

INFINITE STARS

THE STARS WITHOUT NUMBER FANZINE



ISSUE 02

Infinite Stars

**A Fanzine for Stars Without Number(TM), Traveller(TM)
And other Science Fiction Role-Playing Games**

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Table of Contents

Page 2.....	Letter from the Editor
Page 3.....	<i>The Observatory</i> : Expanded World Creation Rules for Stars Without Number
Page 10.....	<i>Dawn Sector</i> : The Bladish
Page 12.....	A Less-Travelled Road: In Defense of Dying in Traveller Character Generation
Page 13.....	Outer Veil: Freeman's Belt – Part I

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Letter from the Editor

Here we are! The second issue of Infinite Stars finally ready! This is a time to celebrate and enjoy the fruits of our work: several long and, hopefully, fruitful articles for use with Stars Without Number and Traveller, as well as the first part of a full-blown novella set in the new Traveller universe, *Outer Veil* (TM), by **Spica Publishing**.

Speaking of which, I'm one of the two proud authors of *Outer Veil*, and, in fact, the primary writer and chief designer. That was a long road begun in the summer of 2008, when I was discussing the possibilities of a near-future, near-Earth Traveller with a few other people in Avenger Publishing and Spica Publishing. The result, which is being published right now on Drive Through RPG, is the *Outer Veil* sourcebook: a full-scale, brand-new alternative setting for Traveller.

Infinite Stars is also expanding to become its own publishing company, the Infinite Stars Cooperative. We will publish several commercial SWN (and other "old

school") products in the future, including a whole sector setting for Stars Without Number – the Alkonost Sector. Infinite Stars itself, of course, will remain free of charge, while other products will be commercial (and will maintain a commercial quality level).

The world of sci-fi gaming needs fans such as the ones who contribute material for free to this and other fanzines, and like the ones (such as me) who worked for hours on *Outer Veil* to yield a very modest profit. The more we unleash our creativity, the more our community grows and prospers.

We are always looking for more submissions to our fanzine, from adventures and pieces of equipment to your opinions and always for artwork as well. You are encouraged to submit such material to golan2072@gmail.com, and we'll include it in our future issues as possible.

Our best regards,
Omer Golan-Joel, Editor-in-Chief



The Observatory:

Expanded World Creation Rules for Stars Without Number

By Richard Hazlewood

The following rules supplement requires the use of the *Stars Without Number* rulebook. These supplemental rules do not reproduce the entire rules section of the SWN rulebook. Definitions of terms and details on how to use these rules are provided in the SWN Rulebook.

The creation of an interstellar Sector should be completed using the rules starting on page 81 of the SWN rulebook. Once the sector has been created, the individual worlds can be detailed using the rules in Chapter 7: World Generation, beginning on page 87. The following supplemental information can be used to help randomly determine additional details about a world, expanding on the rules in SWN.

One important point that is mentioned numerous times in the SWN rulebook: if you don't like the result of a random roll, change it. This is very important in the world creation rules. Even with the revised rules listed below, it is still quite possible to roll a world that just doesn't make sense to the GM. If that is the case, the GM should change any, or all, of the characteristics of the world to get something that suits the setting. While it can be fun trying to come up with explanations for how a weird combination of factors could exist on a particular world, if there are too many strange worlds in a sector, it strains the imagination of the GM and the believability of the players.

An important note is that the tables below and the tables in the SWN Rulebook should only be used for the primary world in a star system. These tables are NOT useful for determining a random world or even other worlds in the same system. A detailed star system generation method will be presented in a future article.

The World Generation Summary on page 88 of the SWN rulebook should be used to create the worlds in a sector. The following discussion is additional information that can be used to create more 'realistic' worlds.

Atmosphere

An expanded Atmosphere table is provided below, with several new atmosphere types. To determine the

Atmosphere type, roll 2d6 and consult the table below. If you specifically intend the world to be populated by more than a few tens of thousands of people, you may simply wish to assume it has a Breathable atmosphere. Alternately, roll 1d6 and use the "Breathable" column to determine the specific atmosphere type on the table below:

2d6	1d6	Atmosphere
2		Corrosive
3		Inert Gas
4		Airless Atmosphere
5	1	Thin Atmosphere
6	2	Breathable Mix
7	3	Breathable Mix
8	4	Breathable Mix
9	5	Breathable Mix
10	6	Thick Atmosphere
11		Invasive, Toxic Atmosphere
12		Corrosive, Invasive Atmosphere

Definitions of new Atmosphere types:

Airless atmospheres are appropriate to asteroids, rocky or icy planetoids or barren worlds that have had their atmospheres burnt off by weapons or cosmic caprice. While there may be a very thin atmosphere, like Mars, whatever atmosphere exists is usually too thin to support anything other than microbial life.

Thin atmospheres can usually be breathed with the use of a filter/compressor mask. Separate air supplies may be necessary to supplement the blend, but any society that means to survive on such a world must have sufficient technological expertise to maintain large numbers of filter/compressor masks and be able to manufacture and store compressed gas (TL2). Thin atmospheres may be breathable in rift valleys or other deep depressions in the planet's surface. Temperatures tend to vary wildly on worlds with thin atmospheres, plunging to very low temperatures at night.

Temperature

Temperature can be determined by rolling 2d6 and consulting the appropriate column for the atmosphere type of the world. Again, if you intend this world to have

a populous human presence, you may want to avoid the Frozen or Burning temperature options.

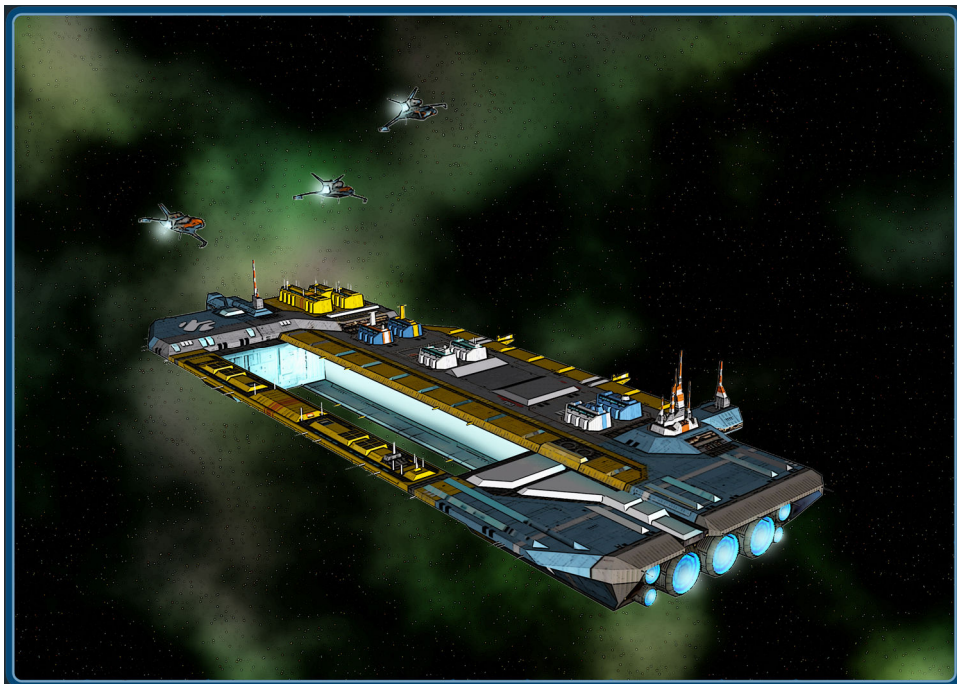
2d6	Breathable	Thick	Thin	Airless	Corrosive/Invasive
2	Cold-Temp	Cold-Temp	Cold-Temp	Frozen	Frozen
3	Cold-Temp	Cold	Cold	Frozen	Cold-Temp
4	Cold	Cold	Cold	Cold-Temp	Cold
5	Cold	Temperate	Cold	Cold	Cold
6	Temperate	Temperate	Cold	Cold	Cold
7	Temperate	Temperate	Temperate	Temperate	Temperate
8	Temperate	Warm	Temperate	Temperate	Warm
9	Warm	Warm	Temperate	Warm	Warm
10	Warm	Warm	Warm	Warm	Warm
11	Temp-Warm	Warm	Warm	Temp-Warm	Temp-Warm
12	Temp-Warm	Temp-Warm	Temp-Warm	Burning	Burning

Biosphere

Most inhabited worlds have some kind of life on them, whether native or imported from Terran stock.

Roll 2d6 and consult the table below, using the appropriate atmosphere column. Most human-inhabited

2d6	Breathable	Thick	Thin	Airless	Corrosive/Invasive
2	Remnant	Remnant	Remnant	Remnant	Remnant
3	None	None	None	None	None
4	Microbial	Microbial	None	None	None
5	Microbial	Microbial	Microbial	None	None
6	Miscible	Microbial	Microbial	None	Microbial
7	Miscible	Miscible	Miscible	None	Microbial
8	Miscible	Immiscible	Immiscible	None	Immiscible
9	Immiscible	Immiscible	Immiscible	None	Immiscible
10	Immiscible	Immiscible	Hybrid	Engineered	Immiscible
11	Hybrid	Hybrid	Hybrid	Engineered	Immiscible
12	Engineered	Engineered	Engineered	Immiscible	Engineered



Population

Roll 2d6 and consult the table below. Additionally, the GM is encouraged to include DMs based on the setting assumptions. If the region is to have a more frontier feel, then a -1 or -2 DM should be imposed. If the sector or region is fairly well settled, then a +1 DM might be appropriate. The final population should make sense based on the overall habitability of the world as determined so far; but don't be afraid to accept an unusual result if you've got an idea about how to explain it. The *Scream* did weird things to planetary populations and even after five hundred years, those effects can still be seen in the populations of some worlds. It is also likely that the GM may want to come back and adjust the population based on the World Tags (determined later) or other social factors that could reasonably affect the population of a world. Extremely high or low Tech Level should affect the population as well as Tags like Feral, Outpost etc.

This table assumes that the planet has some kind of population. If the Referee wishes to impose a population of zero, for an uninhabited world, that is fine, but these rules will not normally generate such a world. The 2d6 table provided actually goes from 1 to 13. GMs are encouraged to impose DMs based on the desired feel of the setting.

The following general DMs should be applied based on the Temperature of the world:

-1 if Warm or Cold, -2 if Variable, -3 if Frozen or Burning.

2d6	Breathable	Thick	Thin	Airless	Corrosive/Invasive
1-	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost
2	Failed Colony	Failed Colony	Failed Colony	Failed Colony	Failed Colony
3	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost
4	10 Thousand	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost	Outpost
5	10 Thousand	10 Thousand	10 Thousand	Outpost	Outpost
6	100 Thousand	10 Thousand	10 Thousand	Outpost	Outpost
7	100 Thousand	100 Thousand	10 Thousand	10 Thousand	Outpost
8	100 Thousand	100 Thousand	100 Thousand	10 Thousand	10 Thousand
9	Million	100 Thousand	100 Thousand	10 Thousand	10 Thousand
10	10 Million	Million	Million	100 Thousand	100 Thousand
11	Billion	10 Million	10 Million	Million	Million
12	Alien	Alien	Alien	Alien	Alien
13+	10 Million	10 Million	10 Million	10 Million	10 Million

New Population Ranges:

Failed Colonies usually have no residual populations. However, there are occasionally stubborn or hearty individuals that survive the collapse of their world. Roll 1d6 and on a 5 or 6, assume that the failed colony has the equivalent of an Outpost population living in scattered settlements of a few dozen people.

Outposts have populations determined by rolling 1d6 on the following table:

1d6	Outpost Population
1	1d10 * 100
2	1d10 * 100
3	1d10 * 100
4	1d10 * 500
5	1d10 * 500
6	1d10 * 1000

Millions of inhabitants have populations of 1d10 Million people.

Tens of Millions of inhabitants have populations determined by rolling 1d6 on the following table:

1d6	Tens of Millions Population
1	1d10 * 10 Million
2	1d10 * 10 Million
3	1d10 * 10 Million
4	1d10 * 50 Million
5	1d10 * 50 Million
6	1d10 * 100 Million

Billions of inhabitants have populations determined by rolling 1d6 on the following table:

1d6	Billions Population
1	1 Billion
2	1 Billion
3	1 Billion
4	1d3 Billion
5	1d3 Billion
6	1d6 Billion

Alien civilizations have populations determined by rolling 1d6 on the following table and then rolling on the appropriate population table above:

1d6	Alien Population
1	Remnant
2	100 Thousand
3	Million
4	10 Million
5	Billion
6	Billion

Tech Level

Roll 2d6 and consult the table below based on the type of population on the world. Worlds with less than tech level 4 are usually incapable of interstellar flight, so typically have little or no interstellar contact. Tech level is another table where the GM should adjust numbers to suit the region they desire to create.

As with the Population table, this table goes from 1 to 13, allowing the GM to impose DMs based on the desired setting, or on other factors.

2d6	Remnant	Outpost	10 Thousand	100 Thousand	Millions, 10 Millions and Billions
1-	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 2	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 1
2	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 3	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 2
3	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 3+	Tech Level 1	Tech Level 1	Tech Level 3
4	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 2	Tech Level 2	Tech Level 3+
5	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 3	Tech Level 3	Tech Level 4
6	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 3+	Tech Level 3+	Tech Level 4
7	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4
8	Tech Level 0	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4
9	Tech Level 1	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4
10	Tech Level 1	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4+
11	Tech Level 1	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4	Tech Level 4+	Tech Level 4+
12	Tech Level 2	Tech Level 4+	Tech Level 4+	Tech Level 5	Tech Level 5
13+	Tech Level 3	Tech Level 5	Tech Level 5	Tech Level 4+	Tech Level 4+

New Tech Level Range:

Tech Level 3 with specialties is a fairly common version of a Tech Level 3 society that experiences occasional interstellar contact. While the majority of the world's technology is solidly Tech Level 3, in some areas, typically space travel and weapons technology, the world is able to produce versions of Tech Level 4 items. Spike drives are typically limited to Drive-1.

World Tags

Roll 1d100 twice and consult the table. These two Tags give striking or specific details of what makes the world worth notice to starfaring adventurers. The original table only had 60 entries. I have used the World Quirk

information from the Mongoose *Traveller* OGL to increase the number of world Tags. New World Tags (explained below) are shown in *italics*.

1d100	World Tag	1d100	World Tag
01	Abandoned Colony	48	Out of Contact
02-03	Alien Ruins	49	Outpost World
04	Altered Humanity	50	<i>Peaceful</i>
05	Area 51	51	Perimeter Agency
06	<i>Artistic</i>	52	Pilgrimage Site
07	Badlands World	53	Police State
08	Bubble Cities	54	Preceptor Archive
09	Civil War	55	Pretech Cultists
10	Cold War	56	Primitive Aliens
11-12	Colonized Population	57-58	<i>Progressive</i>
13	<i>Deceptive</i>	59	Psionic Fear
14-15	Desert World	60	Psionic Worship
16	Eugenics Cult	61	Psionic Academy
17	Exchange Consulate	62-63	Quarantined World

18	<i>Fashion</i>	64	Radioactive World
19-20	Feral World	65-66	<i>Recovering</i>
21	Flying Cities	67	Regional Hegemon
22	Forbidden Tech	68-69	Restrictive Laws
23	Freak Geology	70	Rigid Culture
24	Freak Weather	71	Seagoing Cities
25	Friendly Foe	72	Sealed Menace
26-28	<i>Fusion</i>	73	Sectarians
29-30	Gold Rush	74	Seismic Instability
31	Hatred	75	Secret Masters
32	Heavy Industry	76	<i>Taboo</i>
33-34	Heavy Mining	77	Theocracy
35	<i>Honorable</i>	78	Tomb World
36	Hostile Biosphere	79-80	<i>Tourist Attraction</i>
37	Hostile Space	81	Trade Hub
38	<i>Liberal</i>	82-85	Tyranny
39-40	Local Specialty	86	Unbraked AI
41	Local Tech	87-90	<i>Unusual Custom</i>
42	Major Shipyard	91	<i>Violent</i>
43	Minimal Contact	92-95	Warlords
44-45	Misandry/Misogyny	96	Xenophiles
46	<i>Obsessed</i>	97-99	Xenophobes
47	Oceanic	100	Zombies

(I recommend moving the table above so it is all on one page.)

New World Tag Descriptions:

Artistic

Art and culture are highly prized. Aesthetic design is important in all items produced on this world and even mundane items, like screwdrivers, are decorated and artistically embellished. Offworlders who do not appreciate the artistry and aesthetic designs can be shunned or ostracized.

Enemies	Dishonest art dealer, Offended artist, Offworld art thief
Friends	Flamboyant artist, Conscientious worker, Enthusiastic art historian
Complications	Fines for lack of artistry, Accidental damage of artwork, hidden character talent
Things	Unique collectable artwork, Aesthetic mundane items, Offworld art as new trend
Places	Antique shop, Art Gallery/Museum, PreTech art factory

Deceptive

Trickery and equivocation are considered acceptable. Honesty is a sign of weakness.

Enemies	Dishonest customs official, Fence for stolen goods, Unbribeable official
Friends	The only honest merchant in the world, Admiring con artist, Stranded offworlder
Complications	Stolen cargo, Forged currency, Bureaucracy that runs on bribery
Things	Illegal cargo, Fake PreTech/PsiTech/XenoTech/MalTech artifact, Thieves' tools
Places	House of illusion, Festival of tall tales, Bureaucratic administration

Fashion

Fine clothing and decoration are considered vitally important in the culture. A significant portion of each person's income is spent on clothing and accessories. Underdressed characters have no standing here.

Enemies	Egotistical fashion designer, Sack-cloth wearing revolutionary, Elegant fashionista
Friends	Bemedaled police officer, Jeweler, Up-and-coming fashion designer
Complications	Fines for plain clothing, Fashion models get special treatment, Designer using offworld designs and selling them as his own
Things	Jewelery with built-in electronics, Exotic clothing, Historical fashions
Places	Fashion show, Clothing superstore, Outlet mall

Fusion

The culture is a merger of two distinct cultures. Roll again twice to determine the tags inherited from these cultures. If the tags are incompatible, the culture is likely to be divided.

Enemies	Cultural purist, Suspicious offworld anthropologist, Misguided social integrator
Friends	Child of two cultures, Cultural attaché, Native guide
Complications	Character is from of one of the original cultures, Corned-beef with cabbage and humus,
Things	Expensive integrated artwork, Exotic blended foods, Mismatched clothing
Places	Fusion restaurant, Cultural heritage museum, Twisted cultural location

Honorable

On this world, one's word is one's bond. Lying is both rare and despised. Written contracts are rare and people abide by the spirit of the law, not just the letter of the law.

Enemies	Liar in the midst, Honest opposition, Affronted former business partner
Friends	Honest merchant, Paladin guard, Friendly waiter
Complications	A not-so-simple misunderstanding, Caught in a lie, Over helpful business partner
Things	Too much cargo, Lie detector, PreTech artifact that enforces honesty
Places	Hall of honorable sacrifice, Business centre, Prison

Liberal

The planetary culture welcomes change and offworld influence. Characters that bring new and strange ideas will be welcomed. Depending on the speed of the changes brought to the planet, significant cultural upheaval could be taking place.

Enemies	Conservative activist, Offworld con-man, XenoTech thief
Friends	Cultural advisor, Eager merchant, Xenophilic romantic
Complications	Unintended fad, Conservative demonstration/rally, Environmental impact
Things	Wide variety of XenoTech, Plans for the next big trend, Fake XenoTech
Places	Multi-Worlds fair, Import business, History of fads museum

Obsessed

Everyone is obsessed with or addicted to a substance, personality, act or item. This monomania pervades every aspect of the culture.

Enemies	Addict in need of next fix, Entitled dealer, Obsessed mob
Friends	Reformed addict, Offworld anthropologist/medic, Counter-culture Advocate
Complications	Characters (unknowingly?) have ingredient key to the obsession, No time to service the ship due to obsession, The obsession is no longer available.
Things	Cash for obsession, The substance or object obsessed over, Cure for the obsession
Places	Abandoned manufactories, Looted stores, Building dedicated to the obsession

Peaceful

Physical conflict is almost unheard-of. The culture produces few soldiers and diplomacy reigns supreme. Forceful characters will be ostracized.

Enemies	The one violent person on the planet, Master orator, Obsessed stalker
Friends	Fascinated anthropologist, Pacifistic guru, Lovestruck peacenik
Complications	Nonviolent demonstration, Peace is secured through drugs, Invaders or pirates
Things	Book outlining perfected debating techniques, Weapons used for different purposes, Mind control device that ensures peace
Places	Center of reason, Self defense class, Ancient battle site

Progressive

The culture is expanding and vibrant. Fortunes are being made in trade and science is forging bravely ahead.

Enemies	Unscrupulous merchant, Conservative terrorist, MalTech scientist
Friends	Budding Entrepreneur, Eager young scientist, Offworld advisor
Complications	MalTech violations, Parade promoting advancement, Jealous neighbor tries to slow down or stop the rapid progress
Things	Rich literature or artwork, Hidden cache of PreTech equipment, Plans for the next great project
Places	Construction site, Outdated space station ready for demolition, University research centre

Recovering

A recent trauma, such as a plague, war, disaster or despotic regime has left scars on the culture. The culture of the world is changing quickly and there are several possibly conflicting changes occurring at the same time as the society figures out how to deal with the after effects of the trauma.

Enemies	Member of the group that caused the disaster, Dishonest merchant, Misinformed helper
Friends	Disaster response team leader, Local aid worker, Zealous young revolutionary
Complications	Disaster was man-made and could happen again, Conflicting recovery plans, Significant number of people want a return to the "good old days"
Things	Proof the disaster was caused by a particular person or group, Medical equipment, Historical records from before the disaster
Places	Aid station or hospital, Rebel hideout, Wrecked space station

Taboo

A particular topic is forbidden and cannot be discussed. Characters who unwittingly mention this topic will be ostracized.

Enemies	Fanatic who wants to ensure the characters do not break the taboo, Deliberate taboo breaker, Suspicious taboo enforcement officer
Friends	Marginal Tabooist, Offworld anthropologist, Revolutionary leader
Complications	Taboo is a common topic in the rest of the sector, Breaking taboo causes a violent reaction, Taboo topic changes occasionally
Things	Illegal device that breaks taboo, Device that enforces taboo, Collection of taboo items
Places	Hidden location to experience the taboo subject, Taboo enforcement centre, Rehabilitation center

Tourist Attraction

Some aspect of the culture or the planet draws visitors from all over the sector. Much of the business on the world has developed to cater to the visitors. There may be an underside of society that resents all of the offworld influence.

Enemies	Controlling tour guide, Disgruntled xenophobe, Conservationist who hates how offworlders are ruining the attraction
Friends	Helpful tour guide, Accommodating merchant, Minister of tourism
Complications	Tourists are slowly destroying the attraction, Attraction only appears periodically, Attraction is dangerous in some way, Attraction is not a thing but a basic part of the world's culture
Things	Souvenirs, Illegal pieces of the attraction, Commemorative collectables
Places	The attraction itself, Observation platform, Souvenir shop

Unusual Custom

The culture of the planet has some very unusual custom or habit that significantly sets it apart from most human worlds. Examples of unusual customs include, but are not limited to: the status of offworlders, technology or cybernetics, life cycle or end of life decisions, social standing or caste system, trade, nobility, sex, eating, travel or conspiracy. The exact nature of the unusual custom must be determined by the GM.

Enemies	Counter-culture extremist, Fanatic practitioner of the custom, Offworlder trying to change the "obscene" custom, Custom police
Friends	Open minded practitioner of the custom, Custom teacher, Friendly merchant of the custom
Complications	Custom directly affects one of the characters for better or worse, Strong counter-culture movement is trying to change or eliminate the custom, Custom is dangerous to those not from this world
Things	Item that promotes the custom, Explicit recordings of the custom for offworlders
Places	Designated facility for practicing the custom, Hidden club for counter-custom patrons

Violent

Physical conflict is common, taking the form of duels, brawls and other contests. Trial by combat is a part of the judicial system. Personal affronts are typically dealt with quickly and personally.

Enemies	Professional duelist, Offended fighter, Local bully
Friends	Helpful young guide, Wise old master of arms, Honorable enemy
Complications	Duels have unusual rules of conduct, Violence is being encouraged by offworlders, Violence outside of the <i>Code Duella</i> is strictly forbidden
Things	Usual weapons, Recordings of fights, Concealable body armor
Places	Coliseum of violence, Slaughter house, Street riot

Dress the Set

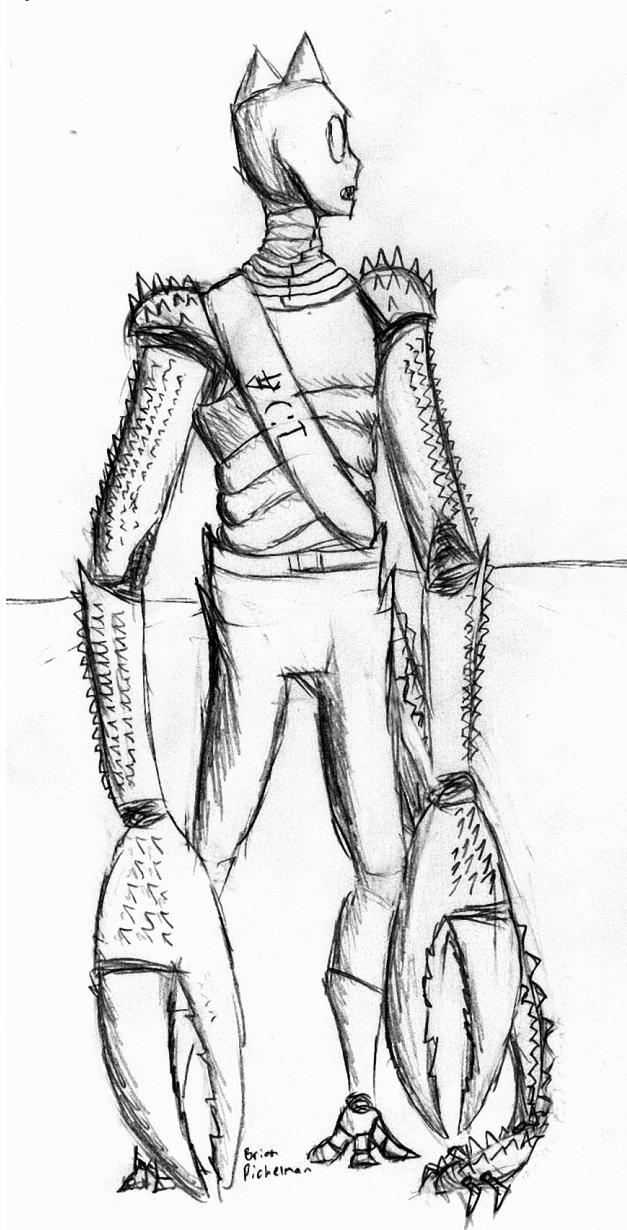
One of the most important things a GM can do after generating a random world is to make sure that everything fits or makes sense. A paragraph or two to explain how

the various pieces of the world creation system fit together, especially the Tags, will greatly assist the GM when the Players come along and mess things up.



Dawn Sector: The Bladish

By Brian Pichelman



The Bladish are large lobster-like men with a taste for war. They are tough, strong, and did I mention tough?

Bladish speak Bladish. Most Bladish do not understand English.

Appearance and Biology

Bladish are usually 7' tall, with large crab claws reaching to the ground instead of hands. They use their 3 clawed toes as hands, which actually works. Their claws will inflict 1-8 h.p. of damage if used as a weapon. They are considered proficient with their own claws.

They have a tail. Males have a cone shaped tail, fat at the beginning, thin at the end, with 4 smaller legs at the end (2 on each side, each about 10 centimeters long). Males have 2 large ridge-like horns on their head. Females have a fat lobster-like tail and 2 long antennae, each stopping at the waist. Female Bladish can swim backwards at their

normal swimming rate.

Most Bladish wear red pants and a sash with their name in Bladish. Females might wear only the sash and no top (Female Bladish lack breasts) or they might wear a large red cloak and the sash. They look sort of like giant lobsters. Most Bladish dress the same (with exceptions for life-saving equipment such as space-suits) because of religious custom. They wear mostly red because it is the color they can perceive the best, and the sash comes from Bladish law for identification (this is no joke, as Bladish look mostly alike even to other Bladish). The sash is also part of a mindset, like shirts and pants for humans.

All Bladish have a solid face, and despite the fact that they have obvious cheekbones, they cannot move their mouth or blink. Their eyes have a shell that protects them. Their language excludes "b", "p", "v" and "m" sounds because of their face. Otherwise, it sounds like a very foreign human speech. When they speak in English, they sound like someone that speaks without lips and through clenched teeth.

Unusual Biological Abilities

When there is enough radiation, Bladish can employ X-ray vision. Around fusion engines, they can see the inner parts and they can easily spot spaceships in hidden areas. Assuming there is enough radiation, A Bladish can see 5' through solid rock. When attacking and able to use their x-ray vision, they gain +1 damage because they can see weak spots in armor that cannot usually be seen, i.e. places that lack any hard bone or extra armor.

They are semi aquatic, being able to swim very well and breathe underwater. All Bladish are immune to any disease they have already had.

Bladish naturally have a AC of 2.

All Bladish are unusually strong, this is because Flicker's gravity is 1.5 times more than Earth's. NPC Bladish have strength of 5-20 (3d6+2). All other scores are normal.

Bladish regrow lost limbs in 1-10 months. Their regeneration is also on a smaller scale, healing 1 h.p. of damage in 1 turn, but damage taken by fire or acid will only heal normally.

All Bladish need radioactivity added to their food. This "extra topping" can be bought at most space faring markets for 4 credits for a day's worth of radiation. If they do not get their radiation, they grow weak, -1 strength every day until it reaches 0, and then they die.

They have a much higher tolerance to radiation than humans. They enjoy a bonus +3 to saving throws vs. radiation.

History

The Bladish are the second-oldest race on Flicker. They

never fully left the ocean, and never developed on their own past the 19th century (Tech Level 2).

Despite their war-craze, they have never started a war with the Hippaflicks or the Irons (the former would refuse to give them wonderful technologies, and the latter would most certainly destroy the Bladish)

Bladish Psychics are shunned and banned from society. They have settled on other worlds. The Bladish are the most space faring, the Hippaflicks fearing space, and the Irons being terrified for perfectly legitimate reasons. More on the general history above.

The Bladish are ruled by a parliament, but they have 13 elected leaders instead of a singular Prime Minister. These leaders also serve on the Council of Flicker.

Psychology

The Bladish are war minded individuals.

Males and females in the Bladish culture are different, but nevertheless equal. Their social rules are about the same as humans.

Bladish hate the uneducated, and will go out of their way to educate others. This is because they view themselves as the least intelligent race on Flicker. Bladish hate being less-than-best at anything.

They view the world in black and white, good-and-evil. Their religion is focused around the all-good Clawed God, one who promotes the Bladish way of life, and representing the all-evil is the deity the Burned One, who is in all respects identical to the Clawed God in appearance, with the exception he promotes evil ways and has been burned all over.

Flicker is a very dangerous place, and when Bladish are surprised, there is a 75% chance that a male will immediately attack the nearest enemy. A female will react normally.

Other Notes

NPC Bladish will have 2 HD., a AC of 2 and a randomly

encountered Bladish NPC has a 60% chance of being a Warrior, a 20% chance of being a Expert, and a 20% of being a Psychic. On Flicker itself, there is a 39.9% chance of being a Expert and a 0.1% chance of being a Psychic.

All Bladish over the age of 8 carry a Lak-Haz. This is a ceremonial knife, +1 to hit and 1-8 damage. A Bladish will NEVER lend their Lak-Haz. They are automatically proficient in their Lak-Haz, but not necessarily proficient in other primitive weapons.

Bladish reproduce externally, i.e. they do not have sex. Prostitution is literally alien to them. The female egg is impregnated outside her body, and the young are raised in a strict fashion, taking a lot of school and physical activities (sports, weight training, etc.).

They cannot move and fight at the same time, because the majority of their weapons are used by their feet-hands. Bladish weapons are usually made with the large forearms in mind though, and these can be used normally. They suffer no other issues with their feet-hands but this.

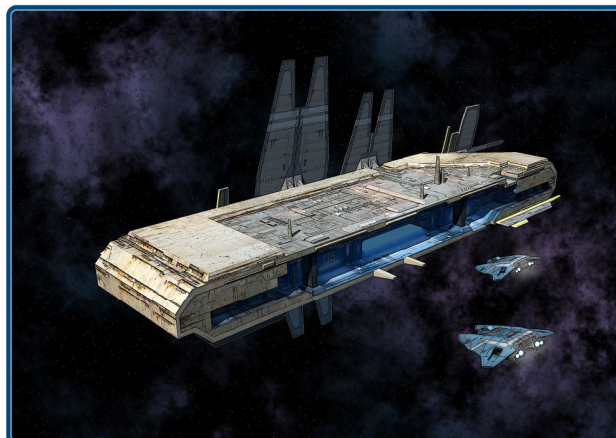
Bladish live for 700 Flicker years, or about 200 Earth years.

Bladish as Player Characters

PC Bladish need a minimum Strength of 14. If a player successfully rolls up Bladish stats, the GM should allow +1 to Strength. They cannot wear any TL 3 or lower armor because of their bulkiness. Their AC of 2 is classified as "primitive" armor. TL 4 or higher armor will cost 5/3rds as much due to the custom design needed for them. They are otherwise like a NPC Bladish.

Bladish take the h.p. of their class, not their race, even if it means losing h.p.

PC Bladish usually see opportunity in leaving. Some are curious about the outside universe, some want to conquer and rule a world of their own. Many are for-hire guards on other worlds. Many Bladish just want to leave Flicker. Having three different races inhabiting the same planet can get stressful. Some Psychic Bladish might leave because of persecution by their brethren.



A Less-Travelled Road:

In Defense of Dying in Traveller Character Generation

By Omer Golan-Joel

A common complaint about Classic Traveller is that characters can die during character generation. At the surface of it, it looks like a very strong and robust complaint - why should character generation be based on chance rather than the player's choice, and why should a character die even before starting the game?

However, there are actually good reasons to follow this controversial, and lethal, rule.

First of all, Classic Traveller game starts not after character generation, but rather at the beginning of character generation. It is a mini-game all by itself - a game of chance, if you will. And like all gambles, it has its own thrill in it. Will your character survive multiple terms of combat as a Marine? Will you muster out a General, or, alternatively, finish your career at a state funeral reserved to military heroes? Go on, gamble!

Another thing to keep in mind is that, as long as you stick to Book 1 and Supplement 4, Classic Traveller character generation is FAST. VERY FAST. Once you know the system well, generating a character takes a mere five minutes. So even if your character dies, you don't lose much time - in fact, you've only played a little game of dice for several moments, no harm done.

But the real reasons for the chances for character death in Classic Traveller character generation are twofold: from a setting perspective and from a game-mechanics perspective.

From a setting perspective, a military career, especially in actual combat service (when you can learn all these nifty combat skills), is a risky thing. Combat is no picnic, after all. You don't earn combat experience by sitting behind a desk, but rather by shooting and being shot at. Soldiers die in many cases; that is the nature of war. And the game reflects that.

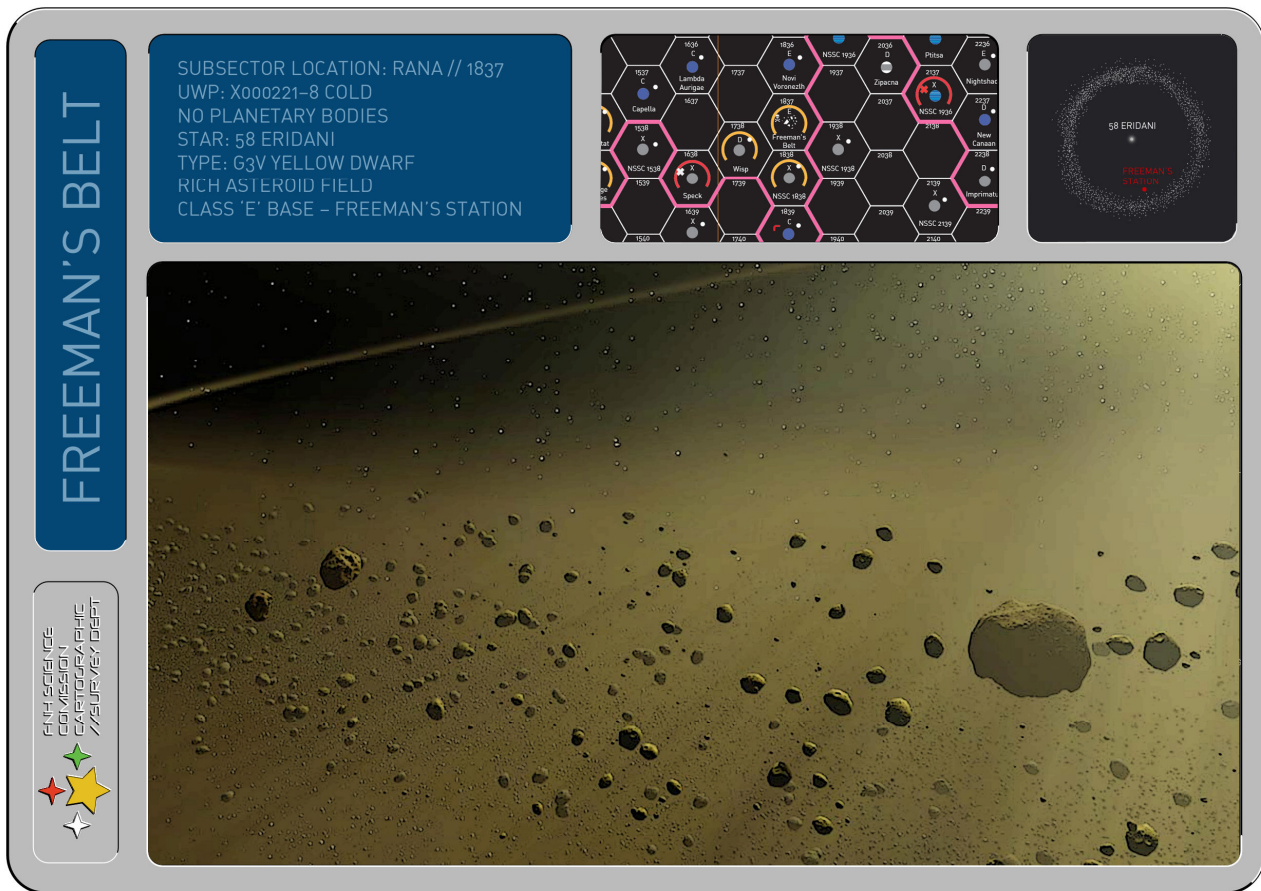
From a game-mechanics perspective, keep in mind that Classic Traveller - like most versions of Traveller - uses the 2d6 curve for task resolution. This curve is highly sensitive to modifiers, so even a mere +1 is significant; high skill levels will skew the curve much towards the character's favor, and thus are highly valuable. The chance of death during character generation, therefore, exists in order to make higher skills rarer and more valuable. Otherwise, why not just stick in, say, the Scouts for terms and terms on no end and have a character with Pilot-5? This presents the player with a choice: do you muster out now alive but with a smaller amount of skills, or risk a certain chance of death in the line of duty to earn better combat experience? Are you determined enough to become an officer to risk your life in the line of duty, or do you muster out as a Private and stay alive for the time being? Choices. Choices. And risks. This is the essence of Classic Traveller character generation.

I hope that these few arguments would make you think again about the reasoning behind these seemingly arbitrary mechanics.



Outer Veil: Freeman's Belt – Part I

By Richard Hazlewood



AUTHOR'S NOTE: The background for this story is based on the *Outer Veil* setting developed by Omer Golen-Joel and published by **Spica Publishing** and is used with permission of the author. In no way should the events or specific descriptions in this story be considered “official” or “canon” to the published setting. Any differences between the official published material and this story are the fault of the author. I would also like to send a special thank you to Omer for allowing me to play in his sandbox.

At the edge of a star system an empty point in space suddenly contained *something*. A flash of light appeared in the void; the flash started as a small gamma ray burst and descended through x-rays into the ultraviolet and finally into visible light. As it continued to decay, the flash passed through the red into infrared, then on to microwaves and radio frequencies. In less than a second, the light had completely faded and in its place sat a ship: a starship; a streamlined wedge shape with fins, projections and markings. The markings were an almost undecipherable version of English. They read “FSS Wyvern”.

On the bridge of the Federated Nations of Humanity Star Ship Wyvern sat her Captain. Lieutenant Commander Kathryn Drake was a tall, statuesque black woman with the short-cropped hair common among spacers. Her features were long and lean with high cheekbones and a

broad nose. She sat in the command chair, her back straight, dividing her time between the main viewer in front of her and the other bridge positions to her right and left, monitoring not just the status of the ship, but the performance of the people. Drake was new to the ship; this was her first mission in command. She had only been with the crew for a couple of days when their orders came to depart Democritus Naval Base and make a sweep patrol through several of the Frontier systems in the Rana subsector. This was only their third system and she had been in command barely a month. The Wyvern had a crew of twenty-eight, including marines; Drake was very bad with names, good with faces but bad with names, so while she felt that she was getting to know her crew, frustratingly she still couldn't remember many of their names.

“Sir, I have confirmed that we have arrived in the 58 Eridani system.” The voice of her Navigator, Ensign Harper Killig, rang through the bridge. Killig was a short man with dark hair and brown eyes that sparkled when he smiled, which seemed to be all the time.

Immediately afterward, the Engineer spoke up. “Captain, the ship is secured from Jump.”

Drake acknowledged the reports with a nod of her head. On the primary display was a holographic schematic of the 58 Eridani system and Freeman's Belt. Tapping the link to the survey data, a side image came up and she noted absently that the primary star was a G3V yellow

dwarf, only a bit cooler than Sol, with a very rich asteroid belt, called Freeman's Belt, orbiting just outside the habitable zone. There was a link to a science paper on how a star system with no planets could form a distinct belt, but she didn't follow it. On the display she could see that they had emerged just outside the jump limit of the star; right where they were supposed to be. Freeman's Station was shown near the middle of the belt and half-a-dozen other ships, transponder codes identified them as independent mining ships, were scattered throughout the belt.

The 58 Eridani star system was sparsely populated, barely two hundred beltlers called this system home. There was only one space station, a small conglomeration of modules that could barely claim to be a Class-E starport. She remembered from the system briefing that the starport was on a long list of systems that were about to be upgraded. Although this was a relatively empty system, things were about to change. As the Frontier was pushed back and settlements moved closer to Beta Eridani, this system and its very rich belt was going to become an important refueling point for ships headed out to that region. The rich belt would become an anchor for the expanding industrial capabilities of the Federated Nations of Humanity. The FNH was about to dump a lot of credits into this and similar systems, preparing for the next push into the unknown. Freeman's Belt was about to become very important and those that were here first would probably become very rich.

Lifting her gaze from the display, she addressed her Navigator. "Mister Killig set course for Freeman's Station, 1G please."

"Freeman's Station at 1G, aye Captain." Came the crisp reply.

Drake liked the young Navigator, he was professional and earnest. He also had a wicked sense of humor which he let out of its cage occasionally. His stories of his life growing up in Juno and around the Asteroid Belt could keep the crew in stitches all night.

Drake herself had been born on humanity's first extra-solar colony, Medea, or Alpha Centauri B 2. Her grandparents had been some of the first immigrants from Earth and her earliest memories were of sitting on Geepaws knee and listening to his stories of how he had tamed a new world.

Drake watched quietly as the Navigator quickly fed in the obviously pre-plotted course to the Helm and Engineering positions. The Engineer, communicating back to the drive room, got the maneuver drive on line and with only the slightest feeling of movement, the ship swung about and began accelerating in-system. Drake was pleased with how well her crew worked together. Their former commander had done a wonderful job and she hoped she could be as good to the next commander.

"Captain, we are on course for Freeman's Station. ETA 3.8 hours." Her Pilot spoke for the first time since the ship had emerged from Jump.

Her senior pilot and Executive Officer, Lieutenant Arden Quetel was a quiet man; very intense and very shy. He was a very good pilot, but needed some seasoning if he was going to be a good XO. Quetel was very tall for a spacer, so tall in fact that he often had to duck to move through the ship. His record showed several trips to the infirmary for minor head wounds when he had failed to duck properly. Quetel seemed to walk with a permanent hunch in his shoulders as if he was always afraid he would hit his head again.

Glancing around the bridge to make sure nothing had been missed, she turned to the Comm station and said, "Mister Nakamura, send a message to Freeman's Station announcing our arrival and ETA. Please give my compliments to the Station Commander."

Pressing a button on her command station, Drake activated the all-comm channel. "This is the Captain; we have entered the 58 Eridani system and should arrive at Freeman's Station in just under four hours. Secure from Jump Stations and set the Underway Watch, Section Blue."

The background noise of the ship changed as the crew began moving around and the extra people assigned to Jump watches stood down and resumed their regular duties.

A young petty officer came onto the bridge. Drake tried to remember her name, Deschard or Deschance, something like that. The woman moved over to the Engineers station and began speaking softly with the Duty Engineer, getting her turnover. At about the same time, the Navigator left his station and moved quietly past Drake and out the door, giving her a slight nod and smile in passing.

After everyone on the bridge had been relieved and the watch pilot reported that the Underway Watch was stationed, Drake got up from her station and said, "Helm, you have the Watch."

Receiving the acknowledgement from the junior pilot, she left the bridge and headed for her stateroom. She had a mountain of paperwork waiting on her desk; she always did.

Just over an hour into her paperwork, there was a soft knock at the door to her office. Warships rarely had extra room and the Wyvern was no exception. The Feilong Class Patrol Frigate had private staterooms for each of the three officers and the Marine Sergeant but the rest of the enlisted crew was housed in barracks. There was no office or ready-room; her small stateroom had to serve double-duty.

After being acknowledged, her XO entered with one of the Gunnery petty officers behind him. It was crowded

with all three of them in her cabin, even with her bed stowed in the day position.

“Skipper,” her XO began quietly, “Petty Officer Lingle has family on Freeman’s. Every time we have come into this system, he has sent a personal message to her along with the first acknowledgement from the station. Lingle’s brother is the Station Manager and we’ve been through here three times in the last year, he *always* sends a message.”

After a slight pause, he continued “This time there was no such message.”

When Drake didn’t reply, Quetel continued a bit more hesitantly. “Normally, I wouldn’t bother you with this kind of thing, but Lingle here brought it to my attention and I thought you should know about it.”

Drake thought for a second and then addressed PO2 Lingle directly. “Has he ever missed a message before?” “No Sir.” Came the quick reply, “Josh always sends a message. My family has been in the station business for generations. The personal message is how we let each other know things are OK.”

Lingle was a short and slightly plump woman in her early twenties. Her dark hair shaved bare on the right side of her head and cut short on the left in a style that was common amongst some spacer tribes. She also had a small tattoo on the shaved side of her head. Drake knew that if she was more familiar with the spacer culture, she would have been able to tell Lingle’s family and clan affiliation from that tattoo.

Tapping her pen unconsciously on her lips, Drake said softly, “Mr. Quetel, please have the bridge perform a detailed passive scan of the station and surroundings. Let’s see if we can figure out what is going on.”

Turning to Lingle, she continued “Thank you for bringing this up. It may be nothing, but we will check it out.”

Lingle and the XO both looked relieved that Drake had chosen to listen to their rather unusual information.

As they left the cabin, Drake tried to return to her paperwork, but her mind wasn’t in it. Maybe this was nothing, maybe Lingle’s brother just forgot, or was too busy to send a message. But, if Lingle thought it important enough to bring it to the XO and the shy officer thought it was important enough to bring to her then she needed to trust her crew. Drake didn’t know if she really could trust them yet or not, she was too new. But everything she had seen about this crew said that they knew their business. If her XO thought it was important she was going to back him on this one and see how it played out.

As she forced herself back to her paperwork a quiet “Damn” escaped.

Another hour later, her private comm beeped.

“Captain, please come to the bridge when you have a moment” came the request from the duty pilot.

“On my way.”

As Drake entered the bridge, she quickly surveyed the scene. Normally only three of the six stations on the bridge would be occupied during this routine watch section. The pilot station was manned by the assistant pilot, Petty Officer Second Class Marissa Svegljanova and the Sensor station, which doubled as the Navigation station on this ship, was occupied by her Assault Shuttle pilot, Petty Officer Third Class Rene Chevien. The Engineering station was manned by Descharde or Deschance or whoever, but was located on the opposite side of the bridge, away from the other two stations. Judging by the expression on her pilot’s face, she had a feeling the other stations would be manned soon.

Svegljanova was a pretty young blonde with a strong eastern European accent that had a lilt in it that said it wasn’t Russian but from somewhere nearby. Chevien had the strong features and a slight accent that indicated he was from one of the French colonies. Drake thought she remembered reading that he was from Rusalka, but she could be wrong.

“Captain, Petty Officer Chevien has found something during the sensor sweep you ordered.” Svegljanova said nervously, interrupting Drake’s train of thought.

Drake didn’t miss that her young pilot had just passed the buck to the older, but lower rank petty officer. Turning to the Chevien, Drake asked “What have you found?”

After a pause that seemed a bit long to Drake, he replied, “Well sir, I’m not sure.

“You asked for a passive scan of the station and surroundings. Well, I didn’t find anything out of the ordinary. The Station has two docking port modules, each capable of docking two ships; two small craft are docked with the station: one is assigned to the station and the other is registered as a mining boat, both are Phaeton class small craft. There are no ships showing on sensors within a hundred thousand clicks of the station. But, I did find this.”

Chevien turned to the holo-display and without looking, pulled up a display of the 58 Eridani system. Zooming in to a region inside the belt about a quarter of a million kilometers from Freeman’s Station, Chevien centered the display on a dot that had routine information displayed next to it.

“Take a look at this sir.”

Chevien then overlaid the existing display of the ship with a wobbling line display and then a few seconds later with another line display. The lines were nothing alike.

Pointing to the first display he had brought up, Chevien explained “This is the passive sensor data on the ‘Ottoman Dream’. Her transponder says she’s a Medved Class Freighter out of Rana, headed for the Outer Veil world of Epsilon Reticuli, stopping here to refuel. This is her drive signature.”

Pointing to the lower second line, Chevien continued “This is what her drive signature is supposed to look like. As you can see, there are definite differences. Mostly, if you look here and here, there seems to be some kind of interference pattern that doesn’t make sense. I tried to figure out what kind of drive irregularity might cause this pattern, but I couldn’t find anything. Then I thought of this...”

A third display came up and Drake could clearly see that it was a much closer match to the original display, the actual drive of the Ottoman Dream, but still not an exact match.

“Here is how I got that signal.” Chevien manipulated the display again and the third line split into two other lines. The two lines were identical but shifted slightly out of phase with each other.

Drake reached out and touched the virtual display, bringing up the data on the two new lines. The display read “TY-07F Kaban Class Assault Frigate” and a string of information about the performance of that ship. The Kaban was an outdated design, but still fairly common out here on the frontier. They were used throughout the less settled parts of the subsector. Several shipyards on the Frontier maintained them for anyone with the money.

Drake turned to Chevien, “Are you telling me that we have two frigates pretending to be a freighter?”

With only a slight pause, and a quick glance to Svegljanova who ignored him, Chevien said “Yes Sir, I think that is what it is. They seem to be docked together, but using both ship’s drives, which is what is causing the interference. When I used the Signal Processing software the interference pattern disappeared. Whoever is doing this, knows what they’re doing. I had to do the analysis manually. Also, their flight path to the station doesn’t seem right. If they were here to refuel, they should have jumped in about where we did, not clear across the system.”

Drake turned back to the display, studying it for a minute. “So, we have two someones pretending to be a freighter. I wonder why?”

Shifting her attention to her pilot, Drake said “Petty Officer Svegljanova, you don’t seem to agree with Mr. Chevien. What do you think it going on?”

Svegljanova refused to meet her captain’s eyes and said, “Sir, I think it is just a sensor glitch and Petty Officer Chevien is overreacting. I trust the software.”

Chevien looked hurt, but unsurprised by the lack of support from the young petty officer, but to his credit kept his mouth shut and waited.

“Well, I agree that it could be either one. Personally, I have found that the SP software is very reliable.” Chevien flushed at this comment. “But, Chevien here makes a very good case. Neither solution is a perfect fit, but this isn’t a perfect universe.”

Both Petty Officers were quiet as Drake thought.

“Petty Officer Svegljanova how long until we reach Freeman’s Station and what is the ETA of the Ottoman Dream to the Station?”

Svegljanova fumbled slightly at her controls; obviously she was not ready for this request. But a few seconds later she had the data.

“Our ETA is 1.4 hours. The Ottoman Dream is 9.2 hours out.”

“Well, we can worry about the Ottoman later. We need to find out what is going on at the station first.”

Turning to Chevien, Drake said “Petty Officer Chevien, I want you to continue to watch the Ottoman and continue with your analysis. I want you to prove to me that it is either two frigates or a freighter with drive problems. Can you do that?”

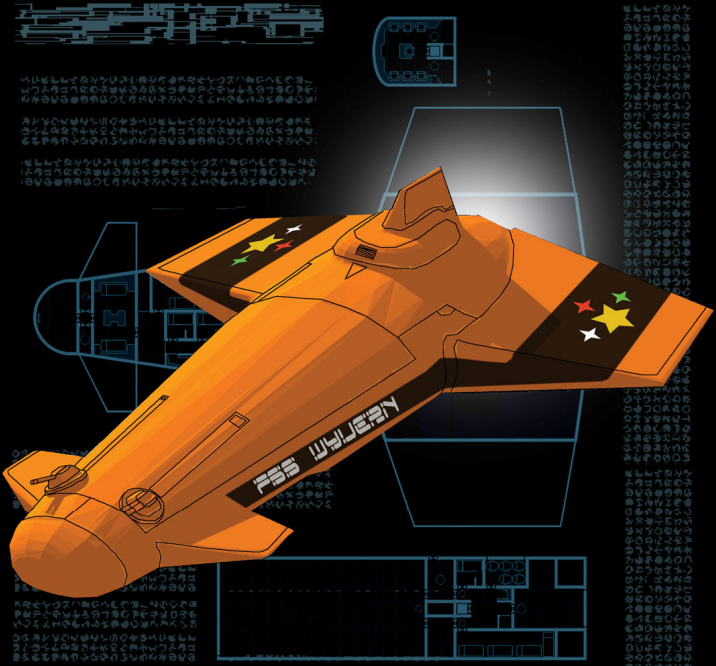
“Yes Sir!” came the quick response. Without asking permission, Chevien turned back to the Sensor Station and began working on the data.

Without a glance at the pilot, Drake left the bridge and headed back to her stateroom, “Double Damn.”

Drake was back in her small stateroom when the door chime sounded again. Sergeant Sattar Albani stood at attention. With a small smile, Drake invited the marine into her stateroom and motioned to the only other chair in the room. With an obvious sign of reluctance, Albani sat, but still managed to look like he was at attention. Albani had the swarthy complexion of someone born and raised in the Middle Eastern part of Earth. Drake remembered that Albani was from the Persian Republic, near Islamabad.

“Sergeant, you have been briefed on what little we know at the station? I would like your input. I want contingency plans. If there is something going on at the station, I don’t want to be stuck in dock when all hell breaks loose, but I don’t want to put the people on the station at risk either.”

“Ma’am, my team has been working on that and we think we have an idea...”



FSS WJJE:RIN
FEILONG CLASS 300 TON PATROL FRIGATE



CAPTAIN
KATHRYN
DRAKE



ENSIGN
HARPER
KILLIG



PILOT & X.O.
ARDEN
QUETEL



CORPORAL
JENNA
McCARTY



CHIEF
SHAMMATMAN
PREMPARI