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>>> ARCHIVE UPDATE <<<

## GREETINGS, COLLEAGUE —

August 17, 2114, was a bleak day for humanity. In the space of a few hours, the *Esperanza* orbital station crashed into France and the Upeo wa Macho psi order vanished from the Solar System. The tragedy of *Esperanza*'s fall was immediate and obvious to all. More subtle and far-reaching was the loss of the Upeo.

With the teleporters gone, humanity's grasp for the stars — our first tentative touch — was broken. From the freestanding colony at Karroo to the fledgling settlements on compatible worlds like Averiguas and Far Nyumba, to the promise of peace, trade and mutual benefit with the Qin — it all seemed torn from our grasp.

But with ingenuity and perseverance, humanity restored contact. Jump ships now span the stars, bringing home our stranded ambassadors to the Qin, resupplying the embattled Karrooans, and taking the Chromatic fight to the aliens' homeworld.

For years, the questions were legion. "What happened to the jumpers?" "Did Karroo colony survive?" "What other races are out there?" "What have we truly found at Far Nyumba?" The Leviathan jump ships brought initial answers, but like the heads of the mythical hydra, each question we dispatch yields more.

Indeed, the most revelatory answer raises the greatest question of all. For in humanity's return to the stars aboard the grand Leviathans, we have found the long-lost Upeo once again. Yet the mystery of the psi order's disappearance almost seven years ago is far from solved. Rumors of Aberrant involvement persist, but the Æon Trinity hesitates to level that accusation against any individual without powerful evidence — let alone against an entire psi order.

This is doubly true when we consider the status of the Khantze Lu Ge, Averiguas and Far Nyumba colonies. The peril to the first, the political turmoil of the second, and the incredible opportunities on the third make it more critical than ever that humanity maintain its reach outside our Solar System.

The jump ships prove that we need not rely exclusively on the Upeo. Nonetheless, there are less than 30 Leviathans, each of which is monstrously inefficient at stellar travel when compared to an Upeo transportal.

The distances between Sol and our stellar cousins challenge Æon's goal of unity, but we must not be discouraged. It is essential that we not only maintain contact with other worlds, but that we maintain our collective human identity.

Not many humans have the opportunity to travel into deep space. Those fortunate few who can travel to new worlds must remember that they act not only on their own behalf, but as representatives of all humanity. The war with the alien Chromatics occurred because they knew us first through the brutality of the Aberrants; that black stain cost countless lives on both sides of the battle. Let us hope that the next new race we encounter will see us at our best — not at our most degraded and depraved.

With my prayers,

Giorgios Alekandros Gamamenos

Deputy Director, Extraterrestrial Office

Æon Trinity

HOPE, SACRIFICE, UNITY



## PSI ORDER UPEO WA MACHO PROFILE

### >>> Æon Trinity Dossier <<<

The Upeo wa Macho described itself as "a coalition dedicated to the protection and expansion of humanity." The order was recognized as an interplanetary non-profit organization. Part trade association, part benevolent society, the Upeo wa Macho concerned itself with applying the unique talents of its members — namely, the ability to teleport — in the most beneficial and efficient fashion possible. In practical terms, this meant space exploration and emergency action.

The Upeo were best known for plumbing deep space, generally in cooperation with the ISRA and a financial sponsor. In its early days, the Upeo wa Macho simply didn't have the fiscal wherewithal to go it alone, so it collaborated with Brazil and the UAN to explore space, discovering viable colony sites like Averiguas and Karroo.

Once interstellar colonies were up and running, members of Upeo wa Macho were quick to capitalize on the lucrative trade in both information and material between the Sol system and the worlds beyond. The psi order itself did not incorporate, however. Had it done so, it could easily have rivaled Orgotek in wealth and influence. The Upeo did not regard their abilities as a chance for personal opportunity and monetary gain, but rather as an opportunity for the entire human race. While incorporating would have allowed them to amass huge profits, it would have slowed down exploration and colonization. Rather than see that happen, the Upeo explorers charged as little for their services as they reasonably could.

Not all teleporters — or "jumpers," "hoppers," "blinks" and "upes" as they were also known — were interested in deep-space service. For that matter, not all of them were capable of interstellar jumps. Nonetheless, the power of teleportation gave these psions unique opportunities to serve humanity. Before the Upeo wa Macho disappeared, its Rescue Squad Zero (named for the time it took a

team to get to the scene) was famous for its ability to teleport emergency rescue and medical services to anywhere in near space, instantly — period. Other jumpers worked with local fire departments, hospitals, police departments — or any other job where lives are at stake and moments matter.

Not surprisingly, the Upeo were widely regarded as the heroes of humankind during this period. They seemed almost too good to be true.

Although the jumpers embraced humanity in return, the Upeo never fully accepted the Æon Trinity. For whatever reason, the vast majority of Upeo members regarded our organization with suspicion. We never successfully recruited a teleporter as a member, though many of our agents had very fruitful associations with individual Upeo. And despite these positive individual relationships, Æon learned very little about the Upeo Order as a whole. To say the teleporters' powers make them difficult to track is a gross understatement. Add in the Upeo culture of individualism, and the task of monitoring the order becomes monumentally challenging.

As one of the smallest psi orders, it was the acts of individual Upeo that always caught public attention. The order seemed to be toiling quietly in the background, never saying much until it could reveal a completed project. The teleporters apparently had no problem keeping Averiguas colony a secret at Brazil's request, and the Upeo were initially very coy about the discovery of Far Nyumba. When 80 of its members vanished (only recently revealed to have been captured by the Chromatics), the Upeo kept that a secret, too.

The greatest secret of all, of course, is why the Upeo wa Macho vanished almost a decade ago. With the order's return, the Æon Trinity stands ready to discover the reasons behind all these mysteries.

Hope, Sacrifice, Unity

Neville Archer

Director, Neptune Division

## ON TELEPORTATION

— Lectures of Dr. Haroun Sabry, Upeo instructor  
at Nyota Kukumbatia Spaceport, 2112

If you ask someone outside the Upeo wa Macho what teleportation is, you'll get a simple answer: Teleportation is the ability to move something between two separate places without covering the distance between them. Of course, everyone knows that's impossible, but that's what it looks like.

Those of us with the Upeo perspective have a much more involved explanation — so hold on tight. Every point in the universe actually touches every other point, but these points don't necessarily touch through the four dimensions humans normally perceive. Instead, they're connected through a fifth, subquantum, dimension.

The discovery of this fifth dimension — also called "the subquantum universe," "the implicate order," "psi space," "subquantum space" and "sub-space" — explained something that had bothered physicists going back to Newton: How could gravity affect objects at a distance with no intervening force or particle passing between them? The standard answer ("gravity curves space") was descriptive, but didn't really explain anything.

Now we've found the long sought "gravity particle" — it was hiding in the subquantum dimension. In fact, that was one of the only things *in* sub-space, which itself has no actual "size"! Otherwise, it couldn't be equidistant from all points in the four dimensional, *experiential* universe, now could it? It's one of the ironies of physics that the very thing responsible for the existence of "location" as we know it has no location of its own. To draw a crude analogy, if location was an appliance, the fifth dimension is where you plug it in.

While gravitons and psions are the only naturally occurring particles in subquantum space (and yes, the term "psion" originally stood for the "psi energy particle") that doesn't mean that other types of particles and waves, such as those that make up the observable universe, couldn't exist there, also. Light, sound, gravel, kitty cats — there is no reason they couldn't pass through a fifth dimensional state, at least for a little while. Enter the Upeo wa Macho.

Every psi ability of the Upeo wa Macho can be explained by our manipulation of the subquantum universe. The most common effect (of course) is what we call "transmassion" — moving an object or person from one place to another without crossing the intervening space physically. This involves briefly putting the object into sub-space and then bringing it out at another location. Performing this shift upon oneself is known as "translocation." A third mode, "warping," involves the manipulation of locational fabric — in other words, actually moving or changing space itself instead of objects within that space.

The effects of these powers are obvious. What is *less* easy to comprehend is the *experience* of using them. The human sense of presence and location is so intrinsic that it's taken for granted until lost — or until a new spatial perception shows it to be false. Perhaps I could put the feeling into words if I was a poet, not a physicist. Here's the best I can do. Simply put, there's a... loss of boundaries; a "de-isolation"; a physical, visceral connection with everything moving around and through you. I can't explain it any further than that. Those who have experienced it know what I mean.

## UPEO WA MACHO METHODS AND PRACTICES

Next to the rogue Chitra Bhanu, the Upeo wa Macho is the smallest of the psi orders. The potential for humans to register teleportation latency is rare to begin with, and the Upeo Proxy Bolade Atwan doesn't allow all latents found to experience the Prometheus Effect. This keeps the number of actual teleporters quite low.

Even so, the order as a whole has many members besides actual teleporters. When the Upeo left Earth in 2114, the order had perhaps 1000 total members. Of that number, less than half were psions. Of those psi-users, only half were teleporters; the remainder had come from other orders.

It's notable that, despite such limited numbers, the Upeo wa Macho accomplished much during its time on Earth. The order's goals from the start were to expand humanity's reach into space while maintaining peace, security and communication between established settlements.

The pursuit of this agenda often appeared haphazard. Unlike more structured and authoritarian psi orders like Orgotek or the Ministry, where an individual could be ordered to perform a certain task or go where needed, the Upeo generally asked for volunteers. Such requests could be couched in strong terms or promises, of course, but no one in the Upeo wa Macho was forced to perform any job.

There is only one known exception to this otherwise free-form membership: the Upeo's disappearance from Earth in 2114. From what the Aeon Trinity has learned, Proxy

Atwan and her lieutenants presented a course of action with no alternative — a kind of “go with us or else.” It's unknown what the “or else” would have involved, since no known Upeo stayed behind. This is less surprising than it might seem on the surface. Atwan inspired tremendous loyalty in her followers, and it's doubtful that any Upeo would have questioned the proxy's directives at that time. As we will see, recent information shows that this obedience is no longer blind.

**Subject:** Upeo Hidden Agendas

**From:** Director William Renton, Proteus Division

**To:** Aeon Council >>> alias-list-hidden <<<

**Encryption:** DSE

**Transmission type:** textfile

**Date:** 14:29:51 3.26.2114

I'm shooting the whole file over to Triton to get cleaned up. The excerpt below sums up my concern quite well, though. Now do you understand why I've been asking for expanded authority on pursuing the Upeo matter?

— **Transcript: partial transmission from operative Timothy Johaňek, Proteus Division**

...coming for me soon, but this has >>>text lost<<< [I've gotten the] requested exploration agenda from the Kupi[ta explorers]. >>>text lost<<<

[The] first priority, as we expected, is the search for sapient life, second priority to discover *any* life. Third priority is [fissionable?] substances! Their clears are [instructed to?] search for nuclear [material.] >>>text lost<<< before they have their own atomic arsenal....

## INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The Upeo Order was never highly regimented. It was organized largely like a trade union: Upeo associated by areas of responsibility (usually based on individual abilities or most common teleportation destinations). The people working in these different areas elected officers. The officers, in turn, communicated concerns to the proxy and her inner circle, and coordinated efforts to solve problems.

Despite the union structure, the Upeo placed their emphasis on the individual. The central order, consisting of the actual teleporters, concentrated on organizing distinctive projects. This might mean providing information and coordinates for rescue workers, helping jumper businessmen negotiate with colony governments, or balancing trade values between different areas. In return for this assistance, the individual Upeo were expected to keep the order informed about what they were doing.

While blinks were free to set their own schedules, the psions' deep respect for the order meant that most of them listened closely to any advice that their representatives gave. This is all the more impressive, given that the order had no formal structure of reward or punishment.

This clubbish, fraternal feeling of volunteerism and individual participation would not work with a less dedicated group. Bolade Atwan was, however, an undeniably shrewd judge of character. Her selection process was steeply slanted toward selecting selfless individuals, those willing to go extra distances for the common cause. The jumpers' dedication and loyalty to the Upeo wa Macho included a willingness to volunteer for unpleasant or even dangerous tasks. Indeed, being "asked to volunteer" for a particular duty was considered a tremendous honor. Few were willing to turn it down.

## INTERNAL FRICTION

Now, though, the unity of the Upeo wa Macho has eroded. Humanity's return to deep space via the Leviathan jump ships ignited an already smoldering dissension within the order. After restoring communication with the wayward order, Æon learned that for the past seven years Proxy Atwan prohibited travel to Earth except with her explicit permission.

The restriction is now lifted, but it had already strained the Upeo members' confidence in their leader. The policy was made for the same reason that the order fled in 2114 — certain elements of the other psi orders had plans to abduct the Upeo, and harness their star-spanning talents. Atwan and her inner circle forbade travel back to Earth since such jaunts might end in the teleporters' capture.

Apparently, the Upeo initially followed Atwan's command with little question, but as years passed many grew to miss the lives they had left behind. Certainly, it is no longer necessary to shackle the Upeo — if indeed it ever was an actual agenda — since mankind has the jump ships. Though not near as efficient as a teleporter, the Leviathans are quite serviceable substitutes.

Still, some Upeo — and many outside the order — do not find it easy to forgive Atwan for the long exile. Although one could cite many instances where a teleporter's talents would have been useful over the past seven years, the most significant of all occurred the day the Upeo wa Macho vanished from Earth: the *Esperanza* tragedy.

The broadcast transmissions from *Esperanza*'s final moments remain restricted. However, Æon does know that the proxies were already in communication on another issue — the attempt to capture the Upeo, if Proxy Atwan's claim is justified — when they were patched into *Esperanza*'s relay. Based on those communications, it appears that Bolade Atwan assumed that the *Esperanza* distress call was a ruse perpetrated by Proxy



Alex Cassel and/or Proxy Rebecca Bue Li to draw the Upeo into a trap. It's common knowledge that there had always been tremendous friction between Atwan and these two proxies. If there were indeed plans to lock down the Upeo wa Macho, it's not surprising that Atwan jumped to her conclusion.

It seems that the Upeo proxy's followers also believed her claim. After all, Atwan had never lied to them before, and the alternative was too monstrous to contemplate.

Now, however, they have learned that the alarm was real.

Feelings of guilt, horror and remorse at their failure to halt the *Esperanza* crash are almost universal among the Upeo. A few are disenchanted with Atwan's leadership, and are vocal in their opposition to her continued authority. Most, however, believe that Atwan is innocent of any deceptive intent.

They point out that it's much easier to second-guess a crucial decision after the fact than it is to make a choice in the heat of conflict. After all (they reason) she's not clairsentient. How was she to know such an unlikely alarm was the real thing? Indeed, it seems that a fair amount of their anger is being directed toward ISRA — all the more ironic since the two groups had worked closely together in the past.

Atwan has publicly stated the horror and dismay that she feels about the event, and vowed that the Upeo wa Macho will never again fail to stand by humanity in a time of need. Her statement, "A psi order must never put its own needs before that of all people," admits Atwan's error, but is also an unmistakable jab at Orgotek and the other orders that supposedly tried to restrain the Upeo in the first place.

## DIVISIONS WITHIN THE ORDER

### THE LONG RIDERS

Communication between worlds is difficult without teleportation. At stellar distances, radio messages crawl, and transporting a physical package involves more years, risk and expense than any colony can afford. Even the vaunted Ministry is restricted in its ability to broadcast thought across light years.

To combat this difficulty, the jumpers established a network of travelers between inhabited worlds — one that still operates, though it's only a shadow of what it used to be. Similar in structure and practice to the 19th-century North American Pony Express, most Long Riders are individual teleporters who make scheduled visits to different worlds. These "riders" (or, in more tongue-in-cheek fashion, "postals") pause only long enough to rest, pick up and drop off news, communications and even the occasional package, then move on.

The Long Riders were developed by Jennifer Shojiki, one of Proxy Atwan's first recruits. Astute operatives may remember Shojiki's appearances on talk shows and news programs in the years before 2114. Indeed, she served as an informal spokesperson for the Upeo as a whole — unlike most jumpers, Shojiki was gregarious, eager to help countries and companies alike in the task of settling deep space. Recent reports indicate that Shojiki is still this group's leader. Yet it remains to be seen if she can retain her previous celebrity status after a seven year hiatus.

Speaking of celebrity, the Long Riders' social status varies wildly from colony to colony. Recent reports from Khantze Lu Ge indicate that they have acted for years in extreme secrecy, even restricting most of their activities to the planet's Aberrant-dominated polar areas. A few refugees from the city of Kuan told Æon investigators that the Upeo wa Macho still coordinate, arm and move what "human resistance" there is in

the Aberrant-controlled cities. The riders also facilitate communication between the humans in occupied territories and the equatorial human colony sites. Unfortunately, this alliance is deeply hindered by the Upeo's intense distrust of China's Ministry. Thanks to the Ministry's pronounced presence on KLG, any teleporters on that planet are paranoid enough to take steps to avoid even *potential* contact with Ministry agents.

Things are somewhat better on Averiguas. The Upeo wa Macho as a whole refused to take sides in the struggle between the Norça loyalists and the People's Government. This didn't win them any friends — but their ability to bring in fresh food and replacement parts sure did. Given the choice between liking the Upeo and eating lichen, most people picked the Upeo. A few even respect them for their political neutrality — "They made the wrong choice, but at least they have the integrity to stick with it," is how one of the Norça exiles phrased it.

Disturbingly, Æon did not know at first that the Upeo had operated openly on Averiguas, which implies the teleporters' neutrality is not entirely absolute. On the whole, the locals refrained from discussing their Upeo visitors until recently.

This colonial loyalty to the Upeo is echoed more strongly on Far Nyumba and Karroo. In both places, teleporters still operate openly and enjoy limited popular support. While their operations on KLG and even Averiguas resemble a secretive political organization, on Far Nyumba and Karroo the Long Riders act more like a relief agency. The Upeo uniformly keep their assistance low-key. As a result, though well known, few colonists talk about the teleporters' actions. Even so, many Nyumbans consider these Upeo heroes and role models, and their periodic visits are anticipated eagerly.

On Ruan's World, the Upeos' own colony, the jumpers are no big deal. The order's new "homeworld" benefits a great deal from be-



ing the *de facto* trade hub between the colonies. Almost all the Long Riders have Ruan's World as one of their familiar stops.

There are indications that the jumpers also made frequent visits to Qinshui, but both the Qin and the Upeo are remarkably reticent when it comes to discussing any contact. Nonetheless, Æon notes that some blinks have been seen carrying biotech that looks like nothing from Earth. The much more organic-looking devices bear the unmistakable stamp of Qin design.

## THE MONITORS

While the majority of Upeo has a natural craving for diversity and novelty, there are a few who prefer staying in one place, or at least, on one planet. On their designated homeworlds, these teleporters serve as Monitors — an unofficial combination of cop, fireman and emergency transportation system.

Monitors lean toward "lone wolf" attitudes — which is not surprising, given the order's overall climate of individuality. This group's "leader" (to use the term loosely) is Khaldun al-Masna, who was a decorated warrior attached to the Legions prior to the Upeo exodus. His combat record paints a clear picture of courage, and the Legionnaires who served with al-Masna have nothing but praise for his calm head and tactical sense. He seems to take a *laissez-faire* view of the other Monitors, allowing them considerable discretion in their operations.

There aren't many to keep tabs on. Averiguas has one, a gent named Phil Corbin. During his recent tenure on the colony, Corbin claimed that he was as ignorant as anyone else on Averiguas about the reason the Upeo cut off contact with Earth; some people even believed him. Speaking of debatable ignorance, Major Vargas, the Norça representative to the colony, was *not* pleased that everyone had "forgotten to mention" the Upeo presence to him — an irritation shared by the Æon Trinity. In fact, it wasn't disclosed until Corbin broke up a fight between one of Vargas' troops and a local shifter who'd gone over to the miners.

Far Nyumba has no fewer than three

Monitors. Not surprisingly, this trio has become the colony's first choice of recourse in almost *any* emergency. With the assistance of Long Riders on the colony, this sizable Upeo presence helped the Nyumbans through the worst of their isolated years.

With the strong Aberrant presence on Khantze Lu Ge, that world probably has the most Monitors of any colony, though no one's sure of the actual number.

Bolade Atwan oversees the Monitors' actions on Ruan's World; in return, these elite answer only to the proxy. There aren't many, but in a population that small — and with a proxy backing them up — the Monitors are more than a force to be reckoned with. The Monitors are *the* force to reckon with.

## KUPITA

Many of the most powerful jumpers are involved in a group known as Kupita, the Swahili word for "beyond." Gerard Portois oversees this collective, but Atwan retains a close personal involvement as well. Kupita arguably represents the greatest single concentration of Upeo wa Macho's power and resources. To the best of Æon's knowledge, this group contains *all* hoppers capable of creating a transportal (often called "warpers," "gatekeepers" or "ferry-men") — in other words, the ones who can move spacecraft across interstellar distances. Kupita also controls the order's remaining ships. Perhaps most importantly, this group's staff includes the Upeo-aligned clairsentients needed to explore new star systems. Without those eyes, the Upeo would be unable to find new realms to visit. They'd be stuck jumping between areas they already know well.

The typical Kupita operation works something like this: One of their clairsentients finds a viable star system. Once a decision is made to explore the area, the sensory data is transferred from a clear's mind into that of a warper. The teleporter then moves a ship containing himself and another jumper to the system. After regaining enough strength, the ferryman returns to Ruan's World, leaving his comrade to study the system.

# TRITON ARCHIVE

**Subject:** Gerard Portois

**From:** Stefani Columbus, Triton Division

**To:** Deputy Director Giorgios Gamamenos, Neptune Division

**Encryption:** SPE

**Transmission type:** textfile

**Date:** 7:06:17 7.12.2121

The good news is, I've found plenty of information on Gerard Portois. The bad news is, none of it really seems to say much about him. Looking at his receipts, I can confirm that he likes green shirts, his waist hovers around 130 cm and he enjoys calypso music. His school records indicate that he's smart, but not a genius. His employment records show that he's an accomplished deep-sea diver, and that after joining the Upeo he trained extensively for deep-space work.

But Portois has no real record of notable social influence or political activity — not even a marriage record (although I'm confident that he had a domestic partner in 2101). The closest he's come to scandal was involvement with some kind of undersea disaster in 2104, but all records of the incident are sealed. (I talked to Michi Toshiima about the matter, and she did let slip that the records include a psych evaluation.) Portois was the first jumper that Atwan recruited, but he never gave a single media interview.

In short, the man's life is an open mystery. We might find more illuminating details if we could learn more about Portois' early years. But he's from France's Provins region, and from what I can tell, any records that might've existed there were lost when *Esperanza* fell.

Occasionally, more than one teleporter goes on an exploration mission, but the gatekeeper always returns immediately after the ship manifests. The Kupita began this policy after one of their best warpers was lost. While all teleporters are vital resources, those who can create transportals are far more valuable

than those who can jump only themselves. There's no way to completely remove the risk, but this helps keep the strongest jumpers as safe as possible. Similarly, this is also why another teleporter remains behind. There are skilled explorers who could certainly perform the necessary studies, but in case of danger, only a teleporter could jump herself out of the system to safety.

Aside from comprehensive sensors, the exploration vessel has a number of unmanned probes that spread through the system and relay their data back to the survey ship. When the researcher gathers enough information (which can take anywhere from a week to a month) she teleports herself back to Ruan's World with a report. If the investigation yields no promising data (sadly, the most common result by far), a ferryman recovers the exploratory vessel and the process starts anew.

On the other hand, if a good system is found — one with mineral resources, or a good potential location for a new colony — a larger exploration/colonization fleet is outfitted. A second transportal brings freighters full of materials, several frigates and a number of fighters. These ships then set about building a habitation satellite, not unlike those seen scattered through Sol's Asteroid Belt or Karroo in its

**Subject:** World Nineteen

**From:** Operative Lisa Stienbrueck, Proteus Division

**To:** Nene Sayre, Exobiology Analysis, Triton Division

**Encryption:** DSE

**Transmission type:** textfile [files enclosed]

**Date:** 01:01:55 3.6.2121

I hope you can make some sense out of these files. I had to go through hell to get them (don't ask) and I couldn't understand much more than the executive overview. The jumpers sure are excited about "World Nineteen," wherever that is.

Apparently, this planet they've discovered has life — no sapience that they can tell, but some really weird native fauna. The exobiologist working on the samples they got back kept talking about "fractal structured megascale eukaryotes." If you figure out what the hell that means, let me know, yeh?



**Subject:** World Nineteen

**From:** Nene Sayre, Exobiology Analysis, Triton Division

**To:** Operative Lisa Stienbrueck, Proteus Division

**Encryption:** DSE

**Transmission type:** textfile

**Date:** 06:33:12 3.7.2121

I'll need more time to provide a detailed analysis, but I can at least give you a quick breakdown.

You know what fractals are? How you can zoom in forever and keep finding new layers of complexity, and how certain shapes (like the "fat man" in the Mandelbrot set) keep recurring? The creatures on the Upeos' "World Nineteen" are similar.

To explain: An eukaryote is a cell with a nucleus (as opposed to a non-nucleated cell like a bacterium). The file data claims that World Nineteen has colonies of single-cell animals that gather together and form larger life forms. Here's the kicker: The larger life forms look and act exactly like their single-cell components! This would be like dissecting a dog and finding that every cell in its body was dog-shaped!

This is a big deal because the single cells change function within the larger colony. If they're on the outside, they become part of the "cell wall" — only at human scale. The cell wall is a tough outer membrane. If they're at the core, they become part nucleus.

No human cell acts like this: It would be like one of your bone marrow cells changing into a brain cell because you had too much to drink last night, or becoming a white blood cell to fight off an infection. The implications for versatile bioware, not to mention medicine, are staggering; imagine a medicine that can cause one of several different metabolic changes, depending on what illness it detects in your system! Or think about a biolaser that you could split in half to create two less powerful lasers.

Of course, all this is based on preliminary data, and assumes one can figure out how the cells adopt new duties. But I understand why they're so damn excited about World Nineteen!

earliest stages. An Upeo of moderate power (someone who has both the power and the familiarity to move between the ship and Ruan's World with comparative ease) pilots at least one of the freighters and carries communications between the Upeo and the outpost.

It's a terrible irony that the biggest problem facing the Kupita is not a lack of teleportation power. Rather, the crunch comes in the first stage of the process, the step that relies on clairsentience. When the Upeo vanished, they were accompanied by perhaps 50 clears, but only a small fraction of those had the power and control needed to scan distant worlds. Furthermore, there's currently no way to know how many MARS suits and ARES pods the jumpers have in operation, it can't be that many. As far as Triton Division can figure, the Kupita can scan perhaps a dozen systems a month — if that.

The Upeo wa Macho has the ships to back up concerted exploration. The order controls a fleet of 60 to 70 freighters, close to 30 frigates and over 200 hybrid-class fighters. Granted, the ships are all a few years out of date — many are decades old — but since spacecraft are commissioned for years of use they're still a match for most Earth-based vessels. Plus, any one of those ships can become an interstellar craft if there's a trained Kupita jumper on the bridge. Never forget that the most powerful ferrymen can move entire fleets and convoys.

## THE NGUZO

Actual psion teleporters form the minority of the order's members. Although the jumpers' powers are the focus of activity, a number of psions with other primary aptitudes count themselves as members, as do a great many neutrals. Most of these individuals form a group known as the "Nguzo" — a Swahili word meaning "pillar." These are the people whose skills or abilities complement the hoppers' teleportation powers.

The psion Nguzo generally stick to the tasks that their powers suit. The bulk of them

TRITON ARCHIVE

**Subject:** Congratulations, Now Get Out  
**From:** Andrew Willits, Auxiliary Navigator,  
Upeo wa Macho  
**To:** Jeanette Willits, ISRA  
**Encryption:** SPE  
**Transmission Type:** textfile  
**Date:** 12:02:44 12.15.2113

So you're out of the Prometheus chamber. Your next step is to get out of ISRA itself. I know they seem nice, but "once an ISRAan, always an ISRAan?" If I needed that crap, I could have joined the Norça.

You're my favorite cousin, so I'll tell you a secret. All that business about "gyres," "destiny" and predicting the future? It's smoke and mirrors. Educated guesses. The future is the future, and trying to grab it with clairsentience is like clutching a handful of water.

You can stay with ISRA and be a tiny cog in a very large, frustrating and possibly futile machine. You could join the opposition, but that's little better. I fought the good Ductran fight for a while, but Herzog and his cronies were ahead of me every step of the way. The only way to beat those folks is to refuse to engage. Once you even accept their *issues*, you're lost.

There's another way, though. One that uses our powers for something that makes a difference. Skip out, come over to the Upeo, and you won't just see places no one's ever seen — you'll go there!

If you've gone through even your first lesson, you've heard about how tiny actions have big repercussions — how the butterfly flaps its wings in China and causes a hurricane in Brazil, yeh?

Not every butterfly makes a storm. Only the one who's in the right place.

are clairsentients; there were 30 recorded clear members in 2114, but the actual number is probably higher. Thanks to the Ministry's excellent Prometheus chamber records, Æon knows that 20 telepaths officially left the Ministry to join the Upeo wa Macho. Rexs and PKs are rare among the jumpers — conservative estimates place their numbers at less than two dozen of each. As for shifters and teks, no one's sure if *any* of them joined the Upeo, either before the order's exodus or since its recent return.

The most powerful clears work with Kupita, trying to find new worlds to develop. A large number of the Upeo telepaths is in Kupita as well, ferrying visions between the clears and the jumpers. A few of these psions have chosen to become Monitors instead, where their unique perceptions give them an edge in fighting crime and civil disorder, but the great bulk of them is needed for exploration.

PKs tend to gravitate to the Monitors, though some have entered into partnerships with Long Riders who can make sure a psychokinetic is deployed where she's needed most. Others remain on Ruan's World, working with the Monitors there to protect the Upeo homeworld from any threats.

The Æsculapian-trained psions tend to associate themselves with Long Riders who can quickly get them to the sites of medical emergencies. Several rexs who specialize in long-term treatment instead of on-site triage have founded a clinic on Ruan's World. Instead of jumping to emergencies, these docs find it more useful to be in a "central" location, so that the wounded and ill can more easily be brought to them.

If any shifters and teks are in Upeo wa Macho, their duties can only be a matter of speculation. Teks might be on Ruan's World taking care of the Upeo's small stores of biotech. In theory, shifters would be tremendously useful as investigators both to the Monitors and to Kupita.

Similarly, neutrals in the order gravitate to where their skills are most useful. Astronomers and physicists work as a part of Kupita,

trained investigators and researchers become Monitors, communications specialists assist the Long Riders, and so on. These non-psions share a common dedication to assisting their Gifted associates in using their talents to the best of their abilities.

## THE STAR-CROSSED

There is a small but notable contingent of teleporters that has grown increasingly defiant of Proxy Atwan's demands. These dissenting teleporters call themselves the Star-Crossed — apparently a reference to being exiled to the stars through the double-crossing of both the other orders and Atwan herself. They consist of perhaps a dozen jumpers and three times that number of former Nguzo.

They grew from seeds first sown when the Upeo went into self-imposed exile. Vocal in their disagreement with their proxy's choice, these few individuals nonetheless remained loyal to the order until recontact with Earth.

The horrible truth about the *Esperanza* crash proved to be the final straw in the dissenters' increasingly strained loyalty to the Upeo. Rebecca Gould became their spokesperson. She called for Atwan to step down, suggesting that a proxy can't afford even one mistake of such magnitude. Bolade Atwan refused, adding that anyone who disagreed with her policies was welcome to leave the Upeo. Gould and a handful of like-minded dissidents did just that.

Atwan and the Upeo have tried persuading the Star-Crossed that this was all simply a terrible tragedy, not some insidious plot by ranking Upeo. They insist that no one is to blame (except the Aberrants). Nonetheless, no attempt is being made to force the Star-Crossed to remain a part of the Upeo wa Macho. Atwan declared that the Star-Crossed are not to be punished, and may go about their business as they will. Yet the proxy did note that, in return, the Star-Crossed will no longer receive the support of the Upeo wa Macho.

## THE LOST EXPEDITION

In October of 2110, a member of Kupita named Hampsah Cisse was sent to explore a promising world detected by an Upeo clairsentient. She returned with the news that she had found a new, sapient race of aliens. Being the first such evidence since contact with the Qin three years before, the Upeo were understandably excited. As always, though, the order delayed an announcement until after confirmation could be made. A sizable expedition force was assembled, comprised of Cisse and 10 additional teleporters, several spacecraft, and 70 neutral crew and support personnel.

Cisse translated the entire exploration fleet through a transportal... and none were heard from again. Using the original psionic coordinates, additional jumpers were sent to the system that Cisse claimed to have explored. They found nothing — no sentient aliens, no habitable planet, no evidence that the expedition had ever been there.

It was only years later, after seemingly unrelated encounters with Chromatics, that humanity learned the truth of this lost mission. Recent altercations with the hostile aliens gave evidence that the Chromatics had somehow captured human teleporters and forced them into service. Only through the efforts of courageous Aeon Trinity operatives did humanity discover where the lost expedition was taken — to the Chromatics' homeworld. The United Nations recently coordinated a massive assault of the planet (designated Chrome-Prime), with the aim of recovering the captive Upeo and destroying the Chromatics' space capability.

The primary cause of this entire tragedy, Hampsah Cisse, remains at large. Not only must she answer for her actions, but Cisse would be most helpful in disclosing more facts about these events. Unfortunately, none of the psions recovered so far can remember seeing her on Chrome-Prime in years. She has not appeared, dead or alive, anywhere in known space.

## War Without Pity?

—Cori Heisler, *The Painful Truth* © 2121 MMI

*The Upeo are back, but you wouldn't know it from how secretive they've been. Imagine my surprise when Fernanda Corona volunteered for an interview in a unique fashion — namely, teleporting away with me after my speech at the Luna spaceflight museum.*

**Fernanda Corona:** Sorry to grab you, but I wasn't about hang out near ISRA's stomping grounds.

**Cori Heisler:** Where are we?

**FC:** My hometown, Veracruz. It's changed, but it's still home enough to jump to. That's not important, though. I have news, sister, big news. I just hope you're really Cori Heisler and not some shifter.

**CH:** Are the Norça after you?

**FC:** Can't be sure. It's hard to know whom to trust. Just look at the docs! I tipped to rumors in Basel about them putting taint into psions! No one would tell me anything except, "calm down, don't strain yourself, you're safe now...."

**CH:** You were at Montessoro? Why?

**FC:** You heard of the Chromatic homeworld invasion, yeh?

**CH:** Chrome-Prime? Of course. Wait — were you a captive?

**FC:** Got it in one, sister. As for why Montessoro, I wasn't born with blue eyes. The Chromies burned the originals out when I wouldn't ferry a war party to Karroo, yeh? Made my friends — Hillary, Chika, Idrissa — watch so that they wouldn't be as stubborn. When Earth finally invaded, I jumped to the first place I could think of, my old family home. Orgotek was waiting.

**CH:** They were already there when you arrived?

**FC:** No, but they'd bought the place and bugged it. Bet one order or another has the childhood home of almost every jumper staked out. I'll give them credit: they handed me over to the

Æsculapians when they saw the shape I was in. Though I suspect they were just as worried that I'd infect 'em all with some ET virus, based on the quarantine they threw over me in Basel....

**CH:** Surely you aren't implying that either order intended to hold you against your will?

**FC:** I'm not much sure of anything. Until a few days ago, I hadn't heard about the "Upeo disappearance." I've been a prisoner since '12. Got the newsbrief from a fellow jumper, one who wasn't lured into the Chromie trap. At first I thought he was overreacting. Later, I heard he vanished — and I *don't* mean jumped. Hope I run into him again. It's hard to keep a jumper prisoner, unless you've got a psi damper... like the ones the Chromies got so conveniently.

**CH:** Sounds like an accusation.

**FC:** Yes — well, not yet. But I get suspicious when I hear about how "the Chromatics were just misled by Aberrants" and about opening diplomatic negotiations with them. Some folk may have a lot to gain from getting on the Chromies' side, but try telling it to someone who was their slave.

**CH:** Do you really think there are humans in league with the Chromatics?

**FC:** Absolutely! Ask anyone who was on Chrome-Prime — the tech that the aliens use looks like Orgotek. Old designs, sure, but unmistakable. Think about it. People sided with the Aberrants, after all. Maybe someone just wanted to back the winning horse. Look, I'll share when I get more. Right now, people need to know the *truth* about the Chromatics. They're *monsters*. There's no peace with them — the only thing they know is war without pity. Human beings are like animals to them, or *lower* than animals.

Don't believe me? Then look me in my new eyes and call me a liar.

## ROGUES

It seems that even her years on the police force couldn't prepare Bolade Atwan to ferret out every bad apple among the latent teleporters. The proxy turned down a number of latents because she didn't think they could cut being psions, and in a couple cases her judgment was certainly valid.

(Remember Pietro Ferrare? His latency leaned strongly toward tele-portation. We're probably all lucky that he wound up as a clairsentient instead. Just think of the havoc a sociopathic mind such as his could have wreaked with the ability to be anywhere that he could visualize.)

Still, a few dangerous individuals talked their way past Atwan. Also, a number of poppers started out just fine, but cracked under the pressure of their duties. Some went crazy in a quiet fashion, but it seems more common for psions who flip out to do it in the most spectacular way they can think of. This does suggest a disturbing similarity to Aberrant tendencies, but thankfully psion psychoses are by far the exception, not the rule.

A few teleporters, veterans of Aberrant actions in near space and North America, became deeply disillusioned and cynical. Several jumpers who worked with the Legions simply disappeared, often after failed missions in which they were the sole survivors. A couple resurfaced later as

burglars or mercenary spies — jobs for which their powers made them particularly well suited. Criminal teleporters remain exceptionally rare, of course. Triton research confirms only two Upeo ever used their skills in such a fashion. None were ever successfully caught: It could well be that others operate similarly without anyone knowing.

The most spectacular cases are blinks whose antisocial actions are due to madness, not opportunism. No mention of rogue teleporters would be complete without ad-

ressing "Hector the Collector." Hector Podkorny's history with the Upeo is the subject of much speculation, but little verified fact. Triton subscribes to the theory that he was spying on other orders — either on his own initiative or with the approval of the Upeo wa Macho as a whole. Whatever Podkorny's initial motivation, something drove him absolutely insane while he was working in Brazil. For a short while, the psion was held by Æsculapians who hoped to restore him to sanity. Their reports indicate that his derangement was due (at least in part) to a biological agent of unknown origin that appeared to have been injected directly into Podkorny's brain.

Unfortunately for the teleporter's victims, this drug or toxin did nothing to impair his considerable

TRITON ARCHIVE

### PSION PSYCHOSIS

**Case Study:** Pietro Ferrare

**Senior Analyst:** Dr. Georgetta deFranco

>>> patient testimony <<<

**Art.** Don't say "crime," say "art." Don't blame me that your puny senses are insufficient to grasp the harmonies that I created. The sobs of the mother on Luna, the whine of the power drill in Shanghai, the thump of the bludgeon resonating from two weeks ago, the soprano sirens fading in and out as the individual movements were discovered — what, you think I didn't know they'd find them?

I knew; I knew *who* and *when* and *how*. That was the progression of the symphony, you fool! Ah, if only I could have been an Æsculapian — what symphonies in flesh and pain could you hear, doctor, if you only allowed your senses to open to the beauty of the *liebestod*!

Those tasteless AI Alif thugs — they should have been my *audience*. They're among the few who could perceive my creation! Instead they brought me *here*. Philistines.



command of the transmass and translocation modes. He escaped from the rexs and continued his program of assassinating prominent Orgotek and Norça personnel until finally stopped by Proxy Atwan herself. The confrontation occurred in the now famous "Head Room" — the chamber where Podkorny stored his gruesome trophies. Although the murderer's body was never recovered, Proxy Atwan was confident in her assurances that Hector Podkorny was never coming back. Considering at least one other of the proxy's claims — regarding the *Esperanza* — this doesn't necessarily inspire confidence.

## UPEO WA MACHO: PROGNOSIS

What are we to make of the Upeo? For the last seven years, they've been a mystery. They've been lost, idolized heroes, prompting speculation that they were destroyed by Aberrants, kidnapped by Chromatics, or eradicated by some other malevolent force that saw them as Earth's best hope.

Now we learn that the Upeo left Earth of their own accord. They fled during an inter-order conflict. If the Legions, Orgotek and the Ministry did promote plans to force the teleporters into indentured servitude, the Upeos' flight seems justified — though it makes the subsequent *Esperanza* crash even more tragic.

Still, a strong case can be made that Earth abandoned the Upeo first.

Even when attacked by the other orders, the jumpers didn't forsake the colonies. Without their aid, would Far Nyumba have survived? Would Khantze Lu Ge have a resistance movement in the polar areas? Would Karroo have remained free of the Chromatics? In every case, the answer is almost certainly no.

Bolade Atwan's distaste for the Æon Trinity was an open secret: She had no patience for "shadowy deals to manipulate public opinion." Now she's back, facing questions about the *Esperanza*, her ties to the Aberrants, her willingness to cut Earth off from its colonies for seven long years. These areas of public opinion could easily damn her if not handled carefully.

Atwan may not like Æon, but she's never needed us more.

## The Upeo: An Evaluation

The history of the Upeo wa Macho begins with Bolade Atwan — a Sokoto police officer who developed powers to rival the most monstrous Aberrants. Atwan is a figure of central historical importance to the 22nd century, yet in many ways her history is as mysterious as that of any proxy, even the reclusive Bue. Bolade Atwan kept no journals, stayed clear of controversy, never married — even her friends seem to have little to say other than, "She was a good cop and a decent person." When asked about Atwan's deeper psychological motives, her goals, her aspirations or dreams, most shrug their shoulders — as if those concepts simply do not apply to this case.

### Common Beginnings

From birth records, we know that Bolade Atwan was born in 2071 in Sokoto, Nigeria. She was the third of eight children. Growing up, Atwan's schoolwork was good, but not exceptional. Her teachers' comments on grading reports were brief and not very communicative: "Bolade is shy and rarely volunteers in class"; "Bolade is a diligent student and a hard worker." The general consensus is summed up by the one word evaluation she was given after her first year of high school: "Satisfactory."

After high school, Atwan entered the police academy. She did not stand out among the cadets, but was respected by those who knew her. The general consensus from these few acquaintances say that Atwan was a serious cadet with good discipline.

Her initial assignment was traffic duty. It was during this mundane posting that Bolade Atwan first performed an exceptional act. While directing traffic around a construction site during rush hour, Atwan was approached by 65-year-old Beulah Popesclav. Popesclav pulled out an antique slugthrower and shot at the future proxy's face. Atwan avoided fatal injury, and even with a serious wound to her left shoulder managed to disarm Popesclav.

No motive was ever found for Popesclav's assault, and the old woman was imprisoned in a mental hospital, diagnosed with senile dementia. Six weeks after being shot in the line of duty, Atwan was back on the street — this time in a patrol skimmer in one of Sokoto's more dangerous precincts.

## UPEO WA MACHO: EARLY FINANCES

The most persistent rumor of how Atwan got the money to establish the Upeo is that she was paid to help FSA dissidents escape from prison. Considering Atwan's singular moral streak, this may well be the case. However, she probably received the bulk of her financial support from Brazil and the fledgling Norça, in return for helping them locate and colonize Avergigas in 2106.

Faced with questions of the Aberrants' true agenda and the immediacy of conflict with at least one hostile alien race, it seems petty to wonder how a working-class African police officer secretly built an international organization in a few years. Such resourcefulness is a testament to the powers, aside from psionics, on which the proxies draw. But in discovering how Atwan went about it, we come that much closer to understanding the proxy herself.

## Atwan Awakens

Bolade Atwan served in the Fifth Precinct for over a decade. She was twice recognized for valor, and was promoted to the rank of sergeant before she began experiencing effects that her psych file describes as "disorienting episodes."

Apparently all the proxies first felt intimations of their future destinies during the year 2101. In Atwan's case, the first indication was a tendency to get lost — even in familiar neighborhoods. Her spatial disorientation increased to the point that it began to interfere with her duties, and she finally sought professional help.

The two doctors Atwan consulted — Dr. Peter Xiao and Dr. Monica Remedios — disagreed on the source of her disorientation. Dr. Xiao, a psychiatrist, suspected a neurological disorder. After all, her mental balance was nearly perfect in all other respects. In contrast, Dr. Remedios, a neurophysician, believed the sensation of "twisting space" was an avoidance behavior caused by unresolved psychological conflicts. Remedios formed this hypothesis from his inability to find any irregularities in Atwan's brain structure.

In 2102, Bolade Atwan took an indefinite medical leave. Reportedly, her sense of "space-bending" increased to the point that one day she was unable to find her way home. No matter which way she turned, she found herself pointing toward Sokoto's local airport. Almost as an experiment, she succumbed to the feeling, and navigated to the 'port with ease. There, she was drawn to the ticket counter for the Jomo Kenyatta shuttle. Once in Jomo Kenyatta, Atwan continued following her sourceless impulses to the city's spaceport, to Luna, and to her first meeting with the other proxies.

As with the other proxies, information on that fateful encounter is lean to say the least. AEon is not even certain where on the Moon they met. Atwan's movements upon her return to Africa are likewise shrouded in mystery. Triton research confirms that she retired from the Sokoto police, most certainly with intentions of building the organization that would become the Upeo wa Macho. However, it's unclear how Atwan paid for recruitment and the construction of the order's headquarters, Nyota Kukumbatia. Until the teleporters were revealed with the other psi orders in 2106, AEon can only guess at what the group was up to.



## The First Jumps

Khantze Lu Ge was the only established extrasolar colony at the time the psi orders emerged into public view. By 2107, the teleporters established a lucrative exchange of messages between China and its colony with only a one-day wait — a vast improvement over the four-year lag of long distance laser communication.

It was in ISRA's infancy that clairsentient psychonavigation provided the most vivid psionic coordinates. The first of these was Averiguas, analyzed in 2104. Within two years, select officials in the Brazilian government were already working with the Norça on colonization plans — before the orders went public. In 2107, Upeo also visited the Crab Nebula, the system that would one day host the Karroo colony. The decision to construct a research and mining station there would not be made for another year.

## The Qin Contact

Possibly the most significant event in both humanity and the Upeos' history was initial contact with the Qin. Under the *aegis* of the Chinese space agency, and guided by the historic "first contact transmission" from the Qin, Upeo personnel jumped a scout ship to Qinshui System. Captain Li Chen Tsau and navigator Lance Sebotho exchanged the first radio contact with an extraterrestrial intelligence.

The Qin seemed friendly, and both races benefited tremendously from their exchange of knowledge and technology. It was, perhaps, this promising development that left the Upeo vulnerable to betrayal. In the next chapter of the order's history, this vulnerability would be exploited without pity.

## The Chromatic Captivity

In 2110, an exploration fleet led by Hampsah Cisse set out, supposedly to investigate the possibility of contacting a new sapient race. That fleet, and the jumpers who propelled it, were not heard from again until humanity's recent invasion of Chrome-Prime.

We now know that the Chromatics captured that fleet — apparently with the assistance of Hampsah Cisse in a manner that remains unknown to this day. The 10 jumpers taken in that mission were used to kidnap others. Once the Chromatics felt they had adequate control over their teleporting captives in 2113, they launched a full-scale attack on the Karroo colony.



## Secret Maneuvers

The same year that Hampsah Cisse betrayed her order, clairsentients loyal to the Upeo wa Macho discovered a habitable moon around a red star. Teleporter Ruan Curwin first investigated this world, and it still bears her name. Late in 2110, a small settlement team was sent there in secret.

RUAN'S  
WORLD

The secrecy was due to the recent loss of Cisse and her fleet. Fearing the exploration team was captured by Aberrants, the Upeo designated a number of "jump spots" — intermediary locations that were to be visited before returning to Earth, in order to confuse pursuit. Ruan's World began as one of these, but grew to be the Upeos' main base of operations off Earth.

In 2112, Upeo wa Macho explorers jumped to a new system to investigate possible mineral resources. They found a human mining-colony — people who said they were from "Eden."

EDEN

The jumpers were puzzled by the "Edenites" presence — indeed, the confusion was mutual. The Edenites asked who the newcomers' "nova" was. When the survey team expressed ignorance, the Edenites became agitated, and warned that their nova would return soon, and that she would be very angry with anyone who harmed her "vassals."

With growing trepidation, the jumpers realized that these people had been out of touch with Earth for over 60 years. Clearly, they (or their parents) had fled Earth during the Aberrant War — followers of the Aberrants themselves, brought along during the Exodus! Still, further communication assured the Upeo that these "Aberrant cultists" were not being abused, were not brainwashed, and were genuinely loyal and grateful to their "nova protector."

Gradually, cautiously, the Upeo extended diplomatic overtures to Eden. In 2113, a jumper finally visited the planet. This ambassador, Hans Gerber, returned to the Upeo headquarters, Nyota Kukumbatia, convinced that what the Edenites said was true: Aberrancy was *not* the inevitable result of taint. Apparently the novas (Aberrants of Eden) controlled their abilities and used them with restraint, in a manner far different from Earth's attackers.



## The Timing Issue

— Cori Helsler, *The Painful Truth* © 2121 MMI

With the Upeos' return, we now know why they disappeared in the first place: They were running away from at least three other orders, possibly more. Why? The Upeo claim it was because their comrades were planning on conscripting all teleporters into mandatory service!

This also helps explain the psi orders' poor response time to the concurrent *Esperanza* disaster. The Upeo thought the alarm was a trick, set by the other orders. It's even possible that the other orders likewise thought it was an Upeo trick, designed to misdirect them from Nyota Kukumbatia.

As disturbing as this intra-order bickering is, there are deeper and more sinister implications. The timing of the *Esperanza* attack — occurring just as humanity's best defenders were distracted by internal strife — cannot possibly be coincidence. This implies that either the Aberrants are monitoring Earth closely enough that they could predict or take advantage of the troop movements — or worse yet, that there are highly placed Aberrant sympathizers inside the psi orders.

After Gerber's report, other psions loyal to Upeo wa Macho visited Eden. Universally, they reported that the government was stable, peaceful, and showed no signs of hostility toward "mere humanity." Eden society did place novas irrefutably in charge, but the human citizens retained rights and seemed content. The possibility that rational Aberrants still existed was to impact on the Upeo in a way the order could not have predicted.

### The Upeo Diaspora

Late in 2113, Atwan was confident enough to reveal the Edenites to her fellow proxies. Initially she held back a great deal of information, first claiming that the Upeo had met a human colony that was "the remains of an Aberrant cult." After being pressed, Atwan admitted that Aberrants were still present — but hastened to add that the society seemed stable, and was "either unwilling or unable to mount an attack on Earth."

Sharing this knowledge did not go as well as was hoped. Not surprisingly, the other proxies were extremely suspicious of any voluntary contact with Aberrants. Concerned that the Upeos' commitment to war on humanity's behalf was compromised, the proxies investigated the Teleportation Order. They soon learned that the Upeo had been in contact with Eden for longer than the order admitted, and that the exchange between representatives of Earth and Eden was far more frequent than the proxies were led to believe.

This suspicion caused a corresponding defensiveness among the Upeo. After all, it was the fear of witch-hunts and distrust that had led Atwan to "break the news gradually" — and now all these fears were being justified.

Matters came to a head in 2114, when the seven proxies met to discuss "the Eden situation." Only the proxies know what happened in that gathering, and none will comment on it. It seems likely that Atwan left the meeting before it was formally adjourned, and that her abrupt departure provoked the other proxies into hasty action.

Aeon can confirm that Atwan told the Upeo that the other orders had grown concerned with the teleporters' unsupervised explorations. The proxies had decided that teleportation was too powerful and important

to leave to the discretion of individual orders. They had decided to take control of the technology.

Atwan's disclosure of the Eden situation had been intended to show that the Aberrants were not a threat. Instead, it had shown that the Aberrants were still present, and that the Upeo were in contact with them. This had led to a loss of trust between the orders, and a decision to take control of the teleportation technology.

The Upeo's return to Earth was a result of this decision. They were no longer running away from the other orders, but were now running towards them.

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an ability to be monopolized by a single group, and that the Upeo should defer to the other orders from this point on "or face the consequences." Atwan also claimed that Bue, Cassel and Larssen were in favor of cutting off all contact with Eden. In response, Atwan called for an immediate removal of all Upeo personnel and equipment off planet — apparently to Ruan's World.

Cassel, Bue and Larssen immediately scrambled strike teams to Africa. Many were not told what their target was until they were on the ground or *en route*. The official directive the teams received stated that the teleporters were being subject to Aberrant influence. All Upeo were to be subdued and extracted; any Aberrants found there were to be destroyed with extreme prejudice.

### The Lost Years

Frustrating though it is to admit, Æon has no concrete information on the Upeo wa Macho's activities until its recent return. We now know that they remained in varying degrees of contact with the extrasolar colonies, but as yet, the Trinity is not certain of the extent of Upeo influence in those regions. Similarly, it appears that the order's relationship with the Aberrants of Eden has not been as corruptive as the other orders feared. It will take some time before we arrive at a comprehensive analysis of the Upeo wa Macho's recent endeavors.

# EXTRASOLAR SPACE

With the Upeos' aid, humanity established colonies on strange alien worlds, light years away. When the teleporters vanished in 2114, we lost all contact with the colonies. Concern for these worlds was great, as most were only in early development. As the isolation stretched on into years, humanity feared the worst for its star-lost people.

The Leviathan jump ships finally gave us the chance to regain contact. Jump ships, the most advanced bioware devices yet created by mankind, strained to duplicate the Upeos' seemingly effortless teleportational abilities. Finally, we could jump light-years without the aid of a teleporter.

In early 2120, the so-called Project: Recontact,

coordinated by the United Nations with the aid of the Æon Trinity, re-established communications with the extrasolar colonies. Six years of isolation had subjected each colony to its own brand of hardships, for which the Leviathans provided much-needed aid. Still, it's clear that the trials are not over for any of the colonies.

## Khantze Lu Ge

**Update: Joint UN-Æon Trinity Aberrant War Task Force**  
— Jason Haldane, *tiasa* of the frigate *Morant*, Phoenix Squadron

As we know far too well, Aberrants have gained a strong foothold on Khantze Lu Ge. We're winning in our efforts to drive them off, but it won't be as easy or as quick as we had first hoped. The

Aberrants' conquest began in 2118, but dragged on as they degenerated into violent internal bickering. We've done our best to take advantage of this since Recontact.

As always, though, the Aberrants are less than accommodating. True, they still engage in open conflict with each other. The factions lead by Kali and Yog-Death seem almost as eager to fight each other as us. "Almost" is the key word, here. Most times, opposing Aberrant cadres band together the instant our strike teams appear. In short, we can't bank on the Abbies wiping each other out. But it can't hurt to let them try.

My Ministry colleagues are developing scenarios to exploit the existing division among the Aberrants in or-

## KHANTZE LU GE

der to increase conflict in their ranks. Our foes are intensely dangerous, but they are also quite insane. With luck, we should be able to learn ways to exploit this insanity.

I know that others counsel more immediate solutions — “nuking the site from orbit” being the most popular refrain. That’s shortsighted and far too extreme a measure, and not just because there are almost half a million innocent people on the planet. A quick victory here will not end the Aberrant menace on other worlds. Though the cost may be high, the knowledge we gain on KLG may help us protect our most important battleground — Earth.

### **The Chinese Perspective** — **Final Report: Lian Yih,** **Ministry Representative**

The situation here is more serious than we first realized. Last month we captured the town of Po Chih from the Aberrant forces. Our air and space superiority allowed us to make this a quick victory. I doubt any of the other settlements will come this easily, but we recaptured the town, with minimal losses and with few civilian casualties.

You have all heard the preliminary reports about Aberrant cultists being purposefully mutated by these monsters. Well, the techs and doctors have finished going over Po Chih, and the news is even worse than we expected. Aberrant-produced taint has irradiated the entire area around the town. The incidence of genetic damage in humans, farm animals, and even crop plants is significantly higher than

normal. They’re not all suddenly sprouting tentacles, but we are seeing a wide range of taint-related diseases. The Aberrants held Po Chih for a year and a half. Within this time, the incidence of stillbirths more than doubled and farmers noticed a marked increase in minor abnormalities in their stock and crops.

There is even preliminary evidence that all organic matter in the town’s vicinity has been altered, including the soil. We don’t know if this will fade with time, and we also don’t know the long-term consequences of exposure. I must reiterate my earlier recommendation: We must seriously consider using massive lethal force to completely sterilize the Aberrant-held regions. In light of the most recent data, even if we win and drive off the Aberrants in the next year, Khantze Lu Ge may still end up with mutated people and toxic soil. We must not forget that the taint could potentially create even more Aberrants. Massive strikes with fusion bombs may be our only answer.

### **Social Conditions**

#### — **Zhao Feng, Proteus Division**

The colonists’ jubilation in the first months after recontact has deteriorated into a growing sense that the Aberrant conflict will continue for many years. The initial reports about atmospheric degradation aren’t helping matters either.

Even if all the previous progress in terraforming the planet is lost, KLG will not be-

## **Weapons Testing on KLG**

### **— A Homestead Exclusive**

Many of us wonder why the war still drags on. A Terran jump ship arrived here in Alpha Centauri a year ago. With the entire resources of Earth available once again, we all thought that the battle would be over in short order. We thought that we were saved from the Aberrant menace — yet conflict continues with no end in sight! At best, our military claims that added UN forces still only grind away slowly at the Aberrants.

We recently learned the true reason for the conflict’s slow pace. According to officials within the UN military strike force, we could wipe out every Aberrant on KLG within a month. However, this is the first time that modern UN/Æon Trinity forces have had the chance to fight a large Aberrant group.

The military is using our world as a testing site to train their troops and field-test experimental equipment! Our friends and relatives suffer under the horrors of Aberrant rule and we endure oppressive martial law so that they can try out fresh recruits and new bioVARG models! We cannot allow this subjugation to continue!

**RESIST THE OPPRESSORS!**

come uninhabitable. Still, that doesn’t lessen the pain many people feel as they see their hard work of the past three decades destroyed. As if poor morale among the general population wasn’t serious enough, we have more immediate troubles. Homestead, a radical KLG liberation movement, is growing in both size and violence. Masked individuals claiming ties to Home-

stead beat up two Chinese bureaucrats last week. Their latest propaganda is also pretty disturbing. The group is still small, likely no more than 1,000 members, but far too many people sympathize with them.

The propaganda has also made both the UN and local KLG troops feel decidedly unwelcome. Bar fights between locals and military personnel are up 10% from last month, and I expect the trend to continue. The worst part about these conflicts is that they are playing right into the Aberrants' hands. If this keeps up, we'll become as fragmented and divisive as they are.

As I reported last year, the Legions of Mal are clearly involved in the racist and radical liberation movements, but we can't pin it all on them. Plenty of perfectly ordinary citizens belong to groups like Homestead. Frighteningly, many seem to hate the UN forces and the Chinese government about as much as they hate the Aberrants.

At this point I don't care about the politics. We need to drive the monsters away instead of bickering about who rules whom. I have promising preliminary reports from our Norça allies in-

filtrating the liberation movements and the Legions of Mal. Thanks to them, Æon now has proof that the LOM is influencing Homestead, as well as some of the more radical fringe groups. This could be the key — people here are repulsed by Aberrant cultists. I suggest Æon leak this information once our operatives have uncovered the top cultists' identities. The public backlash against the radical liberation groups should be enough to discredit them, and cooler heads like Chairperson Jiang can use the opportunity to steer the liberation cause to more constructive pursuits.

Speaking of Jiang, she does seem to be one of our few well-placed allies. She understands the situation and recognizes that it is in all of our best interests to work together. Ministry Representative Yih and her associates use their influence on the joint UN-Æon task force to boss us around as much as possible. They clearly think they should be in charge of the entire operation. Personally, I don't trust any of them as far as I could throw them.

## NORÇA INFILTRATION REPORT: KHANTZE LU GE

**Status:** Eyes Only

**Encryption:** DSE

**Date:** 2.9.2121

>>> **Warning:** Other headers suppressed. To protect their identities, operative names have been replaced and referential pronouns conformed to male. <<<

We have three people in Homestead and two in the Neu Berlin Liberation Army (NBLA). Operative Tlaloc has contacted someone associated with the Legions of Mal. Once the woman's profile is complete, Tlaloc will assume her form and replace her.

So far, our profile work, assisted by telepathic interrogation, has been flawless. No one in Homestead or the NBLA suspects that our operatives have replaced several of their members. Infiltrating the Legion of Mal will be more difficult, but we are confident that Tlaloc will succeed.

We have confirmation from Operative Aztec that Homestead is getting money, weapons and supplies from confirmed Legion of Mal members. As you will note >>> files enclosed <<< the evidence is undeniable.



# KARROO STATION

## Karoo Station

— Jenessia N'guyen,  
Triton Division

The press declares that despite being cut off from Earth for six years, Karroo became a thriving, prosperous research station and mining colony. We hear about happy, successful asteroid miners and researchers building new lives and defending themselves from the awful alien Chromatics. That's all well and good, and accurate enough, but it's not the whole story.

Most official accounts ignore those who came to the Crab Nebula seeking a new life, but found only more poverty and disappointment. Karroo had a population of over 85,000 when it was isolated in 2114, and almost 10% were quite poor. The Upeo helped bring in supplies, but the trips were irregular enough that things

inevitably got worse. As usual, those at the bottom felt the pinch first — and they're still feeling it.

No, Karroo doesn't have entrenched slums like the FSA or the Northern Collective. Everyone has access to basic necessities, but living in the cramped corners of an overgrown tin can has taken its toll. It's grim, just like the bad parts of Bangkok — loads of desperate people, everything in short supply, hope most scarce of all. Even though the situation is better than before recontact, a single element restricts further improvements: organized crime.

It seems that criminals thrive on society's fringe; just look at the Belt. Karroo is no exception. The reigning figures here are called the Leopards. I've found no direct connection to Olympus' leopard-themed gang, the

Bao. Coincidence, probably; from what I can tell, the Leopards are named after an African secret society.

Whatever the name, these parasites are the same everywhere. The Leps are into everything in Karroo's poor sectors — extortion, racketeering, prostitution, drugs. They also have a new tool at their disposal: tickets home. With the renewed assaults by the Chromies, a lot of people want to get back to Earth. Even before the serious attacks started up again, many were ready to get off this station.

Problem is, the jump ships can only carry so many people, and passage is rationed. Those who want to leave are put in a lottery; a new group of winners is aboard each time a Leviathan jumps back to Earth. Since evacuation counts as disaster relief, the UN isn't charging for



**Subject:** Defense of Karroo

**From:** Jackson O'Bannon, Triton Division

**To:** Deputy Director Allison Tremayne, Interstellar Office

**Encryption:** DSE

**Transmission type:** textfile

**Date:** 04:41:13 .27.2120

My interview with Upeo wa Macho member Susan N'gamba yielded another bombshell. She finally decided to talk about what happened at Karroo in September 2116, when the Chromatics launched a full-scale assault on the colony. As soon as the initial attack force was detected, N'gamba made a brief jump to Ruan's World and asked for help.

Soon after, three Upeo members arrived publicly on Karroo and promised that the situation was under control. Unknown to the Karrooans, these teleporters had already dropped off a small band of Eden "novas" on a nearby asteroid cluster. This quartet, led by one Apollo Milliken, focused immense powers of electromagnetic energy that vaporized the entire Chromatic fleet!

It's nice that those beings were on our side, but that sort of power scares me. We *must* find out more about Eden, and the Aberrants there.

passage. However, that •  
doesn't mean other people •  
aren't. The passage lottery has •  
become corrupted and the •  
Leopards are making a bundle •  
off it. Sometimes they rig the •  
lottery; other times they buy •  
the tickets or simply intimi- •  
date folks out of them. The •  
winning tickets go to the high- •  
est bidders; the well-off pay •  
thousands of yuan and the •  
poor give up all their posses- •  
sions and provide services — •  
including prostitution, theft, •  
smuggling and even murder. •  
The going rate for a destitute •  
family of four is either six •  
months of non-violent ser- •  
vices, or one murder! Things •  
have gone too far here; we

desperately need a Proteus intervention to clean this mess up.

Simply clearing out the Leps won't be enough. We need to find some way to change the basic system on Karroo. The problem is that the poor people are simply stuck; they have no place else to go. The jump ships are bringing in essentials along with the soldiers and weapons — new living modules, updated life support, food extruders — but the colony is still short on many things. If all you have is three pairs of clothes, five year old holovids and algae burgers, those who can get a suit of nicer cloths, a better holovid

player or good food are in high demand.

The saddest part of this whole situation is that the Leps serve a useful function. Many of the poor are extremely isolated and don't have any cultural identity. For the people who join this gang, the Leopards provide a tribal affiliation. It's a corruption of the culture true African tribes enjoy, but many of these sad souls are too poor and alone to care.

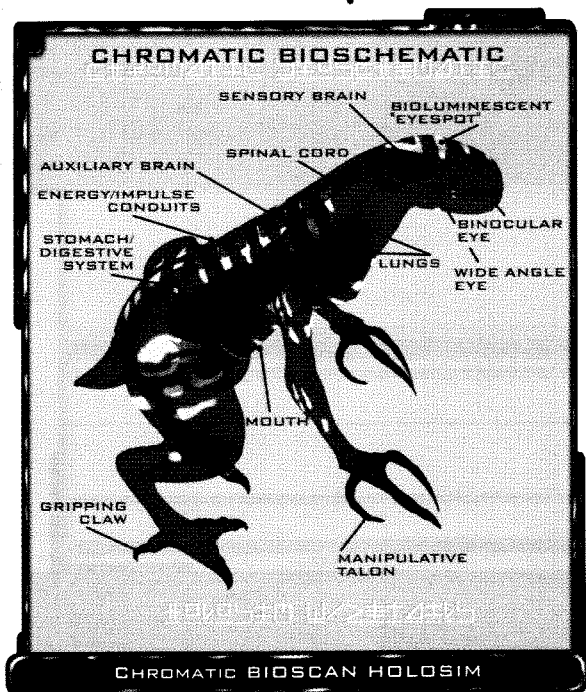
## CHROMATIC OUTPOSTS

— Report: Ministry Agent  
Pei Yin Chih

I have just returned from two scouting missions of known Chromatic asteroid bases in the Crab Nebula. Telepathic scans of the aliens conveys predominant feelings of horror and dismay. I am unsure whether this is due to our continued resistance, their apparent fear of deep space itself or some unknown reason. It is clear that the Chromatics are severely demoralized, however. Their frequency of attacks on Karroo has increased by 32% over the past year, but suicide attacks have increased fourfold.

On our second mission, two Chromatic fighters attempted to simultaneously ram our frigate in order to allow a third fighter to get a clean shot at us. We were lucky enough to have one of the recently returned teleporters, Colin Asambe, on board. He jumped us out of harm's way, but we can expect similarly extreme confrontations on future expeditions.

I know that the Chromatics are "the enemy" and have killed many humans, but they are desperate and scared. We need some way to discover the true source of their fear. It is my hope that the expedition to the aliens' homeworld will give us this knowledge. Otherwise, we shall have to fight them to the last. It is a battle we will win, but it will take a long time and we must still deal with the Aberrants.



## Qinshui

Update: Aeon Trinity Interstellar Office

— Alicia Prasong, ISRA observer

Humanity's diplomatic station on Qinshui continues to do well, despite the long isolation. Other than a few accidental deaths, the human populace is thriving and negotiations are going well. Foremost of the Qin "houses," the Lle-ji (formerly labeled the "Tung Jen") seem quite eager to reestablish full relations with us. They were busy preparing for our return, having developed a number of biotechnology devices for human use. The bioapps will first require approval from the UN Biotechnology Oversight Committee, but from what I've seen, the Qin have a number of real wonders to put on the market. I'm wearing one of their health bands now; ingenious piece of bioware if I do say so myself.

Not surprisingly, the Qin have an excellent understanding of our own comparatively rudimentary biotechnology. It seems that they've specifically designed devices of types that we cannot duplicate, to avoid direct competition. This non-competitive strategy seems to be a common one among the Qin. They attempt to avoid direct conflict, and prefer to outflank an opponent, or devise a way around a problem, rather than resort to direct, head-on confrontations.

Qin culture is based on complex, constantly changing layers of status and superiority. It will take years for us to understand these relationships' full nuances. For now, we see the interaction, but not the pattern.

Take the Lle-ji and Lle-brib (formerly designated "Hsiao Kou") houses. It seems the Lle-ji are heavily involved with space mining and manufacturing, which is partly why they are our primary contacts.

House Lle-brib's focus seems to be research and journalism. This group made overtures to us recently, resulting in correspondingly increased cooperation from Lle-ji. I believe they are afraid that the Lle-brib may capture favored status with humanity. Yet other houses — Lle-llau, for instance — seem to gain status by avoiding interaction with humanity.

Still, the Lle-jis' fear has made them more willing to accede to our requests to learn more about the Qin. This included showing us some of their asteroid bases, from which I believe we can learn a great deal. The space facilities are both strangely beautiful and highly efficient. My guide, Ziu-ji, took me to a base nearing completion. The asteroid was studded with several dozen large domes hundreds of meters in diameter. These domes are clearly some type

## QINSHUI



## MEETPOINT

## EXPLORING THE QIN CITY

— Excerpt: Dr. Raymond Sanders, Xenology Research, Triton Division

It was incredible being one of the first humans actually allowed to see how the Qin really live. They didn't allow any of us to take holos, so this transcript is all I can share....

...The buildings they allow us in are even stranger than the city outside is. Common to both interior and exterior is a lack of straight lines. Oval halls connect to irregularly rounded rooms through organically curved doorways. It feels like I am inside some type of creature — and for all I know I am! I don't have the courage to ask about that yet. Numerous oval, pale-blue light panels adorn the ceilings inside. The shadowless blue light makes these buildings look even more bizarre.

We went into what we were told was the main government building for the city, a kind of Qin office-plex. It is a mixture of very large and very small rooms, with not much in between. There are strange pods and low platforms everywhere, pleasant in appearance though alien in design.

Despite dramatic differences in form, many Qin devices have functions similar to human technology. I saw a Qin, outside its biosuit, crawl up onto a low platform. There, it rested its front half on a small, flat pod that began to glow softly. The Qin then placed most of its tentacles in a series of small depressions on the pod. When I asked our guide what its fellow Qin was doing, Tsali pointed to the minicom on my belt.

of life form, and are grown in place. A few partially grown specimens consist of a stalk with a mushroom-like cap. It seems that this cap eventually grows down to the ground, enclosing a hemispherical, air-tight area. Ziu-ji told me that

the group initially, and escaped, badly wounded.

I don't know if this was a unique colony, or if all Qin settlements have such formidable defenses. Everything I learn increases both my respect for the

the dome drew all of its nutrients from the asteroid and the sun.

I was also in space during a minor Aberrant raid. Ziu-ji had redirected our course to an asteroid base, but was reluctant to say anything other than, "The creatures attack nearby." I was able to use my abilities to see the battle once I felt the disruption of an Aberrant warp. A small group of Aberrants appeared near a heavily populated asteroid colony. The settlement had some form of bio-lasers that killed almost half of the Aberrants before they could land. The remainder attacked the domes, and the structures themselves fought back! Within 20 minutes the fabric of the dome, aided by numerous small entities I could not resolve clearly, had killed all of the Aberrants but one.

This last had warped in the group initially, and escaped, badly wounded.

Qins' abilities and my feeling that we have barely scratched the surface of all there is to discover about our alien friends.

**Subject:** Qin Relations  
**From:** Padura N'geyen  
**To:** Bolade Atwan  
**Encryption:** DSE  
**Transmission type:** holofile  
**Date:** 10:24:15 03.21.2116

My mission to Qinshui was a resounding success!

The Qin are incredibly good at deception and didn't even bother to ask why we were being so secretive. They assume it's some variety of inter-"house" dispute — not far wrong, either! Anyway, we'll get the assistance on biotech development and manufacturing, in return for ferrying a few Lle-ji back and forth from Luna to Qinshui. They'll arrange for one of us to be admitted to the restricted area of the Luna embassy compound and jump their people out. The replacements we teleport back will put on the departed Qins' biosuits, so no one should ever tumble to the switch. Best of all, we'll get the first Qin technicians as soon as we make the first transfer.

The Lle-ji agreed to keep this deal secret from the other houses and from humanity. In fact, they insisted on this secrecy before I even had the chance!

QIN CAPITOL &gt; SOUTH VIEW &gt; Aeon Archive

# FAR NYUMBA

## Far Nyumba

**Report: Harrison Hinton, commander, Leviathan Meroe**

Just prior to our return to Earth, we received the datapod describing the failure of our last transmission. The techs think it was caused by our proximity to Mgitu. Just in case, the Nyumbans will send any future datapods further away from the gas giant.

Obviously, Meroe arrived without incident, and the situation on Far Nyumba is nominal. Morale is excellent; everyone has had plenty to keep them busy. Looks like life has been pretty hard, though. This place wasn't self-sufficient when they got cut off. Still, in spite of inadequate supplies and insufficient personnel, they've done pretty well for themselves. Far Nyumba was a typical research base six years ago; now it's a full-

fledged colony. The main town, Obodo, has a population of 8,100, complete with a school, churches, shops, small farms and even several bars. The whole place has a homey, lived-in feel to it.

Although xenologists continue to study the young world's diverse flora and fauna, the resident obsession is the "zeps," as they call the aliens behind the artifacts on Mgitu. Short for "zeppelin," which is what some of the science folk think they most resemble. Speaking of scientists, the colony is crawling with them. However, a number of them have branched out from strict research into intensive chores like growing crops, clearing the thick forest and patrolling to keep the local animal life in check.

TRITON ARCHIVE

## CLOSE ENCOUNTER

**Transmission excerpt:  
James Dawson to Far Nyumba,  
5.17.2118**

We made it to what seems to be some type of central control area. Dr. Andrasko says that the large green oval is some sort of fusion plant. Right next to it is a black and silver glowing sphere, four meters in diameter. Looks like a softly glowing black opal....

Tried sensing it. Odd; seems like a conduit of some sort. I distinctly get the impression of it being connected to some other point in space.

Ryan, Karl and Dr. Mitsu are examining the ball while Dr. Andrasko and I look at what may be the control panel — well, control cup. It's another of those oval depressions eight meters in diameter. These suckers must have been huge.

My God — It's growing [static] — must have triggered [static]. They're gone — they're all just gone! The ball expanded, almost filling the room — it was over 20 meters in diameter! They were all inside it.... When it collapsed it was empty!

We learned that things got a bit paranoid shortly after Far Nyumba was cut off. The two leading theories were that Abbies had hit Earth really hard, or that the zeps were behind it somehow. Everyone is damn relieved to find out the truth. If we'd left these folks a few years longer, they might've seriously regressed — maybe starting zep-worshipping cults or something.

There has been a subtle change, all the same. I've read about how isolated communities get a bit odd, and I saw the vids about that asteroid colony cult with all the tattoos and scarification. There is nothing like that on Far Nyumba. However, the people here regularly finish each other's sentences, and much of the social activity has a sort of stylized atmosphere. Considering the insular feel developing among the Nyumbans, I recommend that

we bring in as many new colonists as possible (and rotate out anyone who wants to leave). Far Nyumba could be an amazing place, but it's in need of some new blood.

## Colony Report to United Nations

— Representative Robert Nugharu

The biggest news here by far relates to the artifacts on Mgitu. We've found a lot more, including a large installation deep in the gas giant's atmosphere!

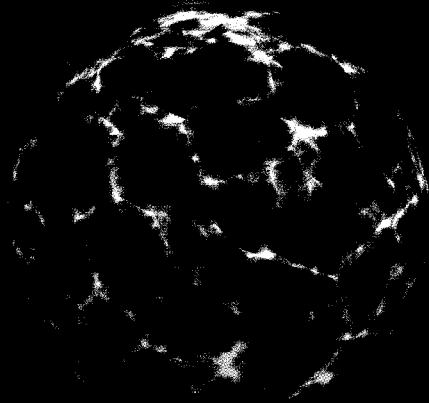
This structure was long hidden due to the tremendous amount of radio static that Mgitu emits, which makes it hard for sensors to plumb its depths effectively. After dispatching several missions there, we can confirm evidence of an extant alien civilization unconnected with any we have contacted before! Best of all, the installation is still functional. It seems to have been

made by creatures that evolved on a gas giant. They aren't alone either; Mgitu itself has life on it! We have holovids of some of the critters. They're like nothing we've ever seen before; they make deep-ocean life look pretty plain.

Sadly, we've lost some people. Aside from unfortunate deaths due to hard colony life, the second crew we sent to the installation is gone. The team, led by Dr. Demetria Andrasko, made it all the way to the center. They encountered a large sphere next to some sort of fusion power-core. The sphere, apparently some sort of transport device, activated while the team was studying it and engulfed everyone except Andrasko and the team's clear, Jame Dawson. Legionnaire Ryan Ingerson, Dr. Karl Germain and Dr. Helen Mitsu were all lost. There is hope, though. Dawson claims they didn't die







ZEP MASS TRANSFER DEVICE >>> FIRST EXPLORATORY MISSION

— she says they were transported to another world.

We aren't equipped to perform further research at this time. The exploration craft suffered damage on both the descent and return. Since that expedition, we're limited to exploring the artifacts in Mgitu's upper atmosphere. I formally request that the next jump ship bring along one of the olaminium shuttles used on the Jupiter exploration project. One of those babies should let us get down there much more easily.

Thankfully, we have no evidence of Aberrant or any other hostile activity here. The alien artifacts are tentatively dated at approximately 600 years old, so we're pretty sure they weren't put there by some Abbie mutant with a fondness for practical jokes.

## • Impact of Isolation

### • on Far Nyumba

#### • Report: Dr. Yolanda McKee, Æsculapian Order

Far Nyumba was the smallest of any of the ordinary colony worlds. Having a small colony suddenly cut off from all contact naturally caused many problems. Unlike the larger colonies of Khantze Lu Ge or even Averiguas, Far Nyumba was not ready for self-sufficiency. The colonist had food and shelter, but medical supplies and other technological necessities often could not be replaced. Official reports talk about how the colonists kept busy and remained in good spirits during isolation. Spending a few days here shows you a very different story.

Even without kirlian eye, I could detect numerous examples of old injuries in the colonists. Injuries that resulted in serious debility — wounds that could have been

TRITON ARCHIVE

## QUANTUM MASS TRANSFER

Analysis: Dr. Demetria Andrasko, 10.27.2119

After careful examination, combined with data provided by my clairsentient assistants, I have determined that the alien transport device on Mgitu uses a form of quantum teleportation. While I have every hope that we can learn to understand and eventually duplicate this device, it is well beyond our current technology.

At best, highly trained clairvoyants can look "through" the device. This has resulted in important discoveries, including the fact that the three individuals drawn through the sphere are alive and being successfully transported on a journey of 137 light years. Unfortunately, transport occurs at light speed. Their journey will end in over a century. (Though for them, no more than a few seconds will have passed.)

Clairvoyant observation has tentatively identified the destination as another gas giant inhabited by the alien zeps. With luck, we will have our own people waiting there when Germaine, Ingerson and Mitsu arrive.

easily healed with modern medicine. To make matters worse, over half of their vehicles failed, lacking replacement parts. In the last years, many people tended their crops by hand and lived in fear that an early frost could starve the whole colony.

Infant mortality was higher than anywhere in settled space except France and the Middle East. The lack of certain trace minerals in the soil produced minor nutritional deficiencies in over half of the population, and they would have devolved to a pre-industrial society within five more years. In late 2115, a local fungus-like organism infected grain supplies, producing a series of increasingly bad famines. They would have all died except for food and other supplies brought to them by members of Upeo wa Macho.

According to reports, in 2118 the Upeo also provided a tailored retrovirus to immunize the grains against this fungus.

Far Nyumba was a lot closer to the edge than anyone likes to talk about. They avoided mass death only through luck and external aid. Given the current unstable situation elsewhere with Aberrants and Chromatics, we cannot be sure that this or some new small colony won't be isolated again. It is essential that all new colonies are much better supplied in the future. Without the Upeo we would have found a charnel house, not a colony.

Perhaps most amazing in light of this is the morale. Despite increasing hardships, the Nyumbans kept in remarkably good spirits. The focus of work helped tremendously. In the first two years, while they assumed that contact would be re-

newed relatively soon, the colonists made a great deal of progress working on the Mgitu artifacts. Using parts salvaged from other craft, they managed to keep two of their hybrid craft in working order. The journeys deep into Mgitu's atmosphere, and the resulting data were shared by the entire colony. The former was broadcast live to every inhabitant with a working holoset; the latter was relayed around a cobbled-together OpNet. The high ratio of scientists on the colony created a thirst for knowledge among all the inhabitants, and generated many discussions about the zeps.

I suspect we would have found a much less pleasant sight upon landing if the people here hadn't had the alien artifacts to keep them occupied. The colonists' devotion to their research kept them sane and hopeful.



# AVERIGUAS

## Averiguas

**Intercept: from Major Rodrigo Vargas, Averiguas Norça Commander, to Giuseppe del Fuego, Norça Proxy**

Averiguas was caught in the grip of rebellion when we lost contact. During the isolation, the rebel workers were victorious, but established a truce with those who remained loyal to Brazil. This *status quo* was destroyed when we arrived in January of 2120.

The rebels, who now include 21 Norça among their number, feel that they earned the right to make this world their own. The Brazilian government wants those colonists who won't fulfill their contacts deported and their property confiscated. Many Brazilian loyalists, including a number of our people, are caught in the middle. They have grown to respect the rebels, but are not willing to see them take Averiguas.

Such tension plays into the media's hands. The stories of bigotry and violence against the rebels are the worst type of inflammatory propaganda. Unfortunately, this has brought in the Æon Trinity as "impartial mediators." The situation is delicate enough without involving those self-righteous meddlers.

Even so, Æon is nothing compared to the new colonial governor, Josefa Cristobal. She wants the entire colony firmly under her rule. She sees only resources to be exploited, caring not about the hard work the fine people on both sides have done. She even dismissed my plan of having the workers labor half-time with doubled contract durations, and maintains that giving land grants at the end of the contract is wasteful and unnecessary.

The more Cristobal demands the complete return of Brazilian control, the more determined the rebels are to hold

their freedom. It is hard to blame them — she would take away everything they have built! This increasing tension is especially aggravating since I was making progress with the colonists until Cristobal arrived. *Pai de Norça*, the people here are willing to work hard, and most do not hate us. This will change if the governor continues her militant agenda. I ask that you make a request for Brazil to replace Cristobal; she is a danger to this world and to our plans.

Speaking of which, the legacy of the Huang-Marr extremists continue to haunt us. Thanks to that handful of corrupt psions, Cristobal is determined to gain control of all Norça research facilities and to supervise all projects there. We cannot operate under such constant monitoring.

The most difficult aspect of the situation is our own people. It was dismaying enough to

## PROJECT ADVANCES

— Report: Dr. Donato Gambetta

I am certain that Major Vargas will regale you with the many problems we face on Averiguas. I shall content myself with reporting on one thing that goes well: our research.

During their isolation here, the Norça scientists made much progress studying Aberrant taint. Among other advances, we should be able to produce taint detectors with greater range and sensitivity. We may even be close to finding a way to partially disrupt Aberrant access to taint energy!

They deserve the highest honors for their accomplishments. Though we cannot acknowledge their efforts publicly at this time, I think that material rewards would help show our gratitude.

Speaking of our Norça cousins, I must make a personal statement. *Pai de Norça*, know that the 13 defectors who joined the rebels during the isolation continued to assist in the project, in spite of the political differences they had with those who remained loyal. I believe that this continued cooperation for the greater good shows that our siblings are misguided, not simply disloyal. Please show them mercy, that we may resolve this conflict without violence.

learn that 13 of our Norça siblings defected during isolation — but since our return, we have lost eight more to the rebels' side! Palacios and the others swear that they will not reveal Norça secrets, and that they still

believe in our goals. However, they have resigned their commissions to aid the rebels in their quest for freedom.

If it comes to fighting, those of us still loyal to the Norça must face almost two dozen of our own brothers and sisters. I refuse to see this horror come to pass. We have always been a family; breaking this could harm all of us. *Pai de Norça*, I beseech you to allow me greater freedom to act so that I may avoid such a terrible incident.

### Colonial Government Efforts

**Update: Governor Josefa Cristobal, Averiguas Colony**

I begin to understand these rebels. They are typical Euro-Americans, much talk of rights and little of responsibilities. They hold meetings and speak a great deal, but I suspect they have little stomach for a real fight. Still, I doubt physical conflict will be necessary; instead, an embargo should break them. All was well when they were poor together, but if only those under our rule can get new supplies, then poverty will become a high price for freedom.

As long as I have enough troops to prevent riots and other troubles, I can keep order until the last ones abandon hope and agree to our conditions. We can deport those who refuse; in fact, I have given orders to round up the most volatile dissenters and return them immediately. A

one-way ticket to Earth is a small price to pay to rid this world of troublemakers. If all goes well, I should have the colony fully under our rule within one year after the embargo begins. The problem is making sure that all does go well.

Our alleged allies, the Norça, are a great concern here. Major Vargas' sympathy for the Norça defectors is understandable, but I fear that he feels more than simple loyalty. He talks to me of compromise and shared rule with the rebels, due to their efforts during isolation. Yet their buildings and crops were all made with our tools and materials while under contract with Brazil — this very planet belongs to Brazil! But Vargas cares more about pride than about the law. Such an attitude worries me.

Another concern is the Norça facilities. I have heard that even those who formally defected from the order's ranks still work at these private installations. I cannot confirm this or even what work they do there, since Major Vargas refuses to allow my people to inspect the sites! We may share power, but I cannot maintain order if even my allies refuse to cooperate. Unofficially, I suspect that if I ordered the colony taken by outright force, Major Vargas may oppose me.

Vargas flirts with rebellion. He promises that, if allowed to do things his way, he could settle this situation in a few months. Perhaps, but I suspect Averiguas would then belong to the Norça and the rebels, and Brazil would be left holding the bill. If Vargas were replaced with someone more tractable, I would control this planet in short order.

# EXTRASOLAR COLONIES

KHANTZE LU GE

QINSHUI



EARTH/SOL



RUAN'S WORLD

AVERIGUAS

KARROO

EDEN

FAR NYUMBA

# NEW DISCOVERIES

## RUAN'S WORLD

TRITON ARCHIVE

### Axum System

Sun	Axum
Sun's Spectral Type	M0
<b>SAPPHIRE (GAS GIANT)</b>	
Founded	2110 (Upeo wa Macho)
Source	Upeo discovery
Planet mass (Earth = 1)	19.3 (Sapphire) 0.39 (Ruan's World)
Equatorial diameter (km)	67,300 (Sapphire) 9,442 (Ruan's World)
Planet gravity (Earth = 1)	1.4 (Sapphire) 0.56 (Ruan's World)
Water Content (Earth = 0.75)	n/a (Sapphire) 0.62 (Ruan's World)
Atmosphere	hydrogen/methane (Sapphire) nitrogen (Ruan's World)
Rotation period	17 hours (Sapphire) 21 hours (Ruan's World)
Indigenous life	variety of animals, vegetables, microbes
Human population	6,000
Closest distance to Earth	18,400 light years
Primary satellites	
(Sapphire)	Ruan's World, Candice, Sahara
(Ruan's World)	none

### Ruan's World

— **textfile conversion, Rachel al-Ahmir, Æon Associate**

Ruan's World is a small planet circling a dim orange sun over 18,000 light years from Earth. The Upeo first used the site as a staging ground in the order's efforts to locate Aberrant lairs. These relay points were used so that, if an Aberrant somehow followed an Upeo, the creature wouldn't find anyplace im-

portant. Yet after the Upeo discovered the Aberrants on Eden and tensions built with the other orders, Ruan's World became the Upeos' primary base. In the months leading up to the teleporters' departure from Earth, increasing numbers of Upeo (along with their families, friends and numerous support personnel) moved here.

Visiting this world is a shock. Our other colonies were purposefully selected for having gravity near Earth's (except Luna, which uses pseudo-gravity grids). On Ruan's World, you weigh less than 2/3 of what you would on Earth. As with Mars, the gravity is high enough to avoid the debilitating effects of LAO, but it still takes a lot of getting used to. The light is also eerie and

disturbing. The sun is huge but dim — a red ball that fills a third of the sky. Its light tints everything, making it hard to see outside unless you wear filters (specs or biocontacts). Sapphire, the small gas giant, does little to influence the light Ruan's World receives.

The planet also has an incredibly unique — and to be honest, somewhat creepy — ecosystem. The air density is higher than Earth's in spite of the low gravity, creating an aerial ecology. Almost everything here flies! It's like living on the bottom of an ocean, but instead of fish there's everything from meter-long air sharks to walnut-sized gas-bugs. It's also noisy here. Echolocation is the primary sense for most creatures, not unlike a bat, and a number of the social animals uses sound to communicate. Put it all together and you get a dim, foggy

world full of unearthly sounds. I can't imagine any one other than xenologists wanting to move here.

The majority of our colonies have mostly barren ecosystems — the exceptions being Far Nyumba's young ecology and Qinshui's terraformed splendor. Ruan's World is even more complex than these, with life teeming on the land, in the seas and in the air. Even on a brief walk you can see schools of glowing gas-bugs drifting overhead and brush-tree fronds flashing bio-luminescent patterns like some alien vehicle's running lights.

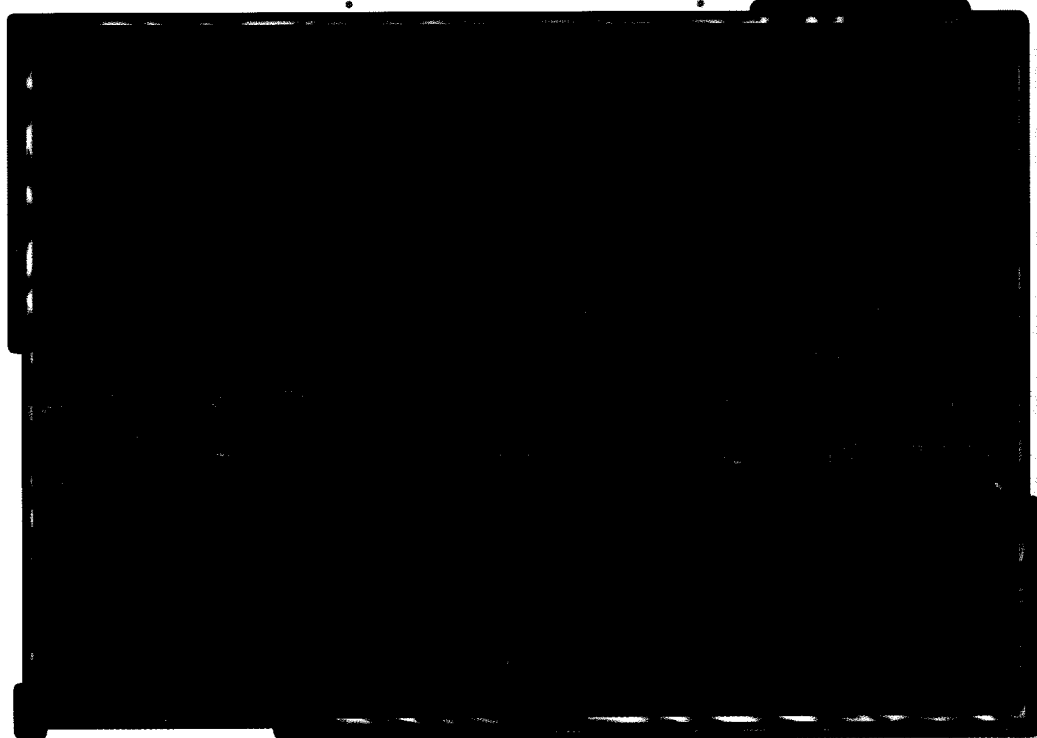
There are surely more fascinating sights, but they involve going beyond the defensive perimeter. Ruan's World isn't terribly tame. Many large animals evolved due to the low gravity, and some have developed a taste for people. There are protein incompatibilities, but that just

means the local predators can't subsist fully on a diet of humans. Doesn't stop them from trying, though. Thirty-two people have been killed by the native wild life since the colony was founded.

### Colony Specifics

The entire settlement consists of the city of Freedom, surrounding farms and a single xenological research station. It's a collection of prefab habitation units with a few more buildings made from stone and locally made brick. On the whole, it's a fairly typical colony town with the requisite number of bars, churches, media arcades and restaurants.

The population seems content, though anxious to establish greater contact with the rest of humanity. I'm certain that Atwan's loyalists hadn't coached anyone with whom I spoke, even my sister Miriam, who's been here



## SOCIAL CONDITIONS

— Dr. Alexia Ulamir,  
Æsculapian Order

Ruan's World is one of the most vibrant and hopeful colonies I've seen. The people have formed a close-knit, egalitarian society like those on the Ceres and Pallas asteroid settlements. Everyone knows each other; hard work and cooperation for the common good are primary virtues and there's little formal government. The ranking Upeo — Atwan, al-Masna, Shojiki and the rest — are natural leaders, but seldom need to enforce policy. Instead, the citizens tend to police themselves. Issues are discussed in open forums, and people volunteer on projects that need doing.

Recontact with Earth is the main topic of late. Some are excited about seeing friends and relatives again and others are worried about public reaction, but the general attitude is cautiously hopeful.

Ruan's World is not particularly suitable for large-scale colonization, but we could certainly learn something from its society.

since '14. The people here support the Upeo, but most were shocked to learn the results of *Esperanza's* fall. until Atwan lifted the restriction. I guess the most they ever did was make quick trips to near-space orbital stations to gather staples like medicine and replacement parts.

There are a number of Algerians here; they've requested returning with our ship to check on French friends and relatives. They did buy a good supply of weapons, but by walking around you can see why. The farms are surrounded by electrified razor wire, and Freedom's perimeter is protected by a laser defense system with sensors programmed to shoot any non-human life forms that try to get in. It's not like carnivores constantly roam the outskirts of town, but you'd best go armed if you take walks in the wilderness.

Looks like the blinks didn't tell the colonists much about recent events back home, which seems to confirm that the Upeo have kept clear of Earth

# EDEN

## Eden

— Philip Guterres, Neptune Division

Almost as big a surprise as the Upeos' return was learning that they'd made contact with an Aberrant colony — which the teleporters claim is benevolently disposed toward Earth. The UN has authorized an expedition to learn all we can with as little risk as possible. If even a fraction of what the Upeo say is accurate, we must re-evaluate our understanding of Aberrants and their condition.

It all began in 2113 when Kupita explorers made contact with a previously undocumented human mining colony. These miners claimed their homeworld as "Eden." Further investigation revealed that this Eden was colonized decades ago by a band of Aberrants and their

- followers. The
- Aberrants of Eden
- (who prefer the archaic term "nova")
- have *apparently*
- constructed a sane and stable society.

Eden has 67 of these novas ruling over a population of 100,000 neutrals. In return for absolute control, the novas have made the planet incredibly beautiful and prosperous. Friendly communities, buildings made of

brightly polished stone, ample food, numerous amenities — overall, a standard of living that's considerably higher than most of human space. If we printed travel posters for Eden without mentioning it was an Aberrant-ruled world, people would flock to it in droves.

## TRITON ARCHIVE

### Valeron System

Sun	Valeron
Sun's Spectral Type	K2
<b>EDEN</b>	
Founded	2051 (Nova Seekers)
Source	Aberrant discovery
Planet mass (Earth = 1)	0.57
Equatorial diameter (km)	9,967
Planet gravity (Earth = 1)	0.83
Water Content (Earth = 0.75)	0.71
Atmosphere	nitrogen
Rotation period	31 hours
Indigenous life	multiple unified ecosystems
Human population	100,000
Closest distance to Earth	14,200 light years
Primary satellites	Valkyrie

We mustn't forget that the Aberrants are firmly in charge, though. They're treated like demigods, dress in elegant finery and draw a crowd whenever they appear. The locals maintain a normal economy among themselves, but all bets are off where the novas are con-



## EDEN FIRST CONTACT

— Sabah Bedi, Upeo wa Macho, 03.17.2113

Eden is the most bizarre planet I've been to. The ecology is screwy beyond all reason, but it's the inhabitants that really throw me. Aberrants rule here, but they aren't feared, they're loved! That's not all; the Aberrants don't look or act like crazed freaks.

Most look at least a bit strange, but they're not all wildly distended skulls and crawling masses of tentacles. Here, the Abbies tend toward tremendous statures and odd skin tones, maybe glowing eyes or a halo of cold fire in the extreme.

I just don't get it — sane, human-looking Aberrants? The cosmos doesn't make sense anymore.

cerned. Simply put, if the novas want something, they take it. Instead of resenting this, their subjects seem to consider it a great honor. There are even signs advertising beneficiaries of nova favor — "nova Wren wears Eising suits!" and the like.

### Eden Government

Harmony is the planet's only full-fledged city, although small communities have sprung up around the dozen or so isolated estates individual novas have created. The majority of novas live in a large citadel on a low hill overlooking Harmony. They don't interact much with the locals except during festivals and parades. The Upeo have holos of a few of

these. It's rather disturbing to see folks holding up their kids to be touched by a passing Aberrant.

Incredibly, it's as if the novas have developed a fascist oligarchy with all the benefits and none of the problems. The streets are clean, public transportation runs on time, festivals are elaborate and frequent, and the uniforms are stylish. The novas rule without question, making law and acting as judges (and executioners if necessary) when crimes are committed. Yet the citizens appear to enjoy freedom of speech, being able to question nova policy without fear of secret police or a midnight raid.

### Contact

**Journal: Brian Ruiz, United Nations Liaison, 05.09.2121**

Frankly, Eden terrifies me. As a child, I wondered what it would be like if gods and goddesses walked among mortals. This planet provides a close approximation.

The locals warmly welcomed the diplomatic team once our Upeo guide, Kariye Wyome, jumped us in. A spokesman then asked Wyome to show who among us were not "mortals" — the actual word he used!

Wyome gestured to me. She then explained that Nghor Tran was my assistant and that Angelica Pouchet, Corben Arbaugh and Dean Poore were xenologists. I was nonplussed that she didn't explain my role as diplomatic liaison, but it seemed all the explanation the Edenites needed.

They gathered immediately around Tran and Pouchet's team, asking ex-

## My Life With The Novas

— Carol Hendricks,  
interviewed for  
*Eden Considered* © 2121  
Walkabout Press

I was born in Harmony. I grew up knowing the history of the Great War and our Exodus. I know that many of the novas during that time abused their powers and went mad. They attacked indiscriminately and caused untold destruction until the rest of humanity turned on all of their kind.

But your ancestors never realized that not all novas were insane. None of our novas were directly involved in the Great War's atrocities. When they decided to leave Earth rather than see it destroyed by the aberrant ones — a good term, that — my grandparents and many of their friends came with. They at least knew that not all novas were monsters, having worked with stable ones in the past.

I'm deeply sorry to hear about the return of the mad ones. The tragedy of France is more horrible than any of the stories my grandparents told me. My grandmother gave me a necklace she bought in Paris. Sad to think that the city stands no longer.

Please know that we on Eden are not responsible for such atrocities. None of us, including the novas, have any interest in mass murder.

## EDEN ECOSYSTEM

— Dr. Angelica Pouchet, Triton Division, Xenoscience Department, 5.11.2121

I apologize for the brevity of this first report, but I'm not sure how long the Aberrants will allow us to poke around their home. We must make the most of the time we're given here.

Eden enjoys copious animal life, with thick forests and verdant plains everywhere. The vegetation is an earthy yellow-green, and though it looks nothing like Earth plants in detail, from a distance an Eden forest looks a lot like one on Earth. However, appearances are definitely deceiving. Aside from those the novas brought specifically from Earth, there are no actual trees, plants or animals!

All native life on Eden is an integral part of one of nine biomes, giant interconnected life forms I've labeled "myriasoma." Lest you think this sounds like some horror vid, try this: Imagine a forest where all the trees are connected in the way grass plants all share a common root system. Well, imagine that this same interconnectedness extends to every organism within a given biome and you begin to get the picture. That's simplifying things tremendously, but provides an adequate working knowledge.

We found no evidence that any of the myriasoma are sentient. However, they are exceedingly complex. Take the animals — or "mobiles," as we've come to call them — for example. Each myriasome has variously sized egg-shaped pods connected to the root network throughout its structure. The mobiles hatch from these pods, filling necessary roles within that biome's ecology. The mobiles don't eat the plants or each other; some feed on dead debris, others on special secretions provided by certain plants.

Each myriasome uses pheromones and similar water and air-borne chemicals (including the plant secretions) to communicate among its many parts — a kind of hive-mind. But most astounding of all, it seems that they also use some level of noetic activity to aid communication and coordination. This is the first evidence of noetic activity outside of sentients and biotech. If we can learn to work with it, the potential for new biotech is staggering.

I must admit that Eden seems to be a healthy and thriving colony. Even living in close proximity with these Aberrants for more than 60 years has not harmed the residents! This data directly contradicts much of what we've been told about Aberrants; obviously, we must investigate further to discover the reason why.



cited questions and sharing gossip. But Wyome and myself were virtually ignored except by the spokesman. The man identified himself as Horace Gaydin, and deferentially asked how he could serve us. I'd been warned that the locals might act this way toward psions, putting us on a par with their Aberrant rulers, but it was disturbing nonetheless. I tried to explain that, although I possessed vitakinetic talents, I was here as a diplomat. It didn't seem to make an impression.

It's not that Gaydin or the others were afraid of us, or even fawning and sycophantic. Even without psi, though, I could clearly sense awe and devotion. I've never had anyone look at me that way before, and I realized that I didn't like it.

As an experiment, I mentioned that I was hungry. Gaydin immediately led me to a nearby restaurant. He said something in an odd dialect to the proprietor, who enthusiastically invited me to eat. She looked insulted and confused when I asked about payment.

There was a commotion in the street then — individuals calling out, children scampering around, and a crowd gathering quickly. They were already clearing a path as we stepped outside, and I saw the Aberrant walking toward us. I knew it was one of Eden's elite only from the deference the people showed him — he gave off no disruptive taint emanations!

It was clear that, to the Aberrant, being treated as a living god was a given. He

faced me as an equal, introducing himself as Apollo Milliken and offering to show my team around. Aside from standing over two meters tall and having an odd facial structure, he looked human. Unsure that this was really an Aberrant, I asked to scan him. Although Milliken registered notably elevated taint levels, it was lower than many D sufferers I've encountered. Further, he didn't bear any of the physiological mutations common to that degree of taint radiation.

Milliken gave us a tour, during which time he and I spoke. Over the course of our conversation, he mentioned that the Upeo urged three other "novas" and himself to help Karroo during its isolation, destroying a Chromatic assault in '16.

He then said that we need not look at one another as enemies. I'm no telepath, but my powers run close enough to sense that he was sincere. It seems that Milliken honestly wants to help us against both the Chromatics and the hostile Aberrants. It was a bit like talking to some of the more psychotic Legionnaires, "The enemies of humanity must be wiped out" — no points for moral and ethical subtlety, but heartfelt.

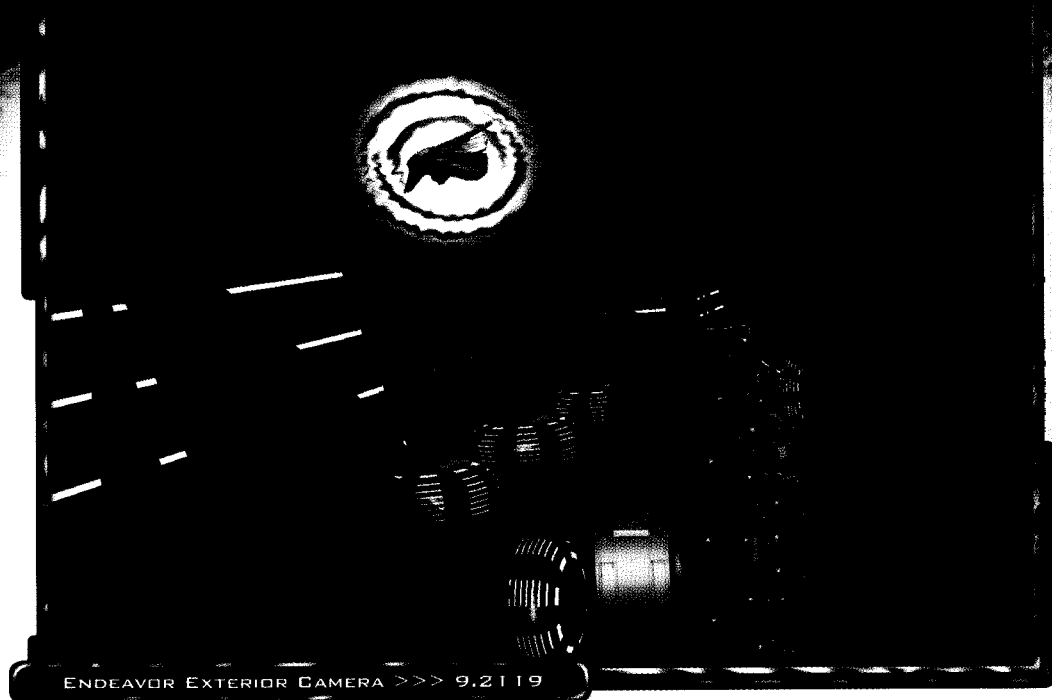
Then he spouted this whole line about how we "enhanced beings have a duty to protect the frail" until everyone can evolve to our own "higher state." I don't know if Milliken is indicative of the norm on Eden, but I shouldn't be surprised that even a benevolent Aberrant retains a superior mentality over humanity.

**Journal: Brian Ruiz, United Nations Liaison, 05.11.2121**

We've spent the past few days in the Aberrants' "castle" — all carved quartz pediments and obsidian columns (well done, but overblown monumental architecture). Apparently, all the Aberrants who don't have their own rural villas live here.

I've seen more than two dozen so far. Many have minor physical abnormalities, but nothing like what we've come to expect — especially from specimens who suffered from advanced aberrancy. The oldest calls herself Diana Kadmon. She claims to be 127 years old, but she doesn't appear to be any more than 40. She has jet-black eyes with no whites, six long fingers on each hand and a faint blue tint to her skin, but otherwise she looks as human as I do. I'll have to check with Æon when I get back to Earth to see if we have any records on her or the rest — they could all be first-generation Aberrants, for all I know!

I'm treated as an equal, while the humans in Harmony — Mother Mary, I said *the humans*! Only a few days and I'm talking like an Aberrant! I haven't sensed any mind or emotion control, but the environment is obviously beguiling enough without it. There's much to learn from Eden, but I — we — cannot be seduced by it. It could lead to just what the extreme anti-psion groups are already declaring back home — that psions are simply a new breed of Aberrant, bent on ruling humanity.



ENDEAVOR EXTERIOR CAMERA >>> 9.2119

We should limit contact with Eden only to personnel directly related to developing human-Aberrant relations, those studying taint and similar necessary pursuits. In the same way, the Edenites should stay here unless otherwise authorized. This shouldn't be a problem at first, since I understand that not all of these Aberrants want to open relations with Earth.

Overall, Eden is a lovely world with happy, lively people. They have valuable medical and scientific data that Earth lost in the Crash. Pouchet says that the native life could aid biotech research. We could use the help of these "novas" against their violent cousins. Still, we must keep a close eye on Eden and its people. This false paradise could be a dangerous place.

## The Lost Ships

**Log: Yousef Kassim, Endeavor Mission, Upeo wa Macho, 2119**

Covic is invaluable; her initial image proved dead on. I manifested our ship 100 km from *Endeavor*. Not surprisingly, *Endeavor's* crew was amazed — and a little frightened — to meet us. I'm glad we used an Owl instead of a biotech ship, otherwise they would surely have thought we were aliens.

After we convinced them we weren't Aberrants or otherwise hostile, they let us dock. As expected, around 4,000 were awake and the rest were hibernating. *Endeavor's* hibernation systems are aged and bulky, but work exactly as designed (except for an unfortunate short a few years ago that killed 20 people). Speaking

of which, the transmitter worked also — *Endeavor* simply lost contact when it got beyond five light years.

The crew is relatively healthy and happy and anxious to start life in the Ophiuchi Belt. They were surprised at all that's happened in the past two decades since they've been gone. Of course, to them it seems like they just left; no one's been awake for more than five years, after all. For my part, it's a shock meeting people of my grandparents' generation who are so young and eager to face the future — especially since I was born four years after *Endeavor* left! It was almost like watching an old holovid.

Nostalgia aside, there are some practical matters to attend to. They could use some supplies; their medical tech is way out of date (as

expected) and their computers could use an upgrade. They're still determined to reach the Ophiuchi Belt, so I asked the current captain, Teresa Colins, if we could teleport the entire ship there. I explained that we didn't yet have solid scans of the system itself, but we might be able to leap-frog *Endeavor* there with multiple jumps — a year or two instead of decades. Colins seemed intrigued, but said she'd have to discuss it with the crew.

## TRITON ARCHIVE

### AIGLE EXPEDITION

**Report: Rachel Mbemba, Upeo wa Macho, 2118**

Mothers and Fathers, what a mess. Friedlander is dead; Lee's in the hospital and my leg is still healing. El-Mansy's scan set us at the outskirts of town, near the beach. Unfortunately, several dozen locals were docking the fishing boats when we arrived, and saw us pop out of mid-air.

There must be some dangerous life forms here since a third of the fishermen were armed. They surrounded us and accused us of being Aberrants. We tried to tell them about psions, but they said it was just another word for monster and pointed out that we couldn't possibly "warp" in if we were human.

Friedlander got scared when they closed to haul us into town. He tried to put up a force bubble, but they were ready. Things got ugly fast. Friedlander took a couple of them down before he got nailed by multiple shooters. Lee tried to heal him, but then she got shot. Ramirez and Lee held the rest of them off while I jumped us out — barely.

Those colonists think we're monsters. It was a bad idea to jump directly to the planet. In their eyes, we're just like the Aberrants — a bunch of murdering monsters.

# AN OPEN LETTER TO HUMANKIND

>>> Holorecording of the Aberrant Apollo Milliken,  
presented by Kariye Wyome of the Upeo wa Macho to the UN Assembly,  
4.1.2121 <<<

PEOPLE OF EARTH,

I SEND THIS MISSIVE WITH ONE OF MY FRIENDS FROM THE UPEO WA MACHO. SHE CAN ATTEST TO THE TRUTH OF MUCH OF WHAT I SAY, AND TO THE PEACE AND GOODWILL THAT WE CITIZENS OF EDEN EXTEND TO THE INHABITANTS OF EARTH AND ITS COLONIES.

I AM A NOVA — WHAT YOU CALL AN “ABER RANT.” I LIVE ON THE PLANET EDEN WITH OTHER NOVAS, PEACEFULLY RULING A SOCIETY OF THOSE WHO ARE NEITHER NOVA NOR PSION. WHILE I DO NOT PERSONALLY HAVE THE WARP ABILITIES NEEDED TO NAVIGATE INTERSTELLAR DISTANCES, A NUMBER OF NOVAS HERE DO. WE COULD HAVE RETURNED TO EARTH YEARS AGO. WE DID NOT FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST, TREPIDATION ABOUT THE RECEPTION WE WOULD GET AT THE HANDS OF A FEARFUL POPULATION. SECOND, WE GAVE OUR WORD AND WISHED TO HONOR IT. OUR WORD IS OUR BOND: WE LEFT OUR NATIVE PLANET IN ORDER TO SAVE IT. WE WILL NOT RETURN UNTIL INVITED.

I AM NOT A MONSTROSITY. I HAVE THE NORMAL COMPLEMENT OF ARMS, LEGS AND HEAD, IN THE NORMAL CONFIGURATIONS. I COULD “PASS FOR HUMAN” IF I DESIRED. I DO POSSESS POWER — MOST RECENTLY DEMONSTRATED A FEW YEARS AGO AGAINST THE CHROMATICS AT KARROO, DEFENDING HUMANITY AS MY KIND DID IN THE PAST.

I WOULD BE A LIAR IF I SAID THAT THE NOVA TRANSFORMATION DOES NOT PRODUCE MONSTERS — GROTESQUE IN THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MAKEUP. GOING NOVA CAN DEFORM BODIES AND SOULS — BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO.

WE OF EDEN CANNOT BRING BACK THOSE SLAIN BY OUR MALFORMED COUSINS — THOSE TRUE “ABER RANTS” WHO SHARE OUR POWERS, BUT NOT OUR POINT-OF-VIEW. WE CAN OFFER OUR AID AGAINST THEM IN THE FUTURE, HOWEVER. TRUST MAY NOT COME EASILY FOR EITHER OF OUR PEOPLE, CONSIDERING THE TRAGIC PAST WE SHARE. I BEG YOU NOT TO SUCCUMB TO THE EASY PREJUDICE AND FEARS THAT IMPRISONED OUR MUTUAL ANCESTORS. DO NOT JUDGE US ALL BY THE ACTIONS OF DEVIANTS LIKE DIVIS MAL AND THE COLONY.

THE NOVAS OF EDEN HAVE MUCH TO OFFER — IF YOU ONLY HAVE THE COURAGE TO ACCEPT.

SINCERELY,  
APOLLO MILLIKEN



## Historical Data

**2071** — Bolade Atwan born in Sokoto, Nigeria.

**2102** — Atwan takes indefinite medical leave from the Sokoto police force and begins developing the Upeo wa Macho the next year.

**2104** — The Norça spearhead a private effort to colonize the recently discovered Averiguas before the orders even go public.

**2106** — The psi orders reveal their existence to humanity at large.

**2107** — First public contact with an alien race, which the explorers name the "Qin." Relations go well, and a human embassy is established on the Qin homeworld the following year. The Upeo also visit the Crab Nebula, discovering an interior region relatively free of dense gases. Construction of the Karroo research and mining station begins by 2109. Additionally, regular teleport relays begin between China and Khantze Lu Ge colony.

**2110** — Hampsah Cisse leads a sizable Upeo expedition to a new system suspected of having sentient life. The expedition never returns, and the region proves to be uninhabited. Years later, the Upeo learn that the expedition was captured by Chromatics. Also that year, Kupita explorer Ruan Curwin discovers a small habitable moon, which is secretly established as an Upeo relay site.

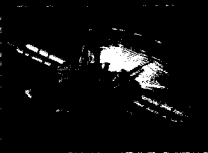
**2112** — The UAN sponsors the colonization of a recently discovered world. The colony is named Far Nyumba. Also that year, the Upeo discover human miners from "Eden." The people turn out to be descendants of Aberrant followers who left Earth during the war.

**2113** — First contact with the Chromatics in their attack on Karroo colony. Also in that time, teleporters investigate Eden and find it to be a peaceful world. Atwan discloses the planet's existence to her fellow proxies later that year.

**2114** — August 17, the Upeo flee from Earth at the threat of capture by the other psi orders. At the same time, the *Esperanza* orbital station is attacked by Aberrants and shoved from its L1 point into the Earth, destroying the station and much of France.

**2114-2120** — Contact with the extrasolar colonies is lost. The Upeo furtively maintain relations with select individuals on the colonies and on Earth. The Aeon Trinity and the psi orders work to restore interstellar capability.

**2121** — Present time; Leviathan jump ships duplicate the Upeos' star-spanning talent; relations with the colonies is restored. The teleporters return and all psi orders face scrutiny for their internal conflict during the *Esperanza* crisis.





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&gt;&gt;&gt; Nyota Kukumbatia Spaceport, 2106 &lt;&lt;&lt;

Andrea licked her lips, nervous. "So uh, what happens to me if I get... lost?"

Her instructor, Moussa, crossed his arms and glared. "You're not going to get lost. Only one student ever got lost doing a short jump like this, and he was drunk and showing off, without supervision."

"But it can happen, right?"

Moussa's nostrils flared with impatience, making darker pits in his black face. "Andrea, if you want to start all over studying something other than translocation — and irritating another teacher in the process — I suggest you go now and get an early start. Don't stand here making excuses." He stuck out one hand. The world swam and twirled around Andrea for just a moment, then she was standing on Moussa's desk in front of him, his hand on her hip.

"But," he continued, "if you *are* incompetent enough to get lost, I will bring you back just like that. Now, no more stalling. Go."

Andrea huffed, stepping to the floor. She looked at the "X" that Moussa had drawn three meters away. She stared, then reached out with her new, extra sense, feeling the space, the way the substance of the walls, floor and ceiling filled the area, the way the air felt different over there, the shapes the sunlight made passing through the *there-ness*. She felt her own location, the relation between the two. She felt the difference, as if that difference was through something that was somehow *everywhere*.

Taking a deep breath, Andrea closed her eyes and pushed space aside. When she opened her eyes again, the X was beneath her feet.

&gt;&gt;&gt; Paris, 2110 &lt;&lt;&lt;

Andrea was leafing through a catalogue, wondering just how *haute couture* she could get without looking ridiculous. Now that money was no object, she figured she might as well dress appropriate to her station. She turned a page, smirked a little at the picture of Djhee Dauwi under a streetlight wearing little more than attitude, and thought, *I'd never have the guts to wear that*. Maybe she'd take Jeanette shopping, get her to try

on something besides those horrible blouses and Luna pants....

She felt the outer door of her office open. Concentrating, Andrea sensed space being taken up by the forms of Jeanette and someone she couldn't recognize offhand. She turned her chair and drew in a breath to speak as the door slammed open. When she saw the pallor on Jeanette's face, though, Andrea let her have the floor.

"Andrea, there's... it's at a school I think, hostages! Something horrible is going to happen; it's coming up *fast*!"

Responding more to the young clairsentient's tone than her actual words, Andrea moved quickly to her gun cabinet. "Jeanette, slow down," she said while keying the lock. "Who's holding the hostages?"

"I don't know, but they... they might kill them. Oh god, the doors are shutting...."

Andrea knew Jeanette well enough to know what that meant. A possible future was crystallizing, becoming more probable, more real. It didn't sound like a good one.

"How many men?"

"I can't see; I only see the kids; they're going to kill them... diplomats, it's at one of the embassy schools!"

"Where are the goddamn Legions?"

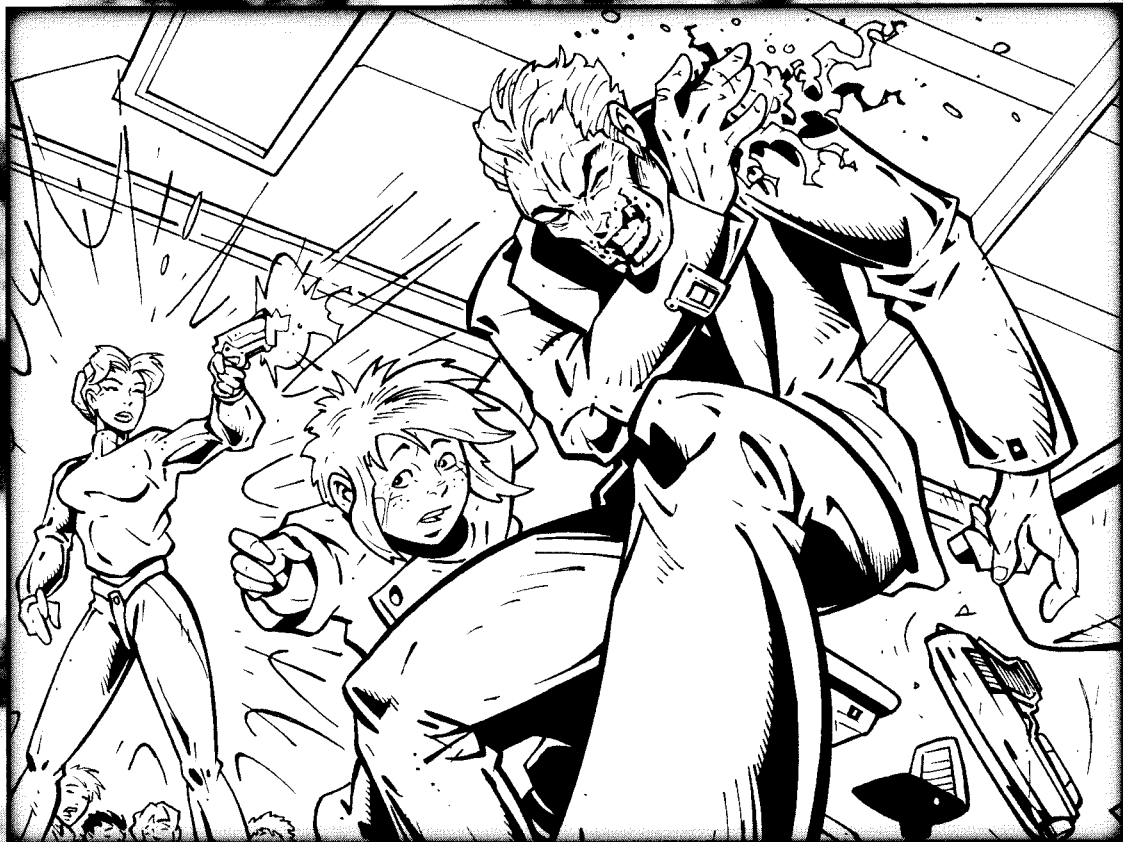
Andrea muttered, barely registering the Voss carbine she grabbed from the cabinet.

"Aberrant attack in Luna orbit."

Jeanette's companion spoke for the first time, and Andrea realized it was Chow Deng Lee. Andrea flushed slightly through the fear and adrenaline the sudden crisis had triggered in her. She'd always liked the strong, silent type, and Chow fit the bill nicely.

Danger always made Andrea a little aroused, for some reason. Almost on its own, her spatial sense darted out, registering just how firm the Ministry telepath's body was under that uniform....

Even as she brought her wayward thoughts under control, Andrea felt the familiar embrace of Chow's telepathic contact. Usually he asked, but in an emergency like this... Andrea had only a moment to feel wildly embarrassed before Chow slid Jeanette's vision into her mind. Then any



thoughts of Chow Deng Lee were washed away by the vividness of a sight not her own. She crouched, making herself as small as possible, and jumped —

— into the back of a cloakroom. Even though she'd phased in slowly to ease the displacement and reduce her sound of arrival, she still expected the terrorists to rush in. Nothing. Instead, Andrea heard the sobs of children and the shouts of a man, something in the flat, clogged tones of a Nordamerican. *Only thing louder than a jump is a loud Yank*, she thought as she moved forward.

Putting an eye to the door crack, Andrea spied a blond man in a business suit, with short-cropped hair. With his head turned down to his lapel, he was yelling into a phone brooch. He had a gun in his right hand, one that fit the terrorist perfectly — big, ugly and lethal. His left arm was wrapped around the neck of a young kid — maybe eight or nine, not really old enough to have an obvious gender. The gun was pointed at the child's temple.

"...our brothers released," the man was saying, "and your little baby ticks can go back to sucking the blood out of North America, just like their parents...." He was really starting to yell now, his

face becoming redder and redder. Andrea reached out, feeling the space.... There were a number of small masses in the room's center, a mass of similar size to Blondie in the back corner opposite the cloakroom, and one more outside in the hall. Reflexively, she glanced down at her carbine and saw **LOW BATTERY** spelled out on the display.

Three men, five shots, maybe a dozen kids. Shit.

Andrea took a deep breath, put the carbine's barrel at the doorway crack, aimed with her eyes... aimed with her *mind*, feeling the location of her laser and the base of Blondie's neck. *One shot, make it count*. She exhaled, pulled the trigger, and the terrorist's head was sliced from his body in a sear of light and ozone.

The other terrorist in the room reacted immediately to the laser shot, opening fire on the cloakroom — a noisy slugthrower like the one his dead friend had — but Andrea wasn't there anymore. She didn't worry about stealth now; the boom of her arrival at the front of the classroom punctuated the sound of his pistol. He was still turning when she fired.

The terrorist screamed, blood frothing from his mouth as he dropped his gun and flailed at his left shoulder. His shirt had caught fire, and beneath

was nothing but charred meat. *Down, but not out*, Andrea thought, *have to—*

There was a thunderclap and Andrea felt a sledgehammer smash her leg. She crumpled, turning as she fell. The last terrorist, dark-haired and dark-eyed, came through the doorway and stepped around the desk for a second shot. Andrea brought up the carbine as pain flared through her leg, thumbing the switch to full auto. She saw his eyes go wide as the last dregs of the Voss' battery sent a ragged beam arcing toward him... and then blackness closed around her.

>>> <<<

Andrea opened her eyes in a hospital room. It was night, and the agony in her leg had died down to a dull throb. The lights were off, but she felt the shape in the corner chair moments before it moved to turn on the lights. It was Chow.

"Hello Andrea. How are you feeling?"

"Thirsty." She had barely said it before he was at her side, holding a cup to her lips.

"The news is filled with stories of your bravery," he said. "The parents of the children are showing great public gratitude."

She swallowed. "Oh?"

"Indeed." His face was calm, but was there a touch of a smile at the corner of his mouth.

"Were you waiting for me to wake up?" she asked. "I was."

She had been deeply frightened that afternoon in the classroom, surrounded by screaming children and the stink of ozone and gun smoke. Now she felt an entirely different fear.

"Why was that, Chow?"

"This afternoon, before you left, I was... perhaps a little abrupt in forming our link. I apologize. Through no intention of my own, I happened to... perceive the surface of your thoughts."

Andrea looked down at her covers and briefly considered blinking away. *Anywhere.*

"Can you forgive me for my trespass?" he asked.

She merely cleared her throat, embarrassed. Then she felt his hand sliding under the covers, reaching for her own.

"Even if what I saw... pleased me?"

Gently, he raised her hand to his lips and kissed her knuckles.

>>> Zanzibar/Nyota Kukumbatia/

Low Orbit, 2114 <<<

The board meeting for Mayhew Industries was relaxed, casual. Why not? A famous and re-

spected jumper was its founder, and business was brisk. Everyone wanted their cargo shipped between the stars with Mayhew, but only the most lucrative contracts could afford it. She wasn't a household name, but her endorsement of the Voss 63K laser carbine back in '10 had provided plenty of capital to expand her business as an interstellar courier.

Her marketing expert, Vaughn, was trying to convince her once again to try to get into show biz. "I'm not saying you're hologenic, Andrea — I mean no offense, none of us here really are — but in your case that can be an asset. 'Everyday woman, but also psion, explorer, the heroine of—'"

Andrea's phone interrupted him with a pre-emptory buzz. "Claris, I thought I said we weren't to be disturbed," she said into the receiver.

"It's Proxy Atwan on one."

Andrea blinked. "Put her through!"

"Andrea, come to Nyota Kukumbatia. Now." Bolade Atwan's voice was tense, without preamble.

"Bolade, what's—"

"It's an emergency. Come here now. I can't stay on this line. Good-bye."

Andrea broke the connection, looked at the board of directors.

"Gentlemen, you'll have to excuse me." With those words, she went.

As she 'ported in, Andrea saw that the familiar training room at Nyota Kukumbatia already contained a dozen of Andrea's old classmates, and the air shook with the sounds of more arrivals. Her old teacher, Moussa, suddenly appeared nearby, his face grim.

"Moussa, what's happening?"

"I don't know exactly, but I do know this: The TEAR units have all been jumped out, and they're preparing to move the Prometheus chamber."

"What? That's insane!" Then details started clicking into place. "Moussa... is it Plan K?"

"I think so."

Andrea sat down hard. Plan K — the Upeo wa Macho plans to evacuate from Earth in case of total Aberrant overrun. It made no sense....

"Why now? Have... has there been an attack?"

"Andrea, I don't know. Right now, I'm not going to wait to find out: I have to get my family to the Sphere."

There was a brittle crackle as loudspeakers throughout the complex came on. The voice of Gerard Portois — one of Atwan's "inner circle" — filled the air.

"My fellow Upeo, the day we all feared — the day we leave Earth behind — has arrived. You all know the plan. Those of you who can reach the Sphere on your own, please go there now. Take what you can carry, with an emphasis on computer gear and survival equipment...."

Andrea shook her head, stood and made her way toward the proxy's office. She had to push through crowds of people, some panicking, some trying to keep order, others simply bewildered.

Andrea blustered past a protesting secretary and found herself face to face with Khaldun al-Masna — next to Bouchiki, the proxy's closest confidante. He put his bulk squarely between her and Atwan's office. Behind him, she could see Portois mopping his brow as he spoke into a microphone.

"Khaldun, what the hell is going on? It's not Aberrants — even *they* couldn't cripple a whole planet this fast. And there was *nothing* on the news, no one was sounding alarms in Zanzibar —"

"It's not Aberrants, and it's not Earth. It's us, Andrea. The other orders are coming for us."

"What? That's crazy! What do you mean, 'coming for us'? Look, I want to speak with Bolade."

"Everyone wants to speak with Bolade, and no one gets to."

"Khaldun, I'm not just another —"

"Right now you *are*. Look, I know you're rich and famous, but unless you get behind Plan K, you're going to be the richest, most famous *slave* for Orgotek or the Legions. Bolade just got back from a meeting of the proxies, and she's convinced that they're going to break Upeo into a million pieces."

Andrea's jaw sagged.

"They can't do that to me! I'll... I could...."

Khaldun's dark eyes narrowed.

"Look, if you want to stay and fight, be my guest. In fact, if you do, I'll let you see Atwan — just long enough for her to break your powers."

Andrea paled.

"I thought that was only an urban legend. She can really do that?"

"She's already done it four times today. The gate opens in..." Khaldun squinted at his watch, "...seventy minutes. Atwan will hold it open for six minutes. After it shuts, no one comes back to Earth. Do you understand?"

Andrea just stared.

"Look woman, decide now. Either you're with us or not. If you're not, leave your powers here

and get out of the way. If you're with us, get to the transportal and get through it."

"My ship. Khaldun, what about my ship? If I can get it here in time, can I take it through the 'portal'? It's a good ship, Khaldun, and we'll need hybrids."

His jaw tightened, then suddenly he laughed.

"You don't quit, do you? Get your bloody ship — but if it's not here in half an hour, I'm pulling you out of the cockpit and shoving you through the gate."

"Forty minutes. Can you make it 40 minutes? It's in orbit now."

He shook his head. "Fine, 40 minutes..." Andrea didn't wait to hear the rest; she just went to the cockpit of her ship.

"Jesus!" It was Murphy, her favorite co-pilot. "Andrea, what the hell? Don't sneak up on me like that!"

"Hi, Murph. Is the *Duke* ready to fly?"

"Fueled up and fine. Where are we going?"

"Is Brutus on board?"

"Yeah, he's napping back in your hammock."

He saw that she was preparing to leave the space station, and he narrowed his eyes. "Andrea, is this some kind of emergency?"

"Yes, it is."

Without another word, Murph started prepping the ship with her. She felt a flood of gratitude... and remembered that Murphy had a wife and two daughters on Luna. Without even asking, she knew where his loyalties were.

"Murph... I left a package in my apartment here. It's, uh, about the size of a datapad, wrapped in brown paper. I'd hop but I have to save my energy for a jump."

Murphy smiled. "Yeh, I'll get it. Gimme the key."

"Great. Oh, and can you put Brutus in her g-box? We may have to make some sharp moves."

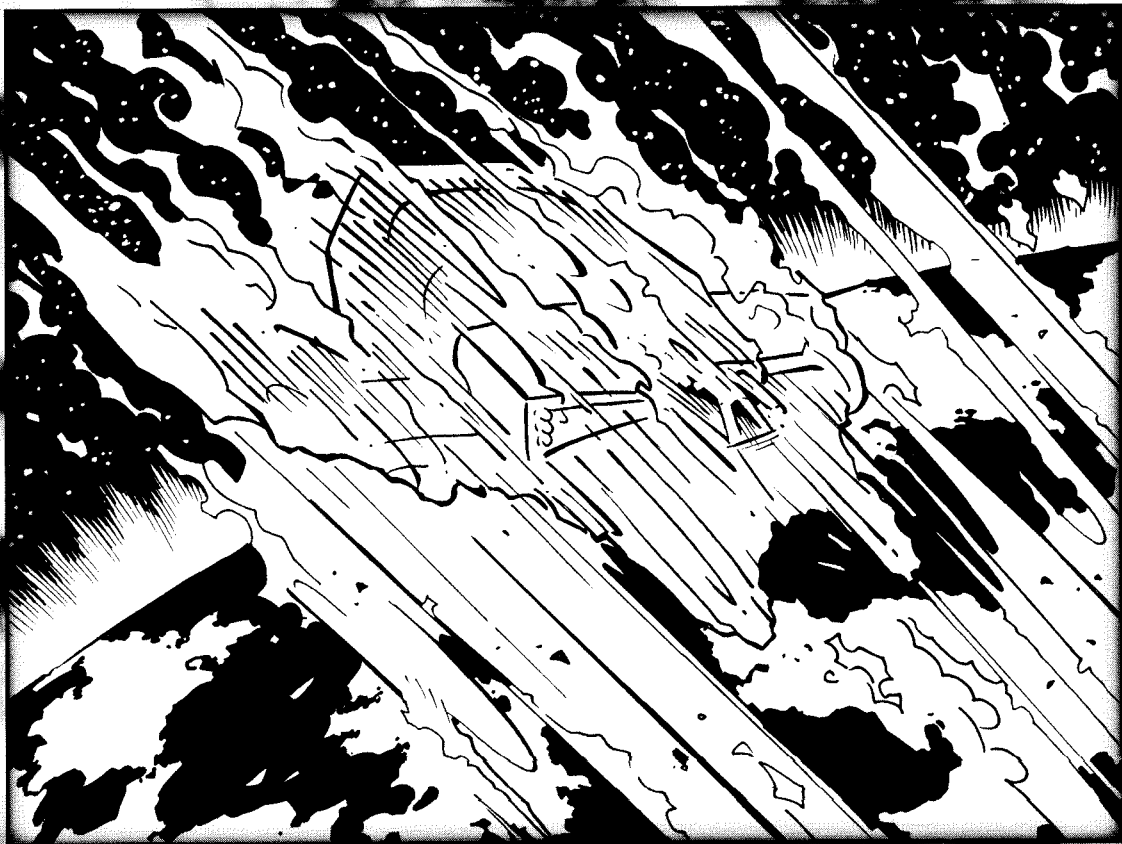
"I'll get her on my way out."

After Murphy left, Andrea redoubled her efforts to unlink the *Duke*. She was interrupted by an incoming call from the board meeting she'd left.... Christ, was it already a half-hour ago?

"Andrea? What the hell is going on? Legal just called. Our assets have been frozen! I'm not sure, but there's rumblings about a hostile takeover from WEI. What's happening? Wait, they — shit Andrea, they just froze your personal accounts too! Who's *doing* this?!"

"Don't know Jane, don't know. And if I never see you again, it was good working with you." She





cut the connection, patched through to an exterior camera and saw Murphy pulling his way along the transparent corridor to the airlock. A flick at her display told her when he'd cycled through the airlock. As soon as he was clear, she detached.

The voice of the control tower crackled across her speakers. "*Detroit Duke*, what are you doing? You're not cleared—"

"Emergency. Top-secret psion business. Nyota Kukumbatia Spaceport's under attack and I'm going in. Clear people out of my way, yeh?"

"Nyota's under *attack*?! We're registering nothing here—"

"Just clear me a route, all right? I'm taking it at Steep Eight."

"Are you sure you can handle that many g's? That's... that's a killer descent...."

"Roger that, but I'm on a time crunch here. I'm going in."

"Godspeed, *Detroit Duke*."

She wished she could just jump the ship right to Nyota, but part of Plan K involved blocking any 'ports to the area. It'd be best to save her energy

just in case and use the time she had to scream in on the *Duke*. The last part of her descent was going to be vicious, but for the first 10 minutes she could take a deep, low cut into the atmosphere, lose as much altitude as she could before Africa passed the horizon. Once she adjusted somewhat to the crushing g-force, Andrea punched a number into her comm set.

Chow answered on the first ring.

"Chow, where are you?"

"I'm in Morocco, Andrea. What's happening?"

"No time to explain. You remember Djibo, right? He's from Morocco. I'm going to put you through to him, he'll come get you and take you to Nyota Kukumbatia—"

"Andrea." Something in his tone made her stop. "Andrea, what is the Upeo wa Macho doing?"

She gulped. "We have to leave, Chow. I'll explain later, all right? Just, please, trust me, we have to leave *right now*."

"I do not think I can do that, Andrea."

"Chow."

"I think it makes much more sense for you to stay behind."

"I can't. There's no way, they.... Chow, don't you love me?"

There was silence for a moment.

"I love China too, Andrea."

Then the soft click of a broken connection.

As Africa grew closer, Andrea steepened her descent. The g-forces pulled her tears back into her ears, and she felt the skin getting tight on her face; she felt the yield of her military spec gravity chair. Her vision grayed out as her eyeballs pressed back on the optic nerve, and every joint began to ache with a dull, deep pain.

"*Detroit Duke*, change course! This is the UAN Air Defense Force, pull up and land in Djibouti at once!"

"Negative, UAN... going to Nyota Kukumbatia. Aberrant incursion... no time to explain."

"*Detroit Duke*, the Aberrant incursion is at Earth's L1 point! *Esperanza* is under attack. Repeat, all psion personnel to defense of the *Esperanza*, immediately!"

Reflexively, Andrea rolled her eyes. With the g-forces, it was agonizing. She switched comm stations to the Nyota Kukumbatia base channel. "Nyota base... the gate open? This is... *Detroit Duke*."

"*Detroit Duke*, the transportal opens in t-minus 40 seconds." It was Khaldun. "That's landing

strip 90, can you make that in five minutes and 40 seconds, over?"

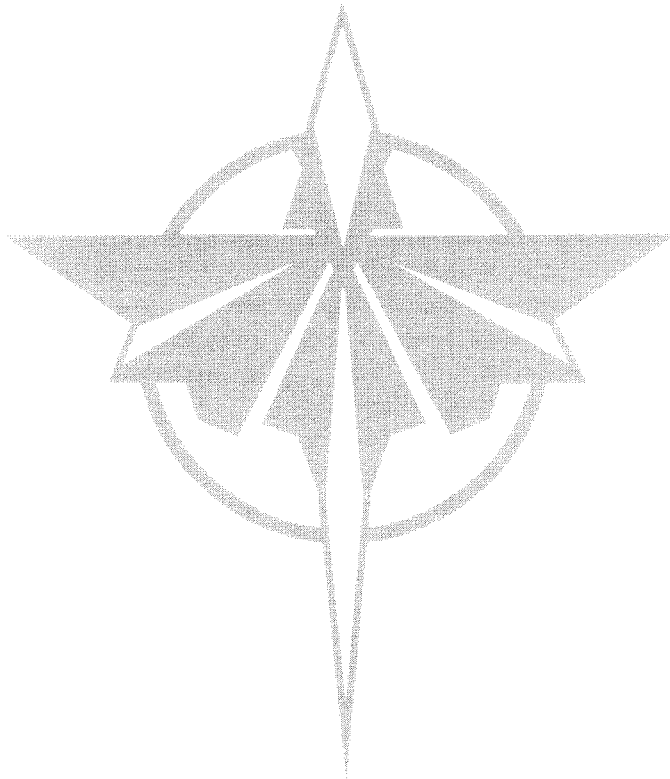
Five minutes and 40 seconds... she'd have to speed it up still more, the *Duke* was already white hot from reentry... she tried to calculate how fast she'd be going when she entered the transportal.

"Roger that... Khaldun, can you... warp down the *Duke*? Need a... dime stop."

"Don't ask for much, do you Andrea? Shit. I've got a lot of people pushing back the Legions, I'll shift some to you...."

The terrain was perfectly flat, and her trajectory leveled out a kilometer over the ground. Far in the distance she could see a curve of light — the transportal, slowly phasing the entire landing pad out of Earth's noetic field. She could feel space stretching around her as dozens of Upeo used their spatial warping abilities to expand the space between themselves and the advancing forces. That same warped space would effectively slow her ship, letting her get into the dome. Below her she could see a fleet of skimmers, ground cars and VARGs moving toward the spaceport.

Andrea dropped the *Duke* to the floor, rattling the invasion force with a sonic boom, and aimed for the rippling dome of light.





We hope you like what you've read of **Stellar Frontier** so far. Here, we're making a transition from the subjective setting material to the objective rules material — going from substance to structure, if you will. Just to keep things orderly, there's a brief overview below of what's going on with this book as a whole.

## The Upeo wa Macho

At long last, you get the inside dope on the mysterious teleporter psions. These are the interstellar explorers, the travelers, humanity's first envoys to the deeper reaches of space.

While their power is great, however, they are an embattled order. They took to the stars with open minds and a generous philosophy. But as a consequence of their trust, they've been used cruelly by the Chromatics and driven from Earth by the other psi orders.

Now that recontact has been made, the Upeo wa Macho is at a turning point: Can its members remain true to their original philosophy of trust and openness, despite the betrayals they've suffered; or will they turn to self-interest, making any future deep-space endeavors — and humanity itself — poorer for it?

The Upeo wa Macho always saw itself as a force for unity — bringing new worlds to the human race, and reinforcing a group identity for all of settled space. Now that unity is threatened from within and without.

## Extrasolar Colonies

For six years, the colonies outside our Solar System largely had to fend for themselves. The Upeo helped when they could, but the jumpers were few — and many colonists saw the teleporters' refusal to return to Earth as selfish and bewildering.

Each of the known colonies has faced challenges. Khantze Lu Ge fell under constant pressure from Aberrant occupation. Karroo lived in fear of the Chromatics — and of their enigmatic "defenders." The Qin Embassy dwelled in the heart of a complex alien society. Averiguas mixed political unrest with the struggle for survival. Far Nyumba faced the mysteries of alien artifacts and the fear of starvation.

Every colony has struggled, and every colony has been very much alone. While most are happy to be back in contact with Earth, in

almost every case there is some sense of resentment as well. These newcomers from the jump ships don't really understand what it was like to be isolated for six years, but now they waltz in and expect the colonies to return to being an outgrowth of their parent nation — or parent company, or parent order. The colonies have had freedom thrust upon them: It's an open question whether they'll give it up.

## How to Use This Book

**Stellar Frontier** focuses on the Upeo wa Macho and on Earth's once "lost" colonies. Here's how it's arranged.

### Setting

The preceding full-color section is set up as a dossier to the influential *Æon Trinity*. While your characters may have access to much of that information, remember that it's not all necessarily *true*. Even the most impartial researcher is subject to bias, and *Æon's* operatives are as human as anyone.

### Rules

The black-and-white section to follow takes a closer look at the teleporter psions and the deep-space colonies from an objective game standpoint.

- For the Upeo, you learn how jumpers are recruited, what their organization is like, and what powers they can command.
- For the colonies, you find deeper details about their history, their societies, and the threats and opportunities that each settlement faces.
- There are descriptions of new equipment — some of it invented by the stranded colonists, some specific to the Upeo, and some acquired from the Qin or the Edenites.
- Finally, there are descriptions of important jumpers and noteworthy colonists, along with ready-to-use character templates.

## Your Ticket to Ride

**Stellar Frontier** covers a lot of ground, but it's not exhaustive. It provides characters and Storytellers with new information, but this is hardly all there is to deep space. As with any *Trinity* sourcebook, keep what you like, and modify, explore and customize the rest. After all, it's your game.

## Star Walking

The Upeo have never been many in number. This is due in large part to the minimum latency required to channel Teleportation properly. The manner in which the order handles recruitment, and Proxy Atwan's desire to personally interview each applicant further limits Upeo membership.

The order's teleporters were never aggressive about recruiting new members in the way that the other psi orders' psions were. Latent psions are rare already. Of that number, only one latent in a hundred (if that) has the psi potential to become a teleporter. Using jumpers to search for latent blinks is seen as a waste of a rare resource. Instead, the Upeo find latent teleporters one of two ways.

The first is to rely on references from other orders. Every order wants help from the Upeo, and finding a latent jumper is one of the surest ways to get on the order's good side.

The second is for those Upeo known as Nguzo to look for them. These folk consist mainly of the order's neutral support staff, but also show a sizable contingent of psions originally with other psi orders. Of all the Nguzo psions, clairsentients are most useful in finding latents. After all, their talents are especially well suited to finding a needle in a haystack (or as they tend to say it, "the jewel in the garden").

## Approval

Getting into the Upeo has always required more than just having appropriate latency, however. Each applicant must be approved by Bolade Atwan before being allowed into the order's Prometheus chamber. Gaining this approval is not simple.

The first step is an interview with the proxy, in which Atwan asks a number of questions about the applicant's life, history, values and ambitions. These interviews can take up to four hours, with the questions becoming increasingly pointed. Very few latents are rejected solely on the basis of the interview. Generally, those rejected have clear mental instabilities, or Bolade judges them to be members of "the criminal subculture." (This judgment is very subjective: The proxy has accepted people with criminal records, as long as she felt they had tried to make an honest break from their past. On the other hand, she has rejected several latents who had never been convicted or ar-

rested, because she felt they were "crooks in the making.")

Once the applicant gets past the interview, he's in for a period of "education." The form this takes is tailored specifically to the applicant. The new student takes a battery of tests — physical, intellectual, educational and psychological — in order to evaluate his capacities and measure him for various roles in the organization.

### Option: Minimum Latency

Teleporters have always been a special case in both setting and game terms. Translating mass into psi energy and back again takes a lot of concentration, power and skill. Not just anyone can pull it off.

For the most part, players can explore such uniqueness through roleplay. A Storyteller may also require a starting teleporter character to meet certain Trait minimums. As a general guide, a base of 7 Willpower and 6 Psi appropriately reflects the strength of will and noetic talent a jumper needs.

Obviously, this ends up benefiting the teleporter (large dice pools are always good), but can limit where her player spends starting points. It also makes the character fairly sensitive to noetic flux, making backlash an ongoing concern.

After completing these lessons (which can take up to two months), the next stage is a series of "apprenticeships." The student is taken along with jumpers on a wide variety of missions — everything from emergency work in deep space to diplomatic meetings with the Qin or business negotiations with metanats.

Six months after the initial interview, the applicant — who still has not gone through the Prometheus chamber — is asked to choose a field he would like to work in after "graduation." Once that fateful decision is made, the next six months are a grueling, high-pressure regimen of training designed to prepare the applicant for his new role in Upeo wa Macho. It doesn't matter how capable (or incompetent) he was in the beginning. This training is designed to test his limits, as extrapolated by the tests and by his actions as an apprentice.

The applicant meets Atwan a year after his first interview for a follow-up. At the end of the talk, he is given three options: leave the program, remain latent and work for the Upeo as a Nguzo, or take the final test to become a teleporter.

Few applicants who reach this point take the first two options, but it's not unheard-of. An applicant who leaves the Upeo at this point receives compensation for the past year, while one who joins the Nguzo is directed to that group for his specific assignment.

Atwan reserves her decision to let the applicant finish the course. This is done after the latent makes his choice — and only if he picks the third option. At times, someone the proxy is going to reject anyway chooses to leave voluntarily. Those rejected from the Upeo are often encouraged to apply to other orders — usually ISRA or the Legions, depending on personal inclination.

The rare few who make it to this final stage must take one last test, known as the long walk.

### The Long Walk

When the Upeo were still based on Earth, the applicant was asked to pick out portable travel essentials and report to the order's headquarters, Nyota Kukumbatia. There, he was given a deadline. "Get back here in six weeks," an applicant might be told — or 24 hours, or even a year. (Longer time spans usually indicated more difficult walks, but not always.)

At that point, the applicant was teleported away. In theory, the destination could be anywhere — an FSA prison, the Pit on Luna, the human embassy on Qin, or even an abandoned mining shack in the Asteroid Belt.

In practice, it was rare for a student to be sent outside the Solar System. The long walk is meant to test the applicant's ability to travel without teleporting, and returning from deep space depended on an Upeo jump of some sort. Furthermore, while there were rumors of certain applicants being jumped without their gear, money or even clothing, these instances (if they happened at all) were reserved for the most resourceful and/or difficult students.

If the applicant could make it back to the Upeo base within the allotted time — regardless of how he traveled (be it begging, borrowing, stealing, stowing away or working for passage) he is finally ushered into the Prometheus chamber.

### The Exile

The recruitment and training of new teleporters slowed almost to a stop during the Upeo's six-year isolation in space, but it never completely ended. New latents were sought in the colonies. Even on Earth, the Upeo retained enough contacts (even some moles within Æon Trinity!) to find a few latents. Earthside latents were watched for months and approached only with great caution in case they were being used as bait by other orders. A Long Rider actually passed up a particularly strong latent who was indeed being monitored by the Æsculapian Black Company.

For these recent recruits, the long walk involves being sent out into the wilderness of Ruan's World. Since this environment can be extremely hostile, the Upeo secretly kept an eye on the applicants, intervening if the subject was obviously in mortal danger. With the Upeos' return to Earth, the long walk is performed both in near space and on Ruan's World — whichever is considered most appropriate to the applicant.

### The New Psions

The Prometheus Effect is such a powerful experience that most jumpers form a type of psionic link to the chamber. Even though immersion only lasts a few hours, the sensation is so strong that the chamber area is considered Very Familiar (see p. 73) for the purposes of teleportation.

Jumpers recently emerged from the chamber are often severely disoriented by the expanded senses they gain. Headaches, dizziness and even nausea are common for a few days. After they become acclimated, many psions wonder how they ever made it through life without Spatial Sense.

The new psion decides which Modes he wishes to learn, and an expert tutor volunteers for instruction. Pedagogical styles vary widely between tutors — some are very nurturing and encouraging, while others resemble brutal psionic drill sergeants.

Regardless of attitude, the techniques taught are quite similar. The first step is learning to draw a correspondence between what is being *seen* and what is being *perceived* five-dimensionally (the fourth dimension being time, and the fifth being the subquantum universe). When that is accomplished, the student learns that the normal perceived sense of location is not fixed. With some techniques, that “locality” can be stretched, changed or transposed.

Once a student masters a few basic effects, he is sent into the field to gain familiarity with them through use. He’s only shown new techniques after he’s demonstrated competence with the ones he already knows.

## Maintaining Order

While everyone in Upeo wa Macho believes in the order’s overarching goals, the organization’s free-form structure tends to sort different people into different duties, guided not only by their Aptitudes but by their attitudes. Some jumpers want to concentrate on maintaining relationships with the worlds humanity has already reached. Others are fascinated by finding new ones.

No blink is forced to take any job. However, Bolade Atwan appreciates a strong sense of duty. Most jumpers are willing to put their personal goals aside for the good of the order. The proxy’s word carries a lot of clout.

If push comes to shove, there are a couple threats that the Upeo wa Macho can use against individual members. The first is censure. After the diaspora, the order became the closest thing to a family that most Upeo have. The threat of being ostracized by that social group is ominous enough.

Those who steadfastly refuse to see reason can actually be stripped of their powers. This is

a particularly devastating experience — irreversible and leaving the subject in some ways less than what he was before being triggered. (In game terms, the character loses all Aptitude use and his Willpower drops to 2. He retains his Psi rating, but the score is halved for purposes of Attunement and *doubled* for purposes of backlash.) Though each proxy can strip psions of similar Aptitude, only Atwan, Bue and del Fuego have ever done so. It’s obviously an extreme measure, and the other proxies prefer to try rehabilitation or, at most, power suppression via a BAN (see **Hidden Agendas**, p. 39).

Atwan used this threat to enforce quarantine of the Solar System during the Upeo exile. Any teleporter caught going into near space without the proxy’s say-so would lose the ability to teleport. The Upeo learned that the proxy was dead serious when she revealed techniques that allowed her to sense a jumper’s transit, tracked down the first few rogues and stripped them of their powers.

## The Sphere

After helping ISRA construct its “space station” *Huruf al-Hayy* (see **Luna Rising** for details), Proxy Atwan decided that a private, secluded orbital station was a pretty good idea. Her version is simply called the Sphere, and only Bolade Atwan and the clairsentient Diego Bouchiki know the location of the Sphere’s star system — or even what type of system it is. Many blinks know how to get to the Sphere itself, of course: Once a jumper has been brought in and familiarized himself with the station’s sensory impressions, returning is easy. Getting to the Sphere is different from knowing *where* it is, though. None of those Upeo can guide a Leviathan to the system or locate it on a star map. (A teleporter could translate a ship *inside* the Sphere, but the results would be disastrous for all concerned.)

As with the construction of the ISRA haven, Atwan hollowed out a large asteroid — almost a planetoid. The Sphere’s interior is (as one might guess) spherical, and stretched four kilometers across. The entire planetoid maintains a constant spin, creating a comfortable .75g on the inner equator without recourse to pseudo-gravity grids.



At the Sphere's center is a second spherical chamber, one kilometer in diameter, connected by struts to the planetoid's interior "north and south poles." This inner chamber is home to Bolade Atwan, the Inner Circle, and the Upeo wa Macho Prometheus chamber. Unknown to most people outside the order's higher ranks, the inner sphere has separate, independent life support as well as thrusters and weapon systems. If the Sphere is ever compromised, the inner core can be teleported away and function as a spaceship.

The Sphere is Spartan in design, but quite secure. There are no portals to the exterior: The only way into the Sphere is by jumping. Further, no one is allowed outside the Sphere, and variations on psi dampeners (see p. 118) are placed around the Sphere's exterior to disrupt attempts at clairsentient scans from inside or out. Most Upeo believe that the Sphere is tucked away somewhere in one of the known star systems — near Ruan's World or Qinshui are the most popular speculations. It actually belongs to a system that has no large planets, only a gigantic, dense asteroid belt

that makes navigation a nightmare. As if that wasn't bad enough, the system's sun is a red giant that puts out enough radiation to seriously interfere with astrogation, sensors and communication. (The interior of the Sphere is protected from this radiation by thick walls and additional shielding.) The Sphere is close enough to the star that it stays comfortably warm, but not so close that it's in danger from one of the frequent solar flares. On the plus side, the solar flares provide plenty of power to run the Sphere's systems, though there are three backup hyper-fusion generators.

Inside, the Sphere contains living chambers for close to 3,000 people — almost three times the current number of all Upeo wa Macho. There are a few parks and recreation facilities, but most of the Sphere is currently being used for emergency supplies, laboratories and training areas.

Every jumper has living space reserved in the Sphere, but only a few consider it "home." Despite attempts to make it more comfortable and inviting, it's hard to get away from the idea that the Sphere is little more than the Upeos' ultimate bolt-hole.



## On the Horizon:

### Life in the Upeo

The divisions within Upeo wa Macho are much less rigid than, say, those of Orgotek. The following section lists each group's leader, Allegiance philosophy and Ability cluster. For more information on Allegiance and Ability groups, see *Trinity*, pp. 179 and 166, respectively.

While it is possible to switch duties, this should happen during the course of play: leaving the Monitors for Kupita can be the focus of a story in itself. When building a starting character pick *one* duty. If your character switches in the course of play, his Allegiance shifts, but his Ability ratings don't change.

### Long Riders

Jennifer Shojiki originally developed this group to act as messengers and light-cargo carriers between the colonies and Earth, but the Long Riders now act primarily as the Upeos' intelligence gatherers. Instead of moving openly, the Riders now mostly move in secret, working through intermediaries and relaying important information.

The Long Rider communication relay's limitation is one that is shared by all teleporters: familiarity. An Upeo has tremendous difficulty teleporting himself or other matter to any location for which he lacks a clear sense impression. The time investment needed to establish reliable "psionic coordinates" is substantial — and considering how valuable a jumper's time is, few are willing to take the months required to establish a new location as "familiar." As such, riders have standard routes that they follow.

Some riders with strong ties to certain regions still carry messages around, keeping the locals up to speed on the rest of humanity's activities. Other teleporters who can transport large quantities of matter send it to distant areas rather than going themselves. While they might rarely leave the planet, these "senders" are tremendously useful for directing equipment, produce or personnel to a specific destination. Such Long Riders often spend as much of their time overseeing the movement of materiel on their homeworld's surface as they do sending matter to distant systems.

**Allegiance:** What's the point of colonizing space if your colonies can't thrive? Trouble starts when

worlds get too isolated: They forget that they're part of a larger community. Communication, news, commerce and art are the lifeblood of interstellar humanity — and you're one of the arteries.

**Ability Group:** Awareness, Etiquette, Intrusion, Linguistics, Stealth, Subterfuge

### The Monitors

This group originally focused on search-and-rescue — Rescue Squad Zero was the highest-profile team the order had. Since the Upeo fled, the Monitors have expanded their duties even further, to include investigation as well as emergency relief.

If something weird happens on a colony, a Monitor tries to find the truth. If there's an emergency or a disaster, a Monitor tries to stem the loss of life. If someone breaks the law, a Monitor breaks them. Call them caretakers or vigilantes, these individuals share a common drive: to protect the innocent and see justice served.

The Monitors often pop in, do what must be done, and depart again without a word. Sometimes the recipients are grateful; sometimes they're confused, and sometimes they're scared. That doesn't matter to most Monitors. They aren't doing it for recognition. They're doing it because it must be done. For a Monitor, it all boils down to a simple code of conduct:

- Extend your protection to everyone in a colony, regardless of social, financial or cultural status.
- Never use your powers for extortion, nor levy any fees for the use of teleportation for colony defense, safety or law enforcement.
- Respect and obey the laws of your colony.
- Never use teleportation powers or Monitor status to unduly interfere with the governance of any colony.

Khaldun al-Masna leads the Monitors. While he isn't as attentive as Jennifer Shojiki is over her Long Riders, he does watch for abuses of power — and unlike Shojiki, al-Masna isn't as forgiving to those under his command who overstep their bounds.

**Allegiance:** The order has been good to you and can give you backup when the shit *really* hits the fan, but most psions can take care of themselves. Your loyalty is to your chosen homeworld — even if the current political climate means you have to keep your full talents a secret.



**Ability Group:** Command, Firearms, Investigation, Melee, Savvy, Subterfuge  
**Kupita**

Kupita is seen as the most elite segment of Upeo wa Macho. After all, the most powerful teleporters work there, it controls the majority of the Upeo fleet and it gets the lion's share of rare resources like the TEAR devices.

Directed by Gerard Portois, Kupita is dedicated to exploring deep space. The few powerful clairsentients in Upeo wa Macho work with Kupita, scanning for valuable or interesting systems and worlds. When one is found, Kupita opens a transportal and begins exploration.

Not everyone in Kupita must be a powerful warper, however. There's plenty of work for people who can Long Jump or Transmit Objects reliably in the survey ships. Surveyors are the first people to fly into new systems — the first human eyes to look on new stars, planets and systems. It's quite likely that the next time humanity meets an alien race, it will be a Kupita surveyor who makes first contact.

It's an awesome responsibility and an incredible challenge for the elite of the elite. Kupita surveyors are subjected to tremendous psychological pressures — including the stress of being in an aging ship, trillions of miles from help....

**Allegiance:** The universe is vast: No matter how fast we explore it, we'll never be able to see more than a piece of a fraction of a tithe in our lifetimes. Yet even that tiny exposure brings more wonders than we've been able to understand, let alone use. No one knows what wonders are out there waiting to be found. Unless someone's bold enough to take the first step, no one will ever know.

**Ability Group:** Awareness, Endurance, Engineering, Pilot, Science, Survival  
**Nguzo**

The teleporters are the core of the Upeo wa Macho, but the Nguzo fulfil many of the order's vital functions. These folk aren't teleporters — many aren't even psions. But although the Nguzo can't get to a system without the teleporters, teleporters can't *do* much in a system without the Nguzo.

It takes more than Teleportation Modes to colonize space, after all. It takes knowledge, skill, persistence and courage. That's where the Nguzo

come in. Maybe they can't jump a ship from system to system, but they can fly it, land it, and fix it when it breaks. These individuals are also the engineers, miners, doctors, scientists and soldiers the Upeo need to help get the job done. And, perhaps most importantly, Nguzo are friends and loved ones who help create the strong sense of family that runs through the order.

**Allegiance:** Upeo wa Macho is humanity's best hope, both for staying together and for spreading further into the universe. You take your responsibilities to the order very seriously, and do your best to make sure that Upeo are safe and efficient.

**Ability Group:** Athletics, Drive or Pilot, Engineering, Linguistics, Rapport, Science  
**The Star-Crossed**

With the prohibition against contacting Earth lifted, all Upeo finally learned the *Esperanza's* tragic fate. The majority of Upeo understood that the decision to flee Earth on that day was made with the visible threat of impending capture and rival Proxy Cassel's history of shady tactics. Even so, the Star-Crossed cannot ignore the fact that Atwan's decision resulted (even unknowingly) in the death of millions.

These dissenters have formally left the Upeo and claimed the order's old base of Nyota Kukumbatia. Led by Rebecca Gould, these teleporters offer services to any governments, corporations, psi orders, or private concerns with humanitarian goals. The Upeo no longer have a monopoly on interstellar travel.

The Star-Crossed aren't "competing" with the Upeo in a traditional business sense, but there is definitely tension now that "independent" jumpers are operating without the "authorization" and "guidance" of the Upeo wa Macho.

**Allegiance:** You can no longer maintain ties to the Upeo wa Macho. Its current leadership has lost sight of the spirit upon which the order was founded. Helping others now will never make up for past tragedies the Upeos' absence caused, but it's the best you can do.

**Ability Group:** Linguistics, Medicine, Pilot, Rapport, Savvy, Survival

## Upeo Covert Activities

The Upeo have always had a close relationship with the colonies, whether those worlds knew it or not. When you have a hundred or more people

who can pretty much go where they want, whenever they want, it's naturally hard to keep them away from something that really interests them. There wasn't much reported Upeo activity during the order's isolation... but that doesn't mean the Upeo haven't been doing anything.

Initial relations with the Karroo colony showed the Upeo that the colonists might become overly dependent on the teleporters. The order had too few members and was rather paranoid at that point, so the Upeo decided it'd be best to keep a low profile elsewhere.

## Earth

The jumpers have been most cautious in their contact with Earth. Atwan authorized around a dozen Upeo Monitors to stay on incognito. These "secret jumpers" carefully (very carefully) monitored the other orders, the Æon Trinity, and public beliefs about the Upeo disappearance. They were also on the lookout for latent teleporters. Any findings were relayed only to Atwan and her inner circle. The deep-cover spies have remained in secret since relations were restored with Earth.

A few other jumpers disobeyed the proxy's command and returned to Earth — usually to visit their families or offer words of reassurance to close friends. These are the source of some of the countless "teleporter sightings." Only two Upeo were ever caught on Earth and of those two, one managed to escape (and had his powers stripped by Atwan). The remaining prisoner is being held in one of the Central Security Agency's maximum security research facilities in North America's South District.

## Khanzte Lu Ge

There's tension among the teleporters on Khanzte Lu Ge, since they consider KLG a Ministry-run colony. Still, most have put the inter-order conflict on the back burner, and focus on hiding from the Aberrants. The jumpers are almost entirely dedicated to aiding the northern resistance against Kali and Yog-Death. Even so, some Long Riders have made mutually beneficial deals with farmers, merchants and factory managers. The LuGeians arrange for produce or machinery to "fall off the skimmer" or be to reported stolen. The jumpers take the material and allocate it according to their own agenda — either sending it north to support the resistance, or taking it to colonies

that need it. In return for the gear and grub, the LuGeians get various benefits — most commonly, assistance in getting family members out of the occupied territories.

## Qinshui

The Upeo have been in contact with a couple of the human ambassadors on Qinshui — the ones they knew they could trust. A few messages of reassurance got sent home to their families on Earth, but the contact was kept strictly to a minimum to protect the Upeo from the other psi orders.

The Upeo have developed promising relations with one of the Qin factions, House Lle-ji. The teleporters tried to contact other houses, but have had little luck so far. Aside from the convoluted inter-house politics common to Qin society, the biggest barrier is Lle-ji's monopoly on translators: All other houses must petition Lle-ji for human language vocoders.

The Upeo wa Macho is unsure whether House Lle-ji learned of its attempt to meet with other factions. It's probable that the Lle-ji at least suspect, since the house agreed to the Upeos' transport terms shortly after one of the teleporters' abortive contact attempts.

## Karroo

The Upeo were comparatively open with their activities on Karroo. In addition to overt resupply missions, the jumpers also engaged in the secretive transport of goods once Susan N'gamba was elected mayor. With an Upeo in the mayor's office, the teleporters felt they could increase their contributions to the colony with less risk of being cornered and questioned by the locals. Mayor N'gamba could cook the books to conceal sudden influxes of food and spare parts, and she could also arrange the best times for drops to occur.

The chance of discovery increased as time went on, though. To aid them in maintaining the order's secrecy, N'gamba managed to ally with one of the local Ministry operatives — who gave a report of "mysterious mental blankness" that prohibited him from being able to sense the teleporters.

## Far Nyumba

Far Nyumba is an interesting situation. The jumpers weren't about to break contact with such a small colony — it was not scheduled to be self-sufficient for another decade. When evidence

emerged that there was an extraterrestrial teleportation artifact present, the Upeo concern was supplemented with interest.

However, while the Nyumbans need the Upeo, the relationship is often tense. The Upeos' refusal to carry messages or personnel to Earth made the Nyumbans suspicious. This led the colonists to keep their discoveries close to the vest, which, in turn, made the Upeo wonder what the Nyumbans were hiding. The early reliance on the jumpers for sustenance also rankled many Nyumbans, and spurred the colonists into using remarkable resourcefulness to become far more self-sufficient than they were.

The Upeo watch Far Nyumba closely. A few Monitors are stationed there permanently, and several Long Riders make visits. In addition to this visible presence, Long Riders also show up unannounced periodically in order to "take the measure" of the Nyumbans' most recent research.

### Averiguas

Given the tensions on the colony and the presence of many Norça-friendly troops, the Upeo kept out of the spotlight on Averiguas. Phil Corbin, a resident Monitor on Averiguas before the Upeo exodus, elected to remain on Averiguas. He claimed (though not very convincingly) to his fellow colonists that he had no more knowledge of the Upeos' fate than anyone. Since Corbin personally lacked proficiency with the Translocation Mode, he was (he said) simply unable to return to Earth.

While Phil Corbin does lack Translocation abilities, he was never out of touch with the Upeo. He has merely been their public face on Averiguas — and a widely respected one at that. Teleporters who came to Averiguas used Corbin as their contact, and he was kept up to speed on what was going on in the rest of the universe.

### Upeo wa Macho and Society

As the lynchpin of humanity's interstellar efforts, the Upeo wa Macho had substantial influence with the other psi orders, as well as various businesses and governments. The diaspora changed all that, of course. With recontact, the rules will probably change again. Neither side is likely to forget what's gone before, but they must somehow build a future together.

### Æon Trinity

Bolade Atwan never trusted Æon. She had little taste for smoke-filled rooms and old-boy networks, and that's what the Trinity looked like to her. She grudgingly admitted that they were useful, even though she had a vague contempt for their relentless media manipulation.

The proxy's views radiated out to the rest of Upeo, but the effect generally faded with distance from her presence. Many people in Upeo got along with Æon when necessary, but it never went further than matters of necessity. The Trinity never managed to recruit a teleporter or even learn much of the order's innermost workings.

The Upeo wa Macho may now re-examine its relationship with Æon. It doesn't have many friends left, and the Trinity's PR network could be an important tool for mending the order's damaged reputation.

### Æsculapians

The rexs and the jumpers got along well and had a healthy working relationship. The Basel clinic was particularly fond of Upeo wa Macho emergency personnel. As a highly structured organization, there was always distaste for the chaos of unpredicted emergencies. While the Upeo couldn't actually predict catastrophes, their fast response time and ability to bring the injured to a clinic without really "moving" them was invaluable.

On a personal level, Atwan and Zweidler maintained a polite distance — there was mutual respect and understanding, and both were quite happy that there was no pressure to become friends.

### ISRA

The Upeo wa Macho was closer to ISRA than any other order. Together, clears and hoppers took ships to the stars and gave humanity its first contact with alien races. When that partnership was broken, the clears could only look at worlds they couldn't reach, while the Upeo were blinded by broad stretches of unexplored space.

Now the orders are in contact once again. The Upeo would like to have an ally among the other orders, but their uncertainty about the clears' part in the raid on Nyota Kukumbatia leaves many jumpers uneasy around ISRAns.



## The Legions

Before the flight from Earth, the Upeo and the Legions got along great. Both were direct, straightforward, interested in doing the immediately necessary thing. Their powers worked well together — an Upeo scout was the next best thing if you couldn't get an eye, and the mobility he provided was highly sought by Aberrant hunters.

That all fell apart with the raid in 2114. The jumpers knew that the Legions were among the loudest voices calling for their "restraint," and this lack of faith from one-time friends was a bitter pill to swallow. Now that the orders are back in touch, the more optimistic Upeo hope that their six years of peace with the novas will prove that the teleporters were never "under Aberrant influence." Most aren't that optimistic, however — especially now that the truth about the *Esperanza* is out.

## The Ministry

During the early days of space exploration, the Upeo were almost as close to the Ministry as they were to ISRA. They couldn't ignore their dif-

ferences forever, though. ISRA is an independent, benevolent and spiritual group. The Ministry is a government branch with a pragmatic and materialistic focus. Tensions between the Ministry and the Upeo escalated with the development of biotech that took over the telepaths' niche in communicating the clairsentients' visions.

The last straw was the attack on Nyota Kukumbatia. Proxy Bue argued vehemently for rapid and decisive action against the "renegade" Upeo. The speed with which she proposed a strategy for imprisoning and "re-educating" the jumpers was not lost on Atwan, and was a key factor in the Upeo proxy's decision to bolt instead of talk.

## The Norça

The Upeo haven't forgotten that Norça wasn't involved in the attack on their compound. On the other hand, it also didn't escape their notice that the shifters didn't exactly spring to their defense. There's less ill will between these two orders than between many others, but it's not exactly close and trusting; more a matter of "I'll rely on you to follow your own best interests."

This distance is a remnant of bygone days, when the shifters turned down an Upeo offer of partnership in exploration. While their Adaptation Mode made Norça personnel ideal space explorers, most biokinetics were more interested in fighting Aberrants — or tending to secret pursuits.

## Orgotek

Bolade Atwan always thought Alex Cassel was a self-interested, double-dealing weasel. Now her distaste has deepened into actual hatred. As far as she's concerned, the fact that Cassel held troops back from the assault on Nyota Kukumbatia indicates his inability to commit to anything — even to his own treachery.

Individual jumpers aren't usually as suspicious of individual teks as Atwan is of Cassel, but there is a great deal of suspicion about Orgotek as a company. Finding bioware reminiscent of Orgotek design on Chrome-Prime was the last straw for many Upeo.

## Chitra Bhanu

Ironically, many Upeo took part in the assault on the "dark psions." In fact, the carnage that Atwan saw in India helped persuade her that the only way the Upeo could survive such an attack was flight, not resistance.

There was never a great deal of closeness between the jumpers and the Chitra Bhanu: Their investigations took them in different directions and worked on different scales. Atwan got along fine with Bhurano — until the Chitra Bhanu proxy "fell in with Cassel." Though there was never any personal animosity, Atwan regarded Bhurano as a pawn of Orgotek, until the assault in Bombay.

Once the Upeo wa Macho found itself in the same position — attacked by the other orders for "allying with Aberrants" — many jumpers reconsidered their previous opinions of the chibs.

## Near Space

The Upeo have longed for years to return to Earth, but many harbor deep fear and resentment of the other orders. When they lived on Earth, the teleporters were among the most popular of the psi orders, and they hope that this goodwill has not soured. On the other hand, the Upeo know that Orgotek and the Æon Trinity are both masters of media manipulation. Furthermore, the jumpers

have no guarantees that some unscrupulous group with dampener collars won't try to take them unawares at some point in the future.

## The Colonies

Many Upeo have conflicted feelings about the extrasolar colonies. On one hand, they love what the colonies stand for — hope, exploration, the future of humanity. Furthermore, since their departure from Earth, the jumpers have had no other home. On the other hand, the colonies can sometimes seem like ungrateful, needy children — always demanding more time, effort and attention, and never saying "thank you."

The invention of the jump ships has alleviated this neediness somewhat, but the Upeo know full well that the demand for teleporters will never end.

## The Qin

The Upeo have a good relationship with the Llei-ji, despite caution on both sides. When the Upeo cut off contact with Earth, the Llei-ji diplomats on Luna were stranded. That Qin clan had taken a large risk on humanity, and had sent many of their most skilled and important members to Earth. As for the Upeo, they were still concerned about the humans on Qinchui.

When jumpers contacted a few trusted embassy people, the Qin found out and begged them to stay in touch. The Upeo were cautious, as were the Qin. They became more cautious when they found that the Qin wanted them to bring some of their people home from the Lunar embassy. The jumpers initially refused, but the Qin made them a sweet offer. They would give the Upeo trade goods to help them develop Ruan's World and support the other colonies. They would also give the Upeo the right to approve any technology before the Qin gave it to the rest of humanity, until such time as the humans of Earth could reach Qinchui on their own. When they threw in promises to ally with the Upeo when recontact was made, the deal was sealed.

## The Chromatics

The Upeo wa Macho is only now drawing the connection between the disappearance of Hampsah Cisse's expedition and the Chromatic invasion of Karroo. Every detail they hear about the Chromatics, and about their treatment of

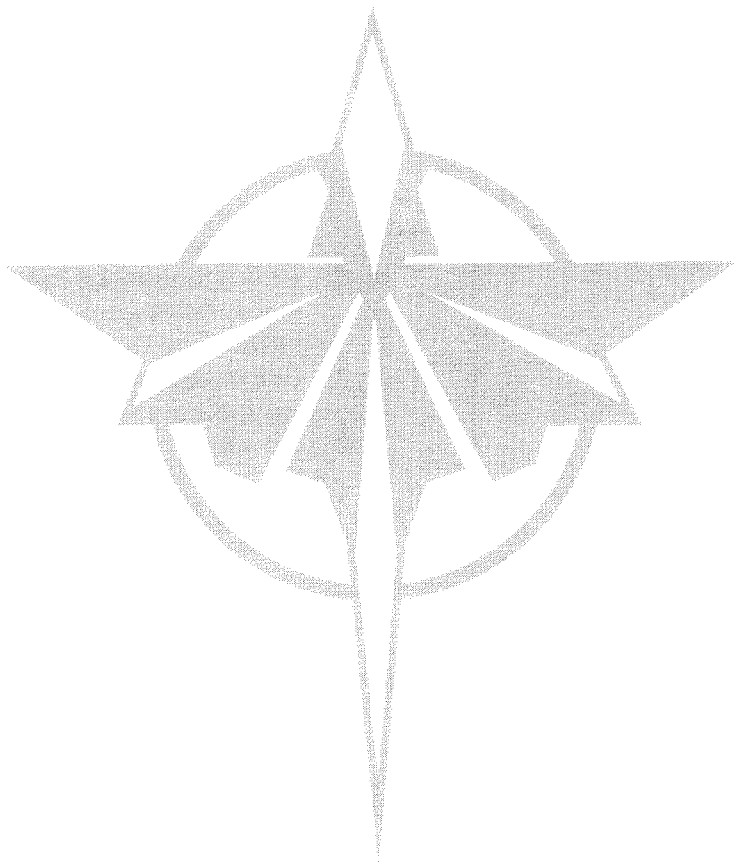


captive teleporters, only adds to the horror. Any talk of negotiating a settlement with the Chromatics is likely to fall upon deaf ears with the Upeo. The most forgiving members of Upeo are in favor of destroying the Chromatics' bioware production facilities and then putting the whole system in quarantine from human contact. They feel that when the Chromatics advance enough to develop space travel on their own, they may evolve enough to treat other civilizations with something other than barbarity. The majority of the Upeo is concerned that if the Chromatics were manipulated to attack humanity once, quarantine may just be ignoring the problem. They favor nuking Chrome-Prime from orbit, to ensure that they *can't* menace humanity again.

## Aberrants

While there are some Upeo who retain a knee-jerk prejudice against any human with taint, most are cautiously optimistic about their contact with Eden. Not only does it appear that the novas control the taint, instead of being controlled by it, Eden doctors claim that there may be treatments for "nova proximate syndrome" — what Earth calls "taint diseases."

Most of the Upeos' Eden envoys are convinced that the novas are on the level. However, they are still cautious about spooking their fellow Upeo, so they have been careful to play up the attitudes of the most cooperative and humane novas, while downplaying the physical mutations. This requires some juggling, as not all the friendly novas are human-shaped, and not all the human-shaped novas are friendly toward Earth.



**T**eleportation (also known as “hopping,” “porting,” “jaunting,” “blinking” or “popping”) deals with manipulating the subquantum stratum in order to alter space or change the locations of people and objects. Stated even more simply, teleportation involves going from “here” to “there” without covering the distance in between.

Moving matter around has always been a big concern of humankind. It motivated us to tame the horse, build railroads and develop supersonic flight. For centuries, the ability to move cargo and personnel was the single biggest factor determining national prominence. Distance was a (perhaps *the*) key concern. Travelers had to consider not only the distance from here to there, but the portability of their cargo and what obstacles might be encountered on the way.

Teleportation handles distance quite differently. For a jumper, there are really only two distances: “right here” and “far away.” It doesn’t matter if “far” is in another city, on another continent or in another galaxy. Similarly, it doesn’t really matter to a teleporter what’s between the starting point and the destination. Since the object (person, spaceship, whatever) isn’t going to cover that distance, it’s a non-issue.

What *does* matter is the arrival point. A teleporter must look at two important factors: how well she knows her destination and what else is already there.

### Psi Coordinates

Memory and perception are the twin limits of a jumper’s power. Distance isn’t an issue when an Upeo wants to go to a familiar place. However, just knowing a place exists is insufficient: If a blink hasn’t visited the Sistine Chapel, she can’t teleport there, no matter how many photos she studies.

Clairsentients have perception to spare, but their visions are of little use to a jumper who can’t share them. While the clears could look at distant worlds, they couldn’t reach

### How the Jump Works

From the outside, a departing teleporter looks like this: There’s a brief moment of rippling light as the psion turns her body into subquantum particles, and shifts them into the fifth dimension. This shift doesn’t take long (usually half a second, if that), then the Upeo is gone, leaving behind only a loud noise as air rushes into the vacuum created by her departure.

Arrival looks much the same: a brief light, a loud noise (this time caused by air being pushed back by the sudden arrival) and the psion appears. More skilled teleporters can phase in gradually to avoid the loud noise, but the faint white light (caused by molecules shedding electrons when they move) can’t be hidden.

From the jumper’s perspective, teleportation is quick (much faster than a jump-ship transit). There’s a moment when the psion’s whole body tingles — like her foot fell asleep, only this is from her head to her toes — and then a hazy moment of weightlessness and... *expansion*... and then arrival.

Some people find teleportation disorienting — a few even vomit. This is more likely when conditions are radically different between where they were and where they go. For instance, leaving the thin air of a mountaintop on Earth and jumping to the thick atmosphere and light gravity of Ruan’s World is going to wrench at the stomach quite a bit. To relate this in a game, a Storyteller may want to impose increased difficulties to Trait rolls for a few minutes after a dramatic jump.

them on their own (at least, not before the era of the jump ships).

In the early days, the Ministry was the relay between the Upeos’ travel powers and the ISRAns’ sensory powers. Mindshare techniques enabled a jumper to not only see what a clear saw, but to *feel* a location light years away as if it was as immediate as the ground beneath her feet. Later on, bioware devices were developed that substituted for the telepath, but



the process was the same — the transfer of “psi coordinates” from clairsentient to teleporter.

That was how humanity first explored the stars: by relying on not one, but *three* high-level psions: the ISRAns to know, the Ministry to show, and the Upeo to go.

(You may think that it makes little sense for three such obviously interrelated talents to be separated into distinct Aptitudes. Did some sort of error occur in the game-design stage when we divvied up the powers? Nope. The Prometheus Effect unlocks psi powers, but it also imposes an artificial limitation on the psion — restricting her full development to one Aptitude only. This doesn't have to be the case, but those who built the Prometheus chambers wanted it that way. You can bet that psions are not going to be happy when they find out.)

## Obstacles

Jumping into solid matter is impossible. If there's already something or somebody where you're trying to go, the teleport simply doesn't work. In game terms, if your character tries to jump into solid matter, or into an area that is significantly filled with matter, it doesn't work. You don't need to roll, but your character still expends any Psi point costs.

Suppose a psion tries to 'port into a closet in her house. She thought the closet was empty, but someone stacked it full of boxes. When she tries to pop in, she can't occupy that space: It's already full. (This is one reason so many Upeo have obsessively tidy homes.) There is some “wiggle room,” though. As long as there's enough open space in the immediate area to compensate, the

teleporter can instinctively shift her arrival there. So if there was only one box in the closet, the psion might find herself standing on top of the box when she jumped in.

Teleporting into vacuum is a cinch, and popping into an atmosphere is also easy: The

teleporter simply extrudes herself into the area. It's also possible to jump into liquids, though this can cause problems: A liter of water is much heavier than a liter of air. A psion who teleports to an underwater destination automatically takes one level of bashing damage. This damage is negated if the hopper is wearing sealed protection, like a vac suit or a VARG.

## Botching

The upside of Teleportation is that all distances are equal (that is, equal to zero). This is the downside as well. Botching on Teleportation means your character loses

control of her flow through the subquantum stratum. She could become stranded in the heart of a supernova sun or in the black void of interstellar space — even if she was just trying to spin around in place.

Of course, the severity of the error is equivalent to the severity of the botch. A single botch might leave your character in the same location, but upside down or a meter in the air. Three botches might send her to a familiar location — just not the one she wanted. Five botches or more could put her anywhere in the universe — with the odds strongly favoring the vacuum of deep space. There's a lot more vacuum out there than there is matter, after all.

## A Gradual Jump

It is possible to jump quietly if the hopper has enough control. A psion with three dots or more in a single Teleportation Mode can attempt to teleport gradually instead of instantly. (Naturally, this can only be done with that particular Mode — someone with three dots in Transmass, but only one in Translocation could only use Transmass in a quiet fashion.)

To do so, first roll to see if your character teleports successfully. If so, make a cross-matched [Wits + Stealth] roll; each success adds a difficulty to the other characters' attempts in detecting the jumper's arrival. (This applies to most standard sensing methods; Attunement and sight still register a jumper's hop as normal.) Your character spends one additional turn phasing in, but does so in comparative quiet.

A gradual jump like this may also be used when 'porting into liquid to avoid the bashing damage.

## Teleportation and Inertia

Teleportation cancels all inertia and momentum from movement. In plain English, when your character arrives, she isn't moving — at least, not relative to the location in which she arrives. If your character teleports to a house on Earth, she's moving along with the planet's rotation and its orbit around the sun, but she isn't moving in relation to the house. Similarly, if your character teleports to the bridge of a moving space ship, she's "standing still" in the ship's framework, not the framework of the space outside it.

This occurs for much the same reason that a teleporter cannot jump into a solid object. Psionics is a focused extension of the user. So under normal circumstances, it won't function if it means harming the user: Just like you wouldn't purposely cut yourself with a knife, a teleporter instinctively manifests in a safe fashion.

This may seem abstract, but remember it the next time your Upeo character gets thrown off a cliff: If she teleports to the bottom, she arrives immobile and doesn't take falling damage. Similarly, your teleporter can drive a car at a brick wall and teleport out at the last moment without continuing to move forward at 100 km/ h!



## Basic Technique

**Spatial Sense:** Teleportation gives a powerful sense of location — not just where the psion is, but how objects are situated within that area. This sense is like a cross between a bat's echolocation and "X-ray vision" — though it works on different principles. Using Spatial Sense, the psion can sense the shape and, to a certain extent, the density of objects around her. Further, this perception is not limited by walls or corridors (since those are simply more objects), but rather by the psion's noetic strength.

Still, Spatial Sense doesn't reveal anything other than location, general shape and overall mass — the Gifted can't tell if something is warm or cold, alive or inanimate, or what color it is.

Interestingly, Spatial Sense also attunes a psion to the unique method of subquantum manipulation involved in teleporting. This allows the Gifted to detect incoming 'ports, or to tell if someone jumped in or out of the area recently.

**System:** Spatial Sense extends a number of meters equal to your character's Psi score. Roll Psi; if successful, she becomes aware of solid objects in that space. She knows where they are and what they're touching, but details depend on the number of successes rolled. One success indicates a vague sense of shapes — your character could tell an object was man-shaped, but not whether it was a human being, a statue, a Chromatic or simply a roughly man-shaped rock. Three successes provide solid details — enough to tell human from alien, youth from adult, flesh from stone. Five successes are like running a hand over every centimeter of the area affected; your character differentiates between friends from strangers, knows exact distances between different objects, and the like.

Sensing for recent Teleportation use in an area also involves a Psi roll. Each success covers a six-hour time period. Your character registers any jumps made to or from the area during the time frame rolled. So with three successes rolled, your character senses any jumps made within her Spatial Sense range over the past 18 hours.

Sensing current 'porting functions as an Attunement roll, since all psions can try to detect the subquantum flux. Spatial Sense provides your character with an extra number of dice equal to her highest-rated Teleportation Mode. Picking up



on a teleporting jump ship or a warping Aberrant *doubles* the number of extra dice, due to those techniques' comparative crudity.

## Translocation

This Mode, involving moving oneself from place to place, is often considered the easiest of the three. Many neophyte hoppers remain trapped by the notion of "distance." It's common sense that it should be harder to go to a distant place than to a close one. Nonetheless, when it comes to the fifth dimension, distance is an illusion. To a confident Translocation specialist, the other side of a planet is just as "close" as the other side of a door. The difficulty doesn't come from how "far" the target is, but from the clarity of the jumper's mental image.

- **Spatial Integrity:** The first step to using Translocation is gaining the ability to sense the "location-ness" of what's around you. Once a student has mastered Spatial Sense, she can begin to manipulate that space. The simplest application is not to change anything, but rather to *impede* change.

Spatial Integrity, then, involves preventing space from being warped or changed near the

psion. A powerful Gifted can shield an area from Teleportation. It becomes more difficult to 'port in or out of that space — even Aberrant warp abilities are inhibited.

**System:** Roll Psi; each success increases the difficulty of teleporting into or out of the immediate area by one. Your character can shield an area 10 meters in diameter for every point of Psi she has. "Tightening up" an area is location-specific: If your character shields an area and leaves, the effect remains where she first placed it.

This effect lasts one hour per point your character has in Translocation. At 5 Translocation, each Psi point spent boosts the integrity's duration for an additional *month*. (The difficulty still depends on the successes rolled, though.)

- • **Jump:** This is a short range Teleportation hop, allowing the psion to go to any point she can see clearly with the naked eye, or perceive with Spatial Sense. A psion can also bring any objects she's carrying as long as they have her psi print (hence the Upeo saying "never Jump first thing in the morning"). There are limits, of course: Even if a psion's print is all over a VARG, for instance, it's

going to be too big to bring along unless she also uses the Transmassion Mode. As a general rule, a psion can Jump with enough inanimate mass roughly equal to her own body's mass.

**System:** Spend one Psi, declare your character's destination, and roll Psi. (Remember, your character can't go where there's solid matter!) If successful, she arrives without mishap. Your character normally takes five turns to transfer herself through the subquantum stratum; this time may be reduced by one turn per extra success rolled. If the time is reduced to zero, she manifests at the very end of the turn (or at the top of the next one if done at the end of that turn). Your character cannot carry living things using Jump unless she uses Transmassion at the same time.

There's an important limitation on what it means to be able to "sense" a particular destination. For these purposes, the hopper must be able to see her destination on a human scale — roughly a meter or two in diameter. Anyone can see the Moon from the Earth's surface without aid. But they cannot see a two meter segment of the Lunar surface! As a rule of thumb, the limit is about a kilometer on a clear day. Rain, fog or darkness can restrict this quite a bit. Similarly, visual enhancement devices can increase it, although the further removed the psion's senses are from the actual area the more difficult it is to register the destination clearly. The Storyteller may impose +1 difficulty to the Psi roll for every additional five kilometers of distance involved.

••• **Shimmer:** Shimmer allows the psion to flicker randomly around in her immediate area (dictated by the limits of her Spatial Sense). This is primarily a defensive power, but the teleporter decides the last place she lands, just like a standard Jump. The intermediary "blinks" can be haphazard, or with a little more concentration, the Upeo can decide where to pop in at each point.

**System:** Spend one Psi if your character randomly flickers, two Psi for controlled shimmering. Roll Psi; your character hops once for each success rolled before stopping at her final destination. (The final blink doesn't count toward this total.)

These successes also translate into the difficulty others make to use ranged attacks on your character while she shimmers. (Thus with three successes, she blinks three times before stopping, and anyone shooting at her adds +3 to their difficulty.) This difficulty is halved in close combat

(round down), since it's easier to strike a target who pops in next to you than it is to try and spot the correct corner she just appeared in.

Shimmer lasts a single turn and comes into play the turn after your character triggers it, allowing her to take an action in the same turn she's blinking. However, if she shimmers randomly, the action (whether firing a weapon or binding a wound) may only be performed after she lands at her final destination. Controlled flickering allows your character to perform one action between blinks, at any position. In this way, your character can take multiple actions in a single turn, splitting them between hops.

A shimmering character may gain an advantage to attack, at the Storyteller's discretion. (It's a plus to appear behind a target, but the flash of light and loud bang usually spoil the surprise.)

•••• **Long Jump:** With this power, a psion can instantly travel to any familiar location, no matter how far away it is. She can 'port from Far Nyumba to her childhood home in Detroit as easily as walking to the corner grocery. There's a catch, however: The location must be very familiar. Going *back* to Far Nyumba after 'porting to Detroit could be impossible if the psion didn't first develop a strong mental picture of the colony.

Since the location's familiarity is what's important, Long Jump can be used to visit "portable locations" — a certain spaceship cabin, for instance. The psion can then jump between the ship and home (or any other sufficiently familiar place), while the craft is moving toward its destination, without dealing with the tedious travel time in between. The psion can also use the craft as a jumping point to visit other places.

**System:** Spend two Psi, declare your character's destination, and roll. A difficulty may be imposed, depending on how familiar your character is with the location; transit time may also fluctuate. If the Psi roll is successful, she arrives without mishap. Both the familiarity range and general transit time scale are listed below.

The more familiar an area, the larger the "location's" parameters. A very familiar place might include every room in a house and parts of the land around it. A vaguely familiar location might be a single room. An unfamiliar place might be a single perspective (about a meter square of floor space) in one room. You may want to make up a list of locations your character can Long Jump to

## LONG JUMP

LOCATION FAMILIARITY	DIFFICULTY	TRANSIT TIME
<b>Very familiar:</b> lived there a year or more	0	Five turns
<b>Familiar:</b> lived there for six months or spent at least six hours a day there for a year.	+1	10 minutes
<b>Vaguely familiar:</b> lived there three months or spent six hours a day there for six months.	+2	One hour
<b>Remembered:</b> spent a week there once.	+3	One day
<b>Pictured:</b> visited for one day, but the location made a powerful impression.	+4	One week
<b>Unfamiliar:</b> visited there only briefly.	+5	One month

easily, just to avoid future questions by the Storyteller. To start, most hoppers know two or three "very familiar" locations, and an equal number of "familiar" ones.

Generally speaking, sense impressions (the infamous "psi coordinates" or other telepathic sensory images) your character may receive qualify as "vaguely familiar" unless the Storyteller indicates otherwise. Also, the transit time may vary somewhat at the Storyteller's discretion. However long the objective time spent traversing the subquantum stratum, though, your character feels like the trip only took a few seconds.

••••• **Bilocality:** With this power, the psion can partially be in two places at once — but is fully in neither. Part of the jumper's mass, attention and psi field is sent to a new location, while the remainder stays put. Both "selves" look solid, but the bodies are light and fragile. The Upeo's psyche is similarly fractured, as it is very distracting to be literally in two places at once.

Although there are perils to Bilocality, there are significant advantages as well. It's used most commonly when a jumper is currently at an unfamiliar location and needs to communicate with someone or to retrieve something at a familiar place. One self is sent to the known locale while the other remains anchored.

**System:** Spend three Psi and roll at +1 difficulty. If successful, your character forms a double at any location she could already reach with Jump or a "very familiar" Long Jump.

Upon the split, your character's Attributes must be divided between the two "selves." If your

character has only one dot (or fewer) in any Attribute, she cannot use that Trait: She simply lacks the mental or physical wherewithal to do two things of that sort effectively. The only exception is Appearance, which stays the same for both.

You can shift allocated dots between the selves once per turn. This represents your character's shifting attention, as well as the shifting of his actual body mass. Both selves also draw from the same Psi and Willpower Traits. They also share a single set of Health Levels — so a bilocated character may become injured more easily due to a lowered Stamina. And any damage that one self takes is immediately apparent on the other!

Since clothing and gear with your character's psi print get teleported as well, such equipment may also "split." However, technological devices become highly unreliable when their mass is divided. Electronic and chemical devices (computers, lasers, radios, etc.) just won't work when they're divided. Simple mechanical devices still function, and bioware works only half the time.

Normally, a jumper must use Transmass or Transportal to move things other than herself. At this level of skill, though, the psion is talented enough to wrap his own noetic aura around small targets. In game terms, a bilocated character can transfer an object or person from one "self" to the other as described in the Relay Object and Relay Person techniques (see below). No Psi is spent, but your character must succeed at any rolls required by those powers.

**For Example:** *Ralph Thorwald and his friends are fighting a nasty carnivore on Ruan's World.*



*He decides he'd like his heavy coilgun: The problem is, it's in his apartment on Khantze Lu Ge. He could get there via Long Jump, but not return to the unfamiliar location on Ruan's World. Ralph isn't the type to run out on his friends, so he uses Bilocality. He materializes one "self" in his apartment, giving that double one dot each in his Physical, Mental and Social Attributes (except Appearance). The "self" on Ruan's World keeps the rest of the Traits so he can keep fighting the predator.*

*Unfortunately, Ralph didn't anticipate that his ex-wife was waiting at his apartment. She starts a tirade on how she's been trying to get a hold of him for a month! The next turn, Ralph shifts the bulk of his Manipulation and Charisma dots to the self in the apartment to explain that he's in a big hurry right now. At that moment, the critter slams into his other self. With only part of his Stamina there to soak the damage, both bodies register the contusion. Ralph's ex-wife sees the injury appear and quickly agrees to let him grab his coilgun.*

The division lasts until your character decides to recombine, at which time he shifts automatically into either location. If your character is dazed or falls to incapacitated in either form, roll Willpower. If successful, your character reflexively recombines at the locale away from the last attack; if failed he consolidates at the same place. On a botch, he may suffer backlash or even become lost in subquantum space.

## Transmassion

Where Translocation is the Mode of moving oneself, Transmassion is the Mode of moving other things — objects, plants and living creatures. (The name comes from a contraction of "mass transmission.") The difference is a subtle one, but distinct — the mind-set required to manipulate objects at a distance is actually quite different from the mind-set needed to manipulate oneself through distance. Therefore, Transmassion is not used to move the teleporter himself.

A number of factors influence the difficulty of moving something. Mass (and, to a lesser extent, size) is a factor: It's simpler to move a light (and small) object than a heavy (and large) one. Psi prints can aid or impede a Transmassion attempt: It's easier to move something that has your own print, harder if it's entangled in another person's print. Most important, perhaps, is integrity. Psionic teleportation tends

to lock on to all of an object, not a part of it. It's usually all or nothing: You can't break something in half by only teleporting part of it away. This is doubly true of living things with strong psi prints — the "biological template" that the Norça love to talk about.

• **Relay Object:** With this power, the psion can summon an inanimate object to himself or send one away. The main restriction is that the object must either start or finish touching the psion. So a teleporter could bring a minicomputer to his belt from across the room or send it from his belt to a shelf, but he couldn't simply move it from the shelf to somewhere else. To do that, he'd have to use Relay Object twice — once to call it to him, once to send it away.

As with the psion himself, Relay Object cannot 'port an item into a solid. Furthermore, this simple use of Transmassion only operates on items the psion can see with his naked eye, or can detect with Spatial Sense. As with a Jump, the practical limit is about a kilometer at most — much less for small objects, since they're harder to see.

This technique is more difficult if the object is in contact with another person's psi field: So taking a gun from a table is much easier than pulling a gun out of an enemy's hand. Also, the faint psi aura common to all bioware makes it as difficult to 'port as an item within a person's psi field is.

**System:** As long as the object has your character's psi print — and is within his visual or sensing range — simply roll Psi to use Relay Object. (The effect is instantaneous.) Otherwise this technique also requires one Psi point for each use. Furthermore, an object with someone else's psi print, and/or one held by someone else each may add +1 difficulty to the roll. Moving bioware automatically involves a base +1 difficulty. Thus, teleporting your character's gun from his holster to his hand costs no Psi. Teleporting a datapad lacking a psi print costs one Psi point. 'Porting a flashlight with a psi print that's currently being held by someone else costs one Psi, and rolls at +2 difficulty. The total mass your character can hop is equal to five times his Psi score in kilograms.

To "quick draw," use Relay Object before Initiative is determined for a new turn. If successful, your character's Initiative increases by one and he's assumed to have the weapon ready immediately. On a failure, his Initiative drops by one as he pauses, expecting a weapon that doesn't arrive.

Relay Object may "deflect" a projectile to avoid damage — by 'porting the item into his hand,



## The Upeo Death Drop

Jumpers are known to use a particularly nasty fighting technique that consists of touching an opponent and teleporting her high into the air. Gravity takes its natural course (assuming the enemy can't fly) and the target falls, often fatally. This is not quite as easy as it sounds. There are two ways to do the Upeo death drop: the fast way, and the reliable way.

For the fast way, your character must touch the target, simultaneously teleporting her to a point your character can immediately perceive. Since it takes two separate moves (a Brawl or Martial Arts roll and then a Psi roll), this is a multiple action (see **Trinity**, pp. 160-161). Remember, if the victim is aware of the attack, this maneuver *also* involves a resisted roll as noted in the Relay Person description.

If your character sends the target to a destination perceived with Spatial Sense, the longest possible drop is 10 meters. Of course, Spatial Sense must already be active. For a really long fall, your

character must look where he wants to send the target. That makes it harder to hit (he's punching one place while looking into the sky). In this case, the initial strike is at +1 difficulty, in addition to any other complications.

The more reliable method involves grabbing the target, holding on and *then* sending her. For this, your character must successfully perform a Clinch or Hold (see **Trinity**, p. 244). As long as the target is still held the next turn, your character can attempt to transmass her (with the resisted roll, since the subject is almost certainly unwilling). If your character used a Clinch, doing damage and then sending the target functions as a multiple action.

In an enclosed space, Spatial Sense or the height of room limits the drop distance — no real damage may occur, but it can sure rattle an opponent. Outside, the target may fall for up to a kilometer (see **Trinity**, pp. 254-255 for details on falling damage).



your character negates the momentum. Still, your character must see the object *and* be able to track its motion — bullets and shrapnel move far too quickly. The power works as normal, with a difficulty depending on the item's speed (as determined by the Storyteller). As a guide, something at about human running speed might be +1 difficulty, a thrown knife +2 difficulty and a dive-bombing bird +3 difficulty.

•• **Relay Person:** This technique works much like Relay Object (including having to touch the target), but the psion can apply his talents to a living creature. Anything on the target that has her psi print moves with her when she's 'ported. It's worth noting that the target's mood may influence this power's effects. A person who desperately wants to get out of her particular situation hops easily, while a person unwilling to be 'ported can resist the move — somewhat.

**System:** Spend one Psi and roll; if successful, the subject moves instantly from another location to touching the character (or vice versa). Add two dice to the Psi roll if the target wants to move (say, if your character's pulling her from an Aberrant's stranglehold). The roll is standard if the subject is indifferent to being moved, unconscious, or doesn't expect to be Transmassed.

In contrast, if the target does *not* want to be moved, your character makes a resisted Psi roll against the target's Psi, Taint or Willpower (whichever is highest). Your character must get more successes than the subject for Relay Person to work.

••• **Transmit Object:** Though similar to Relay Object at first glance, this power is qualitatively different since the psion needn't touch or even see the object involved. At this level, the powers of transport are also substantially stronger, enabling the teleporter to move larger objects.

There are limits, of course. The points of departure and arrival must be clearly visualized; not a problem if either (or both) are within the jumper's visual field. But if the Upeo can't see the object, his mental picture of its starting location must be accurate to within one meter. In other words, a psion can't think "My minicomp is in my house. I'll bring it here." She has to know that her minicomp is on the corner of her bedside table."

**System:** Spent one Psi and roll. Unlike Relay Object, this power does not distinguish between psi-printed objects or objects that are in some-

one else's psi field. However, the difficulty modifiers for Long Jump locations (see above) are applied on both ends of the jump — trying to move something from a familiar place (+1 difficulty) to a place that's only remembered (+3 difficulty) creates a total difficulty of +4 to the Psi roll. Your character's current location adds no difficulty.

The amount of mass your character can transmit depends on his Psi score, as shown in the chart below. Your character can temporarily increase this mass limit by spending Psi points. Each point spent moves your character's mass limit up the chart by one (above 10 Psi, increase the previous rating by 50%).

TRANSMIT OBJECT	PSI	MASS LIMIT
	1	15 kg
	2	25 kg
	3	40 kg
	4	75 kg
	5	125 kg
	6	250 kg
	7	400 kg
	8	750 kg
	9	1.25 metric tons
	10	2 metric tons

**For Example:** Tina has Psi 7 but really wants to transmass that one-ton Shendai AirFoil. After spending one Psi to trigger Transmit Object, her player does out two more Psi, giving Tina an effective 9 Psi to handle the mass involved.

If a TEAR bioapp is used, the mass limit increases dramatically (see p. 117).

•••• **Transmit Person:** As Transmit Object is a qualitatively different process from Relay Object, so too is Transmit Person a dramatic shift from Relay Person. With Transmit Person, a psion can teleport a subject across the stars, bringing someone to him or sending someone far away. Still, moving living beings is substantially harder than moving inanimate objects is. The psion must have a firm sensory impression of the subject and the destination — at least partially simplified if either the person or her destination is right next to the psion.

This is the most common skill for moving non-jumper personnel interstellar distances. Additionally, if two or more people are being 'ported, only one must be familiar to the jumper, as long as there's an unbroken chain of contact between each person being sent.

**System:** Spend two Psi then roll. This roll may be modified by both the destination and by the target. The destination is subject to the requirements listed under Long Jump (see p. 73). The target also falls under these requirements — a person your character has worked with for six months is considered “familiar,” while someone he met briefly is “pictured” at best. A destination in your character’s immediate area obviously qualifies as “very familiar,” as does a subject within your character’s normal sensory range.

Your character can transmit more than one person, as long as they’re all touching. To do so, he need only focus on the most familiar one; an additional person may be ‘ported for each extra success rolled.

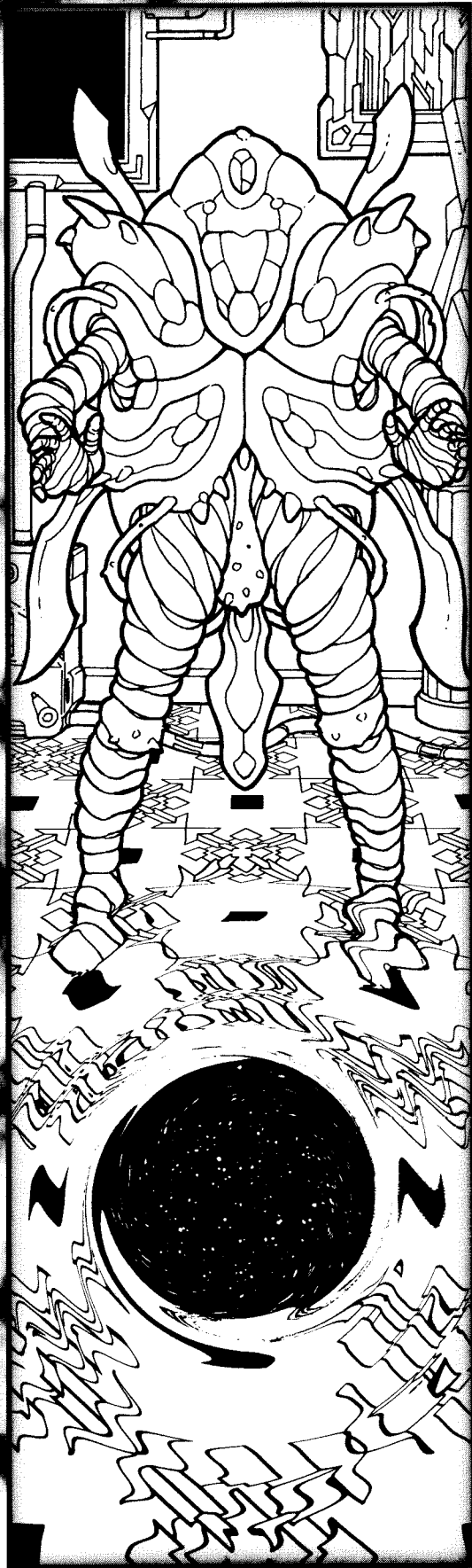
An unwilling subject may resist this effect, as described in Relay Person (see above). Each resisted roll is handled separately. Finally, if your character also has Long Jump, she may travel to the same destination automatically.

••••• **Selective Transmassion:** Teleporting one apple, or even a bushel of apples, is far easier than teleporting only half of an apple. Every object in the four-dimensional universe has an intrinsic shape, and that shape can usually only be changed or divided by four-dimensional effects. Using Teleportation to cut something is unwieldy and inefficient, but it can be done — often with devastating effects. With Selective Transmassion, a psion can ‘port the grenade out of a grenade launcher, hollow out an asteroid... or remove a person’s hand from her body!

In order to use this technique, the jumper must be aware of the target: For living creatures, he must be looking at it or sensing it with Spatial Sense. For inanimate objects, he simply has to have a firm mental picture, as is required for Transmit Object.

**System:** The technique functions differently depending on whether your character uses it against inanimate matter, or living beings.

When used to break inanimate matter (rock, plastic, metal), spend two Psi and roll at +1 difficulty. If successful, your character ‘ports away an amount of mass up to his mass limit (as listed under Transmit Object, above). Specific objects connected to other objects can be removed more easily



SELECTIVE  
TRANSMISSION

## RESULT

Superficial surface laceration  
 Remove a hand or foot  
 Remove an arm or leg  
 Remove a head or large part of torso

## DIFFICULTY

+1  
 +2  
 +3  
 +5

## DAMAGE EFFECT

1 lethal level/success  
 4 lethal levels  
 6 lethal levels  
 10 lethal levels

than undifferentiated matter can be parted from a larger mass. So a power cell may be 'ported out of a laser carbine, but a chunk of rock can't be "carved" into a detailed shape. The best your character can hope for is a large sphere or rough cube. Even so, it doesn't matter if the object is within a person's psi aura: Breaking apart a gun is just as easy if a person is holding it or if it's on a table.

Warping away part of someone is *much* more difficult. Your character can't teleport away anything he can't see — so no tearing out a heart or brain unless he gets at least five successes on Spatial Sense. Furthermore, a living being's psi field actively resists being ripped apart. Still, even if your character isn't entirely successful at 'porting something away, he can still seriously injure an opponent.

Your character may specifically try to remove a body part. To do so, spend three Psi and one Willpower, then roll Psi at a difficulty as listed on the chart below. If successful, the body part is removed and the victim suffers the effect listed below. This may not be soaked unless the victim can somehow soak lethal damage with his natural Stamina. Note that if the character cannot naturally soak lethal damage, the final category results in the victim's immediate death.

## Warping

Outside the Upeo wa Macho, this is the least understood Mode — perhaps because its effects are generally less flashy and impressive. However, it's one of the most intensely studied Modes among teleporters. This is due not only in part because its most advanced applications are the most useful for space travel, but also because studying Warping provides the greatest understanding of the mysterious subquantum universe.

Where Translocation and Transmession both involve moving matter between locations, Warping deals with changing the nature of location itself. A skilled warper can bend space like a child toys with a wad of chewing gum, stretching and folding it to suit his own purposes.

• **Minor Flux:** This technique involves adjusting the space between a hand (or foot, or knife) and the opponent, making it very useful in close combat. Being able to halve the distance between the psion and his enemy at the moment he strikes makes for faster (and much less predictable) blows. Also, lengthening the distance between the psion and an enemy just as the opponent strikes can make it difficult for the teleporter to be hit.

There are some non-combat applications to this ability as well. Since the spatial adjustment only lasts for an instant, the most obvious use is to reach jars down from high shelves.

**System:** Spend one Psi and roll. Your character manipulates space, gaining a number of dice equal to his Warping rating for a single combat action each turn. The effect lasts a number of turns equal to the successes from the Psi roll. This may be increased by one turn for each extra Psi point spent.

During each initiative, decide whether your character concentrates on attacking or avoiding. The extra dice may then be used for a single appropriate close combat maneuver. At 4 Warping, the extra dice may be split between different actions in a single turn, and each additional Psi point spent increases the effect by two turns.

• • **Spatial Divergence:** This is similar to Minor Flux, but it affects an area beyond the psion's immediate vicinity and lasts longer. It allows the jumper to modify a target's effective velocity by expanding or contracting the space in front of it. This adjustment is entirely linear, so Spatial Divergence cannot be used to change a moving target's course.

Any speed change is, in a significant sense, only virtual. If space contracts, the target (whether person or vehicle) covers physical distance in a shorter time, but its actual speed doesn't increase — it just seems to because *space itself* shrinks. This rule also applies to expanding space. As a result, the target doesn't suffer from the effects of wear and tear or heavy acceleration.

**System:** Spend one Psi and roll. Each success allows your character to effectively modify a target's speed up or down by 10 km/h. (This translates to 6 meters per combat turn or 2 m/s.) Every additional Psi point spent allows for another level of adjustment.

Your character can affect any target he can detect through normal vision or Spatial Sense (including himself or the vehicle he's in, obviously). This effect lasts for a number of turns equal to your character's Psi score.

**For Example:** *Tina is in a maglev cab, fleeing from an FSA patrol in a new assault skimmer. The taxi's top speed is 140 km/h compared to the skimmer's 170 km/h. However, with five successes on the Psi roll, Tina contracts the space in front of her cab to increase the vehicle's relative speed. The speedometer still reads 140 km/h, but it actually covers more ground than that — an effective rate of 190 km/h! And, since it's all relative, Tina can still drive the cab (responding to traffic and the like) as if she's going at the slower rate.*

••• **Fading:** This ability allows a psion to divorce most of the matter in his body from its physical location. Put another way, the psion translates some of his mass into noetic energy. The matter still exists — it just isn't exactly *there*. It's become part of the subquantum universe.

The psion's body doesn't interact with the physical universe as it normally does. He maintains some physical presence, but looks dim and transparent — under the surface of his hazy flesh, organs, veins and bones can be seen vaguely. (Since only one molecule in a hundred is still "in phase" with the experiential universe, a great deal of light passes through the psion's body.) The teleporter can pick up and manipulate objects with great difficulty.

The most spectacular use of Fading allows the Upeo to pass through solid matter. The psion must push hard (a faded teleporter remains somewhat solid, which is why the floor beneath his feet still supports him), and some matter is inevitably left behind. Not just extremely painful (likened to "walking through a sieve"), moving through an object also leaves a residue of blood and tissue on and *through* the phased matter.

**System:** Spend one Psi and roll. Your character can remain phased for one minute per success rolled. Each extra Psi point spent increases this fade time by one minute. At 5 Warping, the dura-

tion increases to 10 minutes per success and Psi point spent. Your character's mass returns fully at the end of this time — if he's in a solid at the time, his death is immediate and gruesome.

While faded, your character's Strength and Stamina are both reduced to one dot, and his mass drops to 10% of normal. His Appearance becomes 0 except for intimidation purposes, in which case it acts as a 5. He gains two extra dice on all Stealth-related rolls, and can survive in hostile conditions (extreme temperatures, vacuum) for 10 times the normal duration.

Since your character is divorced almost completely from physical reality, he cannot soak any damage. But any personal combat attack that scores damage successes is automatically reduced to one lethal health level, no matter what the actual damage effect. Vehicle-scale weaponry inflicts a number of lethal health levels equal to half the weapon's damage add, rounding down (see *Trinity*, p. 247).

Your character takes a bashing damage level from phasing a limb through solid matter — pulling his hands from manacles, reaching through a door to unlock it. Pushing his faded head or torso through results in a lethal damage level. (Your character takes only one lethal damage level from moving his entire body through a solid object.)

Your character can also fade any gear that has his psi print on it (clothing, minicomp, etc.). However, *no* electronic devices work while faded. Biotech functions if it affects your character only — a beam from a faded biolaser simply disperses into the subquantum stratum, since it contains 90% of the biolaser's mass. Simple mechanical devices function normally when faded, but they have a tendency to phase through solid matter if forced. As a result, your character can never do more than one damage level with a faded weapon — however, the attack acts as lethal damage and ignores armor. A character may let go of an object while faded. The object does *not* snap back to solidity, however. Instead, it is absorbed by the subquantum stratum and disperses harmlessly in a wave of psion particles.

Faded individuals have their own resonances; therefore, they pass through each other just as they would through solid matter.

•••• **Extrusive Crumpling:** With this technique, the psion can adjust a segment of space — expanding it in all directions or contracting it down dramatically. A



germ could be extruded up to macro (perceptible) size, or a bookshelf crumpled into a wad the size of a softball. In either application, there's no actual structural change.

This power is tricky to comprehend due to the complicated interactions between normal space and crumpled space — it's just an optical illusion in many ways. Living creatures can be crumpled and extruded without harm. Pacifist Upeo have been known to crumple opponents into balls and leave them that way until the effect wears off. The body remains undamaged: Only the space it occupies is altered — turning the head, arms and legs inward and pushing them against the stomach. An Upeo could expand a gap between cells, put his hand clean through a target's body, grab an object on the other side and pull it back through. Again, the subject's body is unchanged, and functions as if nothing was wrong. However, if the psion leaves something in the gap and shuts the extrusion, the object slides harmlessly from the hole as the subject is restored.

In contrast, when touching something in crumpled space, the person's hand slides through the interface and contacts what would be the exterior in normal space. A psion couldn't actually remove an opponent's armor via extrusion — the defense is still there, it only *looks* like it isn't. (This can be handy to expose a subject's internal organs, although they would have to be lit from the inside somehow since exterior light still hits the skin just like the hand of a person touching the subject.) Still, a crumpled person is held by the warped space, and is, therefore, unable to dodge or attack.

**System:** Spend two Psi and roll. When expanding, each success allows your character to expand something by a factor of 1. One success makes something temporarily appear twice as large; two successes make it look 10 times as large; three successes make it seem 100 times as large. Shrinking or contracting things is less efficient. The target's size is reduced by half for each success rolled. Though size changes, *mass* does not! A horse crumpled into a fist-sized ball retains all of its weight!

The effect's duration depends on the nature of the target. Inanimate objects (including bioware or unicellular animals) are affected for 10 times your character's Psi score in minutes. Living things (animals, plants and sentients) stay altered for a number of turns equal to his Psi. Your character can affect an area up to two meters in diameter. The object can be touched and manipulated through the interface, but not changed.

••••• **Transportal:** This is most famous Upeo power, and the most important in the long term. With Transportal, a psion can move everything within a tar-

geted area — no matter how much mass there is — from one physical location to another.

Unlike most Teleportation abilities, Transportal is fairly gradual. The sphere grows out from the jumper himself, and takes about one minute to coalesce. The 'portal's size doesn't matter; instead, the Upeo must take this time to concentrate on bringing the entire area in phase with the subquantum stratum. The psion is completely immersed in this process, oblivious to anything around him. Others can move into (and out from) the sphere during this time, though depth perception suffers and electronics experience odd fluctuations.

Once the psion reaches the proper resonance, the spherical area begins to ripple with light. Beings within the transportal sphere feel a tingling sensation throughout their bodies. The 'portal then triggers, giving off a brilliant flash as it transports everything inside, and dissipates. The flash is duplicated at the destination as the 'portal's contents resolve themselves. Objects that aren't completely in the sphere when it triggers are sliced cleanly.

**System:** Spend three Psi and one Willpower. Roll Psi after one game minute. Your character must have at least a "vaguely familiar" sense impression of the desired destination, as listed under Long Jump (see p. 73); clairsentient scans qualify. If successful, the 'portal's contents are translated into subquantum energy and routed through.

While the sphere forms, all actions performed in (or affecting something inside) are at +1 difficulty (except for the Psi roll to trigger the effect). If your character loses concentration before the translation is complete, he loses the Psi points spent and the sphere collapses, but nothing else happens.

Transportal is not subject to mass requirements of any kind. The sphere expands around your character, with a final diameter equal to 10 times your character's Psi score in meters. (A WEAR can substantially increase this size; see p. 117.) Whatever's crammed inside can be jumped.

Transportals are usually formed between two sites in vacuum for two reasons. First, the noetic flux can cause backlash in those around the sphere. (People within the 'portal are shielded.) Second, the dramatic mass change and displacement from both arrival and departure can create massive weather disruptions, and noises loud enough to be dangerous to unshielded bodies. The exact effects of in-atmosphere transportal use are left up to the Storyteller's devious imagination.

## Psionic Dysfunction

Psionic dysfunction occurs when a psion fails to maintain harmony between her Modes. Some-





one who studies one Mode while neglecting the others tends to become unbalanced — socially, behaviorally and even mentally. The nature of the dysfunction depends on which Mode is being so obsessively pursued.

Dysfunction arises if a psion character buys one Mode up to the five-dot level, but only goes to one (or less) in each of the others. The dysfunction continues until one of the other Modes is raised to the two-dot level.

- **Translocational Dysfunction:** A psion obsessed with Translocation develops a form of agoraphobia, ironically enough. The ease with which the jumper can flick between familiar locations makes her feel uncomfortable, vulnerable and helpless when in an unfamiliar area. The dysfunctional psion must make a Willpower roll whenever she is in a new location. If the roll fails, her Social rolls are at +2 difficulty, reflecting the Upeo's unease and sense of vulnerability.

- **Transmassional Dysfunction:** A psion who focuses overly much on controlling matter outside herself becomes emotionally detached from others, seeing them as objects to be manipulated. She

also develops a phobia of being hopped herself (since that's something that "only happens to others"). The Upeo character must make a Willpower roll when dealing with non-jumpers on a social level. If this fails, she suffers +1 difficulty to all Social rolls since she comes across as an arrogant, uncaring jerk. Furthermore, any time the dysfunctional jumper is herself moved with Teleportation, she must make a Willpower roll or be so overcome with nausea that all Physical rolls are at +2 difficulty for the rest of the scene.

- **Warping Dysfunction:** Focusing on the distortion of space has the most extreme effects of any Teleportation dysfunction. An Upeo with warping dysfunction produces a steady hiccup of low-grade local fluctuations around herself. In other words, space around the psion tends to shake and wobble like gelatin. (The Upeo call this "getting the shakes.") Attempts to hit or touch the psion are at +1 difficulty, but the psion herself loses one point of permanent Psi until the dysfunction is resolved. Furthermore, the jumper's Dexterity-based rolls are at +1 difficulty during this time.

## Known Colonies

### Khantze Lu Ge

The jump ship *Svaha* that arrived at Khantze Lu Ge in early 2120 found the colony in the midst of a desperate war with Aberrants. A group of several hundred Aberrants arrived in the north polar region two years previously, and had conquered large areas of KLG since that time. Only a conflict between the creatures' two leaders, Kali and Yog-Death, stopped them from overwhelming the planet entirely. The colonists have rallied, thanks to reinforcements from Earth. But even though Aberrant forces have been pushed back slowly over the past year, the cost has been high.

#### Physical Environment

Khantze Lu Ge is an exceedingly barren world. Except for the microbes found in the small oceans (which are responsible for the world's thin oxygen atmosphere), it is a lifeless planet, lacking even the algae mats and lichens of Averiguas. The only animals are ones that were brought from Earth. The dim orange sun provides little heat and light, and the thin air holds heat poorly. The only drinkable water comes from small lakes and rivers and from melted polar ice. The seas are extremely salty and toxic, with conventional desalinization techniques insufficient to remove all toxins. Most of the land area consists of sandy lifeless soil and barren rock. In short, KLG is cold, dim and extremely dry.

Compared to any other extrasolar colony, KLG is an inhospitable wasteland. Even so, it's had a three-decade head start on the rest. It has become home to over four million people, and their efforts have thickened the atmosphere and turned large sections of the sandy soil into fertile growing land. It's a world with potential — a future that may never be realized if the Aberrants have their way.

#### Life in Wartime

The joyful hope that accompanied *Svaha's* arrival has become a mixture of despair at the ongoing war and a growing sense of resentment at the off-world presence on

Khantze Lu Ge. There is also growing evidence of a rift between the Chinese and the Euro-American colonists. Local *Æon Trinity* operatives have found evidence that Aberrant sympathizers are behind much of the resentment against the "off-worlders" and the growing racial division between colonists. A branch of the notorious Legions of Mal, the most destructive and twisted of the known Aberrant cults, has the strongest presence on KLG.

Aberrant collaborators cannot claim credit for all the tension. Residents who expected a quick and spectacular victory once KLG regained contact with Earth have instead been faced with a long-term war. Also, the Aberrants have increased both the number and the destructiveness of their attacks. Before recontact, the Aberrants believed they had many years to slowly conquer Khantze Lu Ge. Now they are fighting for their lives and have begun a campaign of destruction and terror, warping in to destroy civilian targets and warping out before off-world troops can arrive.

Conditions in the free areas of Khantze Lu Ge are difficult and getting harder. In the early days of the attack, the spaceport, all aircraft and hybrid vehicles were destroyed to prevent them from falling into Aberrant hands. Today the only aircraft are in the hands of the Earth forces, something the locals aren't too happy about. The continued battle also resulted in widespread destruction of the industrial infrastructure. There is currently no shortage of food, shelter, or clothing, but many less essential goods are rationed or are simply unavailable. More importantly, the Aberrant-held polar air-manufacturing stations have ceased production, already resulting in some minor degradation of KLG's atmospheric quality.

All of these problems, combined with the ever-present threat of Aberrant attack, have resulted in a tone of life alternating between dour fatalism and wild abandon. During the day, most of the free cities are gray and somber places filled with people determined to muddle through and make the best of a rather grim existence.

In the evening, especially in the larger cities like Neu Berlin and P'eng-Lai, many inhabitants lose themselves in a frenzy of music, dancing, drugs and alcohol.

Some members of the colonial government are concerned at such riotous displays, but cooler heads note that it isn't simply an antidote to the universal problems of fear and want. The local nightlife has also helped ease tensions between the locals and the newly arrived UN and Aeon Trinity military and support personnel.

Fresh from Earth, well fed and equipped with the latest technologies, these soldiers rapidly became targets of resentment once everyone realized the war wasn't going to end soon. The locals were jealous of the apparent luxuries the off-worlders possessed and disillusioned when their alleged saviors could not produce a quick victory. However, at the day's end, the hydroponics worker and the soldier both end up in the same social club dancing to the same band.

Unfortunately, such locations are also the perfect spots for petty thieves and con-artists of all varieties to part the well-heeled from their money and equipment. KLG has a thriving black market in stolen off-world electronics and medicine. While some locals are learning to live and work with the newly arrived forces, others are coming to see them as a ready source of money and luxury goods.

### Occupied Territories

The free regions may be tense, but the Aberrant-held areas are hell. The human population is little better than starving slaves. The fear of punishment, as well as the hope of food and medicine for their families, has driven some people to betray their fellow colonists. Many individuals have become informants, helping their Aberrant masters oppress their fellow humans.

The most highly placed of these collaborators suffer a truly horrible fate. The two Aberrant leaders are the offspring of The Coalition, an infamous Aberrant from the 21st century. Like their forebear, these two can contaminate the bodies of their most trusted human allies, mutating them with taint. Many of these mutations prove fatal. Those who survive (technically termed sub-aberrant mutants) are the true elite of the human population. They receive vast luxury and praise at the hands of their Aberrant masters, compared to the normal humans. Ironically, many

### Life Under Aberrant Rule

Each village liberated from the Aberrants provides humanity with more information on conditions in the occupied regions. Sadly, the news is unrelentingly grim. The captives live in desperate squalor, struggling to grow food and to keep their hyper-fusion generators working while doing their best to stay out of the way of Aberrants and their hideously mutated servants.

Government is effectively non-existent. Humans are forbidden to possess radios or any weapons more dangerous than knives. They are forbidden to attack any Aberrant or sub-A aberrant mutant, and they must pay "taxes" — generally giving the Aberrants whatever they want. Failure to follow any of these rules or attempting to escape into free territory is punishable by torture and death.

Otherwise, the captives are free to do what they will, which generally consists of scrounging for food and performing back-breaking farm labor. The less moral inhabitants take to banditry and steal the necessities of life from other humans. As long as the bandits give a cut of their spoils to the Aberrants, their inhuman masters do not interfere.

Upon being liberated, the former captives have been known to turn on such Aberrant collaborators in a brutal bloodbath. The UN forces officially try to stop these massacres. However, an increasing number of strike teams has seen the horrific living conditions and allowed the colonists to take out their anger and pain on some of the captive enemy. The resulting sub-aberrant mutants' deaths are considered "battlefield casualties."

of these mutants are far too maddened by their condition to enjoy their special status.

While vitakineticists working with medical researchers (and with surprising contributions from Norça scientists) have proven that these twisted humans possess no true Aberrant powers, some believe that mutation is only a transitional stage, and the survivors may eventually become Aberrants. Human forces are turning the tide of war, but if the Aberrants can create more of their

number, the balance of power could shift dramatically back in the monsters' favor.

## Government

KLG is technically a Chinese colony. The local leader is Wan-Le Jiang, chairperson of the Office of Interstellar Affairs. The government was based on China's socialist bureaucracy (though KLG is rather more relaxed in practice). Although Jiang retains official sovereignty, the UN (with *Æon* quietly riding its coattails) has effective control over the free areas of KLG.

The UN declared a state of martial law on KLG shortly after *Svaha's* arrival. This ruling has remained in place ever since. Currently, attacking UN personnel, giving aid or comfort to Aberrant forces or their human collaborators, sabotage and looting are all punishable by death, and the sentence may be carried out immediately by any UN officer on active duty.

Even the limited rights available under the old government — to strike and assemble publicly to name a few — have been suspended. While martial law has undoubtedly helped maintain order and restricted Aberrant influence, resentment against UN rule is widespread. The ranking UN military administrator, General Ronald D'Chana, is widely regarded as a rigid dictator who cares more about winning *his* war than about the lives on KLG. Rumors of possible plans to sterilize Aberrant-controlled regions with fusion warheads have done nothing to correct this impression, and the locals have begun an illegal campaign of demonstrations and propaganda protesting General D'Chana's policies.

Most colonists of both Chinese and Euro-American descent prefer not only that martial law be rescinded, but that KLG declare official independence from China. Chairperson Jiang officially continues to uphold China's interests on the colony, but it's widely known that she supports the independence movement. This has put her in conflict with the Ministry's local representative, staunch Chinese patriot Lian Yih.

While most people in the KLG independence movement realize that any bid for freedom from Mother China must wait until the Aberrant threat is eliminated, a few extremists want independence *now* and have ignored Jiang's pleas for cooperation during the present crisis. Claims that the UN forces are deliberately prolonging the war, and an

increasing amount of anti-Chinese racism has sparked the Homestead radicals. These extremists recently began using strikes and sabotage to promote their ends. UN analysts worry that the next step will be open terrorism against both the legitimate Chinese government and the UN forces.

## Æon Activity

The vast majority of *Æon* Trinity operatives on KLG are Proteus operatives or associates occupied with fighting the Aberrants on several fronts. In addition to the frozen battlefields, *Æon* personnel are attempting to combat the more subtle threat of human infiltrators and collaborators. Proteus operative Zhao Feng recently discovered evidence that the Legion of Mal was trying to increase violence and conflict in the free areas through a campaign of propaganda and terror. At Zhao's recommendation, *Æon* requested that ISRA and Ministry agents come to KLG to track down and monitor this cult and its allies. Surprisingly, the normally isolationist Norça also volunteered a group of 16 Norça (only a third of whom are actual shifters) to infiltrate the cult's ranks.

*Æon* Trinity operatives are making progress on all fronts, but they face increased opposition from the local inhabitants. The drive for independence, combined with the recent scandals associated with several psi orders, have left the inhabitants of KLG with an increasingly jaded view of psions. Thanks to *Æon's* long-held association with the Gifted, even non-psion Trinity operatives encounter sullen and uncooperative people who resent their presence on KLG. Combined with petty theft and minor vandalism, this lack of cooperation has left many *Æon* personnel less-than-favorably disposed toward the colonists. Without a doubt, the Upeos' ambivalent relationship with *Æon* has contributed to this sensibility, since the teleporters on KLG have had years to grumble about the Trinity's secretive tactics. These attitudes helped contribute to *Æon's* secretive investigation efforts.

Given the current pall of suspicion, though, Trinity analysts worry that if any of the current undercover efforts are discovered, the radical liberation groups will use the knowledge to increase distrust of off-worlders. All psions (and, by association, *Æon* personnel) on KLG are strongly advised to be exceedingly careful and to avoid provoking local hostility.





## Karoo Station

The inhabitants of Karroo eagerly received the initial recontact mission, and continue to welcome the fighter pilots, psion strike teams and other soldiers who help guard against Chromatic attacks. Rumors from Earth of psi-order corruption and alien subterfuge worry some locals, but here the belief in both psions and the Æon Trinity remains strong. This is due in part to the periodic visits by Upeo teleporters through the years, giving the isolated colonists a much-needed connection to the rest of the universe.

Life in the Crab Nebula colony continues much as it did before, although the focus has changed from research and mining to combat. Safety considerations limit most mining to nearby asteroids, and scientific explorations are increasingly restricted to astronomical observation and short-range journeys. Still, there is no shortage of employment for able-bodied inhabitants — though such jobs focus on maintaining the war effort against the Chromatics hidden in the nebula. Jump ships arrive every three months, loaded with fighter craft, sensor gear, rations, medical supplies, habitat

modules... and military personnel to use it all. Maintenance engineers, medical technicians, astronomers and xenologists are in high demand to assist these forces.

Despite the colonists' favorable reception of military personnel, the constant battle and years of isolation have reduced both productivity and morale on Karroo. The miners, scientists, soldiers and administrators had plenty to focus upon during isolation. But in such a closed environment, many of the lower-level maintenance technicians and service-industry workers never had an opportunity to rise above their humble beginnings.

### The Chromatic Presence

The Chromatics in the Crab Nebula are particularly desperate now. With their interstellar capability shattered (see "The Lost Expedition," p.111, for details), the stranded aliens are in a near panic. Their resources are dwindling and they have no more visits from home. For a primitive race thrust recently into space, their isolation is terrifying. The Chromatic response to such stimuli is to lash out — providing greater incentive to attack Karroo than ever before.

This underclass had come to Karroo to make new lives, but ended up on the front line of war.

Many clamored for a return to Earth, but the huge jump ships can only carry a few hundred people at a time — and there aren't many Leviathans to begin with. Similarly, although the Upeo are now able to jump to Earth, few of the teleporters are powerful enough to jump large groups. As a compromise, Karroo's new mayor, Notse Eyadema, instituted a lottery system for the limited spaces available. Those who win get tickets to Earth for themselves and their immediate family on the next scheduled jump ship. This allows for a slow but steady emigration of those who want to leave.

### Government

Despite the colony's transformation into a deep-space military outpost, there has been no need for martial law. The locals have endured Chromatic attacks for the last eight years; the current political arrangements have proven more than adequate for the task.

The larger mining companies and the various tribal associations are all given a semi-formal voice in the affairs of Karroo station. While the mayor is elected by the entire populace and appoints judges and other civil servants, these various companies and organizations are the local equivalent of a legislature. Unfortunately, this practice leaves some of the poor and tribeless disenfranchised. This has lead several sociologists to suggest that the underground Leopards be formally recognized as a tribal organization.

### The Leopards

The village-capitalism found throughout West Africa is the basis for the Karroo economy. Productive workers earn money that they use to buy goods for their extended families. Within families, resources are pooled and even unskilled adults are taken care off. However, the colonists with few relatives or those whose families were killed in Chromatic raids have little recourse. On the whole, the tribal associations ensure no one goes hungry, but in an orbital city with over 85,000 inhabitants, some people simply fall through the cracks.

For these unlucky souls, life consists of working menial jobs and living in the oldest and most worn habitat modules. Their position on the bottom rung of Karroo's social ladder breeds anger

and resentment. To supplement their loose tribal affiliations, the more enterprising of these organized a secret society they came to call the Leopards. Organized using fictive kinship terms like mother, father, brother, and sister, the Leopards often became the members' family.

Initially, the organization served a similar purpose to the tribal groups, providing its members with assistance, a sense of community, dealing with personal conflicts and dispensing low-level justice. However, once Karroo was cut off, the Leopards grew in importance. For many of Karroo's poorer residents, it became the only place to obtain rare and expensive commodities (new clothes, non-vat-based food, illegal drugs, gambling). Having established a solid power base, the Leopard gangs moved into extortion and enforcing a code of silence about their activities.

Today, the secret society continues to thrive from the sale of illegally obtained jump-ship tickets and a steady stream of black-market goods secretly imported into Karroo. The Æon Trinity and other organizations only recently became aware of the Leopards; Proteus Division infiltrators and concerned Upeo are trying to learn more about these groups.

Currently, Karroo's policy-makers have no shared consensus on the Leopards. Some see them merely as a parasitic criminal gang that oppresses the poor, and that should be vigorously stamped out. Others see them as a method for the poor and disenfranchised to gain power and respect. They seek to work with the Leopards' leaders to help make conditions better for the poorer groups on Karroo.

### Research on Karroo

In addition to astronomical researchers and asteroid miners plumbing the depths of the Crab Nebula, a large number of xenologists and alien technology experts have relocated to Karroo to study the Chromatics. A few of the aliens' ships and other equipment have been taken. Similar attempts have been made to get Chromatic captives, but the aliens are very difficult to take alive. They prefer to commit suicide — literally frying themselves by triggering an internal photokinetic blast! Still, humans have caught a few aliens recently, using new psi dampening bioware that inhibits the Chromatics' psi talents.

Still, studying Chromatic artifacts has proved as valuable as studying the aliens themselves. One



of Karroo's almost two-dozen hollowed asteroids was recently turned over to the Aeon Trinity and transformed into Chromatic Research Facility Two. CRF-2 is one of the busiest military and scientific research stations in human-occupied space. Human and even some Qin biotechnologists use the facility to study Chromatic biotech and hopefully improve communications with the Chromatics.

So far, the most important result of these studies has been the confirmation that the Chromatics do not fundamentally understand the technology they are using, nor the tactics involved in space combat. The Chromatics have a similarly primitive understanding of physics and astronomy, including the Crab Nebula's complexities. A telling example involves electrical discharges within the nebula, caused by shifting magnetic fields. Human astronomers can sometimes predict these discharges, but Chromatics have been caught unawares by them time and again. Astronomers and ISRA clairvoyants try to predict future discharges, while technicians work to devise methods of directing the electrical releases as an additional weapon against the aliens.

### Psions

The fact that three members of Upeo wa Macho saved the station from a massive Chromatic attack in 2116 (aided by four Eden novas), combined with former mayor Susan N'gamba's announcement that she was actually a member of Upeo wa Macho, has made most residents of Karroo exceedingly friendly to all teleporters. The locals treat Upeo as instant celebrities and heroes. Parties are thrown in their honor, and they are asked to meet with the leaders of Karroo.

Most of the other orders benefit from this celebrity through their common ties as psions. Truly, only the Norça are not well regarded by Karrooans, and that's due to (inaccurate) rumors that the Leopards are funded by the Biokinesis Order. Otherwise, someone who wears any one of the other six psi orders' insignia is treated quite well at virtually every level of Karroo society.

### Qinshui

Exploration on the Qins' home planet since recontact has confirmed some human scientists' long-held hypothesis: The Qin have bioengineered almost every element of Qinshui to some degree.

Evolutionary psychologists theorize that the Qin have a strong psychological need to control their environment. Humanity has a similar, if less strong drive, expressed though control factors relating to culture, science and government. The Qin have gone to the root of it all, to the genetic level, transforming their entire world into a vast, complex, custom-designed ecosystem.

### Physical Environment

Qinshui's ecosystem has been modified heavily to function with marvelous synchronicity. Bioengineered creations compete for food, prey upon each other and even breed. A number of organisms have been tweaked to provide a specific function for the Qin. From animals used as vehicles to vine-like plants that act as aqueducts and plumbing, life on Qinshui exists to serve the Qin. Along with other modifications, the Qin have programmed virtually every organism to avoid harming the Qin themselves. Humans who wish to travel into the Qin wilderness can request special marking chemicals that identify them as Qin to the local life forms, thereby avoiding accidental predation.

The wild areas of Qinshui are very odd places indeed. While some creatures, like the Qin, possess reasonable hearing and an exceedingly keen vibration sense, most animals on Qinshui have a poor sense of hearing. As a result, few animals on Qinshui make any deliberate noises — and those that are made are rather loud. The predominant noises include the sluggish sound of the wind through the low foliage, the faint patter of rain, the slosh and gurgle of water, the rustle of animals through the underbrush — interrupted at odd moments by strange shrieks, coughs and warbling cries. This sporadically interrupted silence combined with the frequent fogs and constant damp makes most places on Qinshui seem very mysterious and claustrophobic.

The Qin terraforming (or as some wags have termed it, "qinshuiforming") efforts extend to blending civilization with nature. A series of long vines running through a damp copse may turn out to be a city's power or water supply. Similarly, the fields of fleshy red sunflower-like plants that appear in many images of Qinshui actually function as the Qins' primary solar power generation system.

## The Qinjunan System

Like humanity, the Qin have colonized most of their own star system. Qinshui has no moon, but the system possesses an extensive asteroid belt, two gas giants with numerous moons, and two other terrestrial planets that humans designated Qinshan and Qin-Lak. Qinshan is a hot rocky world that orbits closer to the system's sun than Qinshui does. It possesses a thin atmosphere of carbon dioxide and water vapor. Qin-Lak is a glaciated planet orbiting beyond Qinshui, with a carbon dioxide and nitrogen atmosphere, limited microbial life, small equatorial oceans and vast polar caps. Human researchers suspect that Qin-Lak has been heavily terraformed.

The Qin have colonies on Qinshan and Qin-Lak, as well as on many of the moons and asteroids in the Qinjunan System. In almost all cases, these settlements are completely enclosed by biotech domes. Within the past year, the Lle-ji have allowed a small number of human ambassadors to visit some colonies. Reports indicate that the colony's actual structure appears to be an enormous living being within which the Qin live. However, while the Qin use advanced biotech instead of hard tech, the actual functions seem little different from human-designed colonies. Small mining stations extract needed resources from asteroids, while large bases on other planets form independent societies that trade with the homeworld.

Numerous biotech ships ply the vacuum between the system's various worlds. Some ships use biotech variations on conventional propulsions systems like solar sails and ion drives. Surprisingly, though, many Qin ships use a highly efficient, biologically based magnetic propulsion. Human technicians are very eager to learn the secrets of these craft, but so far the Qin are unwilling to discuss the details.

### Human Interactions on Qinshui

Establishing political and commercial relations between human and Qin has taken on even greater priority since recontact. The Qins' Lle-ji caste is on the forefront of this effort. Human diplomats suspect that these Qin need to show positive results from their time with humanity in order to bolster the group's recently reduced status among the other houses. Lle-ji's efforts are seen in two ways: allowing humans greater exposure to Qin society, and marketing specialized biotechnology for the human market.

A couple of trusted diplomats have even been allowed to tour many sections of the trade city referred to as Meetpoint. These rare tours have even included regions where Qin are visible living and working outside of their biosuits. While only a select few humans have been allowed this privilege so far, and the Qin have not allowed humans to make any visual record of their true appearance, humanity is finally getting a chance to understand the true nature of the Qin.

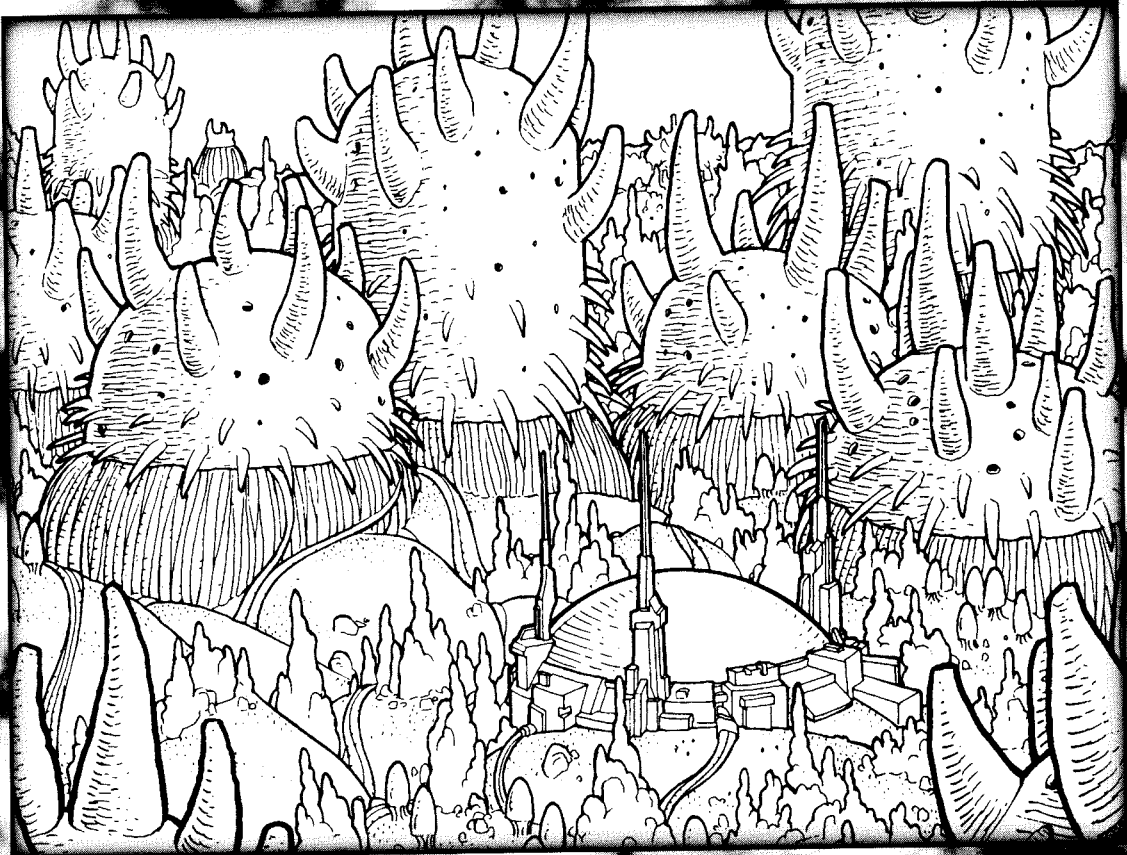
Such comprehension develops slowly, though. A Qin's true form can be shocking to see, even for a trained diplomat (one of the reasons for the biosuits and the ban on visual images in the first place). Also, Qin bio-machines and the race's very way of life is so alien that, despite direct observation and direct questioning, humans are still provided with confusing and contradictory information. Xenologists are beginning to realize that although all aliens are difficult to puzzle out, humanity may well find it easier to understand Chromatics than Qin!

The biotechnology is likewise fascinating yet bizarre (see **Chapter Five: Technology** for details). House Lle-ji hopes to bring in substantial revenues that can be traded for human hard tech, thereby increasing Lle-ji's importance to the other houses. In typical Qin fashion, the Lle-ji creations are not designed to compete di-

### Qin and Psi

The aliens have yet to be studied extensively, but all indications show that the Qin have only weak telepathic ability. While that talent may grow with the species' evolution, it seems quite clear that the race cannot access the full range of psionic talents that humanity can. The Qin rarely talk about it, but a number of them who deal regularly with humans seem somewhat disturbed that no Qin can duplicate mankind's psi mastery — especially teleportation. The stars belong to humanity alone.

Considering that concern and the strong evidence that the Qin are a paranoid (or put more politely, "highly political") species, Aeon has directed all psions who interact with the aliens to downplay the full extent of their abilities and to avoid even the impression of noetic superiority over the Qin.



rectly with human biotech. Instead, the Qin hope to find a new market niche for their products, in much the same way that finding a new ecological niche often helps a species become successful. A few senior members of the Æon Trinity worry about the influence of Qin biotech on Earth markets (and on humanity). Even so, most agree that trading Earth and Qin science is worthwhile, since both races could gain much from the other's technology.

House Lle-ji's main opponent appears to be House Lle-llau. This group is strongly opposed to any contact with humanity, and gained much influence during the isolation from Earth. Although no humans truly understand the full complexities of Qin politics or society, the Lle-llau's primary objection to humanity seems to be that they are a violent, uncontrolled and potentially disruptive force... one that may prove much more powerful than the Qin.

Recently, the members of House Lle-brib also approached humans about separate agreements of trade and cooperation. Lle-brib seems to focus on research and information exchange, so relations with

these Qin has been more difficult to hammer out. Talks go even more slowly since it's hard to tell how a stronger alliance with Lle-brib would affect Earth's relationship with House Lle-ji. After all, most diplomats think that the recent concessions by House Lle-ji have been part of an effort to retain exclusive control of Human/Qin interactions. While there does not seem to be any overt hostility between the two houses, most members of House Lle-ji are reluctant to discuss House Lle-brib and its offers.

### The Human Embassy

While the actual embassy compound on Qinshui is large, it became somewhat claustrophobic for many embassy personnel after five years. The facility is enclosed within a Qin-designed bioglass dome about a kilometer in diameter and 18 stories high. The interior duplicates Earth-like conditions as much as possible. In addition to the living and working areas (which are comfortable and pleasant, if rather small), there are also numerous small parks and open areas containing many Terran plants and small animals. Although the embassy is in many ways more open and comfortable than deep-space settlements

## Aberrant Influence

One of the main topics that House Lle-brib has raised with humanity regards Aberrants. The Qin faction has indicated that the vast majority of Aberrant attacks in the Qijnunan System have occurred on isolated colonies. Much as with Earth, the Aberrants prefer to avoid the Qin homeworld, and their attacks are often little more than guerrilla raids. It seems as if the Aberrants are trying to determine the strength and potential danger that the Qin pose before committing to full-scale attack. Interestingly, the Qin have found no evidence that the Aberrants are aware of humanity's presence in the system.

As a result, all human spacecraft and settlements are directed to maintain strict radio silence whenever an Aberrant raid is detected. Sources in both House Lle-brib and House Lle-ji have revealed that House Lle-llau fears that if the Aberrants realize that humans and Qin are allies, then the Aberrants will attack in greater numbers and with more devastating force. House Lle-llau also blames the humans for Aberrants in the first place, and has tried to turn the otherwise neutral houses against humanity.

To combat this negative publicity, human researchers are working separately with Qin in both Lle-brib and Lle-ji to adapt human anti-Aberrant weapons and detection devices for Qin use. While it is clear that this brings the two houses in competition with each other, both are at least unwilling to interfere with each other in ways that might threaten either the security of Qinshui or aid House Lle-llau.

like Karroo, the fact that it is surrounded by an entirely alien civilization makes many of the residents somewhat uneasy.

Even so, the compound is exceedingly busy since recontact. The two races are currently negotiating a treaty of mutual defense against the Aberrants. While Earth and House Lle-ji diplomats wish for a close alliance, other factions inside the Qin government continue to resist further ties with humanity. Although almost one-sixth of the origi-

nal 13,000 embassy staffers have rotated back to Earth, thousands of replacements have clamored to come to Qinshui. The alien world is now home to over 20,000 humans. Unlike other colony worlds, the majority of these people are diplomats, scientists and technicians, together with their staff and assistants. However, there are also a number of cooks, barbers, doctors, entertainers and others whose presence is necessary to help maintain any long-term human settlement.

While the other deep-space colonies consist of a few thousand to a few million people living in a vast and unexplored world, life on Qinshui is very different. With the exception of the new arrivals, everyone here has spent the last five years living among the Qin on a planet that was manifestly not their home. This culture shock has had a significant impact on many residents. Some, especially the diplomats and researchers who have interacted with the Qin the most, have adopted many Qin mannerisms and habits of speech. Such people are easily recognized by their smooth, almost gliding movements and by their somewhat stilted manner of speaking.

Others, especially people in service professions who had little contact with the aliens, actually grew to fear the Qin. Several psychologists have remarked that such people displayed an almost Qin-like paranoia, ironically enough. The individuals feel threatened by the aliens' innate secretiveness, and become secretive themselves in response. The people subconsciously emulate the beings who come to symbolize their own fear of the unknown.

Despite sharing the planet with an entire alien race, the human embassy staff was kept relatively confined during isolation. As a result, escapism of all forms became extremely common. Vids and holographic simulations of Earth or other human worlds are very popular. Enough Qin are curious about humanity that they've created an actual market for holovids, vid players and simulations.

## Government

The embassy itself is exceedingly well run, as befits a settlement housing several thousand diplomats and diplomatic aides. Chief ambassador Martina Flores is the embassy's director, but her authority is shared with a committee elected from every major diplomatic contingent (science, state, maintenance, medical, service). This executive



council makes all of the embassy's major decisions. The sessions are open to the public, and any individual may call for a referendum on any current issues. This system has served the settlement well during its period of isolation, and most residents are satisfied with their representation.

The embassy has no real problems with poverty or unequal distribution of income since all residents are paid excellent salaries for their work. Property crime is, therefore, quite low and most violent crimes are minor and easily dealt with. The only major fear the embassy's law enforcement personnel have is terrorism. While the Qin are perfectly able to fight and kill Aberrant invaders, their society seems to be relatively peaceful. Embassy officials are worried that any act of terrorism or random violence against the Qin could seriously jeopardize humanity's relationship with them, and perhaps even the safety of the embassy itself.

## Psions

There are a great number of psions at the human embassy, especially telepaths, electrokinetic biotech specialists and clairvoyant observers. Like almost all other humans on Qinshui, these psions are highly trained professionals fit to represent their species before alien allies. Most colonists evaluate all new visitors, especially psions, on their ability to impress (though not intimidate) the Qin. In the end, few humans on Qinshui make much distinction between psions and normals. An ill-behaved or unmannered visitor of any type is approached immediately and advised (politely but firmly) to mend his ways. Proper behavior is vital to inter-species relations, and those who don't abide by that dictum soon find themselves on a jump ship to Earth.

## Far Nyumba

The smallest of the five known interstellar colonies, Far Nyumba had the most difficult time during its five-year isolation. The colonists kept their morale up by continuing to investigate the alien artifacts in Mgitu's atmosphere, but it was impossible to ignore the fact that the colony was far from ready for self-sufficiency. The colonists, primarily scientists and technicians, were suddenly confronted with the necessity of learning how to grow all of their own food, and how to repair various machines without a proper supply of spare parts.

## Physical Environment

The colony's perilous state is ironic, considering Far Nyumba itself. In addition to being the

only main colony not in the midst of a serious conflict, Far Nyumba is also by far the most hospitable world yet settled by humanity. The world — actually a moon orbiting the gas giant Mgitu — is warm and wet, with small polar caps, large oceans, lush vegetation and burgeoning animal life.

Thanks to the orange glow of Mgitu and the white light from the system's primary star (known locally as Kei), a Nyumban day is slightly brighter than a summer day on Earth. Both Mgitu and Kei are in the sky for only part of the day, but depending on the complexities of their orbits, at least one of the two is usually visible. As a result, a single Nyumban day goes through three stages (instead of simple "day" and "night"): full day, when both Mgitu and Kei are in the sky; full night, when neither is visible; and half-day, when either Kei or Mgitu is visible. Half-day is a common condition, and the light produced is routinely equivalent to late afternoon on Earth.

Large areas of Far Nyumba are barren of life, covered with ash and lava flows from the world's many volcanoes. However, the rest of the moon is incredibly verdant. Nyumban vegetation is generally a deep blue-green in color. It consists mostly of a wide variety of vines, many fern-like growths, tall fleshy plants resembling spineless cacti with large leaves, and enormous — almost impenetrable — forests of gigantic bush-like plants known as wicker trees or "wiks." The wiks have many thin branches that connect to each other almost like the weave of a basket. The only way through a wicker forest is along narrow paths, game trails or human walkways, which wind between the "trees."

Many plants are considerably more mobile than their Earthly counterparts. While none can uproot themselves and move, a surprising number can rapidly open and close their leaves and flowers — and even move their branches and leaves to avoid predation by insects, or to seek out light. Of course, many of these plants are carnivorous and supplement their diets with animals. No plant discovered so far has been capable of consuming anything larger than a house cat.

The "insects" of Far Nyumba are a similarly large and varied group. They walk on the ground, burrow into the earth and fly through the air. The vast majority are herbivores and scavengers. The dominant species has eight legs and possesses ac-

tual lungs that allow it to grow considerably larger than Earth arthropods — the largest of these “spiders” is almost half-a-meter long. The creatures are not generally dangerous to humans, but some have discovered a taste for humans’ crop plants. This has necessitated putting up special fences and using locally made pheromones to discourage scavenging. Also, many farmers have taken to planting some of the more voracious carnivorous plants throughout the fields (which handily deters most of the creatures).

Much to xenologists’ consternation, few of the “bugs” encountered so far are carnivores. Some of the spiders are herbivores, but as a few unfortunate colonists and their livestock have discovered, other species are all too interested in meat.

The only other land-dwelling animal life on Far Nyumba is the amphibian proto-animal species. Flat and disk-shaped with four legs, most are quite small. Some rare specimens do reach almost a meter in diameter, though. The majority of these proto-animals are vegetarian since none are fast enough to catch the insects.

The colonists have barely begun to scratch the surface of Far Nyumba’s ecosystem, and are acutely aware of the many mysteries that lurk amid the moon’s thick forests and tumultuous volcanoes.

### Life on the Frontier

Far Nyumba survived its isolation, but times were very difficult. Almost 200 people died from malnutrition and lack of advanced medicine. The worst calamity occurred when a local fungus attacked grain supplies, promising starvation for the entire colony. Two months into the famine, some Upeo visited the colony and responded immediately to the crisis. First, the jumpers ferried in food supplies and as much medicine as they could manage. Once the immediate danger was over, the teleporters approached their Qin allies to help develop a method of protecting grain from the fungus. After a few years of research, the Qin produced a tailored retrovirus that immunized all Nyumban grain. While this effort saved the colony, the effort of ‘porting in massive food shipments meant that the Upeo had no time or resources to provide spare parts or other non-vital supplies.

The lack of extensive technological resources resulted in the development of a strangely mixed pre- and post-industrial colony. Colonists dragged

improvised plows behind converted trucks and hoed fields by hand. Yet these same people used sophisticated computers to analyze data from the Mgitu artifacts and prepared expeditions into the gas giant’s atmosphere! Even a year after recontact with Earth, some of this technological contrast remains. The settlement on Far Nyumba now looks like a strange combination of a rustic frontier town and a sophisticated research facility.

Thanks to some subtle, well-placed urging by the Æon Trinity, the news media has played up the colonists’ heroism and fortitude, and focused on the study of alien artifacts over the struggles of daily life. Æon encourages this perception since it doesn’t want the general public to be aware of just how close Far Nyumba came to total disaster. Currently, both jump ships and Upeo teleporters are carrying emergency supplies to all colonies to insure that each is functionally self-sufficient if it is ever again cut off from external aid.

This positive propaganda has also helped make Far Nyumba a desirable immigration point. Compared to the other extrasolar colonies, each caught up in some manner of violent struggle, a “rustic frontier world where dedicated and intelligent people can build a new life” is quite appealing. Although still rather wild, Far Nyumba is peaceful, quite habitable and at the center of one of the biggest scientific mysteries of the century. A number of humanity’s more eccentric scientists are eager to relocate, hoping that they can live and work without the restrictions found on Earth or the more civilized colonies.

In addition, several fringe religious cults are petitioning to settle on Far Nyumba. While most of these petitions are still being reviewed, more than 500 members of The Fellowship of the Face of the Maker have already relocated. Certain the alien “zeps” must have visited our Solar System at some point, these Fellows — or “Face Cultists,” as they’re generally known — have come to learn more about them. Some of the cultists have even gotten jobs as technicians and assistants in the Nyumban research labs. While some of Far Nyumba’s residents are a bit nonplussed to have cultists living among them, the Fellowship members are generally quiet and hardworking, so they’re slowly integrating into the society. (See **Hidden Agendas** for more details on this and other alternative religions.)



Far Nyumba is becoming an extremely diverse and eccentric colony, and while almost 600 of the original colonists have returned to Earth, the current population is over 10,000 and is continuing to grow.

### Culture and Government

The colonists have been independent and self-reliant from the very beginning. The African colonists and the many scientists who first came to Far Nyumba formed a unique culture — a mixture of African traditions adapted for life off Earth and the eclectic, free-thinking atmosphere of a university.

One important factor almost everyone in the colony had in common was a love of conversation and debate. Most colonists are eager to discuss almost any topic, something that helped them retain their sanity and sense of community during the worst months of isolation. To help share knowledge and improve morale during the years alone, a number of researchers began a weekly program of lectures and classes. As a result, almost everyone on Far Nyumba is relatively well educated and eager to hear alternative points of view.

This love of discussion and debate also greatly influences local politics. Far Nyumba is run by a triumvirate, comprised of a director and two assistant directors, each elected every two years. This trio oversees the colony's day-to-day operation and makes sure that everything runs smoothly. However, when any significant questions or problems arise, the director calls a general meeting. Everyone with an interest in the issue is welcome to participate, either in person or via the local OpNet. Given the Nyumbans' sense of community, this forum often includes several thousand people. The local tradition of politeness, combined with the knowledge that they must all work together to survive, has allowed these group debates to be both orderly and productive. Although the colonists' survival is no longer in doubt, these debates remain lively and popular affairs.

A significant number of Nyumbans worry that these traditions will be lost as new immigrants arrive, but fellow colonists are making sure to include new arrivals in the various classes and discussions. Some adjustments have been made — the forums are now more commonly held electronically — but as long as the present rate of immigration does not increase significantly, Far Nyumba's unique society should remain intact as it grows.

### Psions

There was initially some resentment against the Upeo teleporters for vanishing, stranding the Nyumbans. However, feelings shifted dramatically when the Upeo saved the colony from the famine that began in 2115. Today, almost everyone visiting the moon is warmly welcomed, and psions are especially popular (with the Upeo at the top). A number of Upeo, ISRA, Legion and Orgotek members have arrived to aid in the Mgitu investigations. This close collaboration between researchers and psions is a marked change between the suspicions and troubles that have recently beset psions back on Earth.

### The Aliens

Humanity already knew that there were odd artifacts scattered within Mgitu's upper atmosphere. However, it wasn't until the isolation that the Nyumbans discovered the extent of an alien presence in the system. More artifacts were scattered deeper within Mgitu, but the most startling discovery of all was made in 2117. Explorers found a large installation, apparently the local base for a star-faring species that left Mgitu approximately 1,000 years ago! All evidence points to the fact that this species, which the locals call zeps, evolved in the atmosphere of a gas giant. This revelation has triggered corresponding expeditions to Jupiter and any other known gas giants to check for evidence of zep visitation.

The complete lack of any artifacts on any other body within this star system suggests that the zeps are primarily interested in exploring gas giants. While little is known about the aliens, analysis of various images found in the installation, combined with data gathered by ISRA psychometry specialists has allowed researchers to gather preliminary data. The zeps appear to have arrived on Mgitu almost 1,000 years ago and departed approximately 500 years later. (Their exact method of arrival is unknown.) During their stay, the zeps deployed numerous pieces of machinery, including the deep atmosphere installation and the artifacts found throughout the atmosphere.

The zeps left Mgitu via the glowing sphere in the center of the installation — a quantum teleportation device. This sphere is linked to numerous similar spheres in other star systems. (The systems themselves are still being tracked down

through further clairsentient scans.) The hardtech device is exceedingly complex in design (and contains no noetic components), though quite simple in function. A being entering one sphere is transported across tens or hundreds of light years at the speed of light. Though the trip can take centuries, it seems instantaneous from the traveler's perspective. Psychometrically gathered data supports the hypothesis that the zeps are exceedingly long-lived and have a civilization capable of accepting the time-delays inherent in this form of transportation.

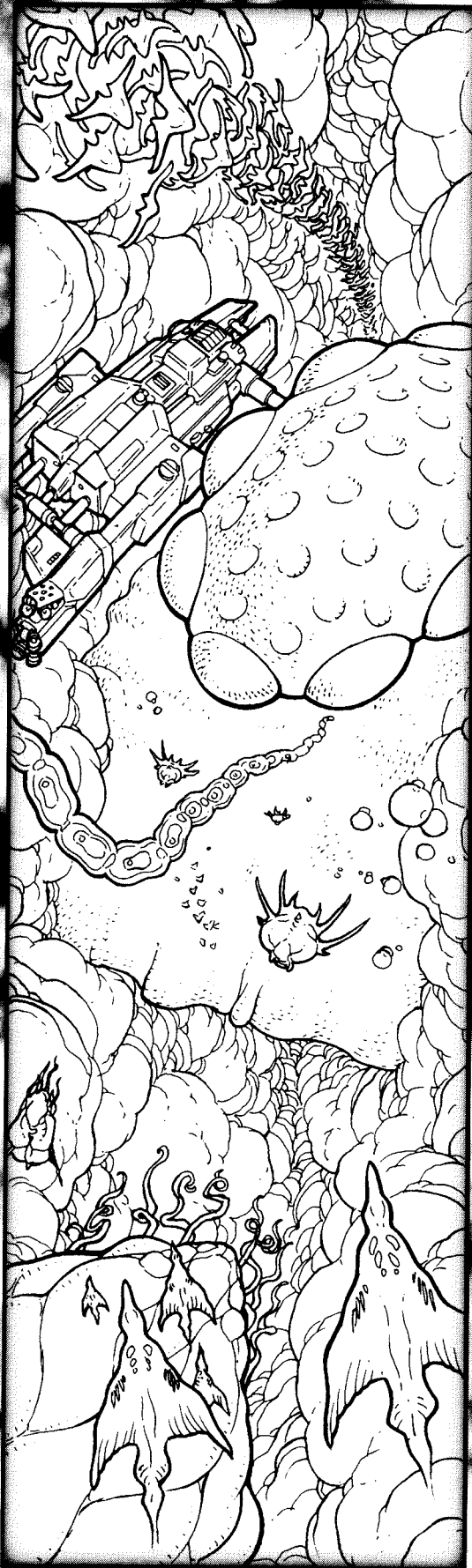
The zeps themselves appear to be huge creatures between eight and 10 meters long and shaped vaguely like plump manta rays, with three rows of manipulatory pseudopods along their fronts and undersides. Like several life forms native to Mgitu, the zeps appear to move through a combination of jets of air produced by muscular action and lift generated by their ray-like wings.

Having evolved in a fully three-dimensional environment, the zeps' sense of orientation differs dramatically from that of humans. The installation is a prime indicator of this evolutionary distinction. The site is an exceedingly disorienting place for humans and other organisms used to conventional concepts of up and down. It floats in the atmosphere, simple buoyancy preventing it from sinking toward Mgitu's core. The structure tumbles and shifts orientation fast enough to disorient human explorers. There have been instances where researchers have had to cling tightly to various projections as the structure shifted around them. To make matters worse, complex electromechanical machinery allows the walls to shift position in response to the station's constantly changing orientation. The enormous scale of the rooms and equipment, as well as the entire structure's variable nature, has made exploration exceedingly difficult.

### Life on Mgitu

The evidence of sentient life on Mgitu is fascinating enough, but research has proven that the gas giant is home to a complex ecosystem. The life there is based on the numerous clouds of airborne organic chemicals found deep within the atmosphere. Drifting swarms of tiny cloud-plankton cluster in this chemical haze, and large creatures feed off of the chemicals and the plankton.

The most common type of large creature found so far are called "flats." These thin, carpet-like entities can grow up to several kilome-



ters on a side while remaining less than 10 cm thick. The huge creatures absorb nutrients directly from the vast clouds of organic chemicals.

More rare, but much more impressive are the "airwhales." An airwhale looks like a cross between a jellyfish and a bunch of party balloons — though hundreds of meters in length. The majority of its mass is a roughly hemispherical balloon cluster, with numerous tentacles and sensory clusters covering the relatively flat underside. The largest airwhale seen so far was over a kilometer long, including its 500-meter long tentacles. Airwhales consume portions of flats and use their paddle-shaped tentacles to waft masses of cloud-plankton into their vast mouths located in the center of their tentacle mass.

Flats and airwhales can occasionally be navigational hazards, but they pay little attention to human exploratory vessels. However, smaller predators like the 15-meter long, delta-shaped "swifts" have taken an unfortunate interest in humans and their ships. These creatures propel themselves rapidly through the atmosphere with muscular jets of air and are as maneuverable as a research craft is. The Nyumbans were at first reluctant to drive off aggressive swifts, fearing that the creatures might actually be the sentients that constructed the artifacts. Scientists are now confident that the swifts are essentially the gas giant equivalent of sharks. Diplomats and xenologists believe that caution is still warranted, since Mgitu may yet prove to have a sentient or proto-sentient species — whether remaining zeps or some other life form. Mistreatment of the other native species could negatively affect relations with such beings.

All explorers are advised to use caution and restraint when interacting with all life forms in Mgitu, including dangerous predators. The chief of research, Dr. Demetria Andrasko, is a devout pacifist and heartily supports strict limits on violence. This policy has caused numerous complaints from the Legionnaires and other psions sent along to guard the Mgitu expeditions.

## Averiguas

This colony suffers from a slow-burn rebellion. Many colonists expected the Brazilian government to rapidly pacify the rebels on Averiguas when *Mae de Ceu* arrived in January 2120. How-

ever, the tense standoff that evolved with recontact has continued for more than a year. The Brazilian government's demand that the colony return fully to Brazil's rule has met with staunch defiance by the rebels. Even an offer of complete amnesty to all rebels who would leave Averiguas and avoid entering Brazilian-held territory was quickly rebuffed. Instead, the rebels continue to demand full legal autonomy (though a number of moderates are willing to negotiate for shared rule). Oddly enough, the normally unobtrusive Norça are caught in the middle of this conflict. Almost two dozen Norça (11 of whom are actual shifters) have allied themselves with the rebels; Major Vargas, the local Norça commander, is reluctant to start a conflict that would likely result in Norça fighting each other.

Currently all parties are involved in complex negotiations — which is not to say that things don't erupt into physical violence every so often. There hasn't been anything beyond isolated skirmishes and vandalism, but the possibility for full-scale conflict hangs heavy over the colony.

## Physical Environment

All this tension over a dry and barren world. Averiguas is no great prize; it has small oceans and large deserts, and the only native life consists of microscopic creatures in the seas and a few lichens found on moist rocks. Life evolved on Averiguas only a little more than a billion years ago, and is unlikely to continue for much longer since the binary system's white dwarf is almost certain to go supernova within the next 2,000 years (something the colonists are acutely aware of). The landscape around the cities of New Hope and Justica is warm and dry. Both towns are built on the banks of a large, slow river, which forms the only local source of water other than the infrequent rains.

The local terrain is flat and rocky with wind-eroded mesas to the north, and a large barren, rocky desert similar to Australia's Outback 100 kilometers to the south. Much of the farming is hydroponic, since only the hardiest crops can grow in the rocky soil. However, farming conditions are gradually improving with the importation of specially bred microbes from Khantze Lu Ge that are designed to rapidly turn the sandy soil into somewhat arable land. In short, Averiguas is a desolate place that only the workers who have struggled and fought to possess it truly love.

## Society

Averiguas is a deeply divided world. While there hasn't been open warfare since the initial battles in 2114, shouting matches, barroom brawls and late-night beatings are common since recontact. The majority of Averiguas' 24,000 inhabitants are lower middle-class laborers from Europe and the Americas. These people are used to poverty and struggle, and they are not inclined to surrender. The rest of the population consists of 4,500 Brazilian soldiers and officials, 2,000 of whom have arrived within the past year.

Cultural and linguistic differences rigidly separate the groups. During their five-year isolation, the workers, as well as the Norça and Brazilians who joined the rebels, learned English to share a common language. Currently, speaking English is taken as a sign of rebel allegiance just as speaking Portuguese marks the speaker as a Brazilian supporter. Visitors are advised to be careful about the circumstances in which they speak either language.

Despite many cultural differences, the two groups continue to cooperate. During isolation, everyone on Averiguas agreed that some form of mutual aid was necessary. In spite of their political and cultural differences, the inhabitants of New Hope and Justica maintained trade, mutual cooperation and assistance with one another. The two groups worked side by side during harvests, and technicians from Justica helped repair the main hydroponics tanks in New Hope when the equipment almost failed.

This continuous cooperation created a climate of mutual respect and toleration among almost everyone who endured the long isolation together. While there are a few reactionaries and bigots on both sides, most of the inhabitants are quite willing to work together when necessary. In addition, after five years, both rebels and loyalists have formed friendships with members of the opposition. In part, the Norça shifters helped to develop this cooperation, since some of the Norça who sided with the rebels continued to work in the research facility. These role models put aside political differences for the sake of far more important anti-Aberrant research.

Unfortunately, the newly arrived colonial government threatens this cooperative spirit. These Brazilian administrators and soldiers lack the his-

tory of cooperation the colonists share, and actively discourage loyalist interaction with the rebels. While Governor Josefa Cristobal has not yet forbid open contact between the two groups, her increasingly harsh policies indicate that it's just a matter of time.

## Go Union!

More than a dozen professional negotiators and organizers from the Olympus-based Interstellar Laborers Association (ILA) showed up after being invited by Averiguas' Workers' Council. The ILA works for labor rights throughout human-inhabited space. The organization has helped colonies receive fair treatment and representation by Earth-based groups for over 15 years. While it prefers non-violent solutions, the ILA is an expert at protests of all sorts and is not above using human blockades and even sabotage to achieve its aims. The Brazilian government is attempting to stop all known ILA members from visiting Averiguas — but, thanks to pro-rebel teleporters, Brazil's efforts are ineffectual thus far.

While settlers flock to Far Nyumba, and others eagerly await the end of the wars on Khantze Lu Ge and Karroo so they can move to those colonies, few people even consider moving to a harsh, barren world circling a star as unstable as the current political situation. As a result, the only real visitors to Averiguas go there on official business. In addition to the Brazilian officials and soldiers, more than 100 Æon Trinity diplomats and relief workers have been assigned to the colony to help work toward a peaceful resolution. Adding to the complications, the rebels have recently acquired allies from Earth in the form of labor organizers and revolutionaries (brought in by sympathetic Upeo).

## Norça Interests on Averiguas

The Norça are in an unusual position. They wish to keep their research bases free from Brazilian oversight control (as was agreed upon when the planet was first settled), but they must work with Brazil to restore order or possibly lose their research entirely.



The Norça wanted Averiguas to be a safe and isolated place where they could conduct research on Aberrant taint. Aberrants draw their power from this taint energy, and the Norça have been working since the order's inception to find some method of limiting, or even severing, the Aberrants' connection to this energy.

The Averiguas sites, like the handful of other secret research facilities the Norça have set up on Earth and in near space, were established to prevent Aberrant attacks or betrayal by Aberrant cultists. A new concern has arisen in light of the disastrous Huang-Marr Project, wherein fringe members of the Æsculapian and Orgotek Orders experimented with Aberrant tissue cultures. The Huang-Marr conspirators' methods were extreme and their results horrific (see the **Darkness Revealed** adventure series for more details).

While the Averiguas facilities also study tainted cultures, the Norça have maintained rigorous control. Unlike the Huang-Marr Project, this research does not involve normal human or psion test subjects. The Norça are concerned only with finding new methods of killing or weakening the Aberrants.

However, the Norça are acutely aware that it sounds similar enough to Huang-Marr that the order could be damned should the research go public. That possibility is quite real if the facilities come under Brazilian control. A great deal of effort is spent directing both the colonial government and the visiting Æon Trinity mediators' attentions elsewhere to avoid just such a scandal.

## Government

Currently a governing body known as the Workers' Council rules the rebel-controlled portions of Averiguas. The council's nine members are elected biannually by all citizens of "Free Averiguas." Anyone willing to swear an oath of allegiance to the free people of Averiguas can become a citizen. The Workers' Council is in charge of the town of New Hope and its surrounding farming areas. All of the current members of the Workers' Council are staunch defenders of freedom for Averiguas; while most seek peaceful solutions, all are willing to fight if need be. Juliet Navarone, an outspoken and somewhat militant French electronics technician, is the council's spokesperson and unofficial leader.

Fifty kilometers away lies the Brazilian-held town of Justica. Originally a large research station containing the main site of the secret Norça facili-

## Unity

A few narrow-minded rebels have decided that the loyalist Norça are representative of all psions, and the Gifted are, therefore, responsible for all the colony's troubles. These extremists, who call their group Unity, are among the most violent and unstable of the rebels, and have little support beyond their own faction. During Averiguas' isolation, these bigots were content to limit their activities to insults and petty vandalism against known psions. Recontact resulted in an increased psion presence on Averiguas, and Unity has decided that it must strike back against the perceived oppression. While most of these malcontents spend their time planning elaborate kidnappings and vast campaigns of terror, their small numbers, lack of resources and general mental instability have kept such plans from bearing fruit. So far, Unity's only "productive" efforts include spreading anti-psion tracts among the colonists and instigating fights with visiting psions.

Recently, Legionnaire Todd Gilroy was surprised in an alley and badly beaten. The Workers' Council openly decried the act and imprisoned two of the Unity members involved. This beating was the most serious incident of anti-psion violence so far, and the Workers' Council asked for Æon Trinity assistance in helping to track down the rest of the extremists. While this alliance is likely to inflame the anti-psion faction to even more excessive action, the rebel leaders are worried that allowing Unity's continued existence will fracture the support the Workers' Council currently possesses.

ties, it has grown into a town with a population of over 2,000 Brazilian loyalists. After the rebellion (which ended shortly after Averiguas lost contact with Earth), those who refused to cooperate with the workers' government were relocated to Justica. With recontact, the city became the site of the Brazilian colonial government. The colonial administration was selected for efficiency and ruthlessness, and the new governor, Josefa Cristobal, is a skilled administrator. She most recently worked as director of Brazil's ci-

vilian-run Military Oversight Committee. Governor Cristobal is used to working with military personnel and is not noted for her ability to compromise.

Officially, the Norça are present on Averiguas only as advisors to the Brazilian government. In practice they hold a great deal of political sway. Governor Cristobal and Major Vargas are considered to share power and must agree on all major decisions. Unfortunately, the two rarely agree about anything, making negotiations with the rebels even more difficult.

## Psions

After seeing the poor working conditions and the rebel's heartfelt desire for independence, 13 of the Norça stranded on Averiguas during the isolation sided with the rebels. One of these Norça, Minola Perez, was killed in an early battle against the Brazilian troops and became a martyr to the revolution. When eight of the Norça from the recontact mission also defected, the rebels' morale soared and all talk of surrender was abandoned. Cristobal worries that the Norça might infiltrate the colonial government, and has grown increasingly paranoid of even her most trusted aides.

The Upeo were sympathetic to the rebels' cause as well. Unknown to the loyalists, a few teleporters brought New Hope much-needed supplies during isolation. Along with the fact that the Upeo disappearance kept Brazilian forces stuck on Earth and unable to overwhelm the rebel opposition, this aid helped reinforce a positive attitude among the rebels toward psions.

The loyalists are also quite aware of how useful the Gifted can be. Like everyone else, psions visiting Averiguas rapidly find themselves judged as to which side they favor. Gifted who spend time among the Brazilian forces are treated with as much distrust as any other loyalist, and psions who hang out with the rebels — including Æsculapian healers and other psion relief personnel — are widely hailed as comrades in the revolution. The fact that a number of the psi orders has difficulty with Norça policies is not lost on the rebels. Since the Biokinesis Order is considered loyal to Brazil's interest, the rebel leaders aren't above using such tensions to their advantage.

## New Discoveries

### Ruan's World

With its low gravity, dim sun, and dangerous animal life, Ruan's World was not initially considered a prime colonization site. Instead, it became an Upeo

staging area for further deep-space expeditions. The site gradually grew in importance and population due to the order's increasing secrecy in dealing with the novas of Eden and the tension with the psi orders over the amount of freedom teleporters were allowed. The Upeo wa Macho moved an increasing number of its personnel and support staff to Ruan's World between 2112 and 2114. Finally, the vast majority of the order jumped to the colony on that fateful day in August of 2114. The population of Ruan's World has since grown to around 6,000 people, including virtually all of the teleporters and a few dozen other psions.

## Physical Environment

Ruan's World is a highly unusual environment for human habitation. Axum, the world's sun, is a cool star. Its dim reddish glow fills almost a quarter of the daylight sky. Ruan's World orbits Sapphire, a small gas giant the size of Neptune. It looms large above this dimly lit world. Interestingly, Sapphire's proximity to Axum has given it a unique chemistry. Numerous Earth-based companies have expressed an interest in extracting potentially valuable chemicals from its atmosphere.

Axum's dim red light is disorienting and even painful to visitors. All new arrivals get frequency-shifting biocontacts (glasses are also available). These lenses adjust the visual frequencies up to a more normal range. However, the shifting process makes all colors look somewhat distorted, so the lenses are rarely worn indoors.

Ruan's World has little axial tilt, and therefore, has almost no seasons. The weather is cool and mild in the region around the only real settlement, Freedom. However, the frequent thick fogs serve to make the wilderness even less inviting. The majority of Freedom lies under a low inflatable dome 300 meters in diameter. This dome is a mixture of mylex windows and electrically powered Sunpaint (a conductive paint that provides a normal level of illumination for the colony's primary living and working areas).

## Biology

The very strangeness of Sapphire's moon fascinates xenologists of all types. Still, these visitors do well to remember that Ruan's World can be a dangerous place for the careless or unprepared. During the early eras of Earth's geologic history, including the so-called age of dinosaurs, large and dangerous predators were relatively common. Similar creatures can be found on Ruan's



World, and some of them can fly. While violent crime is exceedingly rare, every adult owns at least one hand weapon and carries it when near or in wilderness areas.

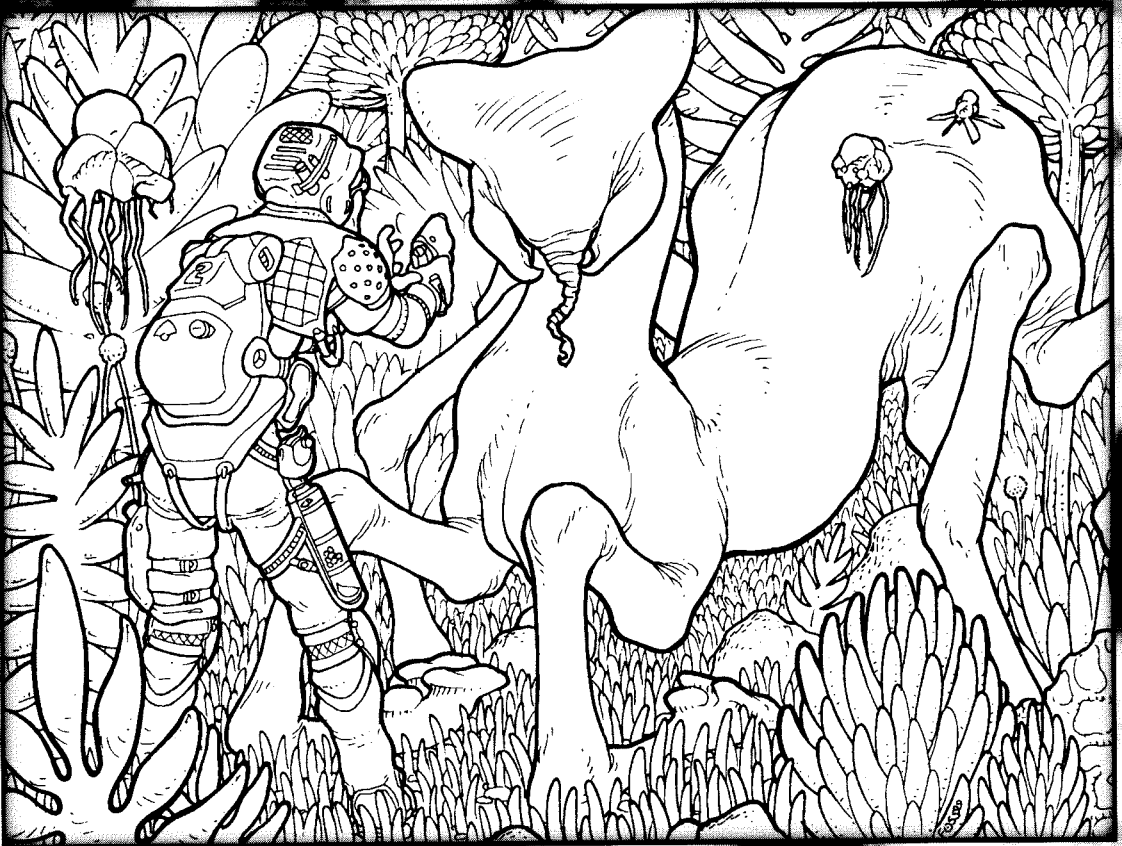
Initial reports painted a picture of a wilderness inhabited by hordes of deadly animals that resembled walking, tooth-filled jaws. Such stories were exaggerations, built partly upon jokes and cautionary tales told by the local inhabitants. Ruan's World has a perfectly normal ecology that simply happens to include more large, dangerous animals than are found currently on Earth. The wildlife is unusual by Earth standards, but their odd appearance does not make the predators any less deadly. Thanks to predominantly dim red sunlight, creatures on Ruan's World have a network of infrared sensors that cover their bodies instead of eyes. These sensors are hidden under a layer of rubbery-looking skin, though some have sub-dermal scales for protection. These sensory abilities are similar to those possessed by life on the Chromatics' homeworld. Still, the native life on Ruan's World lacks both the high degree of visual acuity and the light-generating abilities many creatures on Chrome-Prime have.

The low gravity of Ruan's World means that most animals are rather lightly built, but many large predators are still quite strong (needing additional strength to chase and kill their prey). The most dangerous predators around Freedom are the "diata," bipedal slate-blue pack hunters. The largest predator, though is the "kwiri," a four-meter-long quadruped that stands two meters high at the shoulder. Fortunately, this beast is primarily a scavenger, chasing other predators from their kills.

Tall purple plants vaguely resembling enormous fleshy feathers are Ruan's World's version of trees and grasses. Labeled "fronds," these plants range in height between one and several dozen meters and form large forests and prairies that cover most of the moon's surface.

### Culture and Government

Like several other small human settlements, Ruan's World is a direct democracy. Proxy Atwan and her inner circle run things, but all adult colonists (16 and older) vote on various issues. This system is extremely responsive and has led to a high level of both personal freedom and personal responsibility. It's also extended to other facets of



society. Ruan's World operates on a moneyless economy. People perform their various jobs, from providing medical care to running a restaurant, and those in need of such services simply request what they need. Numerous visitors maintain that this system would not work on a larger scale, but Ruan's World's proponents believe that the naysayers are simply short-sighted. The colony's residents aren't the only ones who view the setup favorably. ISRA Proxy Otha Herzog has expressed extreme interest in studying Ruan's World's society further, even to the point of relocating *Huruf al-Hayy* there from its current hidden locale.

The colony on Ruan's World is tiny; its approximately 6,000 inhabitants know each other well, and Freedom, its only real settlement, has a very small-town atmosphere. Thanks to having a sizable teleporter contingent, the colony suffered none of the isolation and depression that plagued other extrasolar colonies like Averiguas or Far Nyumba. Ruans' World-based teleporters continued to visit the other colonies, and a few careful teleporters even jumped to Earth to purchase supplies, convey messages and pick up latent blinks.

These contacts kept morale on Ruan's World quite high. However, most residents are reluctant to inform outsiders of the true level of contact they've had with other worlds during the last five years. Many colonists fear that information on the extent of Upeo activities will incite anti-teleporter paranoia. Most people throughout settled space are grateful to have the teleporters back in circulation. However, the Upeos' public reappearance has invited all manner of second-guessing — some colonists on Khantze Lu Ge, for instance, blame the Upeo disappearance for the ease with which the Aberrants invaded their world. The most sensitive topic by far, though, is the fact that the Upeos' flight from Earth during the *Esperanza* attack was voluntary. Not surprisingly, both Ruan's World colonists and Earth residents grow rather emotional when the *Esperanza* disaster is brought up.

One of the most unusual features of society on Ruan's World is the degree to which the moon itself is both unknown and ignored. While a few of the colony's xenobiologists have started a survey of main life-forms, huge areas are only known through orbital imaging, and new life-forms are discovered on a monthly basis. This ignorance is due in part to the hazards involved in venturing

into the wilderness. Between the low levels of illumination and the dangerous wildlife, most locals prefer to stay in or near Freedom. The primary reason for the lack of interest is that the Upeo teleporters and their allies still regard Ruan's World as simply a base of operations and not a home. The colonists' efforts are focused almost exclusively elsewhere — communicating with Eden, monitoring Earth, assisting the extrasolar colonies, exploring new star systems — rather than on investigating the strange little moon on which they live.

Proxy Atwan has allowed Ruan's World to be opened to visitors, but the inhabitants have voted to restrict the total number to under 500 at any one time. Further, contingents of armed soldiers or other potentially dangerous visitors are forbidden to enter the system. Ruan's World's unusual environment has so far discouraged any desire for large-scale colonization, so it remains an Upeo base and a biological curiosity.

## Psions

Since Ruan's World is not a popular site for either tourism or colonization, all visitors are expected to have an obvious reason for their visit. Xenobiologists investigating the local life-forms; sociologists studying the colony; reporters interested in hearing the Upeos' side of recent events; colonists' friends and relatives; and official representatives from various governments, psi orders and corporations are all welcomed. Of the orders, ISRAns and Æsculapians are most welcome. Members of Orgotek and the Ministry must provide a damn good reason to gain entry to Ruan's World. The colony hasn't forgotten the troubles and mistrust that lead to the Upeos' departure in 2114. The colonists are ready to defend Ruan's World against hostile invaders, and the easiest way to do so is to prevent suspect individuals from setting foot there.

## Eden

Shortly after the Aberrant group Allah's Legion took over Bahrain in 2046, it became clear that the conflicts between humans and Aberrants would continue to escalate. The standard history books record that between 2030 and 2050 every known Aberrant succumbed to the violent madness that is believed to be inherent in Aberrant Syndrome. Like many such historical "facts," this one is false. Many Aberrants did grow violently psychotic and began a campaign of terror against hu-

manity. Some managed to avoid this madness, though. For these sane Aberrants, the years after 2046 were difficult ones indeed. They sought refuge from the increasing anti-Aberrant hysteria that swept Earth. They needed safety for themselves and for those normal humans who remained loyal to them. Eden was one of these refuges.

## Physical Environment

In many ways, Eden is as difficult to comprehend as is the idea of rational Aberrants. The planet is the only known example of a myriasomatic ecosystem. In the most accurate terms, Eden has only nine native living organisms. Each is a complex network of creatures that are all connected by elaborate chemical ties. Each "stabile" (as the plant analogs are known) is capable of reproducing itself; further, the larger ones grow special reproduction pods of various sizes. A variety of chemical cues can cause these pods to produce any of the stabiles or "mobiles" (the current term for the animal analogs) that make up the organism.

There is no competition, predation or conflict within each individual organism. A given myriasome's stabiles and mobiles work together for the organism's greater good. Mobiles carry seeds and spores to areas that may require them. They feed on and clean up debris, and even sometimes travel to areas for the express purpose of dying so that their bodies can provide needed fertilizer for the local stabiles. The only native conflict that occurs takes place between multiple myriasoma.

Eden's seas are largely one myriasome; there are three separate organisms on each of the two large continents and a single ecosystem on each of the two smaller continents. The terrain itself ranges from rock to soil, but hostility routinely occurs where the organisms

meet. Each one tries to devour the other's stabiles and mobiles, and take important resources like water or rich soil. The conflicts resemble periodic raids more than open warfare, but they occur almost constantly. The larger specialized mobile "warriors" are fearsome creatures that can grow up to four meters long with tough armored carapaces and razor-sharp slashing arms. Most mobiles have numerous legs and jointed carapaces that supplement their internal skeletons.

When humans settled on Eden, they inadvertently became a part of this conflict. While Eden and Earth life are not completely compatible, a number of basic proteins and other nutrients can be shared. Mobiles periodically raid the colony farms, attempting to take away anything they can carry. On more than one occasion, these raids have carried off a few humans as well as grain and farm animals.

Several decades of research, made easier by the wealth of biological data the colonists brought with them, allowed the colonists to partially decode the myriasomas' various chemical "languages." The Edenites developed chemical sprays that are applied to those working within or near one of the organ-

isms. These sprays identify the person or object as being a protected member of a specific organism.

Unfortunately, sprays coded for different organisms cancel each other out (something the myriasoma already tried on one another in the past). While a myriasome regards unmarked individuals as potential resources, individuals marked with a rival organism's spray are identified as hostile. Switching sprays is a common ploy used in the local mystery vids shown on Eden, and has been used in more than one actual murder.

## So Are Myriasoma Sentient or What?

No, they're not, just very strange. The biologists who accompanied the novas to Eden theorized that the various organisms might have some form of communal intelligence. However, all efforts to prove this hypothesis have failed. Current theories hold that each organism is, at best, as intelligent as a monkey. While mobiles display complex behavior and sophisticated tactics when raiding, no evidence of higher consciousness or abstract reasoning has ever been discovered. The few telepaths who have visited Eden mention being overwhelmed with waves of intertwined alien thoughts, but admit that they felt no evidence of actual sentience.



Eden's ecosystem is obviously unusual. What little the Earth scientists have learned about it (from recently revealed Upeo reports and a UN expedition) has whetted their appetites thoroughly. Dignitaries from many Central and South American nations as well as the UAN, China, Nippon and every psi order — not to mention Æon itself — are interested in the potential for adapting Eden biology. That means dealing with Aberrants, which each group is reluctant to do without a great deal more assurance that the Edenites aren't simply propagating an elaborate ploy.

### Establishing Eden

By the 22nd century many people have chosen — or were encouraged by propaganda — to forget that for several decades the Aberrants were seen as powerful allies generally called "novas," and that many wise and moral humans aided their efforts. Ironically, when the Aberrant War began, these normal human supporters were regarded as traitors and quislings... just like the insane cultists who aided the mad Aberrants.

The sane Aberrants (who continued to call themselves novas) realized that no place in the Solar System would be safe. Some novas had al-

ready ventured into the vastness of space. Members of this group did the same, and after a time discovered Eden. More than three dozen novas then developed a plan to relocate to this new world where nova and human could live in harmony. Working secretly, the novas offered their human allies a place on Eden. Those who agreed to go were discreetly used to recruit others. (Those who declined were apparently allowed to go their own way, since they had no idea where Eden was or how to get there.) The situation on Earth was desperate enough by 2055 that virtually all the people contacted jumped at the chance to leave a war-torn Earth for a comparative paradise.

Tens of thousands of humans and many tons of equipment were warped to Eden, including computers containing hundreds of terabytes of data. In fact, Eden remains the only place outside of the Æon Trinity's secret Babel Dossier (see the **Trinity Storytellers Guide** for more details) that retains certain important pieces of data, including the most detailed record of the human genome known to exist! By the time of China's Ultimatum, Eden's leader, Diana Kadmon,



declared it was time to break all ties with Earth. They willingly remained exiled from Earth since that time, focusing their efforts almost exclusively on making Eden a true paradise.

As a result of this restraint, the Aberrants on Eden remain both sane and relatively human in appearance. Their numbers have grown to 67, and the human population has passed 100,000.

The colony thrived in its isolation. The novas used their incredible powers to clear the land and to sculpt Harmony's basic structure from the local rock. Their human assistants began the difficult task of growing food and using automated factories to produce the basic necessities of life. In many ways, Eden is the single most successful and prosperous colony world yet encountered.

### Government

"Benevolent despotism" best sums up the way the novas run things. Eden's rulers are sane, generally compassionate beings who are almost god-like in power compared to normal humans or psions. Novas can fly, move vast quantities of earth with a thought, heal the sick and injured, control temperature and generate tremendous bolts of energy at will. This power has given the novas absolute authority over Eden. For the first time, a truly non-egalitarian society has evolved. The novas serve as rulers, judges and protectors of the humans on Eden. If a child is lost in

the wilderness or if a shuttle crashes, a nova rushes to the rescue. Similarly, novas help with any large public building project, doing the work of many dozen of humans and machines in a fraction of the time.

In return for these efforts, the novas expect to be treated with respect and deference. The novas also occupy a special place in the economy. They are prohibited by their own code of laws from taking a human's personal property, but they may freely take any goods offered for sale. Given the many benefits that the novas provide, and the fact that the majority of Edenites cannot remember a life without their nova overlords, the colonists readily acknowledge the novas' authority.

The novas try not to micro-manage their world. Personal freedom of expression is unrestricted, but the government effectively controls and directs the economy. The humans have their own civil courts and all criminal cases are first tried by a human jury. Only if there remains any question is the case then referred to a nova judge. The novas set wages, prices and production levels for all essential goods and services. The novas wrote the constitution and set the general social policies, but, as with all other elements of Eden society, humans provided considerable help in the planning and implementation.

Though a paradise, Eden is not perfect. The colonists have a wide diversity of opinion about the novas. Some consider them as almost god-like beings; others treat them as powerful rulers, and a few are somewhat resentful of the caste distinction and keep careful track of things to make sure the novas do not abuse their power. Gossip about the activities, likes and dislikes of the novas is comparable to the way many humans in the Solar System regard the lives of famous celebrities.

### Psions

In spite of many explanations and five years of visits, the local populace is still largely convinced that psions are simply another variety of nova. Much to the confusion of most psions who visit Harmony, the locals treat them just like novas. The locals often bow and make gestures of affection and respect when they pass a known psion on the street. Shopkeepers act dismayed and even insulted if a psion visiting their shop attempts to pay for anything. In general, the Gifted is treated much like visiting royalty.

### If You'd Like to Learn More....

Both the previous color section and this expanded rules chapter provide plenty of information on deep space. However, that's not all there is to know about what's going on across the stars. If you want even *more* material on extrasolar space in general, look for the **Trinity Field Reports: Extrasolar Colonies and Alien Races**.

For supplements that focus on a particular colony, check out the following: The **Trinity: Battleground** miniatures game for Khantze Lu Ge, **Darkness Revealed: Ascent into Light** for Karroo, **Alien Encounter: Invasion** for Chrome-Prime and **Alien Encounter: Deception** for Qinshui (and the mysterious Coalition!).

The only problem the Edenites have is that they cannot always identify psions on sight. Unlike novas, who usually have at least a few distinct physical differences, psions look just like any other human. The locals have learned to recognize the insignia worn by the various orders, and usually ask the status of a visitor not wearing obvious identification. Once designated as a "human" or a "nova," the visitor is treated appropriately for Eden culture. "Humans" are treated as equals, "novas" as honored guests.

A normal human who treats a psion companion (or a nova) as equal is considered rude and unmannered. Psions who attempt to mingle casually with the "common folk" find the humans around them become increasingly confused and uncomfortable. To make matters even more difficult, the novas feel the same way. So far, nova relationships with psion visitors have been quite positive. While Eden's rulers all realize that psions are something different, they nonetheless regard Gifted as simply another type of evolutionary advancement.

A dozen Upeo wa Macho have been living on Eden since 2114. The jumpers who stayed on the colony have become fully accustomed to the current social climate and are little troubled by being treated as high royalty in return for the services they provide. Æon is extremely concerned that these teleporters may attempt to spread the nova ideology of post-human dominance to other colonies — or even to Earth.

## The Lost Ships

In addition to the successful Chinese Lito Comet expedition that colonized Khantze Lu Ge, four other publicly funded colony ships were sent out in the late-21st century. In 2079, the Chinese starship *Kuan Yin* was sent to follow the earlier Khantze Lu Ge expedition. In 2083 *Endeavor*, an Australian ship, set out for the extremely rich asteroid belt discovered around 70 Ophiuchi, a dim orange star 17 light years from Earth. In 2086 using information gained from improved space telescopes, the Chinese sent the starship *Yangtze* to a small, heavily-glaciated world around Procyon, a bright type-F star 12 light years from Earth. Then, in 2087 a UAN-

sponsored vessel named *Aigle* left for a water world orbiting the orange star Epsilon Indi, 11 light years from Earth.

When the Upeo started their program of interstellar exploration, they also began searching for the colony ships. Kupita continued this program during the teleporters' exile. *Kuan Yin* was never found; at best, the Upeo came across a small probe near the expected trajectory that contained a message saying they were under Aberrant attack. The absence of wreckage along the flight path indicates that the Aberrants either captured the entire ship or that it was completely vaporized. Lacking any definite location or noetic residue, explorers are uncertain if this ship's fate will ever be determined.

Similarly, *Yangtze* has yet to turn up. However, since the ship is due to arrive around Procyon in 2122, clairsentient observers are keeping a periodic watch on the system. Upon closer observation, Procyon IV has proved to be less habitable than originally thought, so if the ship is discovered the colonists will likely be transported to other worlds.

Happily, news of the other two ships is more positive. Because of their long flight, only 10% of *Endeavor's* 40,000 member crew was awake and active at any one time. The rest slept out their long journey in artificially induced hibernation, reducing life support requirements and slowing aging by a factor of 20. The crew rotated to a new group every five years to make sure the ship ran smoothly on its 50-year journey. In 2118, 15 years from *Endeavor's* destination, Upeo explorers found the colony ship. Even though still several light years from their destination, *Endeavor's* crew already thinks of Ophiuchi as home. The jumpers are currently looking into using their powers to transport the entire ship to its destination more quickly.

Unlike our own asteroid belt, the main Ophiuchi Belt is the remains of a terrestrial planet that was completely fragmented around 60,000 years ago. The belt is approximately 30 times as dense as the one between Mars and Jupiter, and contains a wealth of valuable metals originally from the planet's core. Many Earth-based metacorps have been interested in mining



Ophiuchi in recent years, but a recent UN ruling set the entire system off-limits for the time being to give *Endeavor* first exploration rights.

*Aigle* had already arrived on Zanzania, a luxuriant world orbiting Epsilon Indi, by the time teleporters tracked it down. Passage through a relatively dense interstellar dust cloud had destroyed the ship's radio antenna only a few years after it left Earth. However, the ship arrived safely in 2117. The world itself is lush, warm, and exceedingly habitable even though 91% of the surface is covered by water. Unfortunately, the first meeting between the teleporters and the colonists did no go well. Assuming the Upeo were

Aberrant invaders, the colonists attacked and killed one of the visitors before the others fled. The information on Zanzania has been passed on to the United Nations. Plans are underway to launch a diplomatic expedition, jumping hardtech craft via jump ship to avoid further misunderstandings. Until that time, all contact with this world is forbidden. The only exceptions to this ban are brief secret visits by Upeo teleporters who are gathering data to aid in opening peaceful relations with the colonists. Æon Trinity psychologists and sociologists are using that data to ensure peaceful relations with the colony.



**T**his chapter covers basic rules information and behind-the-scenes notes, mostly to help the Storyteller add further depth to a series based in deep space. Players who want to maintain their sense of mystery about the Trinity Universe should skip this chapter entirely.

## Miscellaneous Rules

### Data

#### Space Combat

The following rules serve to enhance both the detail and the realism of space combat. Such adjustments may also make it more complex, though. The Storyteller should talk to her players first before incorporating these additional rules into the series. This information may be used just as easily in conjunction with or separately from the "Option: Expanded Vehicle Stats" in the **Trinity Technology Manual** (starting on p. 133).

#### Figuring Distance

Determining how close ships remain to each other is determined by both the skill of the pilots and the power of the engines. In general, a pilot with a faster ship can set the distance between two spaceships. As long as the pilot of the ship with the higher vacuum speed (or VS) has at least one die in her **Pilot** dice pool each turn, she can establish the approximate distance between her craft and the slower ship. The more powerful engines make this relatively easy, so a **Pilot** roll isn't

necessary unless the ships are in combat. If two ships have the same VS, the two pilots make resisted **Pilot** rolls each turn. The winner determines the distance.

There are two methods that slower ships can use to even the odds against faster ships. The first is to damage the faster vessel, since it loses VS if it sustains enough damage. The second is to gang up on the faster craft. Each additional ship maneuvering against a single vessel reduces that solitary craft's VS by one. The defender doesn't actually lose engine power; instead, the ship is stymied by trying to react to multiple vehicles buzzing around it. If the defender's VS drops equal to or below that of at least one of the attackers, distance can be refigured as described above.

#### Size Modifiers

Space vehicles differ greatly in size, from a one-ton escape pod to a several hundred thousand ton freighter. Greater size obviously makes for a larger target; the chart below provides a general listing of size and whether the attacker receives additional dice or suffers a difficulty to his roll to hit. Note that the attacking craft's size is irrelevant to how easily a target can be hit.

Larger vehicles are also significantly tougher than smaller ones. Their sheer mass makes them able to absorb considerably more damage. The **Trinity Technology Manual** contains a section on scaled structural levels on p. 135. If that book isn't handy, the Storyteller is welcome to add structural levels to big ships as she feels appropriate.

SIZE MODIFIER CHART	MODIFIER	MASS	EXAMPLE
	+2 difficulty	5 or less tons	maneuver pod, small shuttle
	+1 difficulty	6 to 100 tons	hybrid fighter
	Unmodified	101-2,000 tons	scout; nova starcraft
	+1 to accuracy	2,001-40,000 tons	small frigate
	+2 to accuracy	40,001-200,000 tons	large frigate; small freighter
	+3 to accuracy	200,001+ tons	large freighter; jump ship

## Point Defense

Laser beams travel at the speed of light — much faster than fusion warheads or smart missiles. As long as there is at least several kilometers between the attacking ship and the target, lasers have a chance to intercept and destroy any sizable incoming projectiles. This doesn't include coilgun rounds, since they're too small and move too quickly for a ship's sensors to pick up in time. Missiles are also small and move very rapidly (compared to another ship); still, as long as the defender has some distance, his ship's lasers can try to get a target lock.

Ships are normally equipped with collision warning systems. Sensors are constantly on passive sweep and trigger an alert if a projectile approaches at excessive speed (pretty much anything moving over 100 km/h). If the Storyteller feels malicious, she may have the defender make a standard **Engineering** roll once at each range category (as noted on the chart below) until he picks up a projectile. Generally, though, a ship's sensors are good enough that they'll spot a missile at long range.

Before firing anything, though, the attacker must be at an appropriate range. If he's too far away for the missiles to hit, there's not much point in trying. For **Trinity's** purposes, a smart missile's extreme range in atmosphere is 500 kilometers and a fusion missile's is 5,000 kilometers; multiply those distances by 10 for the maximum range in vacuum. (We know that in space an object in motion remains in motion. These rules assume that you need a target to shoot at, though. You could just fire missiles into space and sooner or later it might hit something, but it's generally a waste of missiles.)

Point defense then breaks the distance into rough range categories, as noted on the chart below. "Minimum Distance" is the closest distance for that range category (so medium range covers everything between 10 and 99 kilometers); "Modifier" is the difficulty applied to the defender's point defense attempt for that range. (The defender rolls **Firearm**, applying any modifiers for the laser's accuracy.) Under one kilometer, the missile is just too close and is moving too fast for the lasers to track it effectively.

RANGE	MINIMUM DISTANCE	MODIFIER
Long	100 km	+1 difficulty
Medium	10 km	+2 difficulty
Short	1 km	+4 difficulty

## Fusion Drive Facts

The following information is not necessary for playing **Trinity**, but may prove interesting to technically inclined players and Storytellers.

- Fusion rockets in **Trinity** are highly efficient. They have a specific *impulse* (a measure of a rocket's efficiency) of two million. For reference, a NASA space shuttle's rockets have a specific impulse of only 450.

- Fusion rockets require reaction mass to operate. Put simply, reaction mass is liquid hydrogen heated by the fusion rocket and used to propel the vehicle. To make things easy, assume that all spacecraft have enough reaction mass to make a round trip between Earth and Mars before having to refuel.

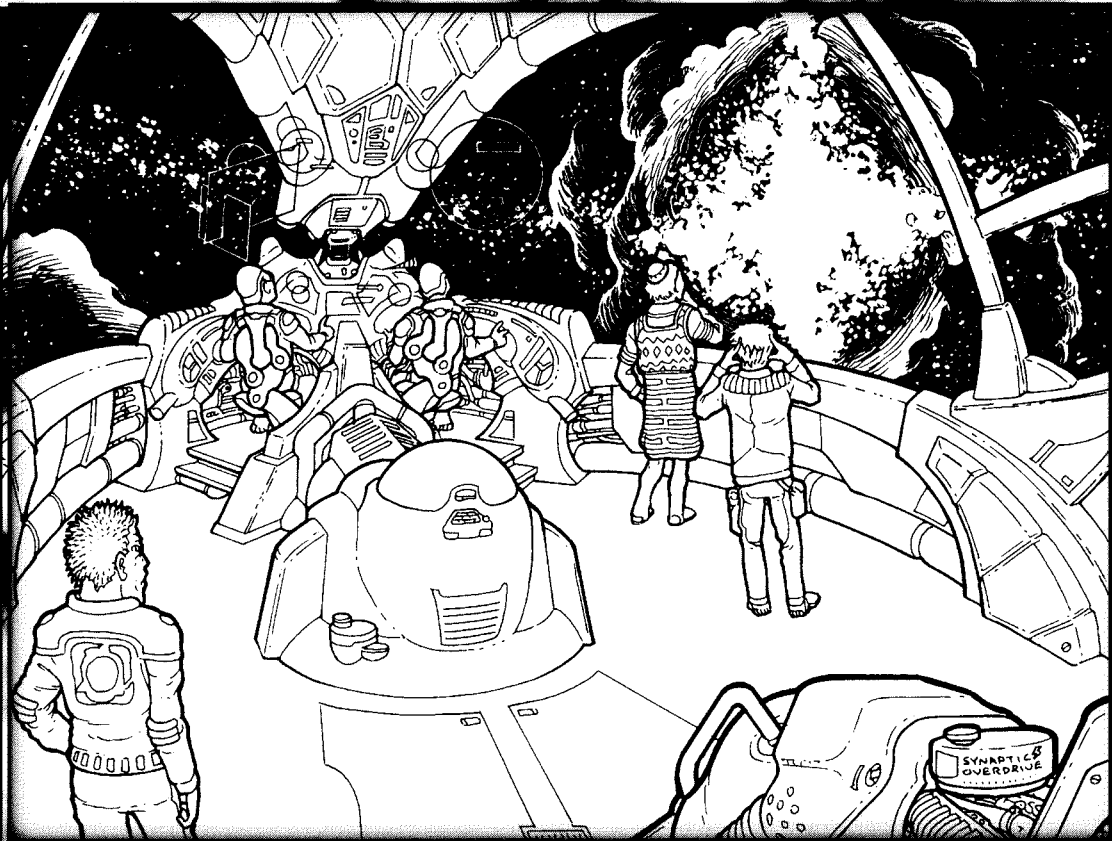
- Fusion rockets are all pretty equally efficient. The difference in VS from one ship to another is due to a combination of factors: greater structural mass (larger ships take longer to accelerate), more reaction mass (more fuel enables the rockets to run longer) and larger or more numerous engines (more power allows for a greater top acceleration).

- Acceleration is measured in "g's" (gravities). A designation of 1g is the equivalent of gravity on Earth, and translates to an acceleration of 10 meters/second<sup>2</sup>.

The table below puts all these facts into handy system details. "VS" is the craft's vacuum speed; "MA" is its maximum acceleration; "RM%" is the percentage volume of its reaction mass; "gHRS" is the measure of the total amount of acceleration a spacecraft engine can produce. Every g hour is one hour that the rocket can run at 1g of acceleration. All fusion rockets can run at less than their maximum acceleration; a spacecraft with 1g hour of reaction mass can run the engines at 1g for one hour, or for 1/4g for four hours.

VS	MA	RM%	gHRS
5	3g	40%	40
4	2.5g	20%	20
3	2g	10%	10
2	1.5g	4%	4
1*	0.5g	2%	2

*\*Rockets with this VS are incapable of taking off from Earth or other large planets, but they can maneuver in space and achieve planetfall.*



The defending ship doesn't have much time to respond. A missile fired from long range in atmosphere reaches the target after three turns. (A medium range shot gets there after two turns and a short range shot hits after a single turn.) The defender can make a single point defense roll each turn — one at long range, one at medium, and one at short. A missile fired in vacuum works the same way, except the greater distances involved allow the defender to make a total of three point defense attempts at long range.

The defender can roll once each turn for each laser on the ship. However, a laser being used for point defense cannot be used to attack in the same turn. As long as the defender gets at least one success to hit, the projectile is destroyed.

If the missile approaches past short range, the attacker rolls **Firearm** (this doesn't count as her action for the turn, since the missile was fired in a previous turn) and applies damage from a successful hit as normal. The defender can try defensive maneuvers to make it harder for the missile to hit — although a single defender piloting and performing point defense in a single turn suffers multiple action penalties.

Obviously, attacking less than a kilometer away completely negates point defense; such attacks hit

too rapidly to be defended against. Of course, performing close-range attacks also prevents the attacking craft from using point defense as well.

### Flying in Gas Giants

Pilots occasionally need to fly into the thick and treacherous atmospheres of gas giants. Such journeys have become much more common with the discovery of the Mgitu artifacts. For game purposes, there are four depths of atmosphere. The main types are listed below, each with a general description of the conditions, appropriate modifiers and the equivalent example of what that depth is like on Mgitu.

- **High:** air pressure similar to Earth; no modifiers; little life, no artifacts.
- **Middle:** dense atmosphere with thick clouds; +1 difficulty to **Pilot** rolls; abundant life, some artifacts.
- **Low:** very dense atmosphere, heavy winds, opaque clouds; +2 difficulty to **Pilot** rolls; abundant life, zep installation.
- **Deep:** atmosphere is more like a fluid than a gas, enormous pressure; anything except a specially constructed olaminium hybrid craft is crushed at this level; unexplored on Mgitu.

## Dangerous Animal Life

This is just a small sampling of the many varieties of animal life that exist on the extrasolar colonies. The **Alien Encounter** series offers a few more examples as well. Storytellers are encouraged to create all manner of bizarre creatures with which to amaze, confound and downright freak out players.

### **Diata**

The diata is the most dangerous predator on Ruan's World. It hunts in packs of up to eight and is perfectly willing to attack small groups of humans. A diata is a slate-blue biped that vaguely resembles a two-and-one-half meter tall dinosaur with a long, flat head and no eyes. Its forelimbs are thin and surprisingly long, each ending in a single blade-like claw. These limbs normally remain folded across the diata's midsection. A diata chases down its quarry and lashes its forelimbs out, whip-like, to cut down the prey.

**Relevant Traits:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4 (Stealth 4), Stamina 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 1 (Survival 3), Wits 4. The diata's large size provides it with an additional bruised health level, and its solid frame gives it natural [1/2, 0] armor. It has an eight-dice combat pool and its claws inflict 8d10 L damage.

### **Kwiri**

Also known as the Ruan Lion, this is the one of the largest predators found on Ruan's World. Standing two meters high and four meters long, the kwiri is an eyeless quadruped with a smooth rosy-gray hide. This skin is quite tough and is supplemented underneath by a layer of large bony plates. The kwiri is largely solitary and lives through scavenging (chasing smaller predators from their kills) or hunting obviously weaker animals (like solitary humans). Despite its seemingly cowardly nature, the kwiri's large teeth and formidable front claws make it an exceedingly dangerous animal.

**Relevant Traits:** Strength 6, Dexterity 4 (Stealth 3), Stamina 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 1 (Survival 4), Wits 4. The beast's tough hide and constitution translate into an extra bruised health level and natural [1/3, 0] armor. The kwiri has a 10 dice combat pool and normally uses its claws to attack for 7d10 L damage. If the kwiri gets three extra successes, the dice are not applied to damage (although the claw damage is still rolled). The successes mean that the beast has used its forelegs to immobilize its victim and bites next turn — with +2 dice to accuracy and 9d10 L damage!

### **Swift**

This huge predator lives in Mgitu's atmosphere. Swifts have been known to attack hybrid craft venturing into the gas giant; two swifts living near the zep installation repeatedly attacked the first research expedition. The average swift is 15 meters long and looks roughly like a stingray. It can repeatedly inflate itself with air (puffing up dramatically in the middle), and jet it out to move at high speed. The swift has a cluster of pseudopods that can extend from its underside to grab or tear pieces from its prey as it swoops past.

**Relevant Traits:** Due to the creature's size, the swift is treated as a vehicle, with a 900 km/h cruising speed and 1,100 km/h top speed. The swift has an average mass of 10 metric tons, and the equivalent of 3 [5] vehicle armor. It has an effective nine dice "piloting" pool and an eight dice combat pool. The number of successes on the swift's attack roll indicates how many pseudopods hit, with each inflicting 3d10 [3] L damage. If more than three pseudopods strike a target smaller than the swift, the prey is dragged along and reeled into the center of the pseudopod cluster. A person grabbed in this fashion can make a resisted **Might** roll against the swift's staggering 14 dice "might" roll (the 'pods are very strong). A ship can make a **Pilot** roll against the swift's normal "piloting" pool. If the victim doesn't break free, the swift's pseudopods start shredding the prey much like a blender does, inflicting 5d10 [10] L damage each turn.

## Aberrant Activity in Deep Space

### **Khantze Lu Ge**

Two warring factions of Aberrants have invaded the "Castle in the Sky," and each wants it to be their exclusive domain.

Like many Aberrants, Kali and Yog-Death have organized a society around themselves — their respective cults of personality. Both have largely the same structure: one "omnipotent" individual at the top, an inner council of powerful Aberrants that gives orders in the name of the "deity," and a disorganized gaggle of Aberrants under that. Underneath the lowliest Aberrants are the voluntary human worshippers, who are basically regarded as property. Underneath even the worshippers are the original residents, who are the property of property.



In theory, the voluntary cultists enforce their will on the settlers by threatening them with Aberrant reprisal if they get out of line. However, since the Aberrants don't really give a damn about untainted humans, the cultists have to rely almost purely on the threat. In practice, if a cultist complains, the Aberrant is just as likely to get annoyed with the whiner and kill *him*. This is usually just the prelude to an orgy of wanton, random violence against cultists and settlers alike: Many Aberrants consider themselves too important to keep up with human politics.

There are notable exceptions. An Aberrant who pays attention to her human chattel can often whip them into a fairly disciplined work force. Even a weak Aberrant is more than a match for human resistance — especially since other Aberrants will back her up against “peons putting on airs” far more readily than they would help a cult leader in the same situation.

An Aberrant who manages her slaves well can often become prominent beyond the normal scope of her powers. After all, Aberrants are few and humans are many. An Aberrant with an organized group of servants can produce food, clothing, shel-

ter and weaponry in abundance, while the ordinary, chaotic Aberrant has to put up with his slaves living hand to mouth.

The bulk of these “wise Aberrants” is aligned with Kali. The “goddess” herself has little concern for the humans in her empire, but she's smart enough to know that the more food they produce, the less time her army spends scavenging, and the more time it can spend putting those Yog-Death morons in shallow graves.

Yog-Death and his minions are single-mindedly focused on destroying Kali, and they haven't put much thought to anything beyond that. Basically, they believe that once they get rid of their rivals, the rest of Khantze Lu Ge will be easy pickings.

Some other Aberrants, followers of a powerful figure called Skinner, thought the whole thing was stupid. This group tried conquering the rest of Khantze Lu Ge while also fighting a holding action against Kali and Yog-Death. While the Skinner's troops had some easy victories against the humans early on, Yog-Death and Kali double-teamed him to keep him from growing too fast. Now the Skinner cult is smashed, though the Skinner himself escaped.



Having learned from the Skinner's mistake, Kali and Yog-Death are careful to never turn their back on one another or on the humans. However, this does not mean that Kali is not paying attention to her southern neighbors. She has two Aberrant spies in place — one in P'eng-Lai and one in Lu Yen. The spy in Lu Yen has a fairly subtle taint, and relies on that fact and her human appearance to allow her to move through the city and learn about any important human plans. The spy in P'eng-Lai is tainted and looks like a diseased human, so that is the disguise he has adopted. He pretends to be the sufferer of a taint illness who has (mysteriously) survived far longer than most. In this disguise he keeps careful track of the humans' progress toward understanding taint.

Far more important than her Aberrant spies are the human ones. Kali has persuaded a number of neutrals to also spy in the south. Her recruiting technique is simple: She finds someone with a suitable background (government functionary, police officer, actor) and a family. She assures her desired agent that as long as the spy provides true information and is not captured, his (or her) family will not be gruesomely tortured to death.

This process has allowed Kali to place over a dozen untainted human agents in the three major human-controlled cities. To provide cover for them, she also sends cultists south from time to time. These cultist spies don't know about the coerced agents, and they're usually so obvious that they get captured fairly soon. Nonetheless, every cultist agent captured means that the cops who caught him weren't looking at the *real* spies. Besides, every once in a long while the cultists learn something important.

### Qinshui

There have been Aberrant raids on Qinshui, but they've been fewer and less vicious than most humans might expect. There are several reasons for this.

First off, the Qin can take care of themselves fairly well. Their biotech production facilities are highly flexible, to say the least: It takes about an afternoon to change a furniture factory into a biofighter factory. There are three biofighters for every qualified Qin pilot, and more Qin sign up to train every day.

Secondly, the Qin's biological research on humankind has yielded more than miracle cures. Aberrants are fearsome creatures, but their DNA is still human. One major reason the Aberrants

don't like to land on Qinshui is that many cities now have innocuous looking flowers that can sense human DNA. When they do, they pump out a pollen that causes cells with human DNA in the nucleus to lose their cell wall integrity. (In effect, it makes humans melt.) This isn't as devastating to most Aberrants as it is to normal humans, but it still hurts like hell. Unfortunately, these blossoms can't tell the difference between Aberrants and normal humans, which is one reason the Qin like the humans to stay in predictable areas.

There's another reason the attacks on Earth are so much more ferocious: The Aberrants have no emotional attachment to Qinshui. Earth is the Aberrants' home, and the force directing these monsters feels the time is right to reclaim it. The Qin are really just a curiosity, and many of the attacks are much like a dog playing with a chew toy.

There is one last reason — one of the Qin factions has made a deal with some of the Aberrants. House Lle-zhan is barely a middle-rank caste, and hopes the arrangement will provide it with greater political power. Lle-zhan has agreed to supply the Aberrants with everything they can learn about "psions," in return for carefully targeted raids against rival houses. The Aberrants also act as if they have no knowledge of humans in the Qijnunan System in hopes that the humans there will focus on increasing ties to the Qin instead of fighting off Aberrants. Unfortunately, the Lle-ji have been very careful to keep humans close to the vest, so Lle-zhan learned very little. With the lines of travel opened up again, circumstances could change rapidly.

### Karoo, Far Nyumba, Averiguas, Ruan's World

These colonies have had the extreme good fortune to go unnoticed by Aberrants... for now.

## The Lost Expedition

The Chromatics have played a key role in the Upeos' history; some discussion of that relationship is warranted. This section covers details from the latter two **Darkness Revealed** adventure sourcebooks, **Passage Through Shadow** and **Ascent into Light**, as well as events from the **Alien Encounter: Invasion** adventure sourcebook. If you have any intention of playing through either series, don't read this!

As described earlier, Hampsah Cisse led a number of Upeo into captivity by Chromatics. She took the entire exploration fleet to Chrome-Prime, where it met with ambush. The alien Chromatics were fully aware of the Upeos' impending arrival, and had prepared bioware collars that drained off the wearer's noetic energy. The expedition's psions were collared and kept alive, but the neutrals were killed — most immediately, with a handful tortured to enforce compliance by the teleporters. Cisse alone of the humans remained free. Obviously in league with the aliens, she acted as an interpreter of sorts. She informed the imprisoned Upeo that they were now slaves.

Cisse gave these early captives an ultimatum: Either take Chromatics to specified coordinates, or more hostages would be murdered. Those Upeo who refused to cooperate were tortured. Continued refusal was punished with death. Still, the captives resisted. It took years of escalating threats and pain, coupled with the eventual use of teleportation control devices to enforce obedience.

Throughout 2111 and 2112, Cisse led Chromatics on raids to capture more teleporters. Recently freed Upeo have stressed Cisse's peculiar behavior during that time — not only the woman's ruthless betrayal of the Upeo wa Macho, but her ability to somehow communicate with the alien Chromatics! Furthermore, she led her abduction crews to unprotected teleporters with uncanny accuracy.

The Upeo captives were subjected to experiments that led the Chromatics to rapid development of psi-control technologies. Cisse had a hand in designing these devices, and was primarily responsible for giving Chromatics the human biotech schematics on which much of their technology is based. Soon a teleport-dampening field was in place around the entire planet of Chrome-Prime, replacing the individual collars. When the Chromatics wanted to travel, they simply removed their chosen "ticket" from incarceration and hooked the unfortunate human to an apparatus strikingly similar to an Upeo image storage device. The bioapp dictated pre-set coordinates to which the human jumped, prohibiting him from escaping or taking the Chromatics to another destination.

Once the aliens had the means to control their prisoners, the experiments stopped. The psions were treated like cattle: penned up, fed, tended to in a rudimentary fashion. The Chromatics made

no effort to communicate with the humans beyond giving basic orders (accomplished through pokes, barks and rough hand-waving). The prisoners had no way to tell time — the lights were always on, and the feeding schedule was irregular. The only unique events were missions (being taken away by the Chromatics), torture (for subdual or for no reason at all) and "freakouts" (when a psion's sanity would finally snap). Things continued in that fashion for an interminable time.

In late June of 2120, Aeon Trinity operatives rescued Clarence Greaves, a teleporter under Chromatic control (as related in **Ascent into Light**). An international UN strike force was subsequently formed over a period of months and, with Greaves' guidance, jumped to Chrome-Prime. As part of the mission to shatter the Chromatics' military capability, the Earth fleet hoped to rescue any and all human captives (as covered in **Invasion**).

When the Upeo prisoners felt the psychic backlash from the UN fleet's arrival in Chromatic space, they knew something was going on, but not what. A few days after that initial backlash, the psionic dampening field around Chrome-Prime dropped, giving the captives their first chance at escape in years. Some of the Upeo simply jumped as soon as they realized they were able. Most paused to bring their comrades, if they had the psi energy. A few immediately attacked any Chromatic they could reach, but most just fled — some to familiar Upeo wa Macho rallying points, but many to Earth.

No one is sure how many teleporters were imprisoned by the Chromatics. Aeon's best guess is somewhere between 45 and 60. Of that number, 16 returned to Earth and either are or were being treated in Basel. Eyewitness accounts indicate that at least seven Upeo died in the invasion, and that at least 20 were killed by the Chromatics in the decade of their captivity.

No trace remains of Hampsah Cisse. She disappeared from Chrome-Prime after the development of the dampening and control technologies, giving no indication of where she planned to go next. Both Hector Ramirez and the Aeon Council are correct in assuming that Cisse was involved with the secretive Doyen (see p. 20-21). However, Cisse wasn't simply an agent of the aliens — she was literally *possessed* by one. As described in **Ascent into Light** and **Invasion**, a Doyen is comprised of almost pure noetic energy, enabling it to insinuate itself into another being. Cisse was domi-

nated in just such a way, for the sole purpose of bringing the Chromatics the tools they would need to battle humanity on equal terms — namely, teleporters and biotechnology.

Not all Doyen are anti-human, but they all fear Aberrants since taint disrupts subquantum energy. The aliens feel that the spread of Aberrants threatens their very existence. The malevolent faction currently aiding the Chromatics thinks that since Aberrants were originally human, it's safest to eradicate the whole race. Doyen are fundamentally cowardly beings, though, and prefer to handle things through pawns. The Chromatics and Hampsah Cisse are only a few examples of how the Doyen manipulate others toward their own ends.

## Bibliography

### Recommended Reading — Fiction

**Ken Macleod** — *The Stone Canal* and *The Cassini Division*. The first is a wonderful book about a human colony world in the 22nd century, the second looks at our Solar System in the same era. These

books contain interesting worlds, fascinating politics, cool technology and post-human menaces. Enjoy.

**Linda Nagata** — *Deception Well* and *Vast*. An excellent series set in a cosmos full of strange human colonies and unfathomable aliens.

**Michael Swanwick** — *Stations of the Tide*. Murder and mystery on a colony world on the verge of a vast climactic shift.

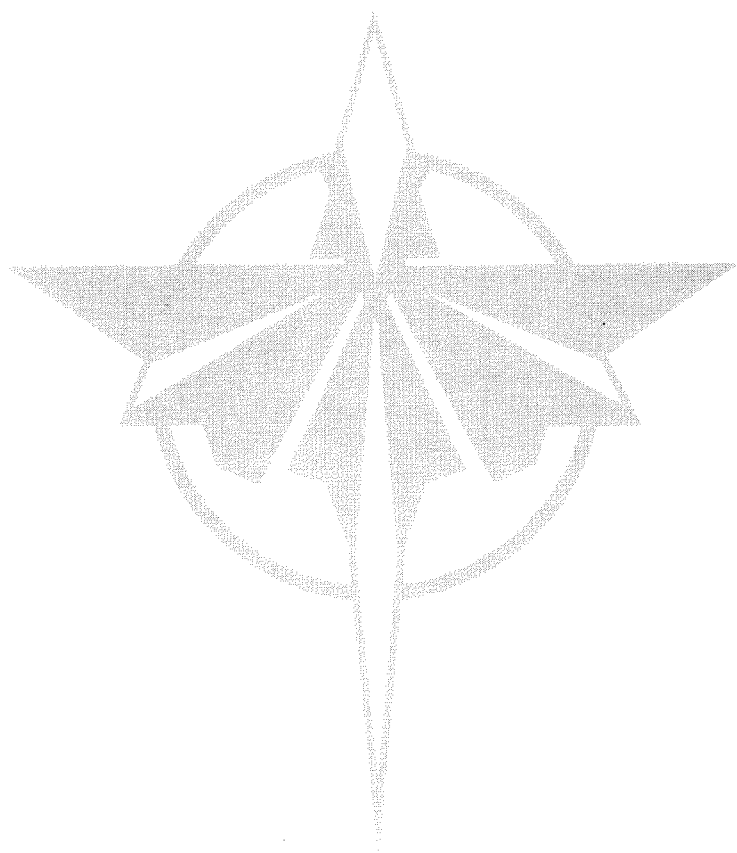
**Joan Vinge** — *Heaven Chronicles*. Political and social conflict in an alien asteroid belt.

Also look for *The Winter Queen*, *World's End*, and *The Summer Queen*. Politics, ancient technology and intrigue in the recovering remains of a vast interstellar empire.

**Walter Jon Williams** — *Angel Station*. Schemes, deceptions and adventure amid first contact with biotech-using aliens.

### Recommended Reading — Nonfiction

**Marshall T. Savage** — *The Millennial Project: Colonizing the Galaxy in Eight Easy Steps*. Some of his ideology is a bit odd, but this is a wonderful source of information on how far we *could* go.



## Weapon

### • Voss 93T High-Threat Combat Rifle:

Voss recently introduced the 93T on Khantze Lu Ge to aid in the battle against the Aberrants. Normally a company that follows its own course, Voss took a cue from the Orgotek SAWS (see the **Trinity Technology Manual**, p. 45) to develop a similarly versatile heavy weapon. Voss hopes that their hardtech version will become even more popular than the SAWS now in use against the Aberrants.

This weapon has three separate modes of operation. The first is a screamer that can do either bashing or lethal damage (the former being exceedingly useful when preserving civilian lives or taking captives). The second attack option is as a coil carbine, which combines long range with an excellent rate of fire. The final feature borrows from Voss' acclaimed plasma pistol design (**Trinity Technology Manual**, p. 46). Only one attack option may be used per turn, but the user may switch modes freely.

The 93T complements these three modes with electronic combat sights (ECS), improving all-around accuracy. The ECS provides +4 accuracy to a user linked to the weapon through vidspecs, sensor glasses, or a HUDset. The link can be attained through IR projection, but can cut out at an inconvenient time if the wearer turns his head away from the direction the weapon's facing. A better connection is made through an interface cable or a bodynet adapter (also described in the **Trinity Technology Manual**).

Most 93T's in use on KLG also come with an integral aberscope that can detect Aberrant taint at a range of up to 100 meters.

Tech:  $\Omega$ , Accuracy: 0 (+4 with ECS link), Concealability: N, Mass: 4.5, Cost: ••••• (••••• • with aberscope) (restricted)

## Tools

• **Airplant:** The airplant represents one of the Qins' first attempts to market biotech specifically for human use. An airplant is designed to serve as a complete replacement for conventional human life-support systems. The bioapp is a long, branching vine approximately four to seven centimeters in diameter that normally produces four different varieties of fruit. Every five meters of vine provides complete life-support for one adult human. The vine's leaves emit oxygen and its trunk supplies water. The fruit include bunches of nutritious, citrus-flavored berries, a starchy fruit similar to a pear, a spongy fruit with a bread-like texture and taste, and even one remarkably similar to cooked chicken.

An airplant can create new varieties of fruit with a wide variety of textures and tastes — including many spices, alcohol, and other mild stimulants and tranquilizers. A sample of the desired substance must be inserted in a special receptacle near the base of the plant; within two weeks, a fruit very similar in flavor to the sample is produced.

With sufficient natural or artificial light, an airplant can recycle all of the air and water wastes sufficiently to provide pure air, clean water and nutritious fruit to meet the needs of the entire crew. The airplant grows in response to increased draw upon its oxygen, water and fruit reserves, and can grow up to two meters a week. The airplant doesn't reproduce, though, and cuttings are infertile. A new airplant can only be purchased from the Qin.

A number of ships and space stations are being retrofitted with airplants. L-B is even beginning construction on a line of luxury ships built with integral airplants, where the bioapp snakes gracefully through corridors and lounges.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 50 (base), Tolerance: n/a, Cost: ••••• •• (initial installation)

VOSS 93T	ATTACK STATISTICS	SCREAMER	COILGUN	PLASMA
	Damage	8d10 B or L	10d10 L	10d10 L
	Range	70	600	35
	Maneuvers	n/a	Af Ms Sa St	Ms Sp
	ROF	1	60	1
	Clip	40	100	8





• **Bio Environment Suit (BES):** This state-of-the-art space suit was developed on Qinshui as a joint project involving human biotech specialists and Qin researchers. In its unformatted state, the BES is a lightweight, comfortable vacuum suit that can provide high-quality life support for up to 30 hours. The suit recycles water and provides food using a modified GPN (see **Trinity**, p. 275). Between uses, the suit requires nutrient injections and must be allowed to rest for at least eight hours.

When formatted, the BES becomes even more useful. The suit's life-support system links up to the wearer's bloodstream, vastly increasing the device's air- and water-recycling capability to provide continuous life support for up to a full week. Also, since the suit is linked to the wearer, nutrient injections are unnecessary as long as the user is well nourished. With weekly additions of fresh air and water as well as at least eight hours of sunlight a day, the suit can provide the wearer with indefinite life-support. A formatted BES fits the user like a second skin, making it extremely comfortable to wear (or even to sleep in).

The BES consists of a form-fitting jumpsuit with durable padded feet; a retractable, soft bubble hel-

met that folds down into a somewhat bulky collar; and detachable gloves. The helmet in a formatted suit automatically deploys whenever the wearer's body is in a hostile environment, even if the user is sleeping or unconscious. [1/ 2, 0]

Tech: Ψ, Mass: 2, Tolerance: •, Cost: •••••

• **Health Band:** Whether on alien worlds or in highly polluted areas on Earth, many people worry about the dangerous chemicals and radiation they are exposed to in their daily lives. To help alleviate these fears, the Qin developed a biotech device that is genetically encoded with an understanding of human physiology. The bioapp continually analyzes the surrounding environment (or it can be touched to a sample of food or water), and indicates the status through simple color sequences, as indicated below:

HEALTH BAND	COLOR	ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION
	Green	normal viability
	Yellow	radiation (including Aberrant taint)
	Black	poisons (airborne, food, water)
	Blue	insufficient oxygen
	Red	dangerously low air pressure

The device can also take microscopic samples of the user's sweat and DNA to check for malnutrition and dangerous toxin or radiation levels that have accumulated over time.

Each data category has its own photocell along the band that indicates the type and severity of any adverse condition. A central bar on the bioapp has a quick-reference indicator, though. This bar remains a vibrant, friendly green in normal conditions — but tints with the appropriate color when a hazardous condition occurs.

Like all Qin technology, the band (which looks much like a slim, stylish wristwatch) is a living organism. It subsists off of sunlight, air, water and the chemicals in the wearer's perspiration. Like most Qin-made biotech, the health band gains nothing from formatting.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: negligible, Formatting: n/ a, Cost: •••

• **Qin Math Polyp (QMP):** The polyp is a small hemispherical organism four centimeters in diameter, one centimeter thick and covered by a metallic-blue shell. It attaches directly to the base of the user's neck (after which time it may only be removed by minor surgery).

The QMP links directly with the user's nervous system, enabling her to make extremely complex calculations in seconds merely by thinking about them. This adds three dice to any roll that relies on mathematical calculation — including astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, physics and gambling. The polyp is very popular with students and gamblers; universities and casinos are already instituting regulations prohibiting QMP users from entering. This bioapp gains nothing from formatting.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: negligible, Tolerance: n/ a, Cost: •••

• **Space Maneuver Pack (SMP):** The SMP gives space-suit wearers long-term mobility in space without the need for bulky fuel tanks and large engines. Biocraft designed the SMP system using technology similar to that in a force gauntlet, and licensed the technology to anyone who wanted it. The SMP has proven very popular on Luna and in many deep-space environments; BioSystems, Orgotek and TechnoDyne also produce versions of their own.

The bioapp must be formatted and provides propulsion similar to telekinetic flight, though only in low gravity (0.2g or lower). After spending two Psi points, the user can accelerate up to 30 km/ h

for the scene. (This can be raised by another 10 km/ h for each additional Psi point spent.)

In gravity greater than 0.2g, this Psi expenditure at best allows for a slowed fall or brief hovering. Effectively, injecting two Psi into the SMP increases the user's safe falling range from every three meters to every 10 meters (see *Trinity*, p. 254). Three Psi points allow the user to hover in mid air for a single turn (and then drop at the aforementioned rate).

The SMP is a somewhat bulky vest with a low bulge on the back. It is adjustable, fitting over all standard vac suits, including armored models.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 2, Tolerance: •, Cost: ••••

## Teleportation Augmentation Devices

• **Psi Coordinate Receptacle (also PCR or "vision sharer"):** The vision sharer allows a clairvoyant to encode a single sensory impression with enough information that a teleporter can jump to that location later (effectively providing Long Jump's "vaguely familiar" ranking). The PCR only holds one vision at a time, but it can hold psi coordinates ranging from a house that the clairvoyant is standing in to a previously unvisited star system that the clear detected.

The vision remains stored indefinitely, but is erased once it's used. Still, the vision sharer can be used over again (though a new image stored in the device wipes out the old one). Also, sensory information can only be recorded first-hand via Subliminal Communication (see *Luna Rising*, p. 74); a clear who "reads" a PCR's image cannot then re-record it.

The vision sharer is basically a combination of an ISRA focus crystal and a scryin (see *Luna Rising*). A crystal is set inside a hemispherical container with a flat, opalescent front (it looks a bit like a 7 cm x 12 cm turtle shell). The user holds the curved backing in the palm of her hand and focuses on the shimmering front for one turn. The player must spend one Psi point and make a standard Meditation roll to trigger the device (a botch erases the stored image); an appropriate Teleportation effect may then be used to jump the character to the stored locale. The PCR gains nothing from formatting.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 0.5, Tolerance: n/ a, Cost: ••••

- **Transportal Rings (also "jump rings"):**

These unique bioapps are the result of a decade-long development between the Upeo, Qin and some former Orgotek personnel. Transportal rings are designed in pairs, and look like heavily cabled organic hoops. A psion can step into one ring, concentrate for two turns, spend two Psi points and be transported into a corresponding ring just like making a "familiar" Long Jump! The individual need only be an active psion, and can take other people or gear at one extra Psi point per person or 100 kg of cargo (to a limit of five extra passengers or 500 kg).

Unfortunately, the jump rings have significant limitations. Each hoop is currently limited to one meter in diameter with a thickness of eight centimeters — but weighs a daunting 75 kilograms. Plus, the transportal rings only operate in pairs at up to a five million kilometer range, and require a significant amount of power to function — on the order of a single fusion rocket engine per hoop.

The Upeo and Lle-ji Qin use these rings privately. The researchers are also working to increase the jump range while reducing the mass

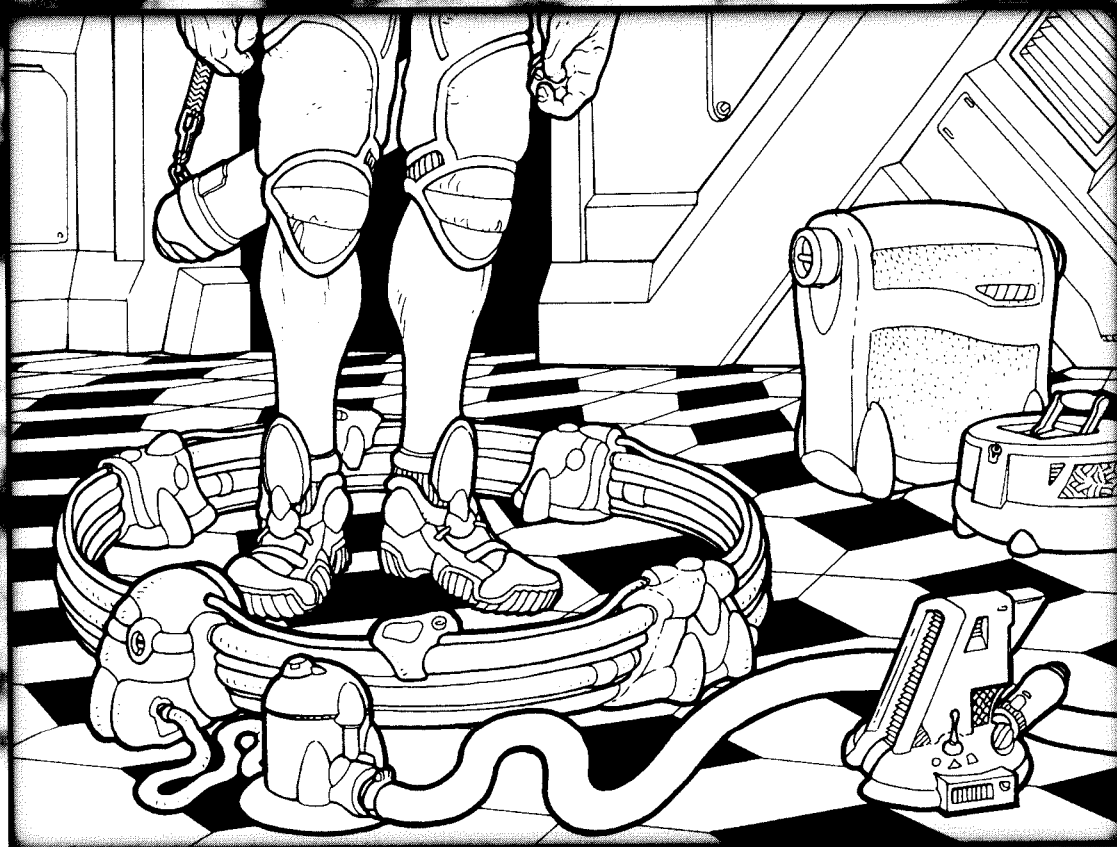
and energy requirements. They hope to someday create portable rings that can be carried and unfolded where needed. This device gains nothing from formatting.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 75, Tolerance: n/a, Cost: not available commercially

- **Transmassion Energy Amplification Rig (also TEAR):** This rare bioapp greatly enhances a jumper's ability to move mass. Twenty TEAR systems were built with the assistance of Orgotek prior to the Upeo diaspora. Almost half have been destroyed or lost since that time, leaving only 11 currently in service. The Upeo have tried to get Qin aid in creating more, but Orgotek put some hidden blocks into the breeding sequence that even the alien biotech masters are unable to overcome as yet.

The TEAR must be formatted to the user, and enhances Transmassion effects as noted below.

For Relay Object, the TEAR increases the total mass your character can 'port to 20 times his Psi score in kilograms. For Transmit Object, the psion's mass total goes up even more significantly: Instead of the chart on p. 73, the TEAR



mass limit starts with 30 kg at 1 Psi and doubles with each additional Psi point. So a psion with 3 Psi can move up to 120 kg of mass, while a jumper with 6 Psi can move 960 kg of mass — and your character may still spend Psi points to boost her score for the purposes of figuring her mass limit! So theoretically, a teleporter with 7 Psi who's wearing a TEAR and spends six Psi points can boost her mass limit to 13, enabling her to transmass up to 122.88 metric tons!

For Relay Person, the TEAR adds three dice to your character's Psi rolls. Your character also gains these dice for Transmit Person, and she can send three extra people for each success rolled or Psi point spent (instead of the usual one).

TEAR-enhanced Selective Transmassion used against inanimate matter provides the same benefit as for Transmit Object, above. Against living targets, Selective Transmassion receives a boost of three dice to the Psi roll, as with Relay and Transmit Person.

A TEAR looks like a brightly colored flower with five large leathery "petals" and a cilia-covered tentacle cluster at the interior base. It attaches to the user's back, the tentacles extending to wrap around her limbs. A single "petal" wraps over each shoulder and around each side of the user's torso, with the last one drooping over her head much like a hood. (It would look comical if it weren't so spooky.) Due to how snugly the bioapp attaches, it acts as [3/ 2, 1] armor, but shuts down if it's hit more than twice in a single combat.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 60, Tolerance: ••, Cost: not available commercially

• **Warping Energy Amplification Rig (also WEAR):** Just as a TEAR increases energy for Transmassion, the WEAR aids the Warping Mode. More WEARs were created in response to the Upeos' emphasis on exploration. The order had almost two dozen when it fled Earth, and 17 remain functional (and under Atwan's direct control). Orgotek still had 10 WEARs when the Upeo left; the devices proved instrumental in jump-ship development.

A WEAR is in some ways much more powerful than a TEAR is, but significantly more limited in other ways. Most notably, this bioapp only effects two Warping techniques: Spatial Divergence and Transportal. Still, these increases are significant.

The WEAR boosts the relative speed increase for Spatial Divergence to 0.5 mach per success.

In vacuum, this translates to +1 VS for every two successes rolled (round down). This can give an incredible edge in space combat, since the increase in speed is only virtual — meaning that it's far easier to counteract or change direction without battling momentum. Still, the increase has no real effect on long trips. Getting from Earth to Jupiter faster requires steady gains in speed, not temporary increases in *effective* speed.

The WEAR increases the Transportal sphere's diameter significantly as well. Instead of a final diameter equal to 10 times your character's Psi score in meters, the WEAR doubles the size starting from the base 10 meters at 1 Psi! So a jumper with 4 Psi in a WEAR can generate an 80-meter diameter transportal, while a teleporter with 8 Psi using the bioapp can create one 1.28 kilometers in diameter!

The WEAR is very similar in design to a TEAR, though much larger and more bulky. The greater number of tentacles virtually engulfs the user's body, and the "petals" close entirely around her. This actually creates an airtight seal, enabling the user to survive for up to 50 hours in a hostile environment (poisonous atmosphere, vacuum, underwater). The WEAR provides some defensive protection as well, in the form of 2 [3] vehicle-scale armor. The two bioapps cannot be worn together due to the interface involved — invariably, those jumpers who've tried were virtually sucked dry of Psi energy and fell comatose for hours or even days. (As one Orgotek wit inevitably observed, "jumpers just can't take the wear and tear.")

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 500, Tolerance: ••, Cost: not available commercially

## Code Indigo Bioapps

• **Anti-Teleportation Generator (also "Auntie Gen" or "auntie"):** Many humans believe that the sophisticated teleport dampeners recently found in place around Chrome-Prime were based on Orgotek designs. They're partly right. When the Upeo wa Macho disappeared after long dealings with the Edenites, Orgotek secretly constructed devices to restrict Teleportation use... just in case the Upeo had fallen irrevocably under Aberrant domination. But Orgotek's generators are nowhere near as advanced as the dampeners the Chromatics developed (and you can bet

Orgotek is damn interested in getting its hands on the aliens' tech).

An auntie consists of a set of four small hemispheres, each 20 cm across and 10 cm high with a set of button-like depressions on the flat side. These half-balls can be set up to 40 meters apart, and the generator is activated by touching the depressions on one of the hemispheres and spending four Psi points. This subjects the bounded area to a kind of subquantum interference for 20 hours, making any Teleportation use into or out of the area significantly more difficult (an additional one Psi and base +3 difficulty to all attempts). The generator still works if only one half-ball is removed — just in a triangular configuration. It can't work with two or fewer hemispheres, though, nor can multiple aunties be used to increase the interference. The generator gains nothing from formatting.

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 12 (total), Tolerance: n/a, Cost: ••••••• (restricted)

• **Psionic Restraint Collar (also PRC or "psi collar")**: This device was developed under the aegis of the Aeon Trinity's Proteus Division.

While the collar doesn't prevent the use of psionic powers, it does drain the wearer of her noetic reserves — effectively siphoning off a psion's Psi points and preventing their recovery! Once placed around a subject's neck, the collar drains one Psi point per turn until the victim is at zero current Psi. The points return normally after the collar is removed. The device gains nothing from formatting.

Each collar is a large, thick enamel band two centimeters around with a muscled swivel joint on one side and a small hardtech maglock on the other. Possession and even knowledge of the psi collar's existence is highly restricted.

Aeon surreptitiously aided in the construction of a variant psi collar for use on Chromatic prisoners (see the **Darkness Revealed** and **Alien Encounter** adventure series).

Tech:  $\Psi$ , Mass: 0.5, Tolerance: n/a, Cost: not commercially available

## Transportation

• **Bioblomp**: This is another of the Qin race's new commercial bioapps. The bioblomp was de-





signed for those poorer nations and new interstellar colonies that do not have the resources to purchase advanced transportation. A bioblump is shaped much like a hardtech zeppelin, with an oval passenger compartment near the front beneath the durable gas bag. It propels itself using complex electrostatic jets powered by tissue similar to that found on an electric eel and has a wide, muscular tail for steering.

Rudimentary in design, the bioblump is nonetheless very durable and fully self-repairing. Best of all, each new bioblump is guaranteed to produce two offspring. The "young" are sterile, but can be rendered fertile with special enzymes... purchased from the Qin, of course. Like all Qin biotech, a bioblump does not require nutrient injections. Instead, its bag has strips of photosynthetic cells that provide most sustenance, and can consume Terran foliage gathered with its anchor tentacles.

An adult bioblump is normally 15 meters long and five meters in diameter; it can carry 30 passengers and five tons of cargo. More enzymes purchased separately can be used to grow a young 'blump up to 25 meters, effectively doubling its carrying capacity.

Designed to be faultlessly obedient and almost as intelligent as a chimpanzee, a bioblump is obviously highly responsive to its user's needs. It comprehends voice commands, can run on "autopilot" and can even be told not to eat the local crops. It also has a small storehouse of words and phrases with which it can respond to its user and even pose questions when a command isn't clear. It is by no means sentient, though, and in many ways isn't even close to an SI program's intelligence.

A bioblump can be formatted, allowing the pilot to communicate with and control the vehicle by thought. This link can be maintained at a distance of the user's Psi score in kilometers. Formatting also bestows upon the user an odd, deeply profound insight into an alien mind.

VT: Blimp

Tech:  $\Psi$

CS: 80 km/h

TS: 150 km/h

Handling: +3

Mass: 7 tons

Tolerance: ••

Cost: ••••••••

Armor: 2 [5]

#### • **Detroit Duke Customized Transport:**

Andrea Mayhew always wanted her own spacecraft — not just some model off the assembly line, but a ship that was truly *hers*. She used her celebrity status to meet with Nova Starcraft, who decided to construct the *Duke* as much for the publicity as to gain a teleporter's services. The deal worked out nicely for all concerned — that is, until Mayhew up and left with the rest of the Upeo.

*Detroit Duke* uses the basic 25-meter-long chassis from Nova Starcraft's A series (see **Trinity Technology Manual**, p. 128), but with an expanded cargo bay and reconfigured cockpit. The *Duke* normally functions with a crew of two, but can get by with one; it can also carry up to 10 passengers or 500 cubic meters of cargo. With only one person, the ship can remain in deep space for up to 300 days without provisioning. (This is reduced by two weeks for each additional person.)

Though lacking the sheer firepower of the A-5L Phoenix or even the A-4L Guardian, the *Duke* is much more maneuverable... and a helluva lot more comfortable.

VT: Hybrid transport

Tech:  $\Omega$

CS: Mach 2.1

TS: Mach 3.6

VS: 5

Handling: +4

Mass: 1,000 tons

Cost: not available commercially

Armor: 5 [10]

Weapons: Two turret-mounted heavy laser cannons (Accuracy: +2, Damage: 8d10 [5] L); missile bay with six smart missiles (Accuracy: +3, Damage: 10d10 [15] L)

## Proxy Bolade Atwan

**A**twan is not a complicated woman. She has a serious personality, almost to the point of being solemn, and she feels a keen sense of duty to justice and social order. In fact, her friend Otha Herzog often warned Atwan of the dangers of her "martyr complex." Over time, she has tried to slow down and consider her own needs. The most powerful need she feels, however, is to help humanity. This makes Atwan a dedicated, hardworking individual, though not much fun at parties.

One factor that sets the Teleportation Proxy apart from her fellow proxies is her focus on the concrete, the here and now. While Herzog contemplates the myriad facets of the totality, and Cassel schemes to expose and destroy schemers, and del Fuego searches for every secret in the universe while divulging nothing himself, Bolade Atwan looks at the nuts and bolts of practical existence. Do people have enough food to eat? Are their homes secure from attack? Only when those pragmatic, down-to-earth

goals have been addressed will she spare much thought for abstractions.

This persona bears great similarities to Solveig Larssen. The Legions' Proxy is savvy to politics, though; she simply chooses not to indulge in it most of the time. Unfortunately, Atwan's relentless focus on the practical blinded her to political necessity. This resulted in the hardest choice she ever had to make. Atwan's forthright trust that the other orders would accept the Eden novas on her say-so left her ill prepared for their suspicions and fears. It was obvious to her that the novas (if they were honest) had a great deal to offer humanity. She failed to reckon with the emotional and political dangers of associating with Aberrants, and retreated in the face of her former comrades' hostility.

The last six years have been full of hard lessons. The other orders' willingness to believe the worst was matched by the colonists' suspicion after the Upeo exodus. Atwan still feels that she made the right choice for her people, but cannot ignore the horrors that could have been avoided had the Upeo still been around.



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## Atwan's Agenda

Bolade Atwan only codified an agenda for the Upeo wa Macho at the urging of her lieutenants al-Masna and Bouchiki, and only when they argued that a solid policy for the order would be a useful tool for deciding on the allocation of resources and personnel.

- **Human Protection:** The first goal of the Upeo wa Macho is to protect humanity from physical danger. Whether the threat of an Aberrant attack, a power failure on a remote colony, or a famine on a settled world, humankind cannot focus on greater issues until survival is guaranteed. Atwan's succinct summation of this first premise is: "You can't negotiate a peace treaty over the rumble of empty stomachs."

- **Human Connection:** It doesn't do any good for humankind to expand into space if it loses its humanity in the process. People need to have respect for the idea of humanity in the abstract: That's the only thing that can draw people from widely different circumstances into common cause.

- **Human Expansion:** Once material wants are tended to and the lines of communication are open, it's time for humanity to move out into the stars. Every new world visited gives mankind another fact, another datum, another light by which we can understand the universe — and through that, our place in it.

## The Inner Circle

### Jennifer Shojiki

The leader of the Long Riders was discovered dealing blackjack in a NAGC casino in Atlantic City. When the Upeo wa Macho revealed itself (along with the other psi orders), the young, pretty and vivacious Shojiki was far more available to the media than the aloof and businesslike Atwan. As a consequence, she became something of a celebrity, and the public face of the Upeo in those early years.

Being in the right place with the right face gained Shojiki influence with the Upeo, but she's kept it by working hard and making good decisions. Her accessibility is no mere *façade*: She has a genuine ability to connect with people, understand them and put them at ease. Her working-class sympathies and common sense have kept her as the leader of the Long Riders for a long time.

Two very different impulses operate within her, and the Long Riders reflect this conflict. On



one hand, Shojiki is an open and straightforward person by nature, and she believes passionately in the Upeos' goals of human unity. On the other hand, she's very pragmatic and recognizes the necessity of secrecy. The practical result of this split is that Shojiki uses the Long Riders in an attempt to improve the Upeos' reputation. At the same time, she also uses them to keep tabs on the other powerful organizations of the 22nd century.

### Khaldun al-Masna

Al-Masna's family migrated to Kenya to farm, and gradually moved into food distribution. By 2105, Al-Masna Farms was poised to expand its distribution network into near space. Khaldun's older brother Salman was in orbit making one of the farms' first deliveries when an Aberrant raid took out the entire freighter.

Two years later, al-Masna had the opportunity to be tested for latency by the Legions, who pegged him as a rare latent teleporter. Al-Masna trained with the Upeo, but worked with the Legions fighting off Aberrants. He was decorated for courage under fire five times, and was seriously injured nine times.

Al-Masna's last injury nearly killed him — it was a crushed spine, requiring many months of recuperation even with Æsculapian aid. During his convalescence, al-Masna served as an instructor for the Upeo, teaching all three Modes to poten-



tial students. He was still recovering when he was asked to become the speaker for the Upeo Monitors. Surprised (but pleased) Khaldun agreed, and he has served as the Upeo security chief ever since.

### Gerard Portois

In 2104, Gerard Portois was working on a Pacific Rim undersea city when there was a violent pipe blowout. Dozens of undersea engineers were killed instantly. Portois was one of the lucky ones: He happened to be working outside the facility in a one-person submersible during the catastrophe. He got to the surface alive after a fruitless attempt to stanch the flow of water into a research lab. Some of the scientists managed to seal themselves behind bulkheads or in pressure suits, but most died — slowly. Portois heard the whole thing over his radio.

Portois took a vacation afterward to get his mind in order. While on a nature tour, he was approached by a dark-skinned woman who bluntly told him “You have the potential to transcend the normal limits of humanity. Do you want to?” He thought she was a lunatic — until Bolade Atwan demonstrated her ability to teleport herself.

Gerard Portois was the first latent teleporter to join the Upeo wa Macho, and he is totally dedicated to the order. His experience in hostile environments put him at the forefront of Kupita exploration from the very beginning, and Kupita has

consistently elected him to speak on its behalf to the proxy and the rest of the inner circle.

Gerard is a large, quiet man who expresses himself in a plain, unadorned fashion. Those close to Portois suspect him of harboring an unrequited affection for Atwan, but no one knows for sure: Like the proxy, the Kupita head keeps his feelings to himself. The one thing that gets him emotional is mention of the pipe blowout. Portois wishes he’d been a jumper then, when his powers would have made a tremendous difference.

### Diego Bouchiki

The only member of the inner circle who is not a jumper, Diego Bouchiki didn’t even give up his membership in ISRA until the diaspora.

Before being found by the clears, Bouchiki was a software engineer. He was among the first hundred clairsentients to emerge from ISRA’s Prometheus chamber, and he helped William Kaige Miller with much of *Huruf al-Hayy*’s design. The friendships Bouchiki forged with the Upeo convinced him that their goals were complimentary with those of ISRA, and he became one of the first Nguzo.

Softspoken but forceful, Bouchiki can be extremely stubborn when his mind is made up. He has consistently argued that the Upeo wa Macho can’t help anyone unless it ensures its own safety first. Perhaps because of his close connection to the people who keep the psi order going, Bouchiki has a strong idea of the order’s overall health. His arguments that exploration should be reduced in order to build up Upeo infrastructure and help populate Ruan’s World irritate Portois, but al-Masna agrees with Bouchiki’s notion that it’s always better to negotiate from a position of strength.

## Notable Teleporters

### Mina Goldberg

In 2110, Mina Goldberg was on retainer with OBC, and signed on with Hampsah Cisse to get the story of a first contact mission. Goldberg is 10 years past her deadline, but she has brought them quite a tale.

A journalist before she was a jumper, Goldberg’s Teleportation abilities made her a valuable asset to the OBC news organization. Though some of her fellow hoppers felt that her “reports from the field” made her less effective in emer-

gency situations, Jennifer Shojiki and Bolade Atwan tolerated it because of the excellent PR it provided for the order. Goldberg's media connections were also essential in getting her assigned to Cisse's mission.

With the captive jumpers rescued from Chrome-Prime, Mina is developing into the refugees' *de facto* spokesperson. (Clarence Greaves is simply too surly to be a positive representative.) As additional news of the Upeos' time in isolation comes to light, Goldberg becomes more instrumental in keeping public opinion on their side. She has been relentless in keeping the psi orders' interference with the refugees to a minimum, and her media presence has been instrumental in keeping anti-Chromatic sentiment strong in the general population.

### Rebecca Gould

Formerly of Kupita, Gould is one of the few jumpers who can create a transportal. She switched to the Long Riders during the exodus to help ease the extrasolar colonies' burdens (particularly Far Nyumba). Gould grew increasingly frustrated during this time, though, since only the Earth had the resources to most help the colonies. But traveling to Earth meant defying Atwan's prohibition and would have put Gould in danger of being stripped of her abilities.

Gould was ready to break Atwan's dictum by the time the proxy announced that the Upeo could return to Earth. After learning all that had happened

in the years the order was gone, Gould was shocked. She decided that Atwan wasn't a fit leader. When the proxy refused to step down, Gould left the order with other Upeo who felt similarly disgusted. She leads the Star-Crossed now, committed to making up for the time she was kept from Earth.

### Clarence Greaves

Greaves was the first teleporter to be rescued from Chromatic captivity (as related in **Ascent into Light**). Originally a claims adjuster from Manchester, England, Greaves was recruited into the Monitors in 2111. He was captured shortly thereafter in one of Hampsah Cisse's abduction raids. Greaves' skill in Transmassion techniques led to his attachment to one of the Chromatic mother ships. He was forced to transport the vessel in the abortive raid on Earth in 2120, and was rescued during the climactic battle in our Solar System.

Thanks to his years in harsh captivity, Clarence Greaves looks two decades older than his 45 years. His mood, well known already among the Upeo as sarcastic and blunt, aged similarly during that time. Greaves is now a bitter, caustic man with little trust in others. Still, his loyalty to humanity remains (though he always makes sure to watch his back); his aid was vital to the raid on Chrome-Prime.

### Hector Podkorny

Hector "The Collector" Podkorny was one of the Upeos' best spies. An expert at intrusion, disguise and escape, he was assigned the difficult task of learning the secrets of the Norça. Instead, he wound up an involuntary experimental subject. The chemical injected into his brain was intended to rob him of his psionic powers (and knock his IQ down a good 20 points in the bargain). It didn't work out that way: Hector remained as smart and powerful as ever. He just went insane.

His madness manifested as a deep and violent paranoia. He became convinced that all the other orders were in league against the Upeo. The ringleaders, Cassel and del Fuego, were evil and had to be stopped. Podkorny managed to teleport away the heads of seven prominent psions before Atwan caught up with him. Podkorny had always been one of the strongest teleporters: The rumors that he had developed techniques unseen by other jumpers were true,





and his battle with Atwan occurred only partially in the normal four dimensions. It ended with Podkorny's physical body being transformed into psion and graviton particles, and smeared across the breadth of the galaxy.

It's taken Hector Podkorny six years to reassemble himself. Even now, he's permanently faded (in other words, perpetually using level 3 Warping). He is alive and conscious, however... and he's decided that Bolade Atwan and the inner circle are his real enemies. Podkorny believes that if he can seize the Upeo Prometheus chamber, he'll become proxy and can save the rest of the teleporters from the machinations of their "leaders."

## Significant Colonial Figures

### Apollo Milliken

Apollo Milliken was born Colin Ingells in London in 2002. He worked as an astronomer until his powers manifested in 2025. He soon took the name Apollo Milliken and began working with other novas on a wide variety of rescue and public-works missions. He became associated with a group led by Dr. Diana Kadmon, a nova and prominent physician. When they decided to leave Earth during the escalating Aberrant War, Milliken helped find an appropriate world to colonize.



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Like many of the more powerful novas, Milliken discovered that he aged much more slowly than the rest of humanity did. In the 60 years since coming to Eden, his resolve to help the "unevolved masses of humanity until they can attain their full post-human potential" remains firm. Many human visitors to Eden find him kind and well spoken, but often patronizing.

Milliken maintains a passionate interest in astronomy. He made first contact with the Upeo visitors when their ship appeared over Eden, and in 2116 he worked with three other Eden novas to destroy the Chromatics attacking Karroo station.

His scientific curiosity extends to humanity's progress. He hopes to learn more about humanity and its various worlds, and about the mysterious psions, whom he regards as worthy, post-human equals. He eagerly talks to any visiting psions who are willing to meet with him. Milliken understands the reluctance many visitors have about Aberrants, and is very vehement that the insane Aberrants must be destroyed.

As a nova, Milliken is staggeringly hardy, with five dots in every Attribute and two of each health level. He also treats all attacks as bashing damage. Although Milliken doesn't have psi abilities, he has 7 Taint and possesses Aberrant powers that produce effects similar to 5 Photokinesis, 5 Telekinesis, 5 Pyrokinesis and 4 Telesthesia. Milliken can generate these powers at no cost. Aside from those effects, Apollo Milliken has the following talents:

*Radiant Conversion:* Milliken can convert anything from a milligram to several tons of matter into pure electromagnetic energy. This process results in an enormous blast of light and heat. Milliken and three other novas destroyed the Chromatic fleet attacking Karroo by converting part of the ships into pure energy. Milliken can use this ability on any target he senses. This ability costs 3 Taint per use.

*Remote Movement:* Milliken can move 10 tons for every Taint point expended. He can move this mass at any range he can sense.

### Ambassador Rachel Takahashi

Ambassador Takahashi is the second-in-command to Senior Ambassador Martina Flores of the United Nations embassy on Qinshui. Takahashi became a telepath in 2110, shortly after finishing high school in Australia. After some time with the

Ministry, Takahashi was attached to Aeon's Triton Division, serving as a diplomat and an alien-contact specialist. Though still in her mid-20s, Takahashi's obvious talent gained her the post as Ambassador Flores' right hand. Since Flores is primarily a director and an administrator, Takahashi actually has the most contact with the Qin.

Takahashi has worked extensively with the members of House Lle-ji, even spending considerable time living among the Qin. This provided her with great insights into Qin society, but made Takahashi increasingly Qin-like herself. While still relatively outgoing and cheerful, she is also somewhat secretive, especially about her personal life, and has even taken to wearing a formatted bio environment suit almost constantly. While Takahashi claims that her BES is the most comfortable thing she has ever worn, the garment bears a striking resemblance to the Qin biosuits.

Takahashi received a detailed psychological evaluation after recontact was made. Her competence and her loyalty to Earth remain unquestioned, but she has become significantly more Qin-like in her attitudes and mannerisms. Aeon Trinity psychologists assured Ambassador Flores that Takahashi seemed to have developed these behavioral quirks simply as a result of spending so much time working with and telepathically contacting aliens, and that there was no evidence of deliberate manipulation by the Qin.

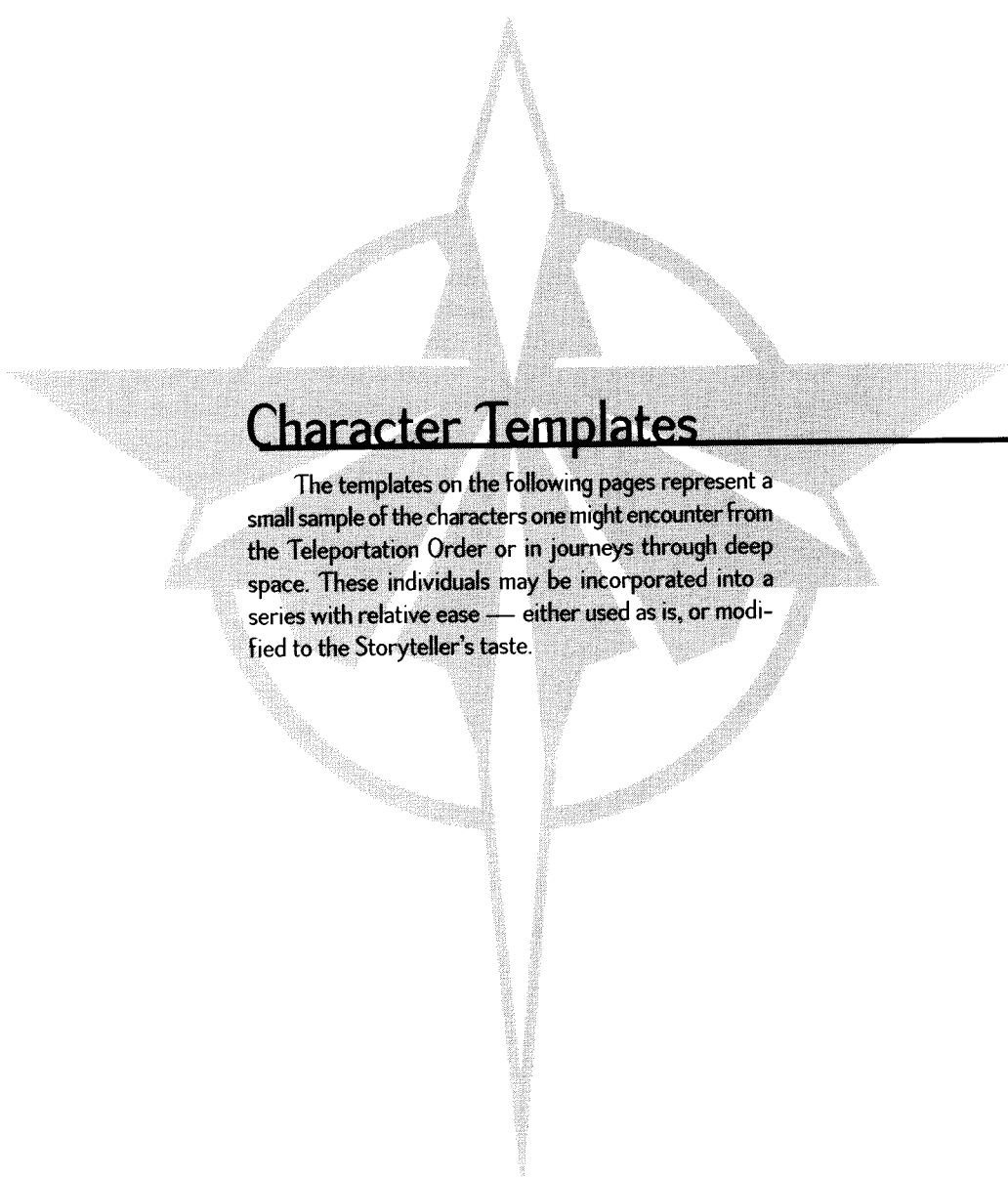
Although undergoing psychological treatment to lessen the more dramatic effects of the Qin sympathy syndrome, Takahashi remains an active part of the embassy staff. She is the resident expert on Qin, advises important visitors and often serves as an intermediary and cultural translator in meetings.

## Major Rodrigo Vargas

Before the military commander of the Norça forces on Averiguas joined the Biokinesis Order, he was a young Brazilian mercenary who fought for various causes throughout South America. While an excellent soldier, Vargas became disillusioned with the supposed glamour of mercenary life. He was working with a trio of Norça, aiding the Mexican rebels, when one of the shifters noted his strong latency. This brought Vargas to the cause he'd been searching for: the Norça. Del Fuego sensed a kindred spirit and recruited him into the order in 2108. Over the years, Vargas has risen in power becoming one of Proxy del Fuego's personal favorites.

Despite his considerable power and responsibility, Vargas still sees himself as very much a lone hero fighting for right. The current situation on Averiguas is the first time that Vargas' personal view of what is "right" conflicts with his loyalty to the Norça. The prospect of Norça fighting each other horrifies him, and he has no desire to choose sides. In addition, while he believes the rebels were wrong for their actions, he has great sympathy for their bravery and fortitude.

Major Vargas is an idealist and a romantic. His enemies (including several of the more radical rebel factions on Averiguas and the Brazilian governor) claim that his suggestions are foolish and impractical. However, Vargas balances his idealism with a firm grounding in immediate practical issues and a deep dedication to duty.



## Character Templates

The templates on the following pages represent a small sample of the characters one might encounter from the Teleportation Order or in journeys through deep space. These individuals may be incorporated into a series with relative ease — either used as is, or modified to the Storyteller's taste.

## Kupita Explorer

Andrea Mayhew had it all — for a while. Born to parents who worked in Detroit for one of the mid-tier metanats, her family moved to the UAN when Andrea was 15. That's where she was discovered and recruited by Bolade Atwan.

Mayhew began working with the Upeo wa Macho at the height of the order's popularity and prominence. Her travels to the colonies opened avenues for tremendous profit, and Andrea took liberal advantage of the chance. She found that she could fulfill her duties to the order and run a booming business transporting small but valuable objects and information between solar systems. Soon she had enough money to fulfill her lifelong dream of owning her own space ship.

She met Chow Deng Lee, a Ministry liaison to the Upeo wa Macho, during these early years. They worked closely with a clairsentient named Jeanette Willits, staging emergency rescue missions on Earth and in deep space, but there was always a special bond between Chow and Andrea. Eventually, they became lovers (to Jeanette's profound discomfort).

Mayhew Transports grew, but Andrea subcontracted all her commercial endeavors



When Atwan announced the resumption of deep-space exploration, Andrea Mayhew volunteered. Partially, she hoped for a return to the sense

**Gear:** Custom-built hybrid spacecraft (*Detroit Duke*) refitted for Kupita survey duty, Voss 63k laser carbine, Banji Cyclone autopistol, other gear as required by mission.

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## Long Rider

Djhee Dauwi was born in Zanzibar, the child of a tremendously prosperous oceanic engineer and his mistress. Young Djhee never lacked for money, and spent as much time in the bang clubs as in school. Serving drinks in one of those clubs (though "holding court" might be a more appropriate description) Dauwi was introduced to Kipo Marsa, a rising Muzzein Bang star who detected the bartender's powerful latency.



An official test revealed tendency toward the rarest of abilities: teleportation. Dauwi joined the Upeo wa Macho eagerly and became something of a minor celebrity throughout known space. Like certain other young psions, the young African was soon one of those people who becomes famous for being famous. Vid producers lined up to get Dauwi for cameos in their productions; Kostbaar offered a modeling contract (which the jumper accepted) and the scandal sheets claimed (or accused) Dauwi of having romantic entanglements with everyone from the media star and German politician, Sananda Doppler, to Luna magnate Benjamin Rich.

Many within the Upeo were astonished when Dauwi joined them in the exodus, but he has proven as dedicated to the Upeos' goals as anyone — in a peculiar, idiosyncratic way. Underneath the spoiled celebrity, there was a political power-broker struggling to get out.

**Image:** Incredibly, the question of Dauwi's gender has *never* been settled. (A number of fans

speculate about multiple gender change operations, as is growing more common in the anima subculture — and they may be right.) Djhee has an androgynous beauty that creates a strange frisson with his/ her seductive manner. S/ he is tall, extremely slender, extremely graceful and extremely black. Djhee doesn't dress like other people: Other people dress like Djhee.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're God's gift to *both* sexes, and there's plenty of you to go around. You're confident to the point of arrogance; you tolerate adoration until it becomes pushy, but you prefer people who challenge you. You're all about "new" in every way possible. On the other hand, you will verbally crucify anyone who thinks they are a bigger deal than you are.

**Apptitude:** [Teleportation] Translocation 3, Transmassion 1, Warping 1

**Gear:** Outrageous clothes, gear that was cutting-edge five years ago (minicomp, bang discs, holovid system).

NAME: DJHEE DAUWI SERIES:		ORIGIN: AFFLUENT NATURE: HEDONIST		APTITUDE: TELEPORTATION ALLEGIANCE: UPEO WA MACHO	
<b>ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES</b>					
<b>PHYSICAL</b>		<b>MENTAL</b>		<b>SOCIAL</b>	
<b>STRENGTH</b> ●○○○○ Brawl ○○○○ Might ○○○○ ○○○○		<b>PERCEPTION</b> ●○○○○ Awareness ●○○○ Investigation ○○○○ ○○○○		<b>APPEARANCE</b> ●●●○○ (Alluring) Intimidation ○○○○ Style (Seduction) ●●○○ ○○○○	
<b>DEXTERITY</b> ●○○○○ Athletics ○○○○ Drive ●○○○ Firearms ○○○○ Legerdemain ○○○○ Martial Arts ○○○○ Melee ○○○○ Pilot ○○○○ Stealth ●○○○ ○○○○		<b>INTELLIGENCE</b> ●○○○○ Academics ●○○○ Bureaucracy ○○○○ Engineering ●○○○ Intrusion ●○○○ Linguistics (Tense, Swath, Qm, Moral) ●○○○ Medicine ○○○○ Science ○○○○ Survival ○○○○ ○○○○		<b>MANIPULATION</b> ●●●○○ Command ●○○○ Interrogation ○○○○ Subterfuge ●○○○ ○○○○	
<b>STAMINA</b> ●●●○○ Endurance ○○○○ Resistance ○○○○ ○○○○		<b>WITS</b> ●●●○○ (Bitch/God/Goddess) Arts ○○○○ Meditation ●○○○ Rapport ●○○○ ○○○○		<b>CHARISMA</b> ●●●○○ Etiquette ●○○○ Perform ●○○○ Savvy ○○○○ ○○○○	
<b>COMBAT</b>					
ATTACK ACC DMG ROF FT ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		ARMOR RTG BULK FT ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		<b>HEALTH</b> Bruised -0 Hurt -1 Injured -1 Wounded -2 Maimed -3 Crippled -4 Incapacitated Dead	
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>INITIATIVE</b> 7		<b>MOVEMENT</b> WALK RUN SPRIN 5 14 26	
<b>PSI ORDER UPEO WA MACHO</b> PLAYER: <b>ADVANTAGES</b> <b>WILLPOWER</b> ●●●●○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○ <b>PSI</b> ●●●●●○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○ <b>TELEPORTATION</b> Translocation ●●●○ Transmassion ●○○○ Warping ●○○○ <b>UXILIARY MODES</b> ○○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○ <b>BACKGROUNDS</b> Allies (Nyumban Monitor) ●○○○ Contacts (Qm Ambassador) ●○○○ Influence (Ohmgod, it's Djhee Dauwi) ●●●○ Resources ●●●○ ○○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○					

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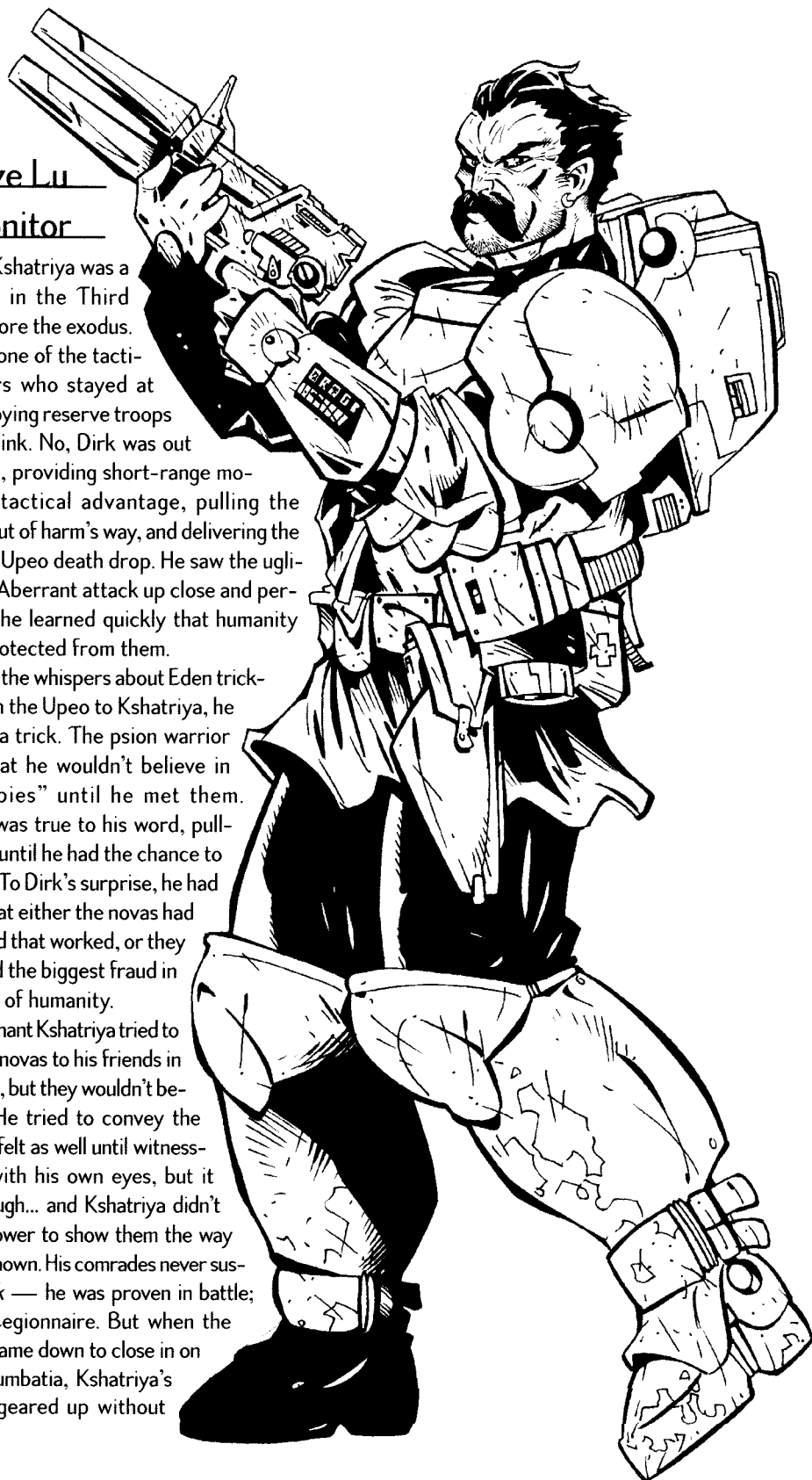
## Khantze Lu

### Ge Monitor

Dirk Kshatriya was a lieutenant in the Third Legion before the exodus. He wasn't one of the tactical senders who stayed at base, deploying reserve troops in an eyeblink. No, Dirk was out in the field, providing short-range mobility for tactical advantage, pulling the wounded out of harm's way, and delivering the occasional Upeo death drop. He saw the ugliness of an Aberrant attack up close and personal, and he learned quickly that humanity must be protected from them.

When the whispers about Eden trickled through the Upeo to Kshatriya, he suspected a trick. The psion warrior insisted that he wouldn't believe in "sane Abbies" until he met them. Kshatriya was true to his word, pulling strings until he had the chance to visit Eden. To Dirk's surprise, he had to admit that either the novas had built a world that worked, or they had crafted the biggest fraud in the history of humanity.

Lieutenant Kshatriya tried to explain the novas to his friends in the Legions, but they wouldn't believe him. He tried to convey the doubt he'd felt as well until witnessing Eden with his own eyes, but it wasn't enough... and Kshatriya didn't have the power to show them the way he'd been shown. His comrades never suspected *Dirk* — he was proven in battle; he was a Legionnaire. But when the command came down to close in on Nyota Kukumbatia, Kshatriya's comrades geared up without hesitation.



**Image:** Kshatriya is a burly man of average height. He has an olive complexion, dotted with freck-

**Gear:** L-K Vindicator II laser carbine w/ grenade launcher attachment, Banji Spark laser pistol, Banji Cyclone autopistol, armor vest [1/3 torso only, 0], field suit [1/3, 0], coveralls (reinforced) [0/2, 0], fighting knife, medkit, binoculars, Steinhardt M1-CC minicomp.

NAME: DIRK KSHATRIYA		ORIGIN: PROTECTOR		APTITUDE: TELEPORTATION	
SERIES:		NATURE: SURVIVOR		ALLEGIANCE: KLG RESISTANCE	

**ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES**

PHYSICAL		MENTAL		SOCIAL	
<b>STRENGTH</b> ●●○○○		<b>PERCEPTION</b> ●●○○○		<b>APPEARANCE</b> ●●○○○	
Brawl _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Awareness _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Intimidation _____ ○○○○ [ ]	
Might _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Investigation _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Style _____ ○○○○ [ ]	
<b>DEXTERITY</b> ●●○○○		<b>INTELLIGENCE</b> ●●○○○		<b>MANIPULATION</b> ●●○○○	
Athletics _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Academics _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Command _____ ●●○○○ [ ]	
Drive _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Bureaucracy _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Interrogation _____ ○○○○ [ ]	
Firearms _____ ●●○○○ [ ]		Engineering _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Subterfuge _____ ●○○○ [ ]	
Legerdemain _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Intrusion _____ ●●○○○ [ ]			
Martial Arts _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Linguistics _____ ○○○○ [ ]			
Melee _____ ●●○○○ [ ]		Medicine _____ ●○○○ [ ]			
Pilot _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Science _____ ○○○○ [ ]			
Stealth _____ ●●○○○ [ ]		Survival _____ ○○○○ [ ]			
<b>STAMINA</b> ●●○○○ (Rugged)		<b>WITS</b> ●●○○○		<b>CHARISMA</b> ●●○○○	
Endurance _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Arts _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Etiquette _____ ○○○○ [ ]	
Resistance _____ ●○○○ [ ]		Meditation _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Perform _____ ○○○○ [ ]	
		Rapport _____ ○○○○ [ ]		Savvy _____ ●○○○ [ ]	

**COMBAT**

ATTACK			ARMOR			RTG BULK FT		
ACC	DMG	RDF FT				B	L	
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

**XPERIENCE** \_\_\_\_\_

PSI ORDER  
UPEO WA  
MACHO

**PLAYER:**  

ADVANTAGES

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●●●

PSI

●●●●●●●●●●

TELEPORTATION

Translocation \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○

Transmission \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○

Warping \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○

LUXILIARY MODES

\_\_\_\_\_ ○

\_\_\_\_\_ ○

\_\_\_\_\_ ○

BACKGROUNDS

Allies (Upeo Long Rider) \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○

Contacts (smugglers in New Berlin) \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○

Followers (fellow resistance fighters) \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○

Resources \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○

Status (KLg resistance) \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○

\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○

\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○

\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○

HEALTH

Bruised	-0	[ ]
Hurt	-1	[ ]
Injured	-1	[ ]
Wounded	-2	[ ]
Maimed	-3	[ ]
Crippled	-4	[ ]
Incapacitated		[ ]
Dead		[ ]

**NITIAIVE**  

6

**MOVEMENT**  
 WALK RUN SPRIN  

5
15
29

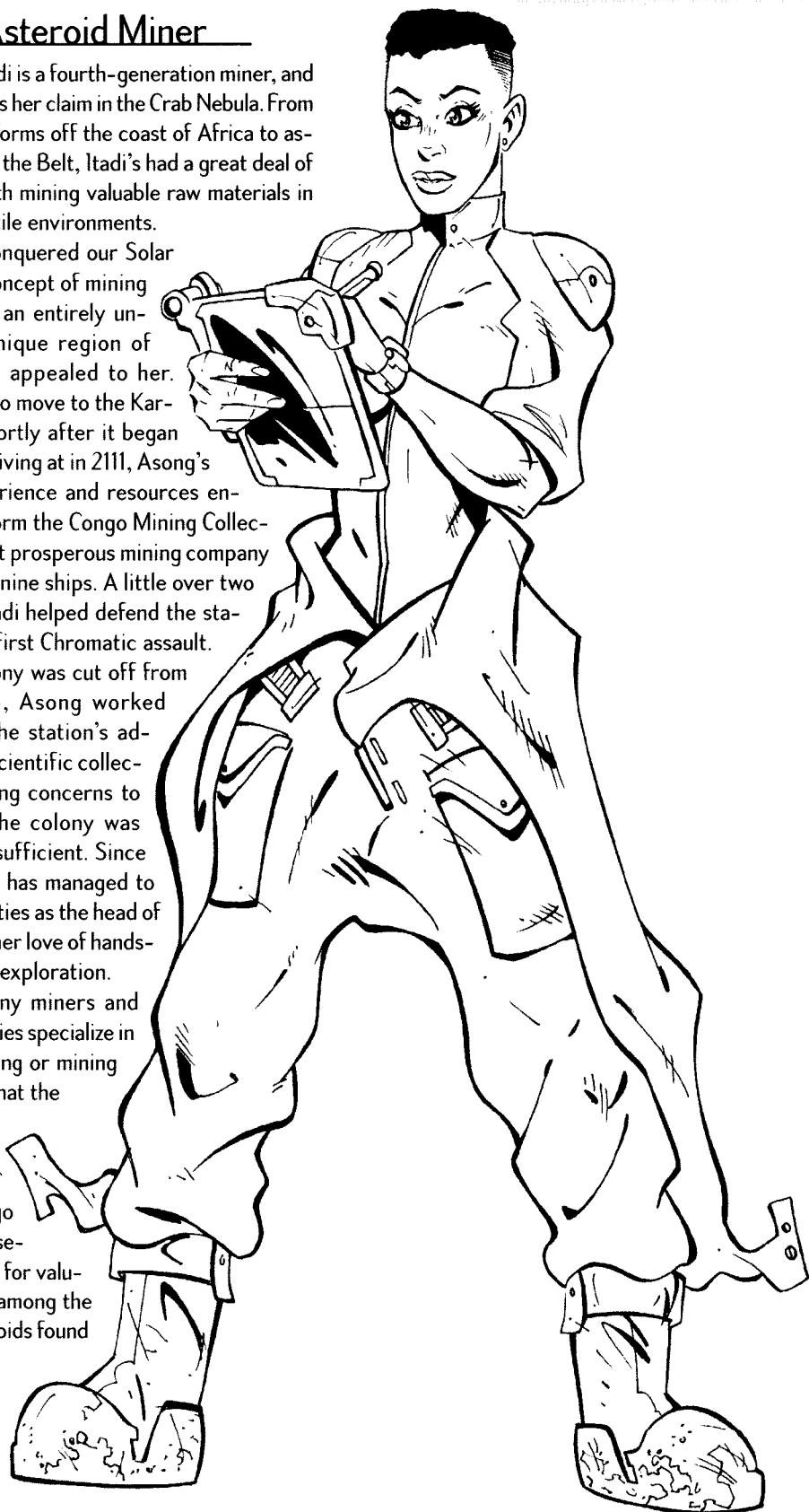
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## Karoo Asteroid Miner

Asong Itadi is a fourth-generation miner, and currently stakes her claim in the Crab Nebula. From deep-sea platforms off the coast of Africa to asteroid bases in the Belt, Itadi's had a great deal of experience with mining valuable raw materials in extremely hostile environments.

Having conquered our Solar System, the concept of mining and exploring an entirely unknown and unique region of space greatly appealed to her. Itadi decided to move to the Karroo station shortly after it began operation. Arriving at in 2111, Asong's previous experience and resources enabled her to form the Congo Mining Collective, a small but prosperous mining company with a fleet of nine ships. A little over two years later, Itadi helped defend the station from the first Chromatic assault. When the colony was cut off from Earth in 2114, Asong worked closely with the station's administrators, scientific collectives and mining concerns to help ensure the colony was safe and self-sufficient. Since that time Itadi has managed to balance her duties as the head of the CMC with her love of hands-on mining and exploration.

While many miners and mining companies specialize in either gas mining or mining the asteroids that the large tugs bring back to Karroo, CMC ships usually go out and do close-up prospecting for valuable materials among the wealth of asteroids found





**Image:** Asong Itadi is in her early 40's, 1.8 meters tall, quite slender and dark skinned. Her

**Gear:** Aris SureSting flechette pistol, bio-environment suit, Iris Quicksilver minicomp (Kartouche agent), sensor glasses

# STELLAR FRONTIER

## Nyumban Scientist

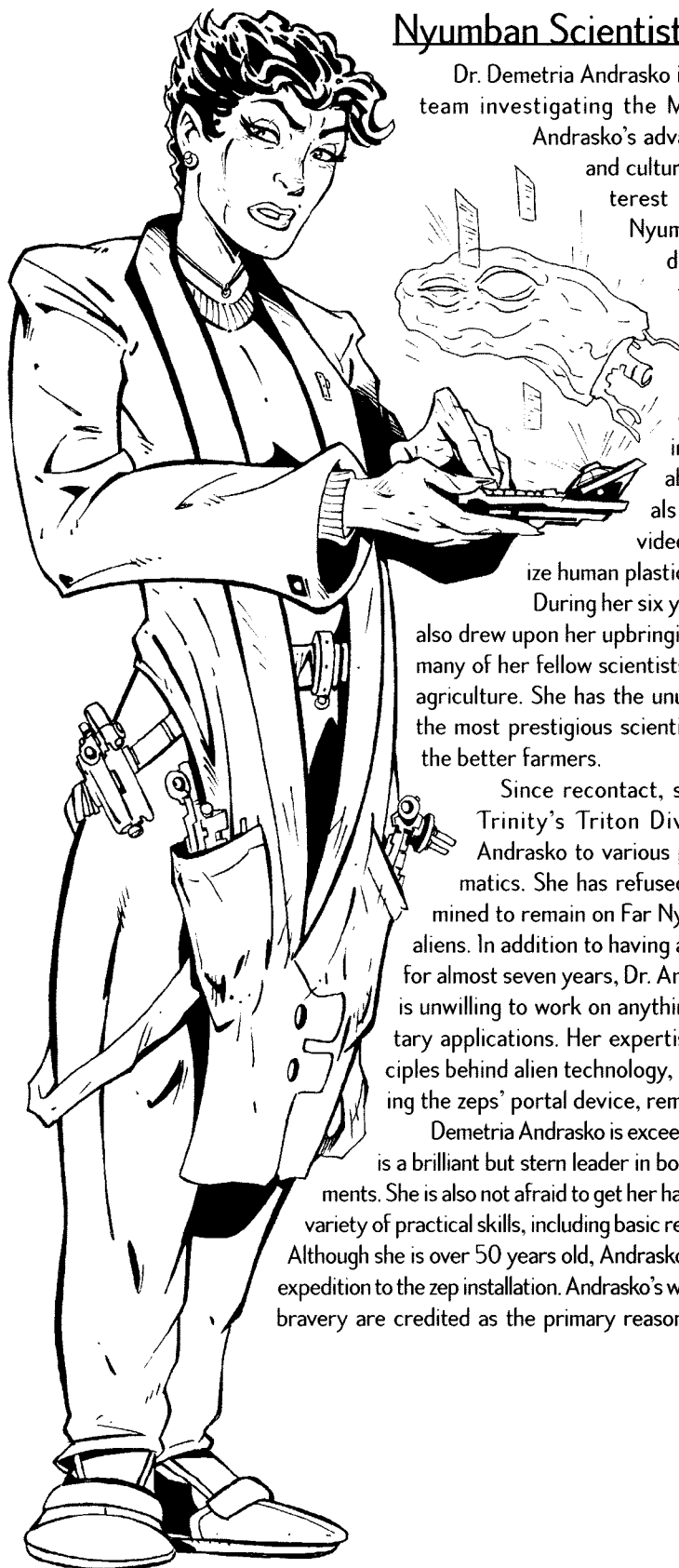
Dr. Demetria Andrasko is the scientist in charge of the team investigating the Mgitu aliens known as zeps.

Andrasko's advanced degrees in both physics and cultural xenology show her keen interest in aliens. She arrived on Far Nyumba in 2114, shortly after the discovery of the first Mgitu artifacts. When the colony was cut off later that year, Demetria continued her work, amassing a great deal of data about the Mgitu aliens, including important information about their science and materials technology. She's even provided evidence that may revolutionize human plastics technology.

During her six years on Far Nyumba, Andrasko also drew upon her upbringing in rural Greece, and helped many of her fellow scientists adapt to a life of subsistence agriculture. She has the unusual distinction of being both the most prestigious scientist on Far Nyumba and one of the better farmers.

Since recontact, several members of the Aeon Trinity's Triton Division have tried to recruit Andrasko to various projects relating to the Chromatics. She has refused all such offers and is determined to remain on Far Nyumba, investigating the Mgitu aliens. In addition to having already worked on this project for almost seven years, Dr. Andrasko is a devout pacifist and is unwilling to work on anything that might have direct military applications. Her expertise on understanding the principles behind alien technology, especially her insights regarding the zeps' portal device, remains unrivaled.

Demetria Andrasko is exceedingly pragmatic and direct. She is a brilliant but stern leader in both laboratory and field environments. She is also not afraid to get her hands dirty and has learned a wide variety of practical skills, including basic repair and piloting of hybrid craft. Although she is over 50 years old, Andrasko insists on accompanying every expedition to the zep installation. Andrasko's wide range of skills and unflinching bravery are credited as the primary reason she and the clairvoyant Jame



**Roleplaying Hints:** You love knowledge and uncovering the secrets of the universe. However,

**Gear:** Sensor glasses, Orgotek Tortoise minicomp (Archimedes agent), jumpsuit with many pockets, some formal clothes, and a well-worn vac suit

# STELLAR FRONTIER

## Credits

**Writers:** John R. Snead (Extrasolar Space material) and Admiral Greg Stolze (Upeo wa Macho material)

**Developer:** Andrew Bates

**Editor:** Bartholemew von Dingleberry MCXVII

**Vice President in charge of Production:** Richard Thomas

**Art Director:** Richard Thomas

**Cover Art:** John Zelenik

**Front & Back Cover Design:** Matt Milberger

**Layout and typesetting:** Matt Milberger

**Artists:** Langdon Foss, Jeff Rebner, John Carroll, Griffon Sykes, Steven Otte

## Author Dedications

**John R. Snead:** To Andre Norton, Arthur C. Clarke, James Blish, and all of the other SF authors who first taught me to wonder about worlds beyond our own.

**Greg Stolze:** To Ed Regis, whose nonfiction is stranger by far than this.



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NAME:  
SERIES:

ORIGIN:  
NATURE:

APTITUDE:  
ALLEGIANCE:

# ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

## PHYSICAL

## MENTAL

## SOCIAL

PLAYER:

PSI ORDER  
UPPED WA  
MACHO<sup>TM</sup>

STRENGTH ●○○○○

Brawl ○○○○○  
Might ○○○○○

DEXTERITY ●○○○○

Athletics ○○○○○  
Drive ○○○○○  
Firearms ○○○○○  
Legerdemain ○○○○○  
Martial Arts ○○○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Pilot ○○○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○

STAMINA ●○○○○

Endurance ○○○○○  
Resistance ○○○○○

PERCEPTION ●○○○○

Awareness ○○○○○  
Investigation ○○○○○

INTELLIGENCE ●○○○○

Academics ○○○○○  
Bureaucracy ○○○○○  
Engineering ○○○○○  
Intrusion ○○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Science ○○○○○  
Survival ○○○○○

WITS ●○○○○

Arts ○○○○○  
Meditation ○○○○○  
Rapport ○○○○○

APPEARANCE ●○○○○

Intimidation ○○○○○  
Style ○○○○○

MANIPULATION ●○○○○

Command ○○○○○  
Interrogation ○○○○○  
Subterfuge ○○○○○

CHARISMA ●○○○○

Etiquette ○○○○○  
Perform ○○○○○  
Savvy ○○○○○

## HEALTH

Bruised -0  
Hurt -1  
Injured -1  
Wounded -2  
Maimed -3  
Crippled -4  
Incapacitated  
Dead

EQUIPMENT (OWNED)

## COMBAT

ATTACK ACQ DMG RGF FT ARMOR

RTG BULK FT  
B L

EXPERIENCE

INITIATIVE

MOVEMENT

WALK RUN SPRIN

POSSESSIONS

CASH

GEAR (CARRIED)

WILLPOWER

PSI



APTITUDE

TELEPORTATION

BASIC TECHNIQUES

TRANSLLOCATION ○○○○○○

TRANSMASSION ○○○○○○

WARPING ○○○○○○

AUXILIARY MODES

○  
○  
○  
○

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ALLIES

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CIPHER

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CITIZENSHIP

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CONTACTS

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DEVICES

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

FOLLOWERS

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INFLUENCE

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MENTOR

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RESOURCES

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STATUS

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\_\_\_\_\_

MERITS TYPE CD

FLAWS TYPE BD

APPEARANCE

Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Hair \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes \_\_\_\_\_  
Ht. \_\_\_\_\_ Wt. \_\_\_\_\_  
Race \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
Nationality \_\_\_\_\_  
Native Language \_\_\_\_\_

# Teleportation Aptitude Alternate Modes

The Upeo wa Macho are arguably among the most powerful psions mankind has. However, the capabilities that the Teleporters show to most of humanity are not the only side of their aptitude.

Several Upeo developed additional techniques over the years that expanded the Teleporters repertoire. While bored or driven Upeo bent on stretching the limits of their psionics abilities developed some of these techniques, many of them were developed by rogue or criminal psions.

In addition, Upeo Security, in order to deal with threats to the Order and to aid in capturing rogue psions, developed their own techniques to augment the already powerful Teleportation mode.

## Basic Technique

**Sense Spatial Integrity:** This ability allows an Upeo to sense whether the noetic fabric of Space-Time has been altered, either ripped or strengthened.

**System:** Roll Psi. A successful check allows the psion to determine whether a special effect has been utilized in the location recently. At higher successes, the psion may determine how long ago such an effect was used, which effect had been utilized there, and what the source was (psion, aberrant, or other).

## Translocation

Translocation teaches a Teleporter how to move herself. The Alternate Modes teach the Teleporter more about the vagaries of how this is done and gives the 'porter additional techniques and utilities that greatly enhance the Translocation basic modes.

All Teleporters learn that space has no "distance" and that a talented Jumper can move as easily across a room as across the Solar System. However, very few Teleporters ever learn to extend their senses and their mind in the same way throughout the noetic plane.

**O Spatial Anchor:** One of the interesting conundrums facing Teleporters in the realm of security is how to defend against its use. It is very hard to lock something up when it can literally be teleported out from under whatever lock, chain or cage it is put in. When applied to the problem of trying to restrain a Teleporter, the problem is even worse.

This ability has the affect of anchoring an object or person such that it is more difficult for them to teleport. A Teleporter with a few moments of concentration can dispel this effect, however, because of the variation in the "Psi frequency" between different Teleporters, another cannot dispel it.

**System:** Roll Psi. The number of successes increases the difficulty to teleport that particular object or person by one per success. The duration lasts one hour per success. The range is equal to the psion's Psi score times 10 meters.

At 5 Translocation, the duration increases to 1 day per success rolled.

**OO Blind Spatial Sense:** One of the Upeo's main abilities is to sense the space and objects around them. In combat, this can be extremely useful since it allows a Teleporter to sense where objects are without having to see them. In order to get an edge over another Teleporter, this ability actually works much like a bright light does when flashed in the eyes and blinds their ability to use Spatial Sense.

This technique allows the Teleporter to interfere with another's Spatial Sense technique by setting up a spatial static that interferes with the normal operating of another's Psi senses. This can apply to psionic senses other than the Teleportation Spatial Sense and it can even be used to shadow one's movements through Space-Time and prevent them from being Traced.

**System:** Spend 1 Psi and roll. Each success increases the base difficulty that another psion is at for utilizing Spatial Sense within the area of affect. The area of effect is equal to 10 times the Psi rating of the psion in meters. The duration is equal a number of minutes equal the psion's Psi rating. At 5 Translocation, the duration increases to a number of hours equal to the psion's Psi Rating.

For all other Psi senses, the difficulty modifier is equal to the number of successes minus one.

**OOO Memorize Location:** One of the Upeo's major limitations is the need to form an impression of a location before they can reliably return to it. This can take weeks or even months to do effectively enough to allow a rapid transit to a new location.

This ability allows a Teleporter to form a temporary "memory" of a location, allowing them to return to that location without needing to stay there for a long time to study it. This does not constitute an actual memory, and will fade quickly over time.

**System:** Spend 2 Psi and roll. Each success reduces the level of difficulty for returning to the location being memorized. The effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the Psi points spent.

**OOOO Trace:** When a person can simply jump away from a given location, tracking them down can be extremely difficult. However, if the Teleportation mode allows one to go anywhere in the universe by traveling through the Psi plane, then it should be possible to track them through the Psi plane as well.

This ability gives a Teleporter the ability to trace a warp, jump or other form of teleport. It essentially allows a Teleporter to repeat a 'port that was made from a given location.

**System:** Spend 2 Psi and roll. In order to recreate the teleport made from a given location, utilize the location familiarity chart in reverse. Utilize the 'transit time' as 'time since teleport'. The 'Difficulty' column is the difficulty of the trace effect. Left over successes then translate into how quickly the Teleporter can retrace the teleport.

*For example, if Janeen tries to trace a teleport effect made by a rogue Teleporter, who has escaped from a mental hospital two hours ago, she would use the transit entry for 1 day (2 hours is greater than 1 hour but less than 1 day) and incur a difficulty of +3 to recreate the teleport. Her player rolls Janeen's Psi and gets 4 successes. This allows Janeen to trace the teleport successfully, but she isn't going to be subtle or quick about it.*

Location Familiarity	Difficulty	Transit Time
Very Familiar – lived there a year or more	0	Five turns
Familiar – lived there for six months or spent at least six hours a day there for a year	+1	10 minutes
Vague familiar – lived there three months or spent six hours a day there for six months	+2	One hour
Remembered – spent a week there once	+3	One day
Pictured – visited for one day, but the location made a powerful impression	+4	One week
Unfamiliar – visited there only briefly	+5	One month

**OOOOO Merge Worlds:** The inverse of Bilocality, the psion can force two locations that he knows to come together for a short time. The effect is extremely dangerous but allows for the movement of large amounts of cargo very quickly. While very similar to Warp, the effect actually allows other psions to attune themselves to objects in the merged locations and “draw” them over to “their” side of the merge. Also known as “reality bleed” by those who’ve seen it, it can be very disconcerting.

If anyone is caught in the merge when it occurs, they are bilocalized, as per Bilocality and **cannot** leave the bleed until the effect is over. If anyone from outside is caught in the bleed when it collapses, they are killed, instantly and messily, when the two locations return to their own spaces.

**System:** Spend 3 Psi and roll. The base difficulty is the location familiarity difficulty of the two locations added together. If successful, a region on both sides of the effect up to a range equal to the Teleporter’s Psi score in meters becomes merged in the bleed. Objects in the bleed seem to overlap each other but a psion, any psion, can grasp an object and by concentrating momentarily (and spending 1 willpower) can draw that object over to whichever “side” they want.

**Transmassion**

The Transmassion Mode teaches psions to move objects other than himself. Just as the Alternate Mode techniques in the Translocation Mode teach a psion to extend his senses through the noetic medium, the Transmassion Alternate techniques increase the psion’s ability to sense objects and locations at great distances.

**O Beacon:** Many Teleporters have a favorite or special piece of equipment (a gun, mini-comp, bio-app, etc.) that they like to be able to get to quickly. This ability, which is sometimes referred to jokingly as “cosmic yo-yo”, allows a psion to imprint an object so that it can be drawn to them quickly and easily. A complement to Transmit Object, this technique allows the psion to retrieve an object even if it is not within sight or spatial sense range.

**System:** Spend 1 Psi and roll. Each success is equal to one hour that the object is ‘beaconed’. At 4 Transmassion, the psion may increase this duration by 1 hour per Psi point spent. At 5 Transmassion the duration increases to 1 day per success. Range is equivalent to the psions attunement range without any bonuses due to bioware or other augmentation.

**OO Tag:** Similar to Beacon, this ability applies to living objects or people. While technically the same, there is a key difference to Tag. Just as a living target may resist a teleport when they are within sight, they may also do so when “Tagged”. However, the target gets the chance to resist the “tagging” as well as the actual teleport later.

**System:** Spend 1 Psi and roll. Each success is equal to one hour that the person is ‘tagged’. At 4 Transmassion, the psion may increase this duration by 1 hour per Psi point spent. At 5 Transmassion the duration increases to 1 day per success. Range is equivalent to the psions attunement range without any bonuses due to bioware or other augmentation.

If resisted, the target may roll their willpower against the psion’s Psi check. If the target gets more successes than the Teleporter, the Tag fails. However, the target is at a +1 difficulty to resist unless they are actively aware that they are being Tagged.

**OOO Exchange Object:** Instead of teleporting an object to or from a psion, this ability actually allows the Teleporter to exchange two objects and flip their positions. Though useful, this is a rather esoteric technique actually pioneered by a rogue Teleporter who used it in several thefts.

**System:** Spend 2 Psi and roll. Base difficulty is based on familiarity with the objects being swapped as per the location familiarity chart. If the two objects can both be sensed or seen, then the base difficulty is only +1. The roll may be opposed if, for instance, someone is holding one of the objects and does not wish it to be replaced. Roll against the subject’s willpower. If successful, the objects are exchanged.

Transmit Object	
Psi	Mass Limit
1	15 kg
2	25 kg
3	40 kg
4	75 kg
5	125 kg
6	250 kg
7	400 kg
8	750 kg
9	1.25 metric tons
10	2 metric tons

**OOOO Exchange Person:** Like Exchange Object, Exchange Person allows the locations of two people or living beings to be exchanged. However, like any teleport, it may be resisted.

In combat this can be utilized to deadly effect and has some non-combat usages as well. Tales speak of Teleporters able to exchange enemy tanks or soldiers so that they fired on each other rather than on friendly combatants.

**System:** Spend 2 Psi and roll. Base difficulty is based on familiarity with the people being swapped as per the location familiarity chart. The roll may be opposed, as per the Transmit Person ability.

**OOOOO Scatter/Mist:** Selective Transmassion is among the most deadly techniques that the Upeo possess. However, it has the problem of trying to break a noetic template in order to work. Most of the time, this makes Selective Transmassion extremely difficult to implement. However, one enterprising rogue decided that rather than trying to teleport a part of a person away, he’d teleport the whole person but not choose a destination. This leaves the victim in the noetic plane where their particles rapidly dissociate and they die.

This is very difficult to do; after all, the whole point of teleportation is to change the location of an object. Not picking an object’s new location is completely against everything that a Teleporter is taught, making it challenging mentally as well as challenging noetically. once learned, though, this technique is a very potent killing tool.

**System:** Spend 3 Psi and 1 Willpower and roll Psi. The intended victim gets to resist with a standard Willpower check but at a +1 difficulty.

The base damage inflicted is a number of Lethal Health Levels equal to the psion’s Psi Rating plus each success is an additional level of damage that the subject incurs from having their matter spread across space and time. The damage inflicted may **not be soaked** and may **not be healed** by any means except normal rest with doubled durations for healing.

If the teleport is successful, and the person succeeds in surviving the assault, they arrive at a random location within a range of 100 meters times the Teleporter’s Psi rating and are at a +1 difficulty to all actions for one round from the disorienting affect of the teleport. However, if the victim does not have any remaining health levels, they do not survive, and **do not** appear anywhere.

The noetic plane has subsumed their body and they are lost forever.

## Warping

While Translocation and Transmassion alter the location of the Teleporter or other persons and objects, the Warping mode actually changes the nature of Space and Time. The Warping Mode's Alternate techniques extend this power into new realms and allow the psion to finally change the aspect of Time directly, rather than just as the consequence of manipulating Space.

**O Warp Shield:** Once it was learned that Teleporters could use their powers as weapons, the race was on to find a means of defending against the attacks. Warp Shield was the end result. It creates a barrier around the psion that prevents both normal and teleport/warp based attacks from entering.

This is a necessary defense against some of the more powerful teleportation effects, including Transmit Object, Transmit Person, and Selective Transmassion.

**System:** Spend 1 Psi and Roll. Each success gained after the first is an increase in the base difficulty needed to affect a change via a teleportation effect on the shielded person or his personal effects.

In addition, physical attacks may not enter the Warp Shield easily, bullets find themselves turned, and laser weapons find their beams bent. As a result, the psion also gains a number of additional dice to their soak equal to the Teleporter's Warp Mode.

The range of the Warp Shield is only a few meters, equal to half the psion's Psi Rating in meters. The Shield lasts for a number of turns equal to the psion's Psi Rating.

**OO Temporal Divergence / Stasis:** One of the obvious lines of questioning when dealing with the Upeo and Teleportation is, if it can affect Space, can it also affect Time? Temporal Divergence is the first indication that the Upeo can develop the ability to manipulate time as well as space.

Temporal Divergence allows a psion to slow or accelerate the flow of time in a given location. If powerful enough, the psion can even freeze time.

**System:** Spend 1Psi and 1 Willpower and Roll Psi. Each success affects the flow of time by an exponential power of 2. If used to accelerate time, the effect results in a double of the rate of passage of time for 1 success, quadrupling for 2 successes, etc. If used to decelerate time, the effect results in a halving for the first success, quartering for the second, etc.

The duration is equal to a number of minutes equal to the psion's Psi rating and may be used at a range equal to the psion's Psi score times 10 in meters. At Warp 5, the duration rises to a number of hours equal to the Psi rating and the psion can actually freeze time completely.

To a person within the effect, the exact opposite seems to occur. If time is accelerated around them, the person believes that everyone else has slowed. For decelerated time, the reverse is true.

This may not be used to increase the number of actions since a person caught within this effect is completely separated from the outside world. If they attempt to fire a weapon, the beam or bullet is incapable of penetrating the stasis field and may even rebound into the bubble.

Because they are separated from the outside world, depending on the time spent in the affect and how fast time is moving, they may suffocate, starve or otherwise suffer ill effects from the passage of time.

**OOO Pocket Dimension:** This ability allows the Teleporter to create a pocket dimension that the psion can reach into to store or retrieve equipment. This is very useful in allowing a psion to carry weapons past metal detectors and x-ray machines.

The effect itself seems to bend space and time, but may actually be tied to the Warper's control of the noetic plane. Noeticists believe that matter only appears to cease to exist but may simply be converted into the noetic plane and stored there until the person decides to return it to normal three-dimensional reality.

**System:** Spend 2 Psi and roll. On a successful roll, the psion may create a space up to 1 cubic meter per Psi point spent in whatever rough configuration desired. The Teleporter may reach into this space with a brief moment of concentration.

This is usually tied to an object such as a box, a bag or a pocket, but can be placed in "mid-air". The effect lasts for a period of one hour per success and may be increased one hour per additional Psi point spent.

**OOOO Warp (a.k.a. "Wormhole"):** With the Warp technique, the Warping Mode, allows a Teleporter to actually bridge two locations in space-time. Instead of teleporting an object from one place to another, this power creates a doorway through which people and material can be transported.

**System:** Spend 3 Psi and roll. The difficulty of the Warp is determined from the location familiarity table for the location desired. If successful, the result is a glowing bluish white portal, similar to a Transportal. However, the destination location is visible from the origin side of the portal and travelers may return through the portal at will.

The portal is usually around 2 meters square and may be adjusted 1 meter per Psi point spent in any dimension. The portal will last for a number of minutes equal to the psion's Psi score. The psion may drop the Warp at will.

**OOOOO Temporal Portal (a.k.a. "Temportal"):** This technique allows a psion to actually make a jump through time by warping space back on itself.

The most well guarded secret of the Upeo, known to only a very few of the most enterprising Teleporters, this method for moving through time was discovered by the late Hector Podkorny before fighting his Proxy, Atwan Bolade.

When a Teleporter activates a Temportal, a similar effect to that of a Transportal erupts. The psion spends a minute concentrating to build the effect of the Temportal. After that minute, anything inside the Temportal may be jumped through time. However, the Temportal, because it is "accurate" in time, loses accuracy in space. The resulting arrival point is random, though usually no more than a few kilometers from the origin.

**System:** Spend 3 Psi and 1 Willpower and roll Psi. For every success, the psion can actually move himself backwards in time by one hour. This may be increased by one hour per Psi point spent.

Apparently, similar to the random temporal displacement effect that results when jumping to an unknown location, the "temportal" seems to deposit a Teleporter a random distance away from the origin, though reversed in time. For each success, the Teleporter moves 10 kilometers away from his "origin" location.

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