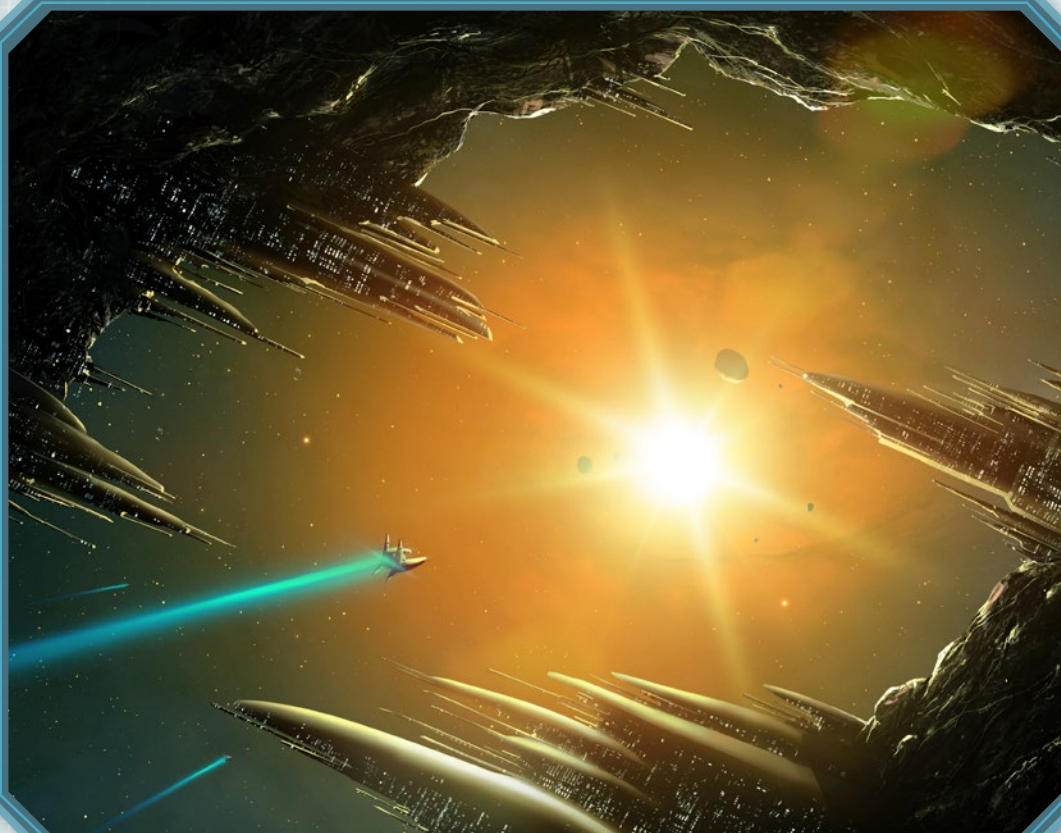
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Astrogation) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Major), Mean

Edges: Alertness, Command, Level Headed



Gear: Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), power claw (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** Rigellians have thick, dark red carapaces.
- **Cannot Speak:** Rigellians communicate with clicks and whirs most others can't understand. They wear digital translators to communicate with slaves when needed (which is rare).
- **Natural Weaponry:** The slavers have cruel, spiky fingers they use to stab and torment "soft ones" (Str+d6).

✦ RIGELLIAN NEGOTIATOR

Sometimes the slavers kidnap persons of value. When they do, a negotiator investigates what they can about the slave and who they can sell them to for the most profit. If player characters talk with Rigellian slavers, it is probably through a negotiator.

Race: Rigellians use the Insectoid racial template without the Outsider Hindrance.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Investigation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10,

Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

Cha: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Loyal

Edges: Alertness, Investigator, Level Headed, Strong Willed

Gear: Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), power claw (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** Rigellians have thick, dark red carapaces.
- **Cannot Speak:** Rigellians communicate with clicks and whirs most others can't understand. They wear digital translators to communicate with slaves when needed (which is rare).
- **Natural Weaponry:** The slavers have cruel, spiky fingers they use to stab and torment "soft ones" (Str+d6).

✦ RIGELLIAN MASTER OVERSEER

Each slave fleet has a master overseer, typically stationed on the carrier. His word is law. The overseer prefers to use his intellect and is willing to sacrifice members of the hive if it serves his

higher purpose. He rarely leaves the carrier unless a situation requires his personal attention.

Race: Rigellians use the Insectoid racial template without the Outsider Hindrance.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Astrogation) d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Cha: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Major), Stubborn

Edges: Ace, Command, Elan, Hard to Kill, Improved Level Headed, Strong Willed

Gear: Laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), power claw (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** Rigellians have thick, dark red carapaces.
- **Cannot Speak:** Rigellians communicate with clicks and whirs most others can't understand. They wear digital translators to communicate with slaves when needed (which is rare).
- **Natural Weaponry:** The slavers have cruel, spiky fingers they use to stab and torment "soft ones" (Str+d6).

TAZANIAN EMPIRE

Tazanian "Pride Fleets" are self-contained military organizations. They are tasked with conquering and subjugating all who come before them. Those who have fought the Tazanians have a saying: "The lions only show their teeth when it is too late to avoid their bite."

TAZANIAN PILOT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Astrogation) d6, Knowledge (Electronics) d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal

Edges: Ace, Rocket Jock, Steady Hands

Gear: Space suit (+1), commlink.

Special Abilities:

- **Agile:** Rakashans have the feline grace of their ancestors. They start with a d6 Agility.
- **Bloodthirsty Hindrance:** Rakashans can be cruel to their foes, often toying with them for simple amusement. They rarely take prisoners and feel little compunction about punishing

captured foes. They have -4 Charisma among "civilized" types.

- **Racial Enemy:** Close to the original rakashan home system, Tazan, a long and brutal war with the kalians has made that race the most common target of their rage. Rakashans suffer a -4 Charisma when dealing with kalians. Unless fettered by other authorities or common goals, rakashans typically attack them on sight. Farther out, splinter groups compose a new racial enemy—other rakashans! These rogue felines, whether originally from the rakashan homeworld or evolved from a different species, are seen as "needing their tails clipped."

TAZANIAN DIPLOMAT

When the fleet first discovers a new system they proceed with caution until the strengths and weaknesses of a race can be discovered. Tazanian diplomats are excellent at showing a smile without teeth until it's time to bite.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Diplomacy) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal, Overconfident

Edges: Charismatic, Elan, Linguist, Strong Willed

Gear: Commlink.

Special Abilities:

- **Agile:** Rakashans have the feline grace of their ancestors. They start with a d6 Agility.
- **Bloodthirsty Hindrance:** Rakashans can be cruel to their foes, often toying with them for simple amusement. They rarely take prisoners and feel little compunction about punishing captured foes. They have -4 Charisma among "civilized" types.
- **Racial Enemy:** Close to the original rakashan home system, Tazan, a long and brutal war with the kalians has made that race the most common target of their rage. Rakashans suffer a -4 Charisma when dealing with kalians. Unless fettered by other authorities or common goals, rakashans typically attack them on sight. Farther out, splinter groups compose a new racial enemy—other rakashans! These rogue felines, whether originally from the rakashan homeworld or evolved from a different species, are seen as "needing their tails clipped."



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