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CIRQUA

TRAVELLER5™
21 CLASSIC-ERA ADVENTURES

TOURING THE MARCHES WITH A ONE-RING CIRCUS
A LOT LESS CLOWNING THAN EXPECTED!

By Gregory P. Lee
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Songbird & Her Warbirds



Barbarian Princess



Fteirle Ihtaci
Warrior Acrobat



Clowns, Jugglers
Drama and More!



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Player's Data

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For

Marc "Traveller" Miller's TRAVELLER5™

This Sourcebook and EPIC-Format Adventure
is based on the T5 Rules Set from
Far Future Enterprises

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IF YOU WOULDN'T STEAL IT FROM YOUR SWEET OLD GRANDMOTHER, WHY WOULD YOU STEAL IT FROM ME? — ARAMAIS P. LEE

A Tall Tale

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

I've misjumped once in my years, just once. It was during the Fourth Frontier War, en route to [Deleted Per Intelligence Regulations] with the [Deleted Per Intelligence Regulations] Fleet.

When the first star-fix came out of the astrogation sub-systems, I nearly soiled myself, and I started to cuss out the Great Crank Turner for her malignant sense of humor. I'll probably go straight to the Coldest Pit of Tartaros for some of the things I said right that minute.

Then I calmed down and got to work. Got everyone on board who could read a screen on the sensor feeds – densitometer of course, EM sensors for infrared and helium traces and even visible light. I had transferred a captured Zho "spotter" – some kind of clairvoyant trick – just before the jump, and wished I'd disobeyed orders, but I hadn't. So no Zho to help with a mind-trick.

We got lucky and then some. After a few hours of sweating – stinky, nasty fear sweat that would have made a Vargr twitch – we spotted a rogue. A comet that must have escaped from its primary, or maybe never had one. And it was close, closer that I had a right to want.

Well, we got within 1000 diameters within two days, so we had full maneuver. A good thing, because we needed a long, hard boost to match vectors. Matched, kissed down, drove some pitons and tied her down, put the marines out with their heavy guns. Fusion guns to melt ice. The chief engineer rigged some melting blankets, and then figured out how to re-direct the plasma vents, and that gave us water, too. Food and water, two things I like to get into my mouth now and again.

Every crew member got out there in shifts. Took us two weeks, two deaths and three leg-killing cases of frostbite to melt enough ice and refuel, but we did it. We got back out, boosted fast and hard to 100 diameters, and made the jump to where we belonged.

Not something I'm aching to try again.

But then again, once in a while... well, there's the part where I almost got distracted from the job at hand.

You see, someone else made the same mistake we made, eons ago. Misjumped near where we did, maybe, or maybe they intended to come out where they did. Or maybe the rogue was just on their vector and forced them out of jump.

They must have hit at truly high vector, because they put up a crater nearly half way through the ice ball. OK, maybe a kilometer deep. All that good old Newtonian physics is still worth knowing. Hit something hard and fast, generate lots of heat.

Whoever it was left little to show for themselves ... just some metallic particles that eventually contaminated the ice and made our filters work overtime. But they were particles of refined alloys better than anything an Imperial shipyard can put out, and there were other impurities that come with jump drives and such. And then some other ones that we didn't have the equipment to analyze.

I wanted to go to the bottom of the crater and see what might be under the ice, but there was no time, no spare people, and a leader needs to focus on the job at hand. Keeping alive. I might just yet dig out my logs, someday, pull out the astrogator's numbers, and try to find that one rogue again. Get in closer, and carry enough fuel for a return jump. Get some

extra payback for the arms and legs we lost.

Told you the astrogator did some fancy math, figured out when that massive iceberg got slammed. I guess I'd like to see what sort of damn fool sophonts were misjumping at high vector 800,000 years ago.

You read the number right. Five-hundred thousand years before the so-called Ancients.

No, no one else believes me, either.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1095.

Give him a fleet? Do you think me mad? Have you read any of his memoirs? He disobeyed orders and invaded the Sword Worlds. He openly threatened the Darrians when he worked with the Scouts. He claims to have had audiences with that fool Norris and goes on and on about cromburgers. And then there's that ridiculous fable about a misjump into deep space... He is a braggart at his best, a liar at his worst.

Put him somewhere he can do no harm, and then keep him away from me, sir, if you please. Make him liaison to the civilian shippers he loves so dearly. They will complain about anyone. We may as well hand them someone whose career cannot be made worse.

—Sector Admiral Frederick Santanocheev, Imperial Navy, late 1107.

“I Got the Job”

I got the job!

I'm going across the sector to Regina, and I'm filming it all. This is going to get me known all the way to Capitol... maybe all the way to Old Sol herself.

I'm the Chief Documentary Producer and Travellers' News Service stringer for this crazy idea that Sharurshid is backing. From what I hear, someone pushed my hiring. I know that the TNS wanted me elsewhere – some new police action near the Vargr Extents – but I guess they backed down. Maybe Sharurshid somehow got that blowhard old admiral, Lii – no, Lee, an old-fashioned Solomani spelling - to push someone around.

It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter how I got the job. I have the job. I admit, I'm not sure that I'm at all that interested in producing video after video of copyright-protection-creating documentaries of actual performances. There will be thousands of those. I think that will get pretty boring after a while, but I can leave most of that to robots and maybe an intern or two. No, on second thought, interns aren't much use.

But that's not the real point. The real point is that I'll be going all the way from Rhylanor to Regina without getting shot at. I have the right to produce an independent documentary from my material, so there'll be some extra money apart from salary. I'll be on-hand for everything from the boring rehearsals to the snafus and bad days, and I'll get to know some of the bigger artists in the Spinward Marches. Like that “Gilgamesh” actor, Trouth Mencken.

I'm glad I'm wearing my set up, because I was even allowed to record the contract talks on board *Cirque*. Andii herself gave me a tour.

[Cut Here. Skip Part of Personal Tour]

Capatin Houke walked me through to the auxiliaries they had converted. You know Andii from my prior documentary on the wounded vets of the Battle of Rhylanor. She lost her legs in using her tender's jump drive against a much larger *Zho* vessel — made it a jump bomb. Cracked the *Zho* in two. Something about the exposure to jump space radiation has made it impossible for the docs to regenerate her legs, so she uses robotics sometimes. More often, she just wears grav kneecaps and zips around, but those aren't much use when you're under spin instead of artificial gravity.

[Cut here. Skip part of description of platoon lander.]

The big central area has been cleared out to be used for onboard rehearsals, extra space, and taping. I'll be using that space to tape some of the other material they'll be putting together, like a new version of that creaky old Geezer Thespian's play about conquering death or whatever it was. “Gilgamesh Re-killed,” or some bad idea. There's an old Earth-type rock band that will be putting on shows between the circus performances, and I'll record a lot of their work for music videos. I can't say I like the stuff, it's much too loud and headbanging and all filled with drums and nasty amplified string instruments.

It's quite a job, and my credits will be all over the place by the time I'm done. Frankly, this is better exposure than the war, because with any luck there won't be any deaths. No deaths, that's the way. Unless it's that creepy old geezer Trouth.

[Cut here. Skip part of description of BT1.]

Whoever worked on this whole design had a fetish for flying saucers. But I suppose it fits, as the promotional material Andii gave me says that old, old circus performances happened in round arenas, under tents.

We also have a proper tent, based on very, very old sketches and writings from as far back as the 21st century in the old Solomani reckoning. Performances will happen in that tent when it can be set up, whether under real atmosphere in the big dome or any such thing. But there will be

a few worlds, even just a few places on those worlds, where it just be easier to keep the performances inside Big Top One.

Anyway, that was it. Andii and I shook on it and she had that quiet guy who hangs out with her, Bertii, send the contract over to my agent for a final review. My agent uses a legal AI, a good thing, since the contract is 500 pages long. I don't know what is with that Bertii fellow, he looks like he could play a *Zho* if he was just the proper height. But he's not.

Anyway, we shook hands and I went back out of *Cirque* through the forward cargo locks. Sharurshid has some influence. *Cirque* is docked right on the concourse segment of the Old Station. I went to the lock and down to the big observation café deck.

The Old Station doesn't really take my breath away too often. I've seen a few stations by now, and the inside of a lot of other vessels. Go figure, spin a giant cartwheel and the people inside stick to the outside deck, same as they stick to a grav plate that costs more and eats power all the time. Terrace up a big curved tube, and you get a deep valley that lets you plant and grow and jump up and down and all that. No, there's nothing all that special about Old Station's concourse segment, until you look at all of the different spacers in the distance, and the offices and residences built up around the central cable and the other cables, and the cable cars running, and the louvers angling the sunlight from the reflectors outside. Once in a while, it catches your breath when you see it, the way it did the first time you stepped through an airlock. For me, this is one of those times. I looked right and left, and I saw all of those people walking around, and running, and talking, and trying get each other interested in all sorts of things... that's the beauty of getting out of the old world.

And then I noticed, away on a corner near the corner edge of the café, a batch of *Zhos*. Real *Zhos*, acting like they had a right to be there. A couple of them even had the head wraps and straight-collar jackets. They also had official patches and ID packs right out to be seen, so they must've been diplomats. Frankly, I can't see why a *Zho* would come to Rhylanor unless he was a diplomat, and maybe not even then. It was odd, as if they were actually watching who was going in and out of the lock behind me. As if they were interested in what was going on with *Cirque*. That was probably just foolishness on my part, thinking that. Not a lot of *Zhos* are likely to really enjoy the circus, I suspect.

But that's okay, because not a lot of good citizens like *Zhos*. They don't want to sit next to them at a show. While I was starting down the steps to the Concourse “ground level,” I saw a couple of women with something round and red in their hands. Fruits, I thought. I looked at my recordings afterward and cross-referenced, and discovered that the red fruits were just old-fashioned tomatoes, but they were a bit ripe. Well, a lot ripe. Rotten, really. Squishy, nasty, oozing.

Those women started tossing the tomatoes at the *Zhos*. I scrambled away, because I don't really much want my video to be subpoenaed as evidence in a court, but I hear that station security ignored it at first, too. They didn't come in until a computer alerted the station manager and got him dispatching Marines because the *Zhos* always were screaming for help. Didn't want to use their mind-control techniques, I guess, there's a new treaty, after all. I guess station security didn't want to see the tomatoes being thrown, either, so it was up to the Marines to bail out the *Zhos*.

Bet the Marines weren't all that happy to bail those *Zhos* out, either.

You know, I just noticed something in the video. Those women – there were three of them – had “*Cirque des Sirkas*” patches on their coveralls. I'd probably better delete that bit. I don't want anyone charged with assaulting a diplomat. A damned *Zho* diplomat especially.

Setting the Stage

Introduction

This campaign is set entirely in the Spinward Marches, a vibrant frontier sector of the Imperium. The campaign assumes that the referee will have some familiarity with the Official Traveller Universe (“OTU”) or will obtain it. While no one supplement or prior writing is essential, the referee would do well to obtain the Classic Traveller materials on CD-ROM from Far Future Enterprises.

The campaign begins near the end of 1110 at Rhyllanor, an important subsector capitol of the Marches. It proceeds to visit numerous worlds in the Marches, and ends at Regina, another subsector capitol that is growing more important to the Imperium. The players are expected to travel with the vessel *Cirque* as ship’s crew, performers, or other support staff of *Cirque des Sirkas*, LLC.

Well-developed characters are important in this campaign. While it can be played as a simple set of “point-and-shoot” incidents, good characters drive good play. A number of prepared characters have been provided that can be adopted by the players or used by the referee for adoption by the players, or at least for the referee to understand. These characters have motives and histories that have the potential to lead to conflicts with each other as well as outside forces. This includes down-time during a jump, so the Referee should not necessarily speed through what could be a rich source of character interaction.

If players roll their own new characters, Imperial citizens — Entertainers and Fifth Frontier War military veterans — are highly desirable. The flexibility of the T5 character generation system permits characters to begin on one career track and move to another. It also permits the assumption that Entertainers were exposed to the Fifth Frontier War, whether as civilian militia at Rhyllanor’s Old Station, reporters (“Authors”) embedded with military units, or entertainers on traditional “morale boosting” tours.

The Classic Era: A Golden Age

The “Classic Era” of Traveller begins in 1105. Published Traveller adventures and materials set in that era recount the “canon” history of the Spinward Marches in some detail from that date. Official maps of the Spinward Marches, the Imperium and its neighbors can be downloaded from the Traveller Map online. The data there includes official basic planetary information effective as of 1105, most of which remains accurate in 1110.

The Fifth Frontier War

This campaign begins several years after the end of the Fifth Frontier War. However, tensions remain high. Veterans are still healing, and fleets remain on alert. The Zhodani, seen as the chief aggressors of the Outworld Coalition (the Zhodani Consulate, the Sword Worlds, and various Vargr polities) attacked the Marches without warning or provocation in 1107.

At the outset of the war, Imperial forces were deployed ineffectively. The Zhodani were able to push almost all of the way to Rhyllanor before Duke Norris of Regina (missing and thought to be ill, dead, or deposed) returned from a daring mission to retrieve a lost Imperial Warrant authorizing him to lead the Marches. On his return, he ousted Sector Admiral Frederick Santanocheev and took personal command of the Imperial forces.

***Cirque* is an old Terran (French) word for circle or circus, and implies something more than the lowest grade of itinerant performers. *Sirk* (proper plural, *sirka*, improperly pluralized in Anglic as *sirks* or *sirkas*) is a Vilani word meaning “star.” Of interest, a close homophone is T'sirk, a Zhodani word meaning literally, "sand soaked with blood after a set duel," and carries a strong connotation condemning unnecessary bloodshed as insanity.**

Based on both Zhodani fleet movements and sources in Naval Intelligence, Norris deduced that the Zhodani goal was Rhyllanor, though not necessarily why that was their goal. Most strategists have concluded that the Zhodani were simply executing the divide-and-conquer plans of the Outworld Coalition (Zhodani, Vargr, and the Sword Worlds). Others look to Rhyllanor’s high technology basis. A few overly imaginative military analysts have speculated that the Zhodani sought to use an Ancient complex on Rhyllanor, speculation that has been met with justified derision.

For Norris, it was enough that the Zhodani military desperately fought to get to Rhyllanor. Norris committed forces, ships and war materiel to the defense of Rhyllanor. He cut the Zhodani supply lines and retreat routes, already stretched across forty parsecs of Imperial space. His tactical sense deployed Imperial forces where they would be most useful.

Thanks to Norris’s actions, not one Zhodani teleport-trooper or landing craft reached Rhyllanor’s atmosphere, much less the surface. Ship-to-ship combat won the day, costing both fleets dearly many vessels and crews. The Zhodani were forced to flee. Their retreat was intercepted at Calit (Spinward Marches 1515) and their fleet sustained such devastating losses that the Consulate’s government is believed to be undergoing significant “internal readjustment”

In the end, the Zhodani made no significant territorial gains despite their best military efforts. Zhodani allies fared no better.

The Sword World Confederation, a militaristic human polity, lost control of a number of worlds. As this campaign begins, the Imperium is building up a new “client-state,” the Border Worlds, in part of the Sword Worlds. As one might expect, the remaining Sword Worlds are equally determined to regain their territory and are already regrouping as they plot to recover their territorial losses.

The various and changeable Vargr polities were also pushed back. The Vargr, intelligent beings created by the Ancients from Terran canine stock, are for the most part back behind their original lines.

The Aftermath of War

The Imperial Spinward Marches are slowly returning to normalcy. Some systems have been especially hard hit (including Rhyllanor, despite the Zhodani failure to land on the mainworld). Others were virtually untouched. Many, many combatants on both sides have been seriously injured. Despite modern medicine and biotechnology, some veterans have permanent injuries, both physical and psychological. Civilians have also been affected to one degree or another.

The Sword Worlds are already working to regain the territory lost during the war. However, they cannot currently do this by force. Instead,

Cirque

their agents in the Imperium and the Border Worlds are committed to guerilla tactics bordering on terrorism. It is safe to say that Sword Worlds agents and local supporters may be found on any Imperial world within several parsecs of the pre-war border with the Imperium. Cirque des Sirkas plans to visit several of these worlds.

The Zhodani defeat resulted in the fall of the Consulate's militaristic governing coalition. The Consulate now faces internal struggles for control. Its various agents still in the Marches find themselves partially or entirely cut off from their leadership. Some agents will continue their information-gathering and their quiet support of underground Psionic Institutes. Others will flail about, taking action as they see fit. A few, loyal to the Consulate, will try to keep order in the "ranks." Thus, while Cirque des Sirkas will not visit any Zhodani world, some agents will be encountered.

Aliens and Uplifts in Traveller

The Traveller Canon includes numerous aliens (non-human sophonts such as the Aslan), prehistorically transplanted Terran humans (such as the Zhodani and Vilani, moved and then used by the Ancients hundreds of thousands of years ago) and "uplifts," sophonts created from non- or semi-sentient species (the Vargr, uplifted from Terran canine stock by the Ancients; Dolphins and Ursa, uplifted by the Solomani to aid the independent Terran push to the stars). Examples of all these species will be met along the way. All are detailed in various other Canon publications. In general, the referee should become most familiar with several.

Zhodani: Humanoid stock transplanted from Terra to Zdhant over 300,000 years ago. The Ancients, a little-understood high-tech society, used these humans in their works. The Ancients' War left the Zhodani and other humans scattered across space free to build their own societies. The Zhodani embrace psionic science and practice. Psionically trained individuals are highly prized, and can rise into the nobility. The Zhodani actively search out non-conformists in their midst and "treat" them to resolve their counter-productive issues. The Zhodani Consulate and the Imperium are hostile toward one another; five Frontier Wars have been fought in the Spinward Marches. The stereotypical Zhodani is almost two meters tall and slender, but many other norms can be found. The Zhodani are considered a "Major" race, and have been in space for thousands of years.

Vilani: Like the Zhodani, the Vilani are descended from humanoid stock transplanted from Terra over 300,000 years ago. These were taken to Vland, a world with a biological base which is not entirely supportive of human life. When the Vilani were abandoned at the end of the Ancients' ascendancy, they developed their own methods of preparing food from the local biological sources. As a result, Vilani food is considered exotic by most other races.

Solomani: Humans of more recent Terran stock. Many humans in the Spinward Marches (including the Sword Worlders) are of Solomani stock. However, this is more of an epithet than a compliment to some, as "Solomani" more accurately refers to a militant interstellar state and movement, originally from the Sol system, which espouses Terran superiority and control over humans throughout space. The Sol system itself is currently a member of the Third Imperium.

Sword Worlders: Humans of clearly Terran descent who will be encountered in the latter half of Cirque's travels. Sometimes derided as "Vikings," they are not considered an alien race, but are militant non-Imperial nationality in the Spinward Marches.

Aslan: Humanoid sophonts independently evolved on Ksuyu from pouncer/carnivore stock. The Terrans who originally encountered the Aslan saw a resemblance to Terran feline stock, but this is inaccurate; they are more similar to arboreal primates. They have a very structured sense of honor, and a rigid dichotomy between male and female roles. In essence, the males, who can be as tall as two (2) meters, explore and fight, and are given the public role of control over their clans and other subgroups. The smaller females tend toward administrative roles (males often cannot comprehend "money") and scientific roles. Aslan have an "internal clock" of about 36 hours, which may affect their function if they are forced to maintain 24-hour days for an extended period.

Vargr: Sophonts genetically engineered by the Ancients from Terran canine stock. Like other Terran transplants, they were abandoned as a result of the Ancients' War. They also eventually developed their own society and eventually came to space (and, coincidentally, within approximately the same general era as the Aslan and various Human subspecies). Vargr tend to shift-

"Timeline for the Fifth Frontier War" Reprinted from "The Spinward Marches Campaign."

186-1107	Zhodani battle fleets appear at Ruie (1809).
187-1107	Zhodani declaration of war delivered.
201-1107	Imperium begins evacuation of Regina (1910) in anticipation of Zhodani invasion.
204-1107	Imperium announces presumed state of war with Sword Worlds. Lanth (1719) under attack. Efate (1705) under Zhodani siege.
206-1107	Detached Imperial Scouts called up.
210-1107	Regina (1910) reports no invasion to date.
212-1107	Duke Norris of Regina reported ill or deposed.
214-1107	Heavy fighting takes place at Efate (1705) and Louzy (1604).
243-1107	Serious guerrilla attacks by Ine Givar at Equus (2417), Meleto (2827), and Bendor (2336).
035-1108	Yorbund (2303) taken by Vargr.
036-1108	Ruby (1005), Emerald (1006), and Lysen (1307) taken by Zhodani.
037-1108	Jewell (1106) and Kinorb (2202) continuing to resist.
097-1108	Zhodani raiding fleet strikes Inthe (2410); cripples massing Imperial fleet.
168-1108	Sword Worlds troops invade Saurus (1520).
229-1108	Zhodani fleet strikes Boughene (1904).
281-1108	Imperial fleet strike against Lysen (1307)
302-1108	Imperial and Zhodani fleets clash at Tremous Dex (1311).
338-1108	Heya (2402) and Beck's World (2204) capitulate to Vargr invasion fleets.
362-1108	Miriam (1315) occupied by Zhodani fleet. Calit (1515) under attack.
021-1109	Ghandi (1815) attacked by Zhodani fleet and forces including the Zhodani Consular Guard.
029-1109	Imperial operations to relieve Efate fail.
059-1109	Couriers from Jewell (1106) report the world continues to hold out.
083-1109	Imperial fleets retake Yorbund (2303). Operations continue against Heya (2402).
096-1109	Sword Worlds forces driven off Lanth (1719).
122-1109	Vargr battle fleet destroyed off Dentus (2201).
128-1109	Imperial forces raid Ninjar (0608).
132-1109	Admiral Santanocheev relieved and replaced by Norris, Duke of Regina.
147-1109	Imperial forces retake Calit (1515).
231-1109	Battle of Rhylanor (2716).
241-1109	Sword World forces expelled from Lanth subsector.
252-1109	Vargr forces surrender; negotiate separate peace.
348-1109	Zhodani fleet fleeing Battle of Rhylanor (2716) ambushed at Calit (1515) and severely mauled.
004-1110	Arden (1011) discards neutrality and allies with Imperium.
023-1110	Operations to relieve Jewell 1106) begin. Lysen (1307) retaken.
099-1110	Armistice declared effective 120-1110.

Cirque

ing alliances; an individual's Charisma is a measure of his or her ability to gain followers. Vargr are seen as pirates, thieves and general pests by many Imperial humans.

Ursa: Sophonts genetically engineered by early Solomani from Terran "bear" stock. When this phase of Solomani arrogance came to an end, attempts were made to destroy the Ursa. Some Ursa escaped and ensured their racial survival. At least one small enclave is found in the Domain of Deneb. Ursa are rare in the Spinward Marches.

Dolphins: Sophonts genetically engineered by early Solomani from Terran "dolphin" stock. Dolphins are often found in the seas of habitable human worlds. Some have taken service in the Imperial military, and have specialized gear designed for them.

Useful Supplements and Material

The Traveller Map (www.travellermat.com) is Canon unless otherwise stated. The Referee can and should use this as a reference, and urge the players to do so. All basic world data found in this adventure starts with that version of The Spinward Marches map. However, some data has changed as a result of the war; those changes are discussed in text.

Rob Eaglestone's website The Sharakkannik Collection has useful tools based on the T5 rules, including an Animal Encounter Maker, Armor and Weapons Maker, a "Task Roller" which calculates combat rolls for multiple characters, a T5 Ship Maker, and examples of T5 ships "ported" from previous versions of Traveller. As publication closes, he is working on a program to assist in character generation (though Craig Glesner does a lovely and personalized job of that).

Other Internet sources should be used only with caution. In this Campaign, MY "Head Canon" is final.

Andii Houke (NPC)

The central Imperial veteran is Andii Houke (an NPC), who lost both of her legs below the knees. Houke, now on disability retirement, is determined to make her new dream a reality: she will bring live entertainment from Rhyllanor all the way to Regina. Her crew and some of the entertainers they transport will be veterans like herself.

Andii's goal is to meet and honor Duke Norris, and to help wounded and disabled Imperial veterans of the Fifth Frontier War recover and make new lives. Promotional material used to secure grants is reasonably accurate:

"Captain Andii" Houke is an aficionado of the arts, especially the oldest of performance arts. Having read widely on the old "circle" of performance and on itinerant performance arts like "vaudeville," Captain Andii has brought together the finest Terran-style acts and select local acts in a unique mix that is guaranteed to entertain both young and old. She also keeps an eye out for local talent that may be invited to join her troupe as they work toward their ultimate goal: playing before Duke Norris' Court on Holiday. As noted above, Andii is a double-amputee.

Bertii Jones (NPC)

Bertii Jones is Andii's husband and second-in-command. Bertii was a merchant. During the war, he served on one of the few Sharurshid vessels actually owned by the corporation (Sharurshid relies heavily on contract shipping with other lines and with independent traders). His liner functioned as a medical evacuation ship, and was present during the critical weeks of the Battle of Rhyllanor. Bertii met Andii when she was nearly dead due to unprotected exposure to jump-space as a result of her heroics in the battle. They were quick to become inseparable.

U'ailli (Potential PC)

U'ailli is an Aslan whose clan has lands inside Imperial space. She is considered "Imperialized" by some, having occasionally stepped outside of traditional female roles. She is third in command, and provides both legal and business acumen to the ship and the circus. She met Bertii while a crewman on the same liner, before the outbreak of the war. The liner was behind the lines at Efate when the Zhodani fired the first shots of the war. Aramais P. Lee was a passenger, and took command; she accepted his authority and directed fire control. The liner was able to break away

from several auxiliaries, and was among the first to bring the news of the attack deeper into the Spinward Marches.

Guillaume Labarenu (NPC)

A skilled juggler and comedian, Labarenu is also an investor in the vessel *Cirque*. He performs in the circus itself, and also tapes a nightly commentary on the news of the day. Labarenu's costume includes an old Solomani top hat and cravat. He is reputed to enjoy whiskey, women, and song. He often jokes that he is not a lawyer "because I never could manage to pass a bar." He claims (convincingly) to dislike working with animals and children. The Small Animal Trainer watches him closely when the seed-spitter joins Labarenu in the ring.

Prior to *Cirque, des Sirkas*, Labarenu's fame spread through Marches. The war cemented his popularity with the masses. After Regina was attacked and Duke Norris disappeared, his nightly material often included a "Where's Norris?" segment, poking fun at the various inconclusive news stories. Norris was depicted sunning himself on the beach, playing various children's games, humiliated by the antics of the Pink Beaker (a children's cartoon character), hiding under tables, and in many other undignified poses.

When Norris returned and announced that he was taking command of all war efforts under an Imperial Warrant, the material continued to be critical only briefly. As his strategies began to succeed, Labarenu wrote material showing Norris personally defeating stereotypical Zhodani at everything from Vilani Parcheesi to bare-handed brawling; the humiliating material was deflected onto former Sector Admiral Santanochchev and others.

Aramais P. Lee (NPC)

Aramais P. Lee is a minor celebrity in the Domain of Deneb. He has travelled widely in his career. His memoirs and comments about his travels have found their way into an ever-expanding book, *Diaries and Dialogues*. A copy of the most recent edition can be found in *Cirque's* computer library, as U'ailli considers Lee a positive influence in her standing with Sharurshid.

What follows can be considered accurate information. Any other information should be weighed with a very large grain of salt. Some of his claims are deemed outright lies, such as: that he once located the *Kinunir*; has hunted with Duke Norris; brought a ship back from a deep-space misjump by locating an icy interstellar rogue world; evaded a Zhodani telepath's mind-probing during the Fourth Frontier War; won at hide-and-seek with a Vargr pirate-princess on board her hijacked *Ringmaster*-class ship, thus securing the release of a young noble; and definitively identified the best cromburger joint in all of the Spinward Marches.

Aramais mis-spent his youth and spent quite a bit of time causing trouble and in juvenile detention. He was finally offered deal by a judge: join the Navy or go into adult prison. He took the Navy.

Though enlisted, he was brevetted to Ensign when half of the crew was struck down by disease during a vital mission. He was promoted to Sublieutenant for further action.

Aramais then found himself assigned to piracy patrol and a special mission. He disliked Vargr by the time he was done.

Lee was then sent to Corridor where he successfully dealt with more Vargr issues. His Knighthood (formally awarded in Mustering) was awarded as a result of his actions against a significant pirate incursion. However, he was "selected" to work with the Scouts on a mission in the Spinward Marches (exiled away from Corridor Fleet after cussing out an Admiral) as Naval Liaison to a Scout task force dealing with something or other.

He was then trained in ordillery in preparation for assignment to the new *Ringmaster*-class and tested several of the new auxiliaries. Thereafter, he was assigned to command of the *Marigold*, a *Ringmaster*-class vessel. The task force in which he was assigned handled several battles and then a siege in a series of flare-ups near the Sword Worlds.

The outbreak of the Fourth Frontier War found Lee commanding a small task force of Ringmasters carrying fighter strike forces. Aramais was involved in significant combat.

Lee was finally promoted to Admiral. He commanded the 23rd Fleet in his last two years. During that time, he took part of the 23rd Fleet

on an unauthorized (and successful) mission to retrieve an IN vessel accused of spying in Sword World territory. Upon his return, he was very clearly ordered to stay put and stay on patrol. He was in conflict with the Sector Admiral throughout the remainder of the term. Disciplined for expressing negative opinions of the Sector Admiral in logs, he retired under pressure. Based on his service and knowledge of the class, he negotiated an arrangement to work with Scouts towards adaptation of *Ringmaster* class to exploration purposes.

While working on board the first Scout use of the *Ringmaster* class (as a predecessor to the *Donosev*), Aramais developed typical survey skills. His basic writing also improved as his log style was made “open to opine.”

In a second term with the IISS, Aramais was focused more on contact and diplomacy. By the end of the Term he had made contacts with Sharurshid and enemies within the Scout Service. Sometimes his diplomacy was less than diplomatic, as when a Darrian diplomat annoyed him and hinted that the Star Trigger made the Darrian Confederation impervious. Aramais untruthfully advised the Darrian that a coordinated nuclear orbital strike plan had been drawn up “and ships are always moving” to counter the threat. “Our intelligence is that twenty radioactive cinders are just as uninhabitable as twenty planets with their stars blown up. So tell me, are you a betting man?” While the bluff re-energized stalled negotiations, the Scouts and Imperial diplomats thought his interruption inappropriate. They suggested he retire. As this threat cleared the way for certain Sharurshid plans to go forward, Sharurshid offered a “Golden Lifeboat.” Aramais accepted.

Lee was made a Senior Captain in Sharurshid by contract. However, his role was not in direct command, but rather in negotiating long term contracts and strategy. Despite this he sometimes annoyed the real captains of the vessels on which he traveled by conducting surprise inspections, taking watches, and otherwise being arrogant and bossy. Lee started on anagathic treatments, as part of his overall compensation package. He was also regularly recorded for Life Insurance.

Lee was on a vessel leaving Efate when the Zhodani surprise attack began. He took over command of the Sharurshid vessel on which he was travelling and fought through to Jump range, then left Efate. He volunteered to reactivate his commission, hoping to command in battle. He was accepted, and ordered to “take charge of the Merchant Marine and other quasi-military resources, get us shipping lines.” Though his commission was active, his work remained in the merchants. Numerous communiquees to Santanocheev changed nothing.

When Norris resurfaced with his Warrant, Lee tried a less angry approach. Norris sent a terse response: “Continue to successfully muster civilian assets. Your assignment will not change. In the future, communicate only through the chain of command.” Lee redoubled his efforts, bringing in ships from all of the major companies within the Marches. Norris may be the only superior who obtained absolute cooperation from Lee.

With the war over, Lee has returned to his role for Sharurshid. He is working on contacts in the Border Worlds, and is expected to also further Imperial interests as a result.

Admiral Lee’s career path says much about him. He is a self-promoter, talker, carouser, and loose missile rack in an ordnance bay, likely to result in unexpected explosions. This has resulted in his being at least temporarily useful to several organizations, and sometimes in a fair amount of trouble. At the same time, he is practical, and has made things happen on a number of occasions.

Aramais provides strong opinions, information and hints about worlds, and even disinformation. He’s a leader and Fourth Frontier War hero in his own right, but also a finagler, a buttinsky, a brilliant self-promoter, and a loose cannon.

Fortunately, he is **not** aboard *Cirque*, nor part of the circus.

Common Abbreviations and Terms

Abbreviations include:

- IISS: Imperial Interstellar Scout Service
- IN: Imperial Navy
- NPC: Non-Player Character
- PC: Player Character

Huscarles: Personal military of an Imperial Noble, often also available to the Imperium.

Credits and Acknowledgments

Marc “Traveller” Miller created the system. He also provided invaluable advice on the Kickstarter and other phases. He helped me shape the plans for this supplement, encouraging me to produce something larger than I originally intended.

Rob Eaglestone encouraged me, and I suspect talked me up with Marc Miller. More importantly, he understood the new T5 ship building system. The ships in this supplement are his designs. The concept and design for *Cirque* herself was necessary to saying that this adventure could be done. It didn’t turn out exactly as originally envisioned, and indeed turned out much better.

Don McKinney has been vocal about Canon throughout this process. I learned early and often to ask, “Don, would this be inconsistent with Canon?” I have also used various of his references, including his continued work on the Second Survey data, his Spinward Marches Canon file, his Traveller Integrated Timeline, and as noted elsewhere, his Mongoose Traveller Alien Module 4: Zhodani. His advice on the choices of Canonical sources have been very informative and helpful. He has forced me to rewrite in places, and in one case, I have clearly labeled as “not necessarily the final or Canonical answer” (my speculations on how to prevent Life Insurance cloning from massively disrupting the Official Traveller Universe timeline). He has also repeatedly refused compensation for this role, something I will deal with at some point, in some way. You have been warned, Donald.

Tim Osborne is the sole illustrator of this supplement. He started in on the ship concepts, figuring things out from deck plans and descriptions, and going back and forth with me over design. His work and willingness to take my fidgeting got me started. He then auditioned for the job of drawing people, and worked those out. He had a sense of what circus is and could be — the clown on a flying guppy is solely and completely his idea. He went on to insist that I not use tried-and-true sketches of classic traveler animals, coming up with new ones for the bestiary section. Two new animals, the duranthe and the fan lizard, are his creations, “statted out” more from his pictures than any original idea. Similarly, his art has added to the description of the vreeper.

Craig A. Glesner has created more characters for this supplement than have I. He took ideas, some character sheets, my character descriptions and returned well-annotated characters that are consistent with T5. Many of the other characters in this supplement were created from simple requests, like “I need a bunch of gunners and pilots and such for *Cirque*.” He went from being a die-roller to a contributing author very quickly.

Bill Rutherford has become a fast-turnaround proofreader. His proofreading is excellent, and possibly even implemented by me. He has done more than critique my “legalistic over-use of quotation marks” and other typing and grammar issues; he’s pointed out ideas that fell flat and could be improved.

Lisa Evans also proofread and provided important suggestions as we came up to the end of the road. Her experience with role-playing and role-playing materials was a great boon. She also has no concern about bruising my ego, necessary in a proofreader. She also knows her medieval needlework and fabric history.

Roger Howe performed a final “blind read,” catching a few more typos and pointing out some things requiring fixing. No one else noticed that BT3 carries enough fuel for an extra Jump-1, for example.

Jim Kundert, Michael Morgan, David Smart, Andrea Vallance, the mysterious RH and others in the Traveller community have provided ideas from time to time, all of which have helped this come together. If your name isn’t there, it’s my tired mind, not an intentional slight.

Loren Wiseman and **Steve Jackson Games** have also been gracious, as has Mongoose Games and, of course, **Fat Future Enterprises**.

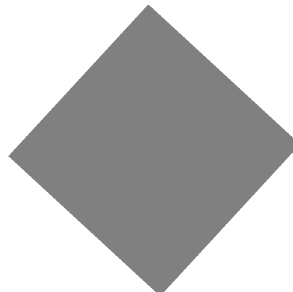
Mario Butter provided the gift of bandwidth. **ProFantasy Software’s Campaign Cartographer** with the *Cosmographer* Add-On made it possible for me, lacking a lick of artistic talent, to produce the deck plans, maps, and route diagrams found in these pages.

All of the **Kickstarter Backers** have made this financially possible, and become partners along the way. If you have somehow been missed in the Main Concourse list of stores, I sincerely apologize.

Fran V. Hutton Lee, my wife, jumped in and helped in both small and large ways. Backers’ names appear in connection with a Main Concourse store because she did the work. She’s also handled numerous other tasks. This book is here because she encourages my nerdish flights of fancy, and has even participated.

Heleen Lee, my mother, gave me an appreciation of the circus. **Benjamin Pew** and others play-tested some episodes.

- Whole Tour Backers**
- Peter L.S. Trevor**
 - Ernest Rowland**
 - Mitch Hirz**
 - Ian Jukes**
 - Dave Finnamore**
 - Dave Hunter**
 - Constantin Terton**
 - Peter Hadden**
 - Carey James Beeston**
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 - Dennis Appell**
 - Jim Moss**
 - Bill Rutherford**
 - Kevin C. Bell**
 - William Self**
 - John Berry**
 - Bill Cobb**
 - Greg Matyola**



Program Notes: *Cirque*, Her Auxiliaries and Other Vessels

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

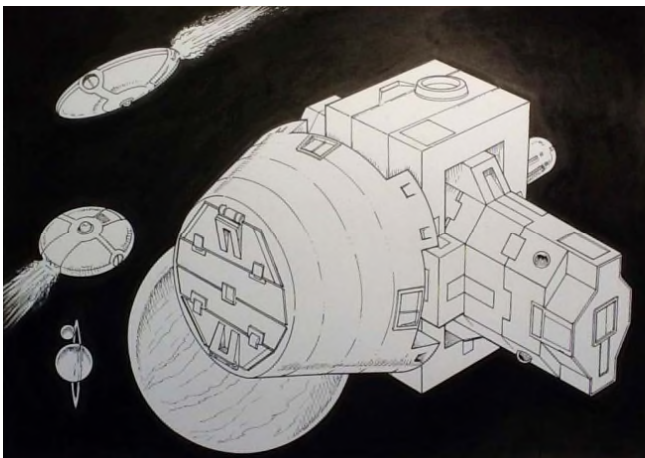
The Ringmaster class? Oh, how can I forget? I handled a few of them when they first undocked from the shipyard frames. A silly name, really. The original design contracts called for a big, circular docking ring, but that sort of thing would never have handled the stresses. Once a name gets attached, though — well, the Navy can be awfully stubborn about those things.

I assigned a few troublemakers to the Bacfuds quarters in my day. That was one of the small things that made those ships odd.

But they're good ships. Not a lot of thrust, but good. Some of the original hulls are still in service. And the blueprints are still in shipyard databanks all along the Marches. Some of the bigger mercenary outfits buy them. Wouldn't mind having one or two for Sharurshid — carry a lot of cargo and still whip any Vargr scum who come sniffin'.

You could have a lot of fun with a good crew, you know, crack pilots and engineers. Three landers and a fuel-sucker could run maneuver in tandem, push some real agility out of the jumpship while they were linked. You plow out of your jump, dodge around like crazy as you come in, launch the auxiliaries, cover and guide 'em downhill until you need to part ways. Everyone covers everyone else.

Different, of course, when the cleats are carrying frames of fighters.



You let the fighters loose to get where they have to get. They're pulling more Gs than you, so they're keeping the bad guys distracted — and you can pack some punches with the particle accelerator.

Bringing in a big artillery can? One rack of fighters for defense, and the big fuel saucer. Put the can in polar orbit or an angle, and you can pound anything needed. Meanwhile, you've got extra boost to maneuver protectively and take on anything coming from above, below, either side. Your fighters are there, too, covering you. Meanwhile, the artillery can drops rocks and boomers on just about anything below.

Sure, we've got a lot of better stuff at this point. The Ringmaster's just proved the concept all over again, showed that a versatile ship in the right place is better than the perfect design three parsecs away. That's why the really big merc units keep one or two Ringmasters and a whole batch of their auxiliaries around. Cost-effective versatility.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

Rob Eaglestone's ship specifications for all vessels follow the written descriptions. Deck Plans are provided for *Cirque* and her auxiliaries.

Welcome Home

The players' home for the run of the show is *Cirque* and her auxiliaries. Between planets, and sometimes on planets, they will have their bunks, bunkmates, and activities. It is not enough that the referee has plenty of characters with whom to work. The characters need their home base, with all its comforts and conflicts, from which they escape when they come to a planet and to which they can retreat when an adventure is over.

Though the total tonnage renders her an Adventure-Class Ship ("ACS"), *Cirque* and her auxiliaries are repurposed military vessels. *Cirque* herself is a small, multi-purpose "jump tender" of the Ringmaster Class originally put into service by the Imperial Navy before the Fourth Frontier War. Vessels of this class have since been used by the IISS (the Imperial Scouts) for survey and exploration, though they are now mostly supplanted by the purpose-designed Donosev-class scout. Adm. Aramais P. Lee (Ret.) has been connected to the class, both in his Naval career and post-Naval Scout contracting.

Vessels of this design are still constructed at some shipyards, though their role has evolved. They now tend to be private vessels, often used by large mercenary organizations. *Cirque* herself is about twenty years old.

The word which should best describe them is cramped. While a few of the main characters will have comparatively spacious staterooms (Andii, Bertii, Thespian, Juggler), many characters will find themselves lucky to have a privacy curtain on their bunks.

Many characters will find themselves with dual roles, as well; acrobats will also serve as gunners, engineers, and so on. The Stage Manager is likely a pilot. A seemingly soft actor may turn out to have been a hardened Marine.

The **Ringmaster Class's** principal features are a massive jump drive capable of Jump-3 when fully "loaded" (and Jump-6 when carrying no more than 60 additional Vtons), as well as a "docking cleat" grapple system which allows versatility in choosing auxiliaries. Its maneuver drive renders it capable of 1-G acceleration fully loaded, 2-G when "stripped."

The vessel has multi-purpose docking/cleats allowing riders with compatible cleats to link for acceleration and jump. The vessel totals 1140 tons, and thus has ten hardpoints and two (2) firmpoints. These are occupied by four three-ton barbettes, four triple laser turrets, two triple sandcasters, a half-ton turret equipped with datacaster, and a half-ton turret equipped with commcaster. The vessel is heavily equipped with commu-

Cirque

nications, sensors, and other electronic gear; it serves as an orbital command and coordination center during operations. Four separate surfaces on the "BACFUDS" ("Braced Adaptable Colloidal-Fuel / Docking Surface") section allow up to four riders to "dock and lock."

Most riders are three hundred tons, roughly saucer-shaped, partially streamlined, and carry a standardized weapon package. These riders are standard, and thus found throughout the Imperium, attached to many different jump carriers. The Ringmaster is the smallest carrier commonly used.

One of the most common rider configurations is a **Platoon Lander** capable of housing a full platoon of "drop" Marines, their heavy weapons, basic supplies, and their battle dress. Big Top 2 (BT2) is a Platoon Lander. A two-deck central space is devoted to exercise and activities, originally intended to allow the Marines to remain toned and prepared. A large central hatch on the dorsal hull also allows rapid access in combat operations. A single deck encircles this cylinder, making it a "split-level house." The Platoon Lander is streamlined and capable of 1-G maneuver. It is equipped with a particle-accelerator barrette, a triple laser turret, a triple sandcaster, and sensors. Its bridge is equipped with a Computer Model/3.

A second common configuration is the high-capacity **Fuel Shuttle**. This rider allows the main vessel to be refueled in only three trips to a gas giant or a planetary source of fuel. Its tanks are collapsible, allowing it to carry additional supplies and material when it is not hauling fuel. It is built on the same hull as the Platoon Lander, and can purify its entire fuel load in a few hours. These also incorporate a dedicated 11-ton cargo hold as well as the collapsible tanks. The Fuel Shuttle is streamlined and capable of 1-G maneuver. It is equipped with a particle-accelerator barrette, a triple laser turret, a triple sandcaster, turret and sensors. Its bridge is equipped with a Model/1 computer.

A third, more unusual rider is the **Ortillery Rider**. At 600 tons, the ortillery rider has a dual ortillery bay, two triple laser turrets, and two triple sandcasters. It has Maneuver-3 drives and a large capacity for ortillery and cargo. Its bridge is equipped with a Model/5 computer and extensive sensors in support of its primary goal: planetary bombardment.

Other configurations include supply craft, heavy equipment and vehicle landers, field hospitals, and surface command vessels. If a function can be fit into a standard configuration, examples have likely been placed into service.

The Ringmaster class's distinction among small jump tenders is the relative ease by which docking grapples can be moved. Up to three (3) circular grapples capable of holding up to three hundred tons each can be installed on a single docking surface. Thus, larger riders can also be carried, so long as the total tonnage carried is within the carrier's jump capacity. One example is the six-hundred ton Ortillery Rider, a large craft looking like an oversized "Apollo" or "Orion" capsule of old Earth. These craft are designed to carry and launch hundreds of missiles or deadfall ordnance from orbit or high altitude. To haul the Ortillery Rider, two or three docking grapples are moved into position and locked to the hull. Skilled workers can perform this task in a day at a properly equipped orbital station.

Cirque has been configured to haul an Ortillery Rider and two standard riders. Andii Houke has obtained an Ortillery Rider, a Platoon Rider and a Fuel Rider. Two of these auxiliaries have been significantly refitted. The Ortillery Rider's launchers were removed and the central bays reconfigured to accommodate a stage and audience seating. The Platoon Rider's central "gymnasium" has been equipped for rehearsals, audio/video recording, and a special stage for outside performances from the upper dome. The Fuel Rider has not been significantly altered.

Cirque herself has been overhauled, but not significantly altered. Even the particle-accelerator barbettes remain; though privately owned, the vessel is carried under "Naval Reserve" status, and thus is fully loaded with everything it might need.

On the forward-most hull of *Cirque*, the central supply hatch allows all cargo and essentials to be brought aboard. The external portions of the barbettes and turrets can be seen. Four flat sensor emitter/receptors serve for sensor and communications purposes, although the main equipment is several decks below.

Deck 1. The forward gunnery deck and the aft gunnery deck are virtually identical. Though all weapons can be operated from the bridge, individual weapons are generally removed from the "slave" circuit

and operated by an individual gunner for close combat. Spare sandcaster charges are stored wherever space can be made. The deck has barracks and common space for at least eight (8) gunners (more can be "hot-bunked" if needs dictate). The particle accelerators themselves are located at this level, providing both ease of maintenance.

Deck 2. Officer's Deck contains the main staterooms for the officers. It also has a small stateroom with an odd entry: it is accessed by walking through the elevator, which has a door on each side. Safety circuits are supposed to keep the door from being opened when the platform is on another deck. Malfunctions have been noted in some vessels.

The open space in the deck is furnished to taste or mission. Many examples of this class of vessel include exercise equipment, as the galley is below. Normally, one room is a lounge, and the other a small gymnasium.

Deck 3. Medical Deck contains a well-equipped medical ward, primary life support, and the main crew recreational space.

The medical ward is better equipped than the small sickbays installed on Platoon Riders, and so treats the occupants of all vessels. Though still small compared to facilities on a dedicated medical rider or a starship, the ward can handle trauma and illness within reason.

The main lounge contains food preparation and eating facilities, used in shifts. Crew can choose to eat in groups, or in anti-social clusters. The lounge area includes access to entertainment systems of various kinds, though the emphasis is of course on recorded stories and music. Educational sessions and briefings can be held in this area, though this can also be handled at crew stations and by use of hand-held computers and tablets.

Additional EM arrays are installed outside this deck, on the hull above and enclosing the primary circuits.

Deck 4. The Bridge and Electronics Deck contains the main computer as well as all command and control consoles. The deck is spacious. Apart from external dishes and other gear, all sensors, communications, stealth gear, and similar electronics are contained in the side sections.

At this level, the central lift is not enclosed save for the lift's cage. This provides quick and easy access to any bridge function. However, it is another triumph of incautious design; despite safety systems including sensors with "auto-stop" functions, loud buzzers and flashing lights, crew members passing underneath the lift when in operation have on occasion been trapped and injured.

Deck 5. The massive jump drive runs from Deck 5 through Deck 7, as do the power plants. Decks 5 and 7 are each 4.5 meters tall; deck 6 is a standard 3.0-meter deck. Fuel is contained in the BACFUDS structure surrounding the engineering structure. Access to the massive fuel tankage is available for inspection and repair purposes. Opening the access panels while the tanks are full is not recommended.

Deck 6. Due to the chill in the small single staterooms squeezed into the BACFUDS enclosure, personnel familiar with the Ringmasters have adapted the acronym into a cuss (e.g., "Oh, bacfuds," "You're a bacfud," etc.).

The BACFUDS docking level is shown configured for *Cirque*'s 600-ton rider and two standard 300-ton riders. The staterooms are designed to allow easy access to the engineering levels and the lower gunnery deck, as well as to use available volume. Unfortunately, despite insulation and extra electric heating coils, the rooms tend to be chilly at best when the tanks are full. As operational procedures favor being prepared for jump, the tanks are rarely empty except when the ship is actually in jump.

Most crews find ways to use the long corridors. With safeties disengaged, the especially large iris-valve airtight hatches are often left open to allow exercise, target shooting with low-powered lasers, and similar creative pastimes. Inspection access hatches into the fuel tanks themselves also allow for foolish games of hide-and-seek and other activities.

Gravitics can be shut down in the corridors on this deck to ease transition from one docked vessel to another.

Deck 7. The third engineering level is much like Deck 5, but also includes basic maneuver drives and necessary access.

Deck 8. Apart from the fact that access hatches are reversed (internal access from ceiling, external from floor), this deck is a duplicate of Deck 1.

Cirque

Big Top One (BT1)

Big Top One ("BT1") is a converted artillery/missile platform. The main feature of the "baseline" vessel is its massive missile capacity in a small vessel. The vessel is built around two semicircular missile bays. The semi-circular hatches are forward and enclose both bays. The bays are partially open to one another in the center; the original bulkhead therein was non-structural and has been removed. This provides a central performance space fifteen meters in diameter and fifteen meters tall. This cylinder is circled by five decks which were previously additional ordinance storage and maintenance space. Columns support these decks; they now contain slightly angled seating. While a close look will show that the seating in the back has at best obstructed viewing angles, the entire performance area has been equipped with numerous cameras and other sensors which feed to the central computer. This builds a fully holographic image of the action. All audience members have "viewers" in the form of obviously dorky and hard-to-steal spectacles (these also contain tracking systems in case a spectator "accidentally" walks off with one). Thus, the "cheap seats" in the back are arguably better seats than the front rows.

All members of the audience can hear everything that goes on without additional aid, though the sound can also be transmitted to remote locations. In addition, the scents of the circus permeate the environment. This theater can seat 1224 people.

When opportunity allows the use of a separate performance area, additional spectators (an overflow audience) can be allowed into the vessel for a lower fee to experience the performances only via video. Alternative performances (e.g. plays, concerts) may also be scheduled.

The recording feeds are "closed circuit" and highly encrypted to prevent tapping of the feeds. The intellectual property rights of the Foundation, its sponsors, and its performers are guarded closely.

On other occasions, and between performances of the circus style shows, the theater can be used for plays, talent shows, musical performances, small sporting events and various other activities. If a performance is possible in the space, it can be put on in Big Top One.

A tent-like, extendable cupola has been installed at the forward end (the "upper" end in terms of gravitic orientation, and Deck 1 due to the top-down viewpoint). In appropriate atmospheric conditions (most of them), this is extended upward mechanically to provide an additional profile of a circus-like tent to viewers outside, and to those looking up from below.

Deck 5a. The lowest "decks" are two extension decks containing the maneuver drives and landing gear. These project slightly further than the 1.5 meters of the three circular docking cleats. In addition, the center docking cleat does not have a direct access hatch into the hull above, unlike most such docking cleats. This prevents direct access from another vessel to the missile bay in the original design and the performance area in the current refit.

Deck 5. The first full deck, Deck 5, contains the four large cargo airlocks and additional storage facilities. In the original missile/ordnance use, these airlocks and cargo space were used to load and store ordnance; they are now used for audience entry and other access. Additional supplies and consumables for extended periods are also stored here. Finally, the four defensive turrets are located at the four cardinal "compass points." It should be noted that access to each segment of the main drive machinery and the landing gear machinery is obtained via a recessed iris valve located in the center of each main lock. The iris valves are covered by a layer of hinged flooring flush with the remainder of the deck surface. This minimizes the risk of accidental falls into the machinery while loading and unloading cargo, whether it be ordnance or miniphants.

In the current configuration, two of the four cargo holds remain as they were, each capable of holding ten (10) containers three (3) meters long, one and one-half (1.5) meters wide and three (3) meters tall. The other two cargo areas have been converted to transport the various animals used in performances. Two (2) "animal tanks" allowing maintenance of unusual environments are installed, as are a number of smaller berths for small to midsized animals. One very large more-or-less open animal pen is maintained for large animals such as miniphants.

The animals are exercised daily in the center ring, regardless of whether in space or on a planet.

The four heavy ordnance lifts from the original design remain, but have been upgraded to bring guests and other necessities up and down. For safety reasons, each lift has an operator while performances are ongoing.

As noted, there is substantial seating.

The performance entrance is found at the "North" position. The cargo hold behind that entry is normally emptied of containers, which are moved outside during performances. The cargo area becomes the dressing and backstage area.

Some cargo containers include minimal "essential facilities" for guests. Other cargo containers include quantities of foodstuffs and materials, as well as substantial material to generate the all-important scent of popcorn (although actual popcorn is in limited supply, and the most costly item sold at performances). The majority of snacks and foodstuffs are purchased onworld, including local snacks to satisfy particular local preferences.

The four defensive turrets also ring the rim of this deck.

Deck 4. The next deck contains seating essentially mirroring the deck below; the center is open. The deck space above the "northern" entry area is used as a bandstand and additional performance or entrance space. The ship's power plants are located at the east and west points, with the fuel tanks to either side. The main control room is located at the south, with the computer systems in parallel consoles to either side. Note that while there are four separate computer consoles, these are linked to form a single unit; space requirements in the original configuration required as much. To the southwest, beside the computer the life-support is found. To the southeast essential electronics including the masking electronics are maintained. Beside each of those are found is found a stateroom generally occupied by the vessel commander and the onboard ordnance commander in the original configuration. In this configuration, these staterooms are available for any appropriate user; the command pilot is due less space than some of the star entertainers. It is likely that a larger bed will be placed in both to allow certain entertainers some additional space to reside with their spouses or significant others. Each stateroom has a private fresher.

At the north is found an eight-person barracks which originally housed ratings who handled ordnance in combat. In addition, several "crew niches" are also found there. In this configuration the double bunks (which afford some pertinent partitioned privacy) are primarily used to house performers and essential stagehands.

Deck 3. The next deck contains additional seats. The angled space at the outer edge of the deck has no functional use, and is sealed away from internal pressure.

Deck 2. Deck 2 mirrors Deck 3, but with no additional angled space.

Deck 1. The uppermost level contains the equipment for raising the tent-like cupola. It may also be used for surprise entries or gags (falling buckets of confetti, rubber chickens, items to be juggled being dropped, release of performing avians, etc.). The equipment for opening the main hatches for the two missile bays is also found at this level.

Big Top Two (BT2)

Big Top Two is a converted troop carrier based on a standardized three-hundred ton saucer/disc hull. She has a single primary deck, with a two-level central cylindrical deck.

The bridge is contained at the forward end, along with the main computer. Going clockwise around the rim are compartments for troop equipment, storage facilities for the particle accelerator, and the landing gear, as well as a personnel airlock. Similar storage facilities, landing gear, and the laser turret are found counterclockwise from the bridge.

Two common rooms with galley and recreation space are found further clockwise, followed by a junior officer cabin for up to three (3) people. To counterclockwise is found another common room, followed by the medical bay, followed by another junior officer room. In the original use, these were used either for Marine noncommissioned officers or junior vessel crew.

To both clockwise and counterclockwise are found single staterooms. The large number is used to guarantee privacy for crew, a Navy custom. Marine officers were also given private rooms. In the current configuration, these private cabins are reserved for the higher-level performers and managers.

Power plant, maneuver drives, and life support are found at the rear of the vessel, as is fuel.

To inboard, four (4) barracks with bunks for up to sixteen (16)

Cirque

troops each are found. The central two-deck structure is accessed from the corridors allowing access to each barracks unit.

The central area has several hatches in the upper hull allowing lift armor or lift vehicles to exit quickly and easily. The lower deck contains a central access hatch through the docking ring assembly.

In the current configuration, the central area is used as a rehearsal stage, gathering area, and recording stage. The primary documentarian has a daily schedule using that space to record various acts. One of the documentarian's primary projects is a full recording of the plays of Nish-gunashuu, the "Vilani Shakespeare."

Big Top Three (BT3)

Big Top Three is similar to BT2. However, most of the space allocated in BT2 to for crew and troops is devoted to BT3's fuel tanks. Central fuel tankage is collapsible, allowing further cargo space for shuttling cargo to the surface. The lower central deck is devoted primarily to fuel scoops and purification equipment. As has been noted elsewhere, the entire fuel requirements of a Ringmaster can be supplied by three (3) trips of the vessel to a hydrogen source.

The vessel also has substantial sensor capabilities, which allow it to avoid trouble, and to extend the sensor capabilities of the Ringmaster.

The Advance Sophonts' Scout-3

The Scout-3 on long-term loan to Advance Scout 1 is an integral part of Cirque des Sirkas. Though built on the same basic hull as a Type-S, it has reduced maneuver of 1G, enhanced jump of J-3, and no air/raft. This vessel compromise is used by the Scout Service for long-distance mapping and scouting in areas of low stellar density. However, it is even more cramped than a standard scout and thus is not often a desired mustering benefit.

The Scout 3 in use by Cirque des Sirkas is sometimes referred to as *Grendel's Mother*. Other Scout-3 vessels are occasionally encountered in the Spinward Marches and in space with a low density of stars. In the Marches, they are greatly outnumbered by the standard J2, 2G scout model.

The Vargr Corsair

Yaarrghu Pfaalum, a typical Vargr merchant/commerce raider, visits Old Station for the celebration of Holiday, 1111, and to check on the increasing fame and fortune of one of its own pups. Vargr corsairs may occasionally be met in the Spinward Marches. Armament varies; the details shown do not include turrets or weapons.

Yacht (Bakaal Sunflower Class)

Yachts may be encountered from time to time, especially in more civilized ports. Yachts may be used by the very rich, including Imperial Nobility. MegaCorporations also own yachts, using them to transport high-level employees from one world to the next, and to entertain important contacts. Armament varies; the details shown do not include turrets or weapons. The high (4G) maneuver rating is aimed at outrunning and outmaneuvering attackers.

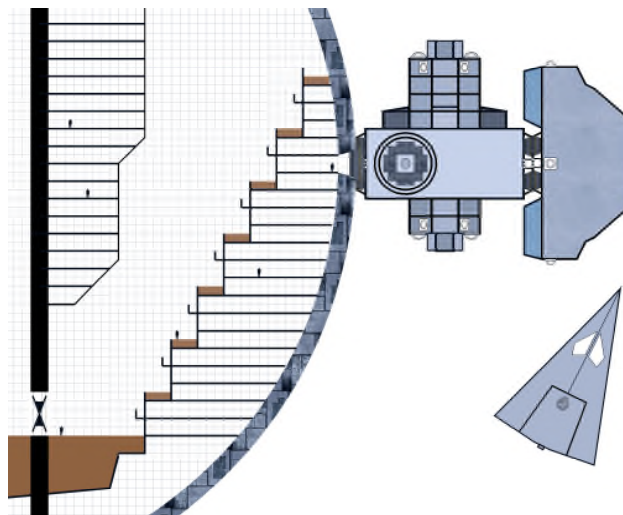
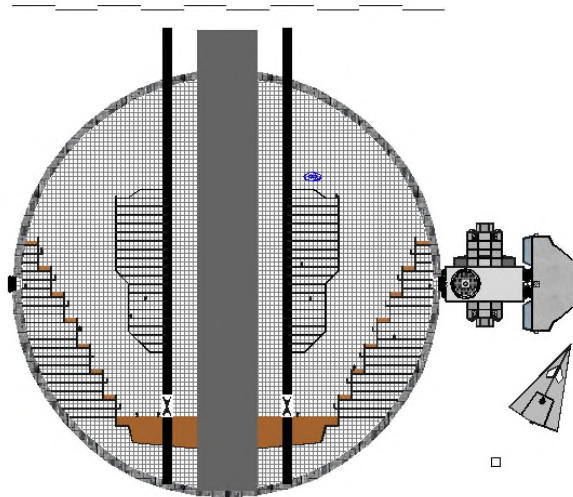
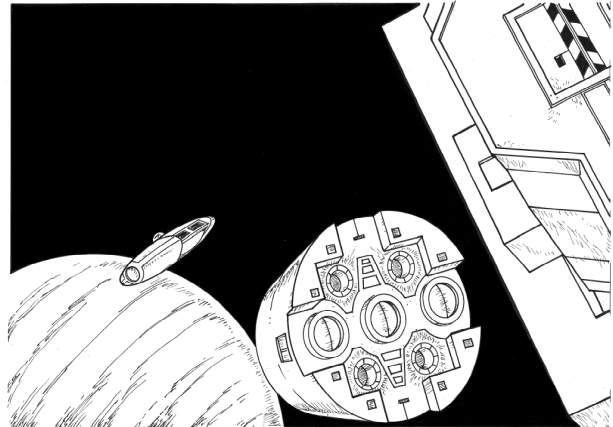
Tulgan Patrol Cruiser

The Sword Worlds employ various vessels. Their designs are often more utilitarian than Imperial designs. They tend to be crowded. The emerging Border Worlds retain a few of the vessels. Others remain in the control of the remaining Sword Worlds.

Lakmir-Class Laboratory Ship

The Lakmir-class laboratory ship is a standard and regularly encountered vessel. Weapons and laboratory equipment vary significantly.

Cirque's Planned Itinerary	06 2624 Mercury	14 1320 Saurus
01 2716 Rhylanor	07 2324 Capon	15 1119 Vilis
02 2414 Tureded	08 2124 Lunion	16 1217 Arkadia
03 2417 Equus	09 2024 Derchon	17 1315 Miriam
04 2519 Pannet	10 1822 Rabwhar	18 1515 Calit
05 2621 Fosey	11 1825 Zaibon	19 1413 Denotam
	12 1524 Hofud	20 1611 Phlume
	13 1522 Dymwyn	21 1910 Regina



Cirque

Transport T-MC26 Ringmaster0214 MCr475.4 [Bilstein Yards]

Original Hull Name: Avinashini
 Current Name: *Cirque*
 Disposition: Cirque des Sirkas, LIC, with Reserve Obligations

Actual volume: 1140 tons
 Crew comfort: -2
 Passenger demand: -5

Tons	Component	MCr	Notes
1200	Cluster Hull	24	C
-6	No Landers	0	
0	AV=28. 1 Kinetic Charged	0	
648	Jump Fuel (6 parsecs)	0	6 parsec jump, at 108t per parsec
48	Plant Fuel (3 weeks)	0	0.75 months
1	Fuel Transfer Pumps	1	
109	Imp PowerPlant-6 (T2)	109	P 6
185	Jump Drive-6 (J5 actual)	185	J 6
23	Maneuver Drive-2 (M)	46	2 G
1	AR Ant Communicator	1.5	
1	AR Ant Jammer	1.5	
1	AR Ant Scope	1.5	
1	AR Ant Neutrino Detector	1.5	
1	AR Ant EMS	1.5	
1	AR Ant Stealth Mask	1.5	
2	2x Vd T3 Sandcaster	2.2	#2
4	4x Vd T3 Beam Laser	6	#4
0.5	D T4 DataCaster	1.7	
0.5	SR T4 CommCaster	5.7	
12	4x AR B1 Particle Accelerator	22	#4
4	Computer Model/4 std	18	
2	Life Support Long Term	2	40 person-months
8	2x Gunners' Barracks	0.4	#2 (5) R1 R1 R2 R2 R3
9	Medical Ward	4	
4	Spacious Bridge	0.4	2cc 0op 0ws
1	Crew Common Fresher	1	10 crew
5	5x Spacer Niche	0.5	#5 1 crew
12	4x Crew Stateroom	0.4	#4 1 crew
8	2x Crew Lounge	0	#2
17	Cargo Hold Basic	0	
0.5	Air Lock	0.1	
37	37x Grapples	37	#37 up to 35t

A-FU30 Bigtop One MCr154.5 [Clan Severn]

Original Hull Number: Ortilery SM C443
 Designation: Big Top 1
 Disposition: Cirque des Sirkas, LIC, with Reserve Obligations

Crew comfort: -2
 Passenger demand: -5

[code]

Tons	Component	MCr	Notes
600	Unstreamlined Hull	20	U
0	AV=28. 1 Kinetic Charged	0	
0	Jump Fuel (0 parsec)	0	0 parsec jump, at 0t per parsec
9	Plant Fuel (0.5 months)	0	0.5 months
17	Maneuver Drive-3 (J)	34	3 G
28	PowerPlant-3 (J)	28	P 3
0	AR Surf Communicator	1.5	

Cirque

0	AR Surf Jammer	1.5	
0	AR Surf Neutrino Detector	1.5	
0	AR Surf Visor	1.5	
0	AR Surf Stealth Mask	1.5	
0	AR Surf EMS	1.5	
0	Vd Surf Proximeter	0.6	
1	2x D T3 Beam Laser	2	#2
1	2x D T3 Sandcaster	1.2	#2
5	Computer Model/5 std	27	
5	Squad Barracks	0.4	(5) R1 R1 R2 R2 R3
6	3x Life Support Long Term	6	#3 40 person-months
3	Cramped Bridge	0.7	1cc 5op 0ws
6	2x Officer Stateroom, fresher	1.2	#2 1 crew
3.2	4x Spacer Niche (bunkable)	0.4	#4 1 crew
7.2	4x Small SR, fresher (bunkable)	2.4	#4 1 crew
6	2x Crew Lounge	0	#2
20	2x Cargo Hold Basic	0	#2
7	Large Animal Berth	1	5 tons of animals
14	2x Capture Tank	1.4	#2 atmospheric controlled
8	4x Cargo Lock	0	#4
3	6x Animal Low Berth	1.2	#6 750 Kg of animals
433	Center Stage	0	
18	18x Grapple	18	#18 up to 35t

Transport T-CL10 Big Top Two MCr165 [Bilstein Yards]

Original Hull Number: Platoon SM B918

Disposition: Cirque des Sirkas, LIC, with Reserve Obligations

Originally designed as a troop carrier, this ship sports barracks for a platoon of marines with equipment (battledress and support weapons) and multipurpose living space. Even with all of the open space, the ship feels too small.

Crew comfort: +0

Passenger demand: -5

Tons	Component	TN	MCr	Notes
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
300	Lift body Hull, lifters	12	43	L, lifters
3	Landing legs with pads	14	3	
3	Flotation hull	14	3	
0	AV=28. 1 Kinetic Charged	14	0	
0	Jump Fuel (0 parsec)	12	0	J0, 0t/pc
1.5	Plant Fuel (0.5 months)	12	0	0.5 months
3	Maneuver Drive-1 (B)	14	6	1 G
7	PowerPlant-1 (B)	14	7	P 1
0	AR Surf Communicator	14	1.5	
0	AR Surf Jammer	14	1.5	
0	AR Surf Neutrino Detector	14	1.5	
1	AR Ant EMS	15	1.5	
0	AR Surf Stealth Mask	14	1.5	
0	AR Surf Visor	14	1.5	
3	AR B1 Particle Accelerator	16	5.5	
1	Vd T3 Beam Laser	14	1.5	
1	Vd T3 Sandcaster	14	1.1	
3	Computer Model/3 std	17	10.5	
4	Medical Bay	14	3	
40	Troop Barracks (16 each) (4)	14	0.8	#4 (5) R1 R1 R2 R2 R3
4	Life Support Long Term (2)	14	4	#2 40 person-months
12	Spacious Controls	16	0	
48	Officer Stateroom (12)	14	1.2	#12 1 crew
12	Crew Stateroom (6)	14	0.6	#6 1 crew
2	Crew Common Fresher (2)	14	2	#2 10 crew
12	Galley/Lounge (3)	14	0	#3

Cirque

0.5 Air Lock	14	0.1	
100 Center Stage	14	0	
10 Cargo Hold Basic	14	0	
4 Cargo Lock (2)	14	0	#2
16 Vehicle Lock (4)	14	0	#4
9 Grapples (9)	14	63	#9 up to 35t

Transport T-CL10 Big Top Three MCr158.7 [Bilstein Yards]

Original Hull Number: Fuel SM A274
 Designation: Big Top 3
 Disposition: Cirque des Sirkas, LIC, with Reserve Obligation

Actual volume: 298.5 tons
 Crew comfort: -3
 Passenger demand: -5

Tons	Component	MCr	Notes
300	Lift body Hull, lifters	43	L, lifters
3	Landing legs with pads	3	
3	Flotation hull	3	
0	AV=28. 1 Kinetic Charged	0	
0	Jump Fuel (0 parsec)	0	0 parsec jump, at 0t per parsec
216	Plant Fuel (72 months)	0	72 months
3	Maneuver Drive-1 (B)	6	1 G
1	Fuel Transfer Pumps	1	
2	Fuel Intakes 80t/hr	0.2	80t/hr
7	PowerPlant-1 (B)	7	P 1
5	5x Fuel Purifiers	0.5	#5
1	Fuel Scoops	0.1	
4	4x Fuel Bins	0.4	#4
0	LR Surf Communicator	2.5	
0	LR Surf Jammer	2.5	
0	LR Surf Scope	2.5	
0	LR Surf Neutrino Detector	2.5	
0	LR Surf EMS	2.5	
2	LR Ant EMS	2.5	
0	LR Surf Stealth Mask	2.5	
3	AR B1 Particle Accelerator	5.5	
1	Vd T3 Beam Laser	1.5	
1	Vd T3 Sandcaster	1.1	
1	Computer Model/1 std	1.5	
2	Life Support Long Term	2	40 person-months
12	Spacious Bridge	0.8	2cc 4op 0ws
8	4x Crew Stateroom	0.4	#4 1 crew
1	Crew Common Fresher	1	10 crew
1	Spacer Niche	0.1	1 crew
0.5	Air Lock	0.1	
12	Cargo Hold Basic	0	
9	9x Grapples	63	#9 up to 35t

Enhanced Scout/Courier S2-AL23 Grendel's Mother MCr80.9 [Bilstein Yards]

Owner: IISS
 Disposition: Detached Duty

Though built on the same basic hull as a Type-S, the Extended Scout has enhanced jump of J-3, and no air/raft. This vessel compromise is used by the Scout Service for long-distance mapping and scouting in areas of low stellar density. However, it is even more cramped than a standard scout and thus is not always a desired "mustering benefit."

Crew comfort: -1
 Passenger demand: -5

Cirque

Tons	Component	TN	Mcr	Notes
100	Lift body Hull, lifters	12	17	L, lifters
1	Landing legs with pads	11	1	
2	Submergence hull	11	4	
0.5	Fins	11	0.2	
0	AV=11. 1 Blast Plate	11	0	
33	Jump Fuel (3 parsecs)	12	0	J3, 11t/pc
3.3	Plant Fuel (one month)	12	0	one month
15	Ear Jump Drive-3 (B)	9	30	J 3
7	Ear PowerPlant-3 (B)	9	14	P 3
2	Maneuver Drive-2 (A)	11	4	2 G
1	Fuel Scoops 100t/hr	8	0.1	100t/hr
1	Fuel Intakes 40t/hr	8	0.1	40t/hr
1	Fuel Bins 20t/hr	8	0.1	20t/hr
1	Fuel Purifiers 4t/hr	8	1	4t/hr
1	Vd T3 Hybrid L-S-M	11	2	
1	Computer Model/1bis std	13	3	
1	Life Support Adaptable	11	1	10 sophonts
2	Life Support Long Term	11	2	40 person-months
10	Spacious Controls	13	0	
2	Crew Stateroom	11	0.1	1 crew
0.5	Crew Shared Fresher	11	0.5	4 crew
3	Spacer Niche (3)	11	0.3	#3 1 crew
8	Crew Lounge (2)	11	0	#2
4	Cargo Hold Basic	12	0	

Raider P-DA42 Rrazaghz Corsair MCr167.1

Built on a 400-ton TL-12 winged airframe, the corsair is a pirate ship, ranging the star lanes in search of vulnerable freighters and their cargoes. Its drives support jump-2 and 4-G with fuel tankage for one jump and four months of operations. Ungainly in an atmosphere, this particular ship has a 60 ton cargo bay, and a 60 ton hangar -- both are perfectly suitable for storing captured goods and stolen small craft, respectively.

The keys to the corsair are its firepower and its sensor suite (which varies widely between ships). It has four hardpoints, usually allocated to several bay weapons and powerful sensors.

[T5,p.359]

Overtonnage: 23 tons

Crew comfort: -1

Tons	TN	Component	Mcr	Notes
400	12	Airframe Hull, lifters	34	A, lifters
4	12	Landing legs with pads	4	
8	12	Submergence hull	16	
16	12	AV=24. 2 Kinetic Plate	0	
80	12	Jump Fuel (2 parsecs)	0	J2, 40t/pc
64	12	Plant Fuel (4 months)	0	4 months
25	12	PowerPlant-4 (H)	25	P 4
25	12	Jump Drive-2 (D)	25	J 2
15	12	Maneuver Drive-4 (H)	30	4 G
1	8	Fuel Scoops 100t/hr	0.1	100t/hr
1	8	Fuel Intakes 40t/hr	0.1	40t/hr
1	8	Fuel Bins 20t/hr	0.1	20t/hr
1	8	Fuel Purifiers 4t/hr	1	4t/hr
0	12	LR Surf Jammer	2.5	
0	12	AR Surf EMS	1.5	
0	12	LR Surf Scope	2.5	
0	12	AR Surf Stealth Mask	1.5	
0	12	Vd Surf Field Sensor	0.6	
6	14	AR B1 Missile (2)	6.4	#2

Cirque

6	14	Vd B1 Beam Laser (2)	7	#2
2	14	Computer Model/2 std	5	
2	12	Life Support Long Term	2	40 person-months
8	12	Standard Controls	0	
1	12	Crew Shared Fresher (2)	1	#2 4 crew
16	12	Crew Stateroom (8)	0.8	#8 1 crew
8	12	Crew Lounge (2)	0	#2
2	12	Cargo Lock	0	
1	12	Air Lock (2)	0.2	#2
60	12	Cargo Hold Basic	0	
10	12	Large Vehicle Lock	0	
60	12	Hangar	0	

Yacht Y-EU42 Bakaal Sunflower MCr179.5 [Tukera]

Builder: Tukera

Built on a 500-ton TL14 unstreamlined hull, the yacht is a noble's plaything for entertaining friends and undertaking political or commercial missions. It mounts drives giving it jump-2 and 4-G. Fuel tankage supports five months of power plant operations and allows two successive jump-2; it incorporates fuel intakes for refueling from a water source. Adjacent to the bridge is a Model/3 computer. Added to a basic sensor suite is a neutrino detector, stealth mask, and a standard proximeter.

The yacht is built around its luxurious staterooms, including one double stateroom suite for the owner. There are five hardpoints, but no weaponry is installed. There are three ship's vehicles: an air/raft, a 30-ton ship's boat, and an ATV. The ship's boat is fitted to ferry the ATV from orbit to surface and back. Cargo capacity is 20 tons. The yacht is unstreamlined, and is capable of tarmac and water landings only. The yacht requires a minimum crew of four: pilot/astrogator, three engineers, and a steward/medic. In practice, it carries several more stewards.

Actual volume: 497 tons

Crew comfort: -1

Passenger demand: +5

[code]	Tons	Component	MCr	Notes
	500	Unstreamlined Hull	17	U
	5	Flotation hull	5	
	0	AV=7. 1 Kinetic Organic	0	
	180	Jump Fuel (4 parsecs)	0	4 parsec jump, at 45t per parsec
	36	Plant Fuel (2 months)	0	2 months
	1	Fuel Intakes 40t/hr	0.1	40t/hr
	1	Fuel Purifiers 4t/hr	1	4t/hr
	19	Maneuver Drive-4 (K)	38	4 G
	30	Imp Jump Drive-2 (E)	30	J 2
	31	Imp PowerPlant-4 (K)	31	P 4
	0	LR Surf Neutrino Detector	2.5	
	0	LR Surf Stealth Mask	2.5	
	0	G Surf Proximeter	4.1	
	0	LR Surf EMS	2.5	
	0	LR Surf Communicator	2.5	
	0	LR Surf Scope	2.5	
	5	5x AR T1 Empty	1	#5
	3	Computer Model/3 std	10.5	
	1	Life Support Luxury	1	10 high passengers
	2	Life Support Long Term	2	40 person-months
	16	Spacious Bridge	0.8	2cc 3op 3ws
	16	8x Crew Single Stateroom	0.8	#8 1 crew
	2	4x Crew Shared Fresher	2	#4 4 crew
	8	2x Crew Lounge	0	#2
	20	Cargo Hold Basic	0	
	12	Owner's Suite	0.8	1 passenger + fresher

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42	7x Luxury Suite	2.8	#7 1 passenger + fresher
28	7x Passenger Lounge	0	#7
4	Air/Raft Enclosed	0.1	
30	Fast Boat	14	
1	ATV	1	
4	Vehicle Brackets	4	

Cruiser C-FS22 Tulgan Patrol Cruiser MCr172.4 [undefined]

Owner: Sword Worlds

Heavily armored and with cramped crew conditions, this ship is aimed at taking on Imperial ships, and therefore is designed with survivability in mind.

Actual volume: 454 tons

Crew comfort: -3

Passenger demand: -5

Tons	Component	MCr	Notes
600	Streamlined Hull	38	S
96	AV=55. 5 Kinetic Plate	0	
120	Jump Fuel (2 parsecs)	0	J2, 60t/pc
6	Plant Fuel (0.5 months)	0	0.5 months
1	Fuel Scoops	0.1	
1	Fuel Intakes	0.1	
1	Fuel Bins	0.1	
3	Fuel Purifiers (3)	0.3	#3
19	PowerPlant-2 (F)	19	P 2
35	Jump Drive-2 (F)	35	J 2
11	Maneuver Drive-2 (F)	22	2 G
0	AR Surf Communicator	1.5	
0	AR Surf Jammer	1.5	
0	AR Surf Radar	1.5	
0	AR Surf Scope	1.5	
0	AR Surf Neutrino Detector	1.5	
0	SR Surf Stealth Mask	1.2	
50	AR Bay Particle Accelerator	7.5	
50	AR Bay Salvo Rack	15	
3	AR B1 CommCaster	8	
1	Vd T3 DataCaster	2	
1	Vd T3 Beam Laser	1.5	
1	Vd T3 Sandcaster	1.1	
18	Platoon Barracks	1	(22) 4 sq + R4 01/02
2	Life Support Long Term	2	40 person-months
4	Frozen Watch (2)	2	#2 10 individuals
2	Computer Model/2 std	5	
2	Counsellor	0.2	
2	Clinic	1	
4.5	Cramped Controls	0	
4	Crew Lounge	0	
1	Crew Common Fresher	1	10 crew
2	Spacer Niche (2)	0.2	#2 1 crew
1.5	Spacer Bunks (3)	0.3	#3 1 crew
4	Crew Stateroom (2)	0.2	#2 1 crew
8	Cargo Hold Basic	0	

Lab Ship L-DC12 Laknir MCr138.4 [Bilstein Yards]

Disposition: In Service

Using a 400-ton TL15 Cluster hull, the laboratory ship is a mobile base for scientific analysis and investigation. It mounts drives for performance of jump-2 and 1-G acceleration. Fuel tankage supports a single jump-2 and five months of operations. Installed on the bridge is a model/2 computer,

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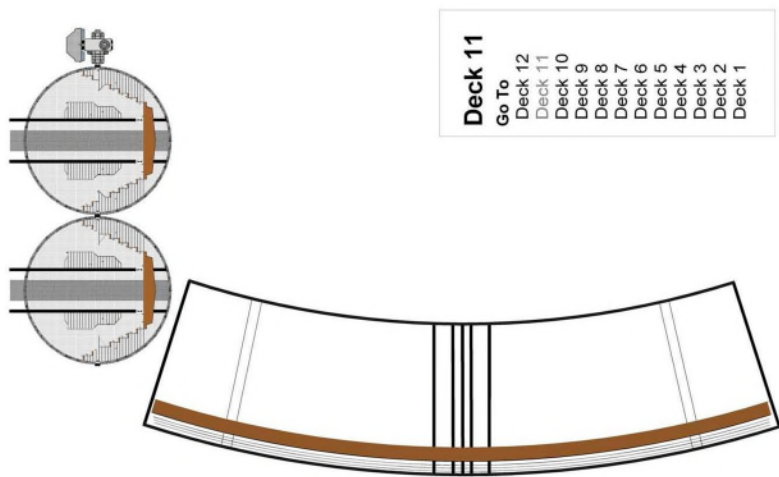
and a powerful sensor suite. The unusual hull of the lab ship allows spin-generated centrifugal gravity: to avoid the interference that gravitics might produce on some sensitive experiments. About half the ship is allocated to laboratory space and sample storage. The ship has four hard-points, but no weapons are installed. There is one 40-ton pinnace in a vehicle bracket, and two air/rafts stored adjacent to cargo. The ship is an overtonnage design. The laboratory ship requires a crew of five: pilot, astrogator, two engineers, and medic, although most are typically mission-oriented researchers as well. Gunners and scientific research personnel may be added. There are twenty staterooms and no low berths. The pilot operates the pinnace; the engineers operate the air/rafts. The ship can carry 20 passengers (35 if double occupancy) on a non-commercial basis.

Overtonnage: 25 tons

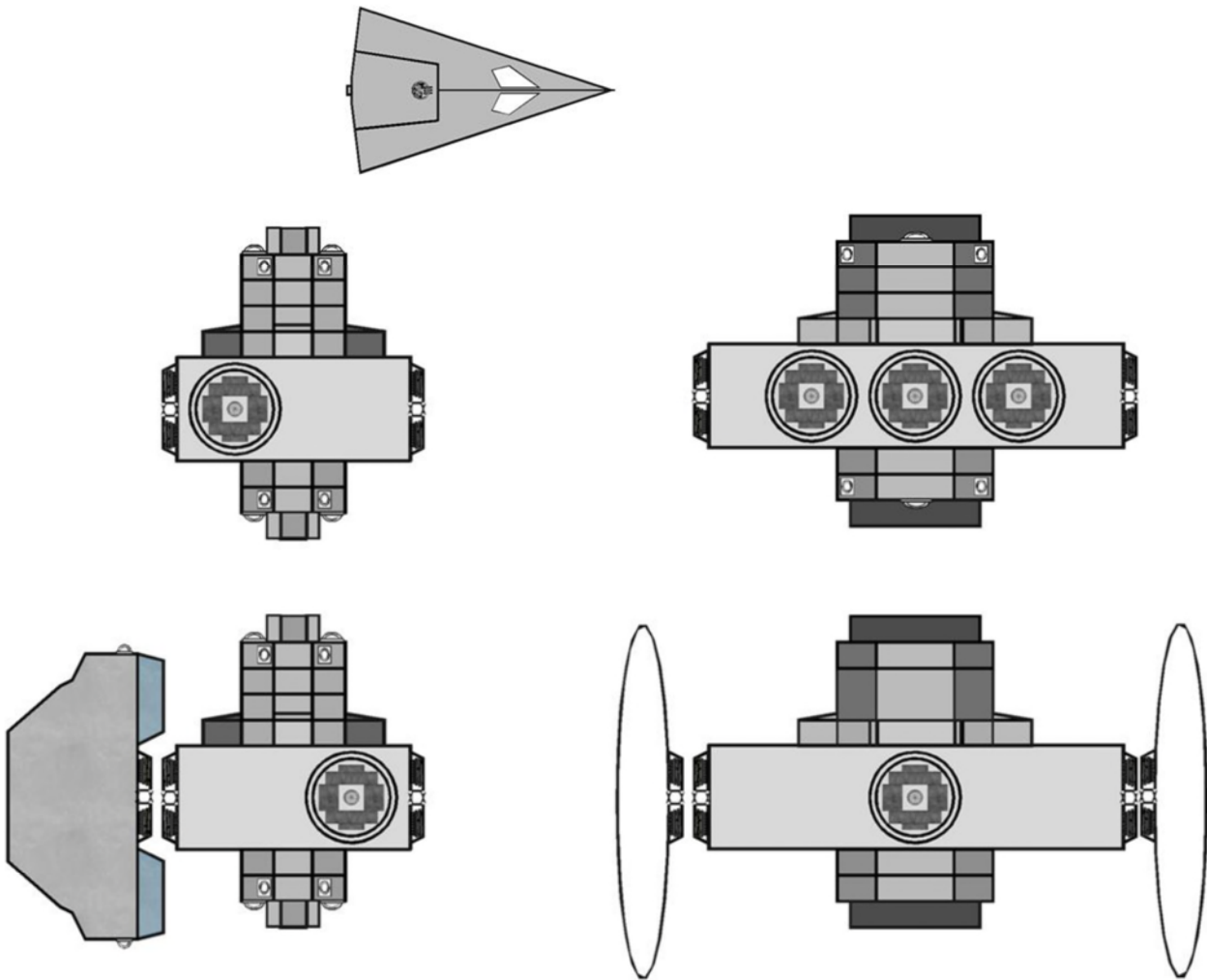
Crew comfort: 2

Passenger demand: -5

Tons	TN	Component	MCr	Notes
400	12	Cluster Hull	8	C
-2	15	No Landers	0	
0	15	AV=30. 1 Rad Charged	0	
66	12	Jump Fuel (2 parsecs)	0	J2, 33t/pc
32	12	Plant Fuel (5 months)	0	5 months
1	8	Fuel Purifiers 4t/hr	1	4t/hr
3	15	Maneuver Drive-1 (B)	6	1 G
4.29	15	Adv PowerPlant-2 (D)	13	P 2
10	15	Adv Jump Drive-2 (D)	30	J 2
0	15	DS Surf Communicator	3.5	
3	16	DS Ant Neutrino Detector	3.5	
3	16	DS Ant EMS	3.5	
0	15	DS Surf Grav Sensor	3.5	
0	16	DS Surf Visor	3.5	
0	15	G Surf Mass Sensor	4.1	
0	15	G Surf Deep Radar	4.1	
0	15	G Surf Densitometer	4.1	
0	15	G Surf Proximeter	4.1	
2	17	Computer Model/2 std	5	
4	15	Infirmary	2	treats minor trauma
3	15	Life support (120 people/month)	3	120 people/month
7	15	Standard Controls	0	
50	15	Crew Single Stateroom (25)	2.5	#25 1 crew
5	15	Crew Shared Fresher (10)	5	#10 4 crew
4	15	Crew Common Fresher (4)	4	#4 10 crew
120	15	Lab/Conference/Work area	0	
50	12	Cargo Hold Basic	0	
8	15	Vehicle Lock (2)	2	#2
40	14	Slow Pinnace	18	
4	15	Small Craft External Bracket	4	
8	9	Air/Raft Enclosed (2)	0.2	#2



Cirque Deck Plans



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Cirque

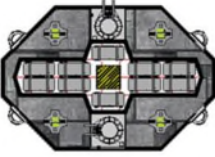
Forward Cargo Hull and Hatch.



Forward Hull

Ringmaster-class vessels are designed for one-ton cargo units, rather than the three-ton units common in commercial use. The hatch is designed for this maximum.

Forward Cargo Deck (10 Tons) and Gunnery Hull, including Sensor Arrays, External Portions of Gunnery.

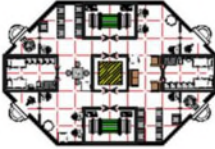


Deck 1

This deck also serves as a primary airlock and docking point for standard cargo locks. EVA can be conducted from this lock, as well as other locks.

In military and mercenary vessels, the cargo space is generally used for extended supplies (rations, ammunition, spare weapons, etc.).

Forward Gunnery Deck. Particle Gun Hardware, Gunner Barracks (8 Crew), Missile Storage, Sand-caster Storage.



Deck 2

One of the four turrets is a firmpoint turret containing either the datacaster or commcaster emplacements.

Decommissioned Ringmasters are generally stripped of all weapons before being sold. Thus, Ringmasters in service may have different weapon combinations.

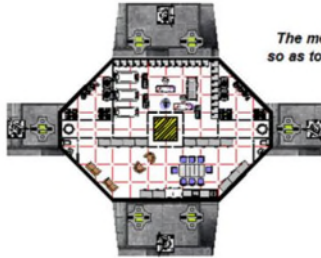
Officer Quarters (5) (can be converted to double occupancy), lounge, gym space. Note hazardous placement of central stateroom (access only through lift shaft).



Deck 3

Ringmaster officers' decks are uncommonly spacious. Some vessels may be refitted for bunk space up to the capacity of life support. In military use, officers from auxiliaries also use this deck.

Life Support, Medical Deck, Main Crew Lounge and Galley. Sensor Arrays on Hull.

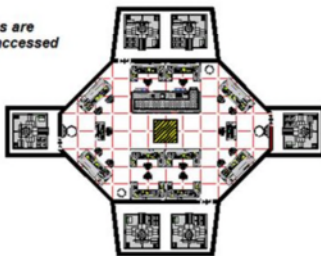


Deck 4

The medical facilities on a Ringmaster are spacious so as to afford medical care to a significant number of crew and combatants.

The entire crew of a Ringmaster and its auxiliaries generally have access to the crew lounge on this deck. This deck also serves for briefings and planning. Its facilities were state-of-the-art in the Fourth Frontier War era.

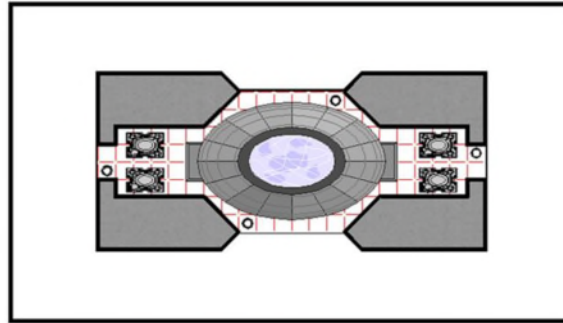
Bridge. Computers and main control consoles are contained in this deck. Primary electronics are accessed at the four cardinal compass points.



Deck 5

Cirque

Typical Docking Cleat
Face-on view
and cross-section.
Locking mechanisms
retracted.

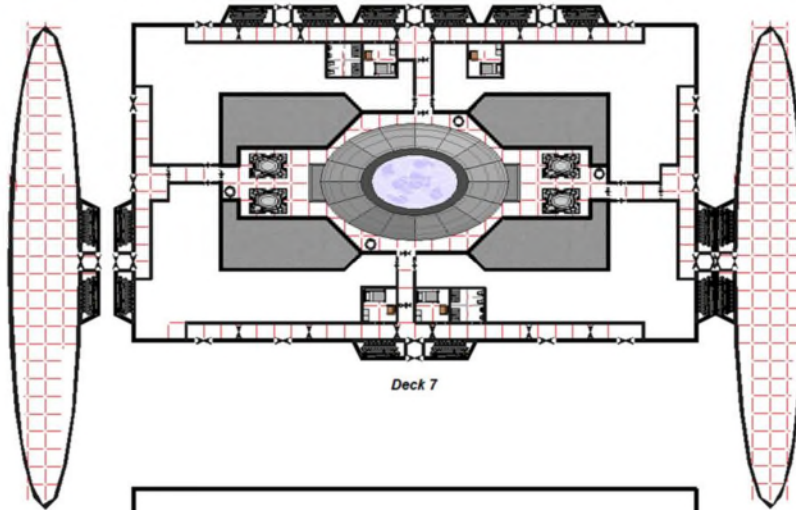


Upper engineering deck.
Note that, due to BACFUDS
height, this deck is more than
three (three) meters in height.

One significant design compromise
is the poor access to major engineering
structures. Any large parts must be
maneuvered down the "courtyard shafts"
to access points; hull plating must be removed
and later replaced.

Deck 6

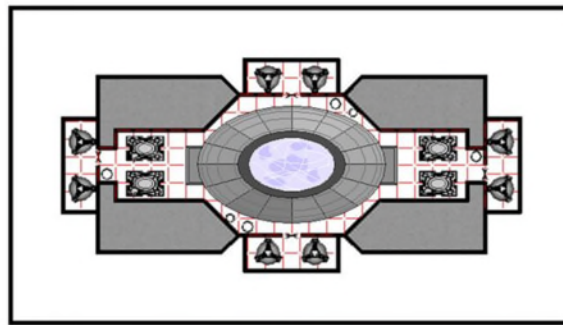
Docking Access Deck
Configured for two (2)
300-ton craft, one (1)
600-ton craft, and one
(1) 60-10 cargo module
(adds 56 tons of cargo
capacity).



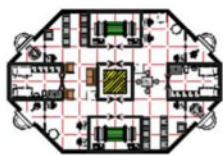
Deck height is standard
three-meter deck. Docking
cleats are centered at 1.5
meters.

Deck 7

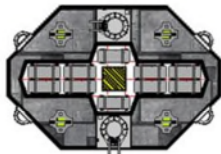
Lower Engineering Deck.
Deck is more than standard
three-meter height. Maneuver
drives are at this deck level.



Deck 8



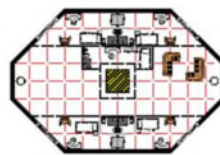
Deck 10



Deck 11

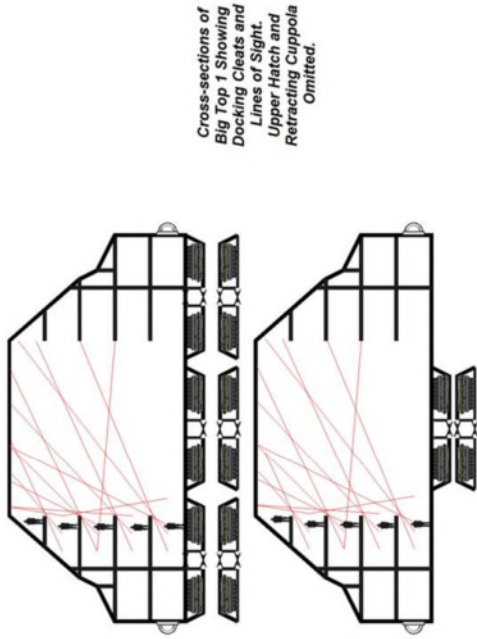


AR Hull



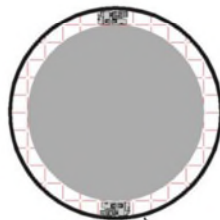
Deck 9

Lower quarters, gunnery and cargo decks.
These decks are very similar to
those on the forward structure.
In Cirque, the staterooms have been
converted to double-occupancy.



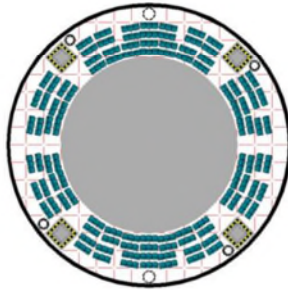
Not shown: catwalks and structures for lighting, video hoists for settings, and attachment of lines for aerialists

Cross-sections of Big Top 1 Showing Docking Cleats and Lines of Sight. Upper Hatch and Retracting Cuppola Omitted.



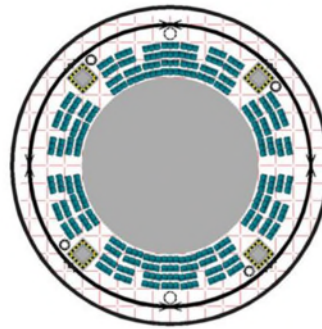
Hatch machinery to East and West. "Cuppola" made of material similar to the external tent can be raised. When lowered and folded, the cuppola takes about 1/2 of the upper deck.

Deck 1



Audience space only.

Deck 2

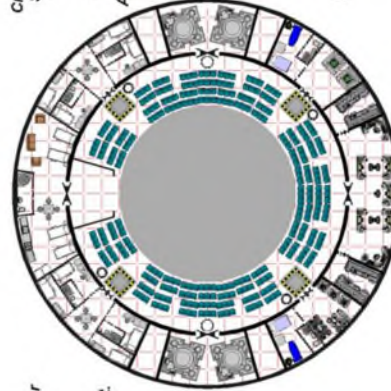


Audience space only.

Deck 3

Big Top One

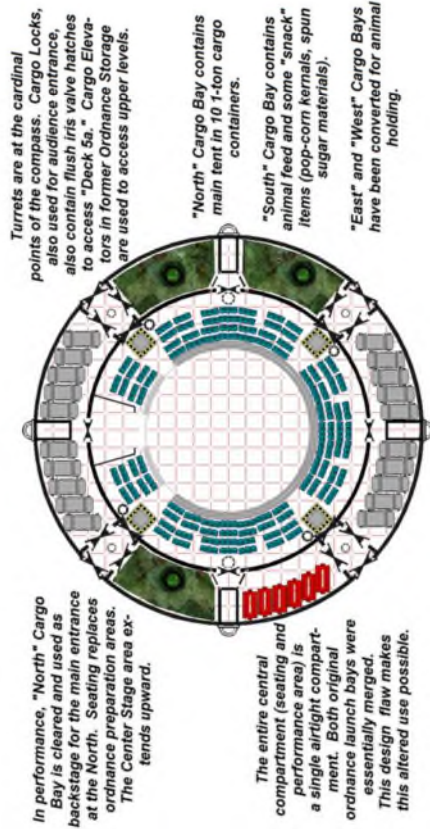
Crew Quarters, Barracks (8), 4 Small SRs with freshers (8), 4 niches (8). All beds are bunked. Animal care personnel and stage crew are assigned here. The Aslan Tumblers may choose to use this space as well.



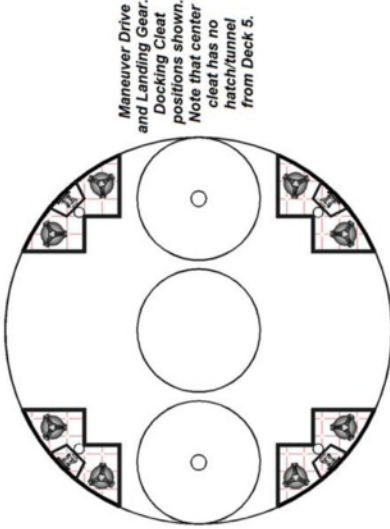
Power plants are to the East and West points. Fuel tankage is to either side of the power plant compartments. All airtight hatches are locked during performances.

Bridge to south. Computer modules to either side. Sensors and electronics to southeast; Life Support to southwest. Small staterooms for Commander and First Officer as noted; First Officer usually gets SR beside waste reclamation system.

Deck 4



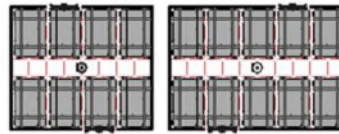
Deck 5



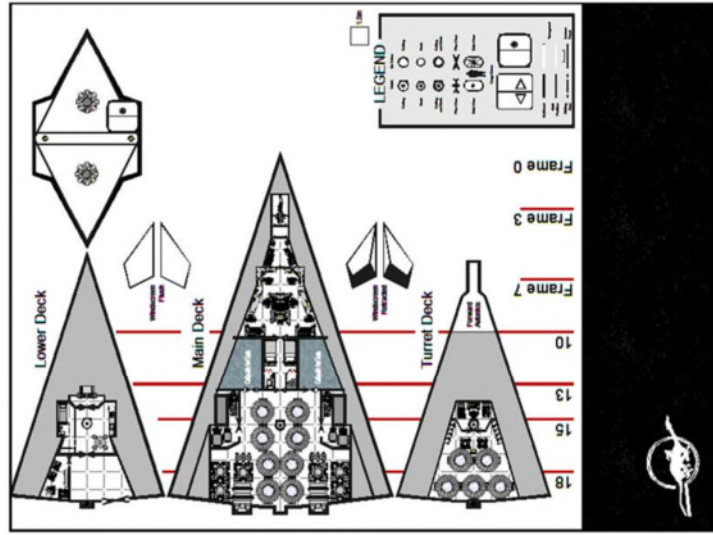
Deck 5a



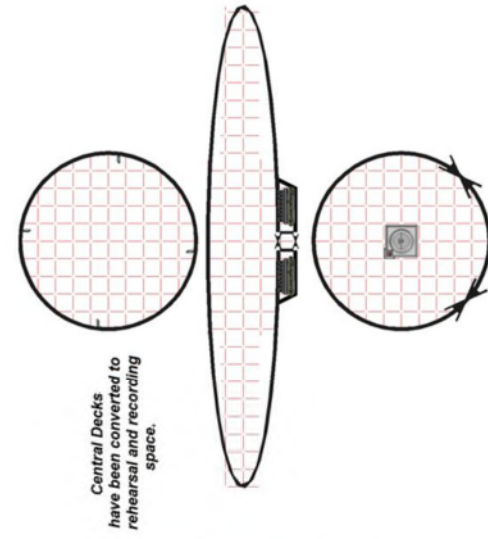
The cargo module totals 60 tons, with internal space for a total of 56 tons by volume. Most cargo modules have been retrofitted for standard commercial cargo containers (3 tons each).



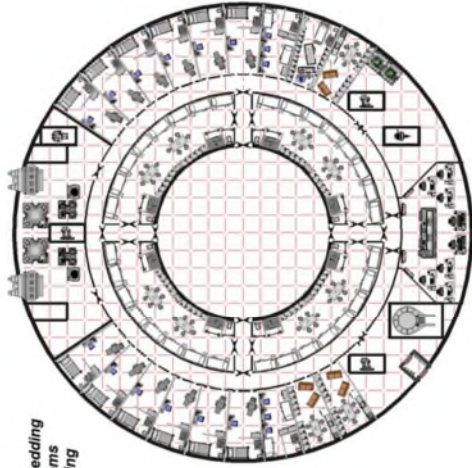
The cargo module consists of two decks. The external hull is unstreamlined. Cargo transfer generally occurs in orbit. Use of the standard docking cleat allows passage to the cargo module from the parent vessel during maneuver and jump.



Cargo Module and Jump-3 Scout



Central Decks have been converted to rehearsal and recording space.

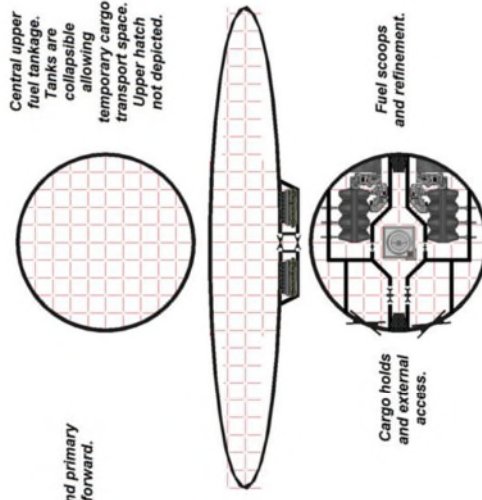


Apart from cleaning and provision of new bedding and furniture, the barracks and staterooms for the original troop-carrying and landing functions are unchanged.

Headliners generally have staterooms, sharing only by choice. All others stage hands, support staff) are housed in barracks. Bunks have minimal privacy screens.

Unassigned space in the forward areas contains various racks for EVA and other equipment.

Big Top Two

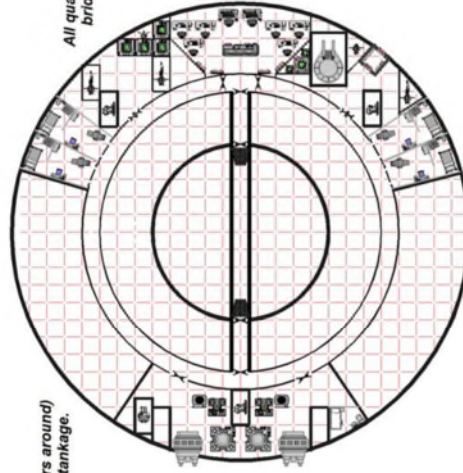


Central upper fuel tankage. Tanks are collapsible allowing temporary cargo transport space. Upper hatch not depicted.

Fuel scoops and refinement.

All quarters and primary bridge are forward.

Cargo holds and external access.



Unassigned space (except corridors around) and through central area) is fuel tankage.

Direct route from Bridge to Engineering goes down to lower level of central cylinder, then back up.

The two-deck central cylinder creates a "split-level effect" in 300-ton hulls built to the general specs of Ringmaster-ready auxiliaries.

Big Top Three

Program Notes: Animals of Cirque des Sirkas

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Slopping the hogs, milking the cows, mucking out the stalls. It's the same all over. It doesn't much matter whether the cow's a goat, or the horse is a kian. It's hard, smelly work. I never much liked it. Ran like hell away and never went back. I didn't want to spend my life watching a kian from behind, if you get my drift. Like I said, it doesn't matter what your local draft animal is — I don't suppose a Terran horse is any better.

Have you ever seen a proper horse here in Spinward? Not unless your socket's plugged in to the entertainment nets. Or maybe the power outlet, but that's a different concept. Lot of animals you haven't seen, probably, and a lot more you don't want to see. Animals are mostly for the planet-bound, not ships. Ever see a live-animal hold? Sure, the recyclers process their stuff, too — one full shovel at a time. It's not like scooping out that litter box you keep for the ship's tree rats, you know.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1102.

Animal Handlers and Trainers

In the oldest tradition of travelling entertainment, many of Cirque's acts involve animals. All are treated and trained well. All have a place in performance. Some may become useful in the course of various adventures. Most of the animals reside in the space allotted for them in BT1's various animal decks, though some of the more tame creatures stay with their handlers. A few, notably the Diva's avians, are housed in their performer/handler's cabins. These performers tend to have cabins on BT1.

Animal handlers are not necessarily the performers in the ring, though as a general rule they are involved. In a small circus, many of the performers assist with the animals, participate in the animal acts, or include animals in their acts. At least one of each type of animal participates in the opening procession, with various performers riding or leading.

Later, the Aslan Tumblers join in "equestrian" tricks on galloping Kian. Seedspitters perform tricks with the Comic Juggler before he begins his topical monologue. The clowns deal again with seedspitters, as well as "thieving" tree rats. The Diva performs her arias with garhawks and afeahyalhtows ("batstings") swooping and barrel-rolling in an aerial dance.

The clowns perform a traditional piece with various animals running, jumping, escaping, and generally making fools of them. Later, the "Terran brown bears" (actually fully intelligent Ursines) dance and entertain by riding old-fashioned bicycles and rolling on balls, showing their almost-human gestures as they growl and moan for approval before one gives the punch-line ("How easily humans are amused, Dear!").

Eventually, miniphants perform traditional tricks. The Vilani Feathered Fan Lizards are brought out in cages. Screeching and roaring, the Fan Lizards face their noble master, jumping through various hoops and performing other tricks. Finally, after arguing with the Noble (who has already worked with the dangerous and intractable Fan Lizards) the Vargr Ringmaster rolls out a covered cage holding the most fearsome beast known in Solomoni space, the Crested Jabberwock, known for its implacable, untrainable ferocity. It escapes, rears back to pounce — and

turns out to be nothing more than an oversized puppy, a sloppy-drool-friendly look-alike from a world deep in Vargr space. It performs tricks between moments of affection for the Vargr Ringmaster, the Noble, and all of the performers during curtain calls.

Descriptions of each animal are taken either from the T5 Bestiary (p. 588) or from the original text found in the Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society magazine, with permission of FFE. Some editing of the JTAS articles has occurred. T5 statistics and information on trainability are included at the end of each description. Trainability is based on the wild animal, not the domesticated breed. In most cases, domesticated examples of these animals will be at least one level less difficult to train. Thus, for example, all training of a Terran dog born and matured in the company of humans becomes an average task for the breed as a whole.

Animal Speed is expressed as "SpeedC" (the standard energy-conserving movement), "SpeedAF" (speed when attacking or fleeing), and "SpeedB" (the highest speed an animal can achieve in short bursts). SpeedC is also expressed as Speed2 in generating animal encounters. The number in parentheses following the beast name is the number of such animals found on board *Cirque*. The various performing animals' given names are found under the name of the original creator.

Value	SpeedC	kph	SpeedAF	kph	SpeedB	kph
1	Walk	5	Run	10	Sprint	20
2	Run	10	Sprint	20	Charge	30
3	Sprint	20	Charge	30	Fast	50
4	Charge	30	Fast	50	Vfast	100
5	Fast	50	Vfast	100	Xfast	300
6	Vfast	100	Xfast	300		

Afeahyalhtow (2)

(Aculeoptere venatod)

Original Writer: John Marshall

Perfect and Jamussen

Trainer and Handler: Diva Avian Trainer

A life-form native to Kusyu, homeworld of the Aslan, the afeahyalhtow (known to humans as the batsting, winger, or falconbat) was domesticated by Aslan hunters long before the race first achieved star flight. They are popular as pets, and are found almost anywhere Aslan are found. Afeahyalhtow are roughly as common in Aslan space as dogs, cats, and other pets are in the Imperium, and regarded by the Aslan in much the same way.

The afeahyalhtow is a carnivore/killer, distantly related to the Aslan in evolutionary terms (the relationship is roughly equivalent to that between humans and bats on earth). Like the Terrestrial bat or the Macropan screamer-in-the-darkness, the creature is a flyer, massing roughly 1 kg, and

Cirque

with a wingspan of about 0.75 meters. The lower limbs have evolved as grasping claws to carry prey or perch on tree limbs or high rocks.

Afeahyalhtow have sharp eyesight, with cat-like eyes that can adjust to a wide range of lighting conditions. Their common practice is to soar at high altitudes, then swoop down on prey. The creatures' grasping claws include one sharp, specialized claw which can inject a paralyzing poison which does 10 points of damage within a few minutes of injection. The poison's effects wear off after about an hour (whereupon the damage is recovered). The venom is not usually harmful to any creature much larger than five kgs, but can be deadly to humans who develop an allergic reaction to it. The primary purpose of the poison is to slow the prey or render it un-conscious, so the afeahyalhtow can feed (it prefers live meat). Teeth and claws only do two points of damage per round, but this is sufficient to allow the afeahyalhtow to make an excellent meal, feeding for 2D + 6 rounds before departing.

Domesticated afeahyalhtow are raised and trained much as falcons and garhawks in human space. Properly trained, they can be used to track and hunt prey; such trained hunters will administer poison to the prey, but will feed only when permitted to do so by their owner. They are easily cared for, eating almost any variety of small animals or, if necessary, raw meat of almost any sort.

Training an afeahyalhtow requires Animals:Trainer skill and six to twelve months before the animal will respond to simple commands (usually various whistle and tongue-clicking signals). A character who has any hunting skill at all and who has worked with afeahyalhtow (Aslan characters with hunting skill have this experience on a 6+, humans on 12+) will gain an extra level of hunting skill while using the animals on the hunt.

Despite their feeding habits, which most humans find distasteful, afeahyalhtow are relatively gentle, companionable pets. They are frequently likened to cats in their behavior — independent, somewhat aloof, but capable of a strong affection and attachment to individuals who understand their ways.

Afeahyalhtow do not respond well to being caged; most grow listless and lose any hunting spirit if confined for more than a few days (roll 10+ once per week to avoid such an outcome) and will eventually die in close confinement. Most owners let them fly free, first attaching small straps around their feet to prevent the stinger claw from functioning. On a



starship, they usually require an hour or two per day of flying time in the ship's cargo compartment or some other open space.

Afeahyalhtow can fly on any world with standard or dense atmospheres and in any thin atmosphere where the world size is 4 four or less.

Because of their size and build, they cannot be provided with any sort of protective gear which will allow them to fly, and so are rarely encountered on worlds with tainted or otherwise unbreathable atmospheres, except indoors, in conditioned quarters.

Other than on worlds heavily settled by Aslan colonists, Afeahyalhtow are not common in human space though some humans do keep them as pets. They command high prices commercially.

Niche:	C Carnivore	Subniche:	5 Pouncer
Quantity:	1 Sole	Size:	4 75 cm (wingspan)
Volume:	1 litre	Mass:	1 kg
Loco:	Flyer (Wings)	Strength:	Strong Size*4D
SpeedC:	Sprint	Speed AF:	Fast
SpeedB:	VFast (Diving)	Endur:	4 hours
Weapon:	Claws, Sting	A/F:	S/S+
Defer:	Formidable	Obey:	Formidable
LST:	Formidable	Edible:	Y (Unusual)

Garhawk (2)

(Stellafalconformis u/ularis)

Original Writer: J. Andrew Keith

Fluffy the Bog Troll and Chookeyham

Trainer and Handler: Diva Avian Trainer

Also known as the Skyhuntress, or Kahkahyeek from its hunting call, the garhawk has become popular in some circles of Imperial nobility for hunting. Properly trained garhawks, with their keen eyesight and superb hunting instincts, can spot and kill prey over remarkably long distances.

Garhawks are large (over one meter wingspan) flying carnivores, originally from Nagaschk, a planet to spinward of the Imperial core. Natives of the world, a TL3 race, delighted in hunting; their use of garhawks in their sport sparked interest among human visitors. Once the trick of raising and training these vicious aveforms was mastered, a small but lucrative trade in garhawks gradually opened, introducing them through much of the Imperium, the Solomani Sphere, and even within the Zhodani Consulate. Humans, at least those enjoying the hunt, have found the sport of hunting with garhawks a fascinating renaissance of falconry and hawk-ing.

The Stellafalconformes are prime examples of convergent evolution. Externally, they are quite similar to the Exoaccipitiformes of Kalga, the Falconiformes of Terra, and countless other aveform families throughout known space, where natural selection has acted to mold highly efficient flying hunters. Garhawks are not true birds; they bear live young in nest-litters of two or three. The young are fed meat in the nest by the two parents for three months. After their first flight, the young will remain in the nest for from six to nine months. Garhawks form mate-pairs which last for life; they are often sold in pairs, for this increases the lifespan (and the value) of the animal, but they rarely breed in captivity, and those that do produce inferior hunters. Their average lifespan is ten years, although one specimen lived for nineteen years after it was taken.

Garhawks should always be approached cautiously. Sudden noises or movements, unfamiliar voices or odors, brightly colored or shiny objects or articles of clothing have been known to provoke sudden and unrelenting attacks. Trained garhawks are used to hunt a wide variety of small animals, usually not exceeding half the garhawk's weight. However, they have been known to ferociously attack creatures far larger than themselves in defense of their young, or on command from an experienced handler.

Garhawk falconry is not a sport for the poor (which also explains its popularity in certain circles). Garhawks are expensive to buy — a trained one demands a price of close to Cr5,000 — and expensive to maintain. A full-grown garhawk, weighing as much as 6 kilos, needs 500 grams of fresh meat per day. A temperamental creature, a garhawk can be particularly vicious when it is not properly fed and cared for. Other expenses include heavy gloves, pads, and training paraphernalia for the handler, and hoods and collars for the garhawk. A full-time handler is required to feed and care for the creatures, and to constantly sharpen their training. Garhawk falconry remains a sport of the very rich.

Adventurers may encounter garhawks in a variety of circumstances. For example, a wealthy patron or enemy may keep them for sport. An encounter might find a nobleman unleashing his garhawk against unwanted intruders to his estate.

Skyhuntresses are occasionally found aboard ships as cargo, especially if the destination is a world where hunting is popular, or where there are many landed estates. Adventurers owning a starship may be hired to deliver a mated pair of garhawks to a noble, and woe betide them if the feeding instructions for their charges are not carried out precisely.

Garhawks inhabit such remote and hard-to-get-to places that in the wild they are rarely encountered by adventurers. If a party is actively searching for garhawks, roll 12 exactly each week spent searching the proper locations (generally high, not readily accessible mountaintops, cliff faces, and so on) for them to successfully locate a nest.

Characters with noble or hunter backgrounds are the only characters likely to have had past experience training garhawks. On a roll of 6 on one die, a hunter or noble will be familiar enough with these creatures to attempt to handle them. They may be able to turn a garhawk's attack on a roll of 7+ (The referee may wish to designate DMs for various skills which may be applicable.)

Training a garhawk requires much time, patience, and blood. One

Cirque



raised in captivity usually lacks the spirit of its wild cousins. A garhawk must be captured while still flightless in the nest in order for optimum training. Those captured too soon will not survive, and those captured too late will

be too hard to control although even the best trained of garhawks are difficult to control completely.

Training takes six to eight months, with a training session every day. On each encounter, roll 10+ to avoid attack; past experience gives a DM+3. Dexterity, strength, intelligence, and the Animals: Trainer] and JoT skills can all be used as DMs at the referee's discretion.

Niche:	C Carnivore	Subniche:	5 Pouncer
Quantity:	1 Sole	Size:	4 1 m (wings)
Vol:	11	Mass:	1 kg
Loco:	Flyer (Wings)	Strength:	Strong Size*4D
SpeedC:	Charge	SpeedAF:	Fast
SpeedB:	VFast (swoop)	Endur:	3 hours
Weapon:	Claws	A/F:	S/S+
Defer:	Staggering Obey:	Staggering	
LST:	Staggering Edible:	Y (Slightly Off)	

Bloodvark (5)

(Megalorhinos osmichnilatis claudii)

Original Writer: William H. Keith, Jr.

Traak, Phileas, Eschnitt, Artemis, and Aiderbai
Trainer and Handler: Edwina Dystrom

Bloodvarks — also called walking noses and hoovers (the latter for reasons unknown) — are four-limbed mammal-like creatures native to Lentoli. They have been introduced as trade items to worlds throughout the Imperium; they are often purchased by the law enforcement agencies of planets of tech level 5 through 9.

These strong, hairy animals mass between 50 and 70 kg when full grown, stand .8 meter high at the shoulder and average 2.3 meters long, including the bushy tail. They are omnivores, preferring small, burrowing animals or hive insects, which they dig up with their fore claws, but can subsist on berries and sweet grasses. This adaptability has let them adjust to and thrive on a number of planets and a variety of climates.

Bloodvarks are best known for their uncanny sense of smell. Once put on the trail of a fugitive or animal prey (by letting them smell an article of clothing or recently-handled item, for instance), they will follow it relentlessly and without stopping for days at a time. They can follow trails a

week old in good weather, though they will lose a trail after about 4 hours of steady hard rain or snow. They have been known to follow fresh trails — less than 6 hours old — across streams or along the ground UNDER the branches used by an escaping prisoner, probably picking up traces of scent still hanging in the air. They do not tire easily; they are worked on leashes day and night by handlers working in relays. The animals used by local police



forces are trained for their tasks, usually by the agency which raises them, a process which takes 3 months.

Bloodvarks have extremely poor eyesight, and only fair hearing. Normally gentle, they attack if wounded, cornered or provoked, with powerful swipes of their long claws.

Their usefulness as trackers makes them valuable trade items. Trained bloodvarks can fetch as much as Cr800 on the world where they

are purchased; untrained animals bring about Cr100 each. Their size and single-mindedness makes them unattractive as pets, but because of their intelligence and fierce loyalty, human handlers frequently become quite attached to their charges.

Bloodvarks are oviparous and have two genders. The female digs a den in soft earth under a fallen tree or a large boulder, buries two or three 15 cm eggs under loosely packed soil, and lays over them until they hatch. The young dig themselves out and cling to the mother's abdominal hair, where they hang and nurse for about 5 months.

Niche:	O Omnivore	Subniche:	HG Hybrid
Quantity:	2 Pair	Size:	5 2.3m
Volume:	70 liters	Mass:	70 kg
Loco:	Walk (Legs)	Strength:	Strong Size*4D
SpeedC:	Walk	SpeedAF:	Sprint
SpeedB:	Charge	Endur:	6 hours
Weapon:	Peds (Clawed)	A/F:	9/6
Defer:	Difficult	Obey:	Difficult
LST:	Difficult	Edible:	Y (Tasty)

Miniphants (2)

(Microelphas var.)

Original Writer: Roger Moore

Rumpole and Casey

Trainer and Handler: Dashsha Riira

During the earliest days of expansion into space from Terra, a number of worlds were settled whose terrains challenged the best overland transportation systems. Dense jungle growth and swamplands foiled road building, and local vegetation sometimes proved nearly unkillable. Since the colonies had (initially at least) very low technologies, one solution to the problem was to use specially bred beasts of burden. These animals could be sent to the colonies in embryonic form, and soon became the low tech alternative to the truck and ATV on many worlds.

One of the animals developed for this program was geneered from the Terran Indian Elephant (*Elphas indicus*). These beasts were ideal for overland travel in forests and lesser swamps. Later colonies carried the animals to other colonies, and over the years, numerous varieties were developed. The most popular of these are several species collectively referred to as miniphants, so-called because of their smaller size and mass. Miniphants were bred for tractability and high intelligence. They stand an average of 2.05 meters at the shoulder; males weigh 1800 kgs, females weigh 1600 kgs. No tusks are present, but miniphants compensate for this lack when lifting loads by having more powerful trunks. Miniphants have an extremely good sense of smell by nature, but are possessed of superb hearing, giving them a DM +2 against being surprised. The visual sense is not exceptional, and geneering was only partially successful in eliminating a tendency towards near-sightedness. The grey hide of a miniphant is as tough as cloth armor but is very sensitive to touch. The trunk is even more sensitive and susceptible to injury, but makes a fairly effective manipulative limb.

There is a fair chance of running across miniphants on worlds with tech levels between 0 and 3, and they can be found on some higher tech level worlds in remote and backward regions, employed as cargo handlers, pack and hauling beasts, and mounts. In addition, many worlds keep them in zoological collections, where they are popular exhibits. The cost of upkeep is about Cr150 per day, including 50 kg of hay and vegetable supplements and 50 liters of water.

Miniphants, like many other elephant species, have some powerful abilities to aid their survival. Though they cannot tolerate cold weather, miniphants adapt well to higher temperatures to the limit of human tolerance. All swim exceptionally well. Their feet are padded in such a way as to permit them to move quite silently (DM +1 to surprise). Because of their foot structure, it is difficult for them to get stuck in the mud; the foot expands when it strikes the ground, and reduces its diameter when lifted.

Miniphants will rarely attack unless wounded or provoked. The usual tactics involve charging the victim and delivering a butt with the head, trampling with the feet, or seizing a tree branch or similar object in its trunk and flailing away. A blow from an elephant-wielded cudgel, which is larger than a human could use, will do substantial damage.

Cirque



Miniphants can be considered to have an intelligence range of 2-4. While they cannot speak, they can understand spoken commands readily, even when given in whispers. A large number of commands may be learned and will be retained for a long period of time, though few tasks of exceptional complexity will be known. Miniphants make slow

but patient learners. They have emotions as humans do, play games and practical jokes, and are amiable.

If used as a pack animal or mount, miniphants can carry up to 350 kgs comfortably or can pull up to 2000 kgs in a wagon or cart.

Niche:	H Herbivore	Subniche:	Grazer
Quantity:	2D Some	Size:	5 2.5m
Vol:	2000 l	Mass:	2000 kg
Loco:	Walk (Legs)	Strength:	VStrong Size*5D
SpeedC:	Walk	SpeedAF:	Sprent
SpeedB:	Charge	Endur:	4
Weapon:	Peds, Trunk	A/F:	8/8
Defer:	Difficult	Obey:	Difficult
LST:	Difficult	Edible:	Y (Tasty)

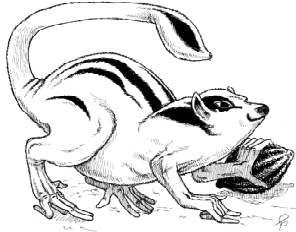
Seedspitter (3)

(Pseudotupaia gigans)

Original Writers: L. Crede Lombard and Jerry Stoddard

Chromamoth, Blinky and Fuzzybutt
Trainers and Handlers: Shugaap Shugap, Comic Juggler, Clown

The seedspitter is a small, moderately intelligent animal native to the forests and uplands of certain worlds throughout the Imperium. Externally, the seedspitter resembles the Terran shrew, but is larger, massing about three kgs (about the size of a small domestic cat). It has reddish-grey to reddish-brown fur, a domed head and an elongated nose.



At one time the seedspitter secreted an irritant poison similar to a bee's venom into a chamber located behind its upper lip. It would fill this chamber with venom, constrict it rapidly, and squirt the irritant out through an opening in its upper lip with sufficient force to propel it one or

two meters. The irritant could paralyze the small animals which were a part of the seedspitter's diet.

As time passed, the animal learned to pick up fruit seeds or small stones with its tongue, insert them into its poison cavity, and propel them at predators. In time, the seedspitter developed this skill to the point where it only secreted enough poison to lightly coat the seed and lubricate its passage out of the chamber.

Because of its affectionate nature and its appealing appearance, (the upturned corners of the mouth give the appearance of a perpetual smirk), the seedspitter is a common pet on starships, where it helps in pest control. Seedspitters are easily trained to do tricks such as hitting a target, or "juggling" seeds by repeatedly spitting them into the air, catching them, and spitting them again. Well-trained animals can keep four or five seeds in the air at once.

Niche:	O Omnivore	Subniche:	HG Hybrid
Quantity:	2D Some	Size:	3 20cm
Vol:	3 liters	Mass:	3 kg
Loco:	Walk (Legs)	Strength:	Weak Size*1D
SpeedC:	Walk	SpeedAF:	Run

SpeedB:	Sprint	End:	
Weapon:	Peds, Poison	A/F:	9/8
Defer:	Difficult	Obey:	Difficult
LST:	Difficult	Edible:	Y (Bad)

Crested Jabberwock (0)

(Jabberwockiscristatus saevitia)

Original Writer: John Marshal

Loki

Trainers and Handlers: Beast Tamer and Assistant

Cirque des Sirkas bills itself as having "the galaxy's most ferocious land-based killer, the Crested Jabberwock, tamed and taught to perform for your amusement!"

Sometimes called the nightclaw, the fanged death, or simply jabberwock, the *genuine* Crested Jabberwock is a medium-sized carnivore native to Kasaan (Vega 0101 A-785757-E) in the Solomani Rim. Only a few members of the species have been transported off-world.

Fully grown jabberwocks mass about 400 Kgs. They are bilaterally symmetrical, homoeothermic quadrupeds, standing about 1.2 meters tall at the shoulder and measuring some 2.6 meters in length. Their anatomy is unusual in that the animal has four two-chambered hearts.

The jabberwock is noted for its magnificent, multi-colored crest, which is used in displays of territorial aggression and courtship. This gorgeous crest is highly prized by hunters and trophy collectors throughout the Solomani Rim, who have made the animal a highly prized and much-sought-after target. As the jabberwock is one of the most aggressive carnivores known in modern exobiology (they have been known to attack prey five times their size), the challenge of jabberwock hunting has long been considered the ultimate proof of courage and skill in some circles.

The creature unfortunately has not proved a match for the inevitable march of civilization. Over the centuries, the inhabitants of Kasaan have sought to extend the world's agricultural production into new areas; they have ruthlessly sought to eliminate the carnivore to protect fields and livestock. This, even more than the depredations of trophy hunters, has caused a massive decline in the numbers of jabberwocks in the wild. The species was recently placed upon the endangered species list maintained by the Pan-Galactic Friends of Life (FoL), which organization has set out to protect them from further decline. The FoL's efforts have been quite successful to date, with the establishment of wilderness preserves on Kasaan and the passage of strict laws against jabberwock hunting being among the most important triumphs achieved.



A solitary hunter, the jabberwock stakes out a territorial claim over an area several kilometers square, and tolerates others of its kind within that area only during a relatively brief rutting season each year. They are ferocious and kill their prey by using both their long slashing claws and sharp fangs. A jabberwock is rarely satisfied; even when freshly fed, they take great delight in stalking and killing prey.

Cirque des Sirkas does *not*, in fact, have any such animal in its bestiary. The insurance alone would bankrupt the tour.

Niche:	C Carnivore	Subniche:	Killer
Quantity:	1 Sole	Size:	5 Large 2.6 m, 400 kg
Vol:	400 liters	Mass:	400 kg
Loco:	Walk (Legs)	Strength:	Formidable Size x 6D
SpeedC:	Run	SpeedAF:	Sprint
SpeedB:	Charge	End:	8
Weapon:	Claws, Teeth	A/F:	12/12
Defer:	No	Obey:	No
LST:	No	Edible:	Y (Disg)

Vargr Crested Tracker/Retriever (1)

Vargr Name: Dzoeghuerrgh (No Latin Genus Name)
 Original Artist: Tim Osborne
 Original Writer: Gregory P. Lee
 Loki
 Trainers and Handlers: Vargr Ringmaster
 and Clown

The dzoeghuerrgh, or Vargr crested retriever is originally from Soun (1005 Tuglikki). It is best known to the Vargr of that sector, and is rarely seen in Imperial space. Only a few have found their way there, primarily with Vargr merchants. The animal has long been domesticated and used in hunting, tracking, and for simple companionship.

Though not originally from Terra, the dzoeghuerrgh seems to thrive on companionship with mammals of Terran biological extraction, most especially humans and Vargr. Vargr scientists who have studied the animal have concluded that pheromones produced by Terran mammals have a mood-altering effect on the dzoeghuerrgh. In response, it has an almost sycophantic need to please intelligent mammals of Terran DNA-origin. The dzoeghuerrgh is highly affectionate and submissive, seeing itself as a lapdog despite its size. It handles separation from its primary badly, yowling and crying if left in a cage or behind a locked door. Fortunately, the dzoeghuerrgh is easily house-trained.

The dzoeghuerrgh has highly developed olfactory and visual senses. It is generally useful in tracking, flushing, and retrieving game. It views this as wonderful play, at least so long as it is properly fed.

The dzoeghuerrgh is intelligent and can be trained with relative ease. It can perform reasonably complex tricks, and seems to derive pleasure from doing so, especially if its master is pleased.

In short, the dzoeghuerrgh is a perfect pet for a Vargr. Even the least charismatic Vargr who has a dzoeghuerrgh has a loyal follower.

As an interesting sidelight, the dzoeghuerrgh is similar in shape, color and proportion to the deadly Crested Jabberwock of the planet Kas-san in the Solomoni Rim. Though its head is far less frightening, and it is about twenty-five percent smaller, many sophonts viewing photos or videos of the crested retriever identify it as the more deadly Crested Jabberwock. Others have been known to run in terror as a dzoeghuerrgh bounded toward them to bestow an affectionate greeting. Indeed, at least one charlatan has attempted to foist a dzoeghuerrgh off on the Duke of Lunion Subsector as a "tame" Crested Jabberwock.

Several dzoeghuerrgh pups were recovered from wreckage during the Fifth Frontier War. A breeding program has been commenced on Rhyalanor's Old Station. Both Andii and the Vargr Ringmaster saw the potential for using this animal in performances. It is brought on at the end of the Fan Lizard performance, as the Clown attempts to convince the Vargr Ringmaster that he, too, can tame a frightening beast.



Niche:	C Carnivore	Subniche:	Pouncer
Quantity:	1 Sole	Size:	5 Large 1.5 m
Vol:	300 liters	Mass:	300 kg
Loco:	Walk (Legs)	Strength:	Typical Size x 3D
SpeedC:	Walk	SpeedAF:	Run
SpeedB:	Sprint	End:	6
Weapon:	Claws, Teeth	A/F:	6/4
Defer:	No	Obey:	No
LST:	No	Edible:	Y (Unusual)

Beaked Monkey (4)

(Psittarhynchus fructophagii)
 Original Writer: Loren Wiseman
 Tyche, Pella, Fruzzel and Snowball
 Trainers and Handlers: Shugaap Shugap,
 Bertii (Snowball)

Beakers, as Beaked Monkeys are sometimes called, are common on many worlds, both in the wild and in captivity. In addition, they are found on many starships as pets. Their planet of origin is not known, but the animals can be documented as far back as far as 300 years pre-Imperial, with a range almost as widespread as at the present.

Beakers typically weigh from 2 to 3 kilograms, and measure 60 to 75 cm in length, half of which is generally taken up by the tail. Tails are sometimes bobbed on animals kept aboard spacecraft. Beakers are covered by a short fur, most commonly brown or gray. Black is rare, and white extremely so (roll 2D for 2-7 = brown, 8-10 = grey, 11 = black and 12 = white).

The skeleton and musculature follow typical Terran vertebrate norms. Respiration is accomplished by the usual paired lung arrangement, the circulatory system is closed and the heart four-chambered, making the animal very similar to certain small Terran mammals such as the squirrel monkey.

The beaker's most notable feature, the beak, is formed of two bony projections from the palate and mandible, covered by a horny substance resembling keratin. The lower third of the esophagus is extremely heavily muscled and lined with a number of tooth-like grinding structures, which break swallowed food into fragments small enough to be digested readily. In the wild, the beaker is arboreal and is thought to have originally subsisted on a diet of hard-shelled nuts and seeds, although specimens have been observed eating insects and other small animals. In captivity, beakers thrive on almost any available type of human food.

The animals are quite popular as pets on starships because of their gregarious affection to almost all humans, their intelligence and their scrupulous cleanliness. Some individuals are rumored to act as a booster for certain psionic activities, but this last ability has not been proven to the satisfaction of most authorities.

Referee's Information: Certain animals act as boosters for psionic talents under restricted conditions. First and foremost, The animal must have the potential. Roll 2D for 10+ to determine if a particular beaker has psionic booster potential, DMs +1 if black, +2 if white.



A player possessing psionic ability at any level greater than 0 may be able to detect a beaker with psionic enhancement potential (DIF (3D) < (Psi + Mentation). No player can determine the amount a particular beaker will be able to boost psi potential in advance.

Finally, for the boost to be possible and be used successfully:

- The beaker must have lived in close proximity with the human desiring the boost for at least three months.
- The beaker and the human must be within one meter of each other during the time the boost is taking place. If this distance is exceeded, The beaker must save against its endurance to avoid death for each combat round the separation continues: AVG (2D) < (End).
- The human desiring the boost must have a natural, unenhanced psi rating of 5 or higher.

If all of these conditions are met, the beaker will raise the human's psi rating temporarily by from one to six points (roll one die). Each time the player's psi strength is boosted, the beaker must roll to save against dying from the effort (AVG (2D) < (End). If a beaker dies during psi booster contact with a human, that human permanently loses 2 from his psionic strength rating.

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Niche:	O	Subniche:	Hunter/Gatherer Hybrid
Quantity:	Triple	Size:	4 75cm
Volume:	3.5 litre	Mass:	4 kg
Loco:	Legs	Strength:	Typical Size*2D
SpeedC:	Walk	Speed AF:	Run
SpeedB:	Sprint	Endur:	3 hours
Weapon:	Teeth, Tail	A/F:	
Defer:	Difficult	Obey:	Difficult
LST:	Difficult	Edible:	Y (Exquisite)

Kians (4)

(Pseudostruthio gigas)

Original Writers: Liz Danforth and
Loren K. Wiseman

Camivog, Bernhardt's Rhino, Cecelia and Rema
Handler: Wayne Johnson

Kians are herbivore grazers of large size, originating on Prilissa in the Trin's Veil subsector. Due to their hardy nature, they were exported to a number of worlds as beasts of burden and are a common sight in the coreward reaches both in the wild and in captivity. They are plains dwellers, travelling in herds of 10 to 60 individuals, feeding upon grasses,



leaves, or similar plant matter.

Externally, the kian is a large bipedal creature with a long neck, short tail, and no other limbs (the remains of an atrophied pair of fore-limbs can be found in some breeds). Kians are thickly furred, their coats showing distinctive color patterns of brown, gold, lemon yellow, and black. A kian's legs are powerfully muscled for fast movement over long distances. The sturdiness of their overall frames has made them a frequent choice for use as mounts and pack animals on the planets where they occur. Klan's hearing and

eyesight are extremely good, reflecting their predator-laden environment of origin.

Internally, the kian is unremarkable. It has a closed circulatory system and an overall high metabolism which requires that it be fed 30 to 50 kilograms of vegetable matter daily. Its digestive system consists of two stomachs, which allows the animal to break down the toughest plant matter into digestible form. The kian has a thick layer of fat which insulates in cooler climates and provides a degree of protection from the venomous bites or stings of some small animals. The skeleton is strong and heavy, and is structurally not unlike that of the moa and other prehistoric terrestrial flightless birds.

When attacked or frightened, kians will usually flee, but if cornered are capable of delivering deadly kicks with either of their hoofed feet. The large claws projecting from the backs of the feet are only present in the male, and seem to be used solely for ritual combat between males prior to mating.

Kians can carry up to 250 kilograms comfortably, and will refuse to move if overloaded. Kians cannot tolerate thin atmospheres and require a special filter/ muzzle (Cr50) for tainted atmospheres.

Niche:	H Herbivore	Subniche:	Grazer
Quantity:	2D Some	Size:	4m
Vol.	800	Mass:	790 kg
Loco:	Walk (Legs)	Strength:	VStrong Size*5D
SpeedC:	Sprint	SpeedAF:	Charge
SpeedB:	Fast	Endur:	5
Weapon:	Peds	A/F:	9/4
Defer:	Difficult	Obey:	Difficult
LST:	Difficult	Edible:	Y (Tasty)

Kagerushum (Fan Lizard) (3)

(No Latin Genus Name)

Original Artist: Tim Osborne

Writer: Gregory P. Lee

Millicent, Zoxy, Grok'thar Dorounaunt

Trainer and Handler: **Baron Asushuum Medukaiide**

The Vilani kagerushum is a small but decorative creature which is found in the more tropical regions of Vland. They are more intelligent than Terran animals of similar niches (e.g., the flamingo), but less easily tamed. They are deemed ornamental but not necessarily companionable. The kagerushum are a flocking species but are far cleaner and easier to keep as indoor pets than Terran birds. Keeping one as a pet is a mark of arrogance in some eyes. The animal is difficult to fully tame, and in that way is similar to the big cats of Terra.

The "fans" are bone covered with a thin skin with complex and consciously altered biochemical color-production qualities. They serve to communicate moods and other messages to both other kagerushum and potential threats and predators. When an individual is safe and pleased, the fans are soothing blues and greens, and vibrate so as to make pleasant sounds. When the kagerushum is mating, it uses yellow and green symbols. When threatened, the fans become very animated and seem to "strobe" through various patterns and color combinations, amounting to a final warning and threat by the kagerushum. If the animal attacks, its flock will follow, and the target of the attack will be in significant danger of being eaten. Several Vilani nobles of note have committed "suicide by kagerushum" when greatly shamed by misdeeds, pushing themselves into enclosures with hungry, threatening flocks.



The social and flocking nature of the kagerushum makes it an interesting animal to train. When a leader is trained and willing to comply, its followers will copy its actions and colorings. Some patient trainers have been able to teach animals to mirror words and patterns in the coloring; if a leader learns the pattern, its followers will copy from the leader.

Niche:	C Carnivore	Subniche:	Chasers/Sirens
Quantity:	Several	Size:	5 135cm
Volume:	80 litre	Mass:	70 kg
Loco:	Legs	Strength:	Strong Size*3D
SpeedC:	Sprint	Speed AF:	Charge
SpeedB:	Fast	Endur:	2 hours
Weapon:	Teeth	A/F:	S/S+
Defer:	Staggering Obey:	Formidable	
LST:	Formidable	Edible:	Y (Unusual)

Duranthe (1)

(No Latin Genus Name)

Original Artist: Tim Osborne

Writer: Gregory P. Lee

James

Trainer and Handler: Wayne Oater

A beast of burden native to Lagaashin (Core 2407), the duranthe is a valuable animal. It is four-legged, has a wide back, and a somewhat tall neck suited for grazing from trees as well as the ground. Like most of the warm-blooded creatures from that world, the duranthe is self-inseminating. However, it maintains a veritable "recombination laboratory" in a special organ. This, in essence, provides the same "re-scramble and experiment with mixtures" that is provided by more common systems of reproduction. A duranthe will commence a gestation of approximately

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thirteen standard months when conditions are right (sufficient food and water must be available, as well as certain biochemical signals).

Duranthes are long-lived and are apparently able to recycle and refurbish their own telomeres several times. Some duranthes have had documented lifespans exceeding 150 standard years. As mounts, they are sometimes passed from parent to child.

The beasts are compatible with humans as a whole. However, they can evidence clear preferences, and will not let some humans approach. In those cases, they have been known to bite, snort, spit, and even rear up and attack, all without apparent provocation. They are at the least querulous and unpleasant to those humans they dislike.

Despite their unusual reproduction, they are not at all solitary creatures, preferring to herd with other duranthes or other creatures. They are surprisingly social with both Terran horses and kian when mixed, so long as they are exposed to the species while fairly young.

Duranthe communicate in what is sometimes described as a mixture of nasal and raspy tones, but which have a musicality nonetheless. Their four eyes provide substantial peripheral vision; their ears are very sensitive. Their trunk-like dual nasal manipulators are used in eating, sensing by smell, communication with other duranthes, and simple grasping. Many humans find contact with these tentacle-like structures unusually distasteful; scientists suspect that this is in part a pheromone-mediated reaction.



Nicheche: H Herbivore	Subniche: Grazer
Quantity: 2D Some	Size: 2 m
Vol: 750	Mass: 770 kg
Loco: Walk (Legs)	Strength: VStrong Size*5D
SpeedC: Sprint	SpeedAF: Charge
SpeedB: Fast	Endur: 5
Weapon: Peds	A/F: 9/5
Defer: Difficult	Obey: Difficult
LST: Difficult	Edible: Y (Tasty)

Tree Rat (9) (Abdor var)

Original Writer: Roger Moore

Sleepy, Dopey, Grumpy, Sneezey, Doc, Happy, Bashful, Snow White, Rose Red

Trainer and Handler: Shugaap Shugap

The Focaline tree rat is a small rodent-like creature native to Focaline (in the Aramis subsector). It weighs 3-4 kilograms, and measures 70-80 cm in length. Two thirds of its length is tail. Tree rats have a red-brown fur covering the entire body except for the soles of their paws. Some specimens are shaded more to a deep chocolate brown or maroon. Tree rats seem able to adapt very quickly to temperature changes, and exposure to cold weather for more than a week results in their growing a thicker and rougher coat. Though they physically resemble terrestrial rodent types, tree rats have longer legs, feet adapted to grasping, and a prehensile tail that all help them in their arboreal habitats. This tail allows tree rats to easily pick up small objects and hang from tree limbs using their tail alone (most tree rats sleep in this fashion). In the wild, tree rats use their tails to carry food to treetop nests, to retrieve food dropped into areas that cannot otherwise be reached with paws, and in combat, either to free their other limbs for the fight or to grab a small opponent and dislodge it from its perch on a limb. They are omnivores, and have very sharp teeth that they use to pierce thick fruit skins (or unwary fingers!) They are quite intelligent

(about the same level as most small Terran monkeys) and have an elaborate social structure in natural environments.

Tree rats are looked upon with a mixture of dislike and appreciation. They are prone to raiding fruit-bearing plants (their chief food) and are thus not popular with orchard owners and other growers, but they also feed upon and control local pests (such as the ubiquitous Norway rat) that destroy or spoil other more financially important crops on the planet. Tree rats have proven quite popular pets in many places (especially in places where small animals present a pest problem), as well as on starships as mascots or personal pets. This practice has led to the spread of tree rats throughout most of the spinward reaches of the Imperium.

Tree rats have an extremely well developed olfactory system, and much of their intra-species communication is based on the detection of emotional states through different smells. When exposed to human company for longer than a year, tree rats can learn to distinguish emotions such as fear or anger in humans by smell. They can easily be trained for certain tasks, such as sniffing out small component micro-fires or bearing burn-outs. Some planetary police forces have trained tree rats to track creatures or persons over limited areas, and sniff out hidden illegal cargoes. This is not a simple undertaking, however, as such training takes a year or more, and requires constant reinforcement.

As pets, tree rats are quite successful. Their mammalian physiology allows them to eat most of the foods that humans do. They shed little, except when getting rid of a cold weather coat, and are naturally clean animals, easily housebroken.

Tree rats have an average lifespan of fifteen years, mate for life, and bear young once a year after age three, in litters of about four "ratlings". Their major drawback as pets is their insatiable curiosity, which has led to their accidentally being locked in airlocks or food bins. They also like to collect bits of shiny or brightly colored material (like coins, keys, and credit cards), depositing them in a nest in their owner's cabin, a trait which has earned them the nickname "cinnamon thief". This can develop into a game the tree rat initiates by picking up a valuable item in its tail and then racing around the ship, with the item's owners in hot pursuit.



Niche: O	Subniche: Hunter/Gatherer Hybrid
Quantity: Triple	Size: 4 75cm
Volume: 3.5 litre	Mass: 4 kg
Loco: Legs	Strength: Typical Size*2D
SpeedC: Walk	Speed AF: Run
SpeedB: Sprint	Endur: 3 hours
Weapon: Teeth, Tail	A/F:
Defer: Staggering Obey:	Formidable
LST: Formidable	Edible: Y (Tasty)

Vreepers (0)

(No Latin Genus Name)

Original Artist: Tim Osborne

Original Writer: Gregory P. Lee

Named for the sound they make when warning or attacking, Vreepers are about the size of the Norway rat, and fill the same ecological niches and functions. Like the rat, they migrated on ships, and thus are well represented in the Spinward Marches. However, they lack the cute and cuddly nature of their Terran counterparts — which is to say, they are truly repugnant.

Vreepers are six-legged, exothermic (warm-blooded), and furred. Their legs end in clawed four-digit manipulators, each of which can be used as either a foot or a hand. Their mouths are hinged to open wide, then clamp down and grip. Though omnivorous, they are capable hunters and defenders.

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The vreepers' original world circled a small star with a companion star in the next orbit. While its environment was generally reasonably wet, severe drought struck at varying intervals as the companion star drew close. Thus, when water is lacking, vreepers hibernate, slowing down all bodily functions and excretions. A vreeper can survive up to four weeks in this state.

Vreepers are mammalian, with two genders. Females give birth to broods of six to eight offspring, with a gestational period of about 33 standard days. A pregnant vreeper may hibernate in dry spells; the unborn broodlings within her suspend their development until both food and water become available.

Vreepers form nests of 4D individuals. Beyond this number, population pressure causes individuals leave and form new nests. Interrelated nests form colonies. Where food is plentiful, colonies have been known to include up to 50D6 nests (200D6 individuals) within a half-kilometer radius. With sufficient food and water supplies, vreepers can live even more densely.

Fast and clever, vreepers have been known to get into cargo containers despite reasonable efforts at pest control. Food-containing cargo carriers are a primary mode of vreeper migration from world to world. Technological means are not always succeeded in locating hibernating vreepers in containers. Common shipboard animals such as tree rats consider the torpid vreeper a treat, but do not always locate them. The somewhat rare Terran cat has been less successful in rooting out the pests; although they can locate and kill torpid vreepers readily enough, they find the taste of the flesh unpleasant.

Vreepers which become free in ships (e.g., from improperly sealed cargo containers or low-technology containers constructed of edible natural fibers) will nest and begin breeding. Already-pregnant females may give birth even before the vessel reaches its destination. Vessels which take insufficient precautions have become mobile breeding grounds. Any vessel believed to be infested is subject to orbital quarantine. All cargo is off-loaded to a sealed bay in the up-port's cargo dock, unpackaged, inspected and sifted to eliminate the vreeper nests before it is re-packaged and re-sealed.

The infested ship itself is often fully decompressed and left without air for a week. All supplies are discarded into space, usually on a terminal orbit. The resulting brief show of streaks in the night sky is sometimes called a "vreeping meteor shower" by space-aware groundlings. Such quarantine procedures are more a commercially disruptive inconvenience than an expense.

Non-hibernating vreepers are highly territorial and will display threatening behavior to scare off any perceived competitors, including humans. Where the threat is ineffective, and fewer than five vreepers are nearby, they may attack or flee. However, when more than five are within a few meters, they become aggressive, and are much more likely to attack.

Attacking vreepers emit both the verbal signal and a strong pheromone signal that attracts other vreepers up to two range bands away. These new vreepers join in emitting the pheromone as they swarm. This can cascade, significantly extending the range of the "call to arms." Wounded vreepers release a similar but more potent pheromone, raising the "threat level" and inciting surviving vreepers to a higher level. This second pheromone may even attract vreepers from nearby related colonies.

In either case, healthy vreepers from the same multi-generation colony swarm toward the fray. Hundreds or even thousands of vreepers may attack an individual or group, biting and sometimes clawing. The attack ends only if the vreepers are satisfied that their territory is secured by the apparent death of the enemy, or the vreepers are dispersed.

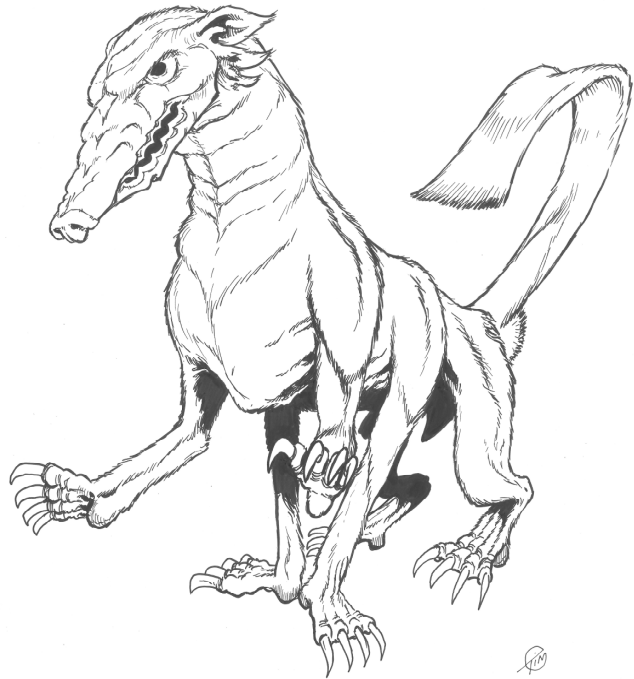
Vreepers can be dispersed using stench projectors. They are also susceptible to tear gas and other gases which incapacitate humans, but they release the more potent pheromone in response. The pheromone is

lighter and travels farther than the tear gas. Hogajue's Patented Vreeper Grenades, a recent entry into the field of vreeper-control products, combines a tranquilizing gas with an artificial vreeper "food-here" pheromone signal in a colorless, odorless gas. The product is effective on about seventy-five percent of vreeper nests, with an effective radius of 1.5 meters in an open space.

Gunfire and other wounding attacks tend only to exacerbate the situation, as injured vreepers release the second pheromone. As more vreepers swarm, escape can become difficult even for those in battle dress.

A single vreeper bite causes only 0.1 points of damage. It is possible to survive a swarming attack, although the sheer number of wounds generally leave the victim weakened, miserable and at risk of infection. The referee may choose to give vreepers amalgamated attacks in groups of ten or more when swarming, easing calculations and giving the full effect of a coordinated attack. In large enough numbers, vreepers may cause gruesome injuries, including amputation and mutilation.

Niche:	Omnivore	Subniche:	Hunter-Gatherer
Quantity:	1 Sole Seen	Size:	3 10 - 20 cm
Volume:	0.5 liter	Mass:	0.5 kg
Loco:	Walk	Strength:	0 Weak
SpeedC:	2	Speed AF:	3
SpeedB:	4	Endur:	1 hour
Weapon:	Teeth, Claws	A/F:	8/8
Defer:	No	Obey:	No
LST:	No	Edible:	N (Offensive)



Vreepers—Single Nest and Colony

In general, only one vreeper is noted at first; the others are within alert range.

#	C	Num	Type	Sz	Len	Loc	Spd	STR	END	Weapon	A	F	Sym	Struc	Kg	AV
4	S	4D	Om-Hun	3	0.2	Wlk	2	0	1	Teeth	A8	F8	B	HBS-T-LL-LN-N	1	1
4	S	200D	Om-Hun	3	0.2	Wlk	2	0	1	Teeth	A8	F8	B	HBS-T-LL-LN-N	1	1

Program Notes: The Tent and Other Cargo

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

I love poking through cargo containers. They're filled with all sorts of interesting stuff. Amazing what gets put in those crates. Apart from vreepers, I always want to take a sample of what I find. It's not always mine, and sometimes it's not even legal.

Legal's over-rated.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

Cargo Pod

A cargo pod has been specially built to make use of 60 tons of jump and maneuver capacity not otherwise used in *Cirque's* configuration. Though rated at 1200 tons, *Cirque* is actually only 1140 tons.

The cargo pod has two decks and uses a standard docking cleat designed to mate with the docking cleats on *Cirque*. The internal cargo capacity is 54 tons. The hatches and fittings are designed to accommodate standard three-ton pods. This is a difference from the cargo spaces in *Cirque* and her auxiliaries, which are designed around smaller one-ton containers of the sort sometimes used by the military. One-ton containers may be substituted in the cargo pod, but not all freight space will be accessible from the corridor during flight. As most standard cargo is carried sealed, this should not present a significant problem.

The tent and primary circus equipment is carried in Big Top 1's cargo space. Other equipment is carried within *Cirque's* original forward and aft cargo bays. The external cargo pod is reserved as much as possible for Sharurshid cargo.

The Circus Tent

When the planetary environment permits, *Cirque des Sirkas* performs in a one-ring tent familiar to schoolchildren of many societies thanks to old videos and archival images. However, TL 15 materials are far superior to the romantic but vulnerable canvas used in ancient times.

The tent uses technology based on inflatable survival domes first developed as easily constructed and stored pressurized shelters for scouts and colonists. For all their convenience and light construction, however, these facilities are designed to provide adequate shelter in most atmospheres once they are fully erected and pressurized. The materials are not, however, proof against corrosive or insidious atmospheres. In that sense, the tent is really nothing more than an oddly-shaped pressure dome capable of functioning in various atmospheres and environments.

In addition, nano-fiber and nano-facturing technologies render the fabric more compact, more versatile, and far stronger than any low-tech canvas or plastic. The tent cannot be easily ripped or damaged, and is completely fireproof. It is also layered with reflec and other TL-15 materials to reduce threats from outside attack. Andii has no desire to have his/her guests become terrorist targets.

The tent fabric also has built-in mnemonic and display functions thanks to nanotechnology, allowing previews of future shows, interviews

with the headliners to be displayed directly on the tent during the run-up to the performance, and even advertisements for local products. In essence, the entire tent — interior and exterior — is a marquee.

The internal fittings include light, collapsible seating and risers for spectators. With the seating fully assembled, 1700 guests can attend a single performance. Heating and cooling systems are included and can be attached and operated as necessary. There is also an entry area that includes basic space for refreshments stands and a ticket booth.

The performance area is a circle 15 meters in diameter. Gravitic generators under the stage allow variance for performances, usually to provide the performers with the gravity to which they are most accustomed. Thus, aerialists (trapeze artists and similar performers) need not re-tune their reflexes for every planet's gravity. They may also work without a net, as automatic sensors alter the gravitic field to catch a falling performer. If Dolphins join the tour, they will perform a graceful, weightless ballet in their specialized skin-wetting suits. The gravitics may also be used for dramatic entrances and exits, and to play tricks on clowns, jugglers, and others for comedic effect.

Poles, props, food service stations, set-pieces and portable rest rooms are also carried in cargo. These portable rest rooms are by no means sufficient for a full audience, but provide basic facilities. Spare food and care material for the various animals are also carried in this cargo space. All told, *Cirque* devotes six pods (18 tons) to essential performance equipment and material in standard cargo carriers.

The tent is semi-robotic. Erecting the tent requires the supervision and efforts of several people and several robots, but its own robotic brain coordinates the process. The robots are fairly common models used in construction and are programmed to unload the tent, set up the main telescoping poles, and handle the wrapping of the tent fabric. This all works fine unless there is a malfunction, at which point erecting the tent becomes a job for all hands.

The tent's dimensions when erected are:

- Height: 15 meters on the inside to the cupola, 21 meters to the top of the tent.
- Diameter: 45 meters.
- Sidewall: made of 12 sections, totaling 141.4 meters in circumference and measuring 6 meters high
- Cupola frame: 15 meters across.
- Masts: 15 meters tall.
- Side poles: 98 side poles measuring 5 meters high support the periphery of the tent.
- Stakes: Masts and tent are tied to a total of 194 stakes.

True aficionados of old Solomani circuses will note that these measurements approximate a relatively standard "one-ring circus," which generally had a 50-foot (old English measuring system) ring.

The entry area is a separate appendage, as is the entry/exit staging, but they are also capable of being pressurized and sealed for certain conditions. Sanitary facilities are located outside the tent, but in an enclosed

Cirque

area, for the convenience of patrons.

Sharurshid's Cargo

Approximately 26 tons of cargo volume is allocated to Sharurshid cargo. As a major sponsor of the tour, Sharurshid is taking advantage of available cargo space to move its most valuable shipments. Few other merchant vessels carry the substantial firepower of *Cirque* and her auxiliaries, much less trained war veterans in command and major crew roles, which gives Sharurshid's shipments an extra layer of security and protection.

Sharurshid's cargo consignment varies from system to system, but includes rare food and drink, various antiques, and similar valuables. The containers are all securely locked; only Sharurshid personnel and *Cirque*'s senior crew can access these containers for anything other than inspection purposes. The manifest is available, but not all items are clearly identified. Various pods are set for drop-off at various stops along the way. These will be returned with some cargo removed and replaced, or entirely replaced.

A three-ton module is listed as "private shipping," and set to go to Regina "unless otherwise requisitioned by appropriate Sharurshid authorities." Its contents are known only to Andii, Bertii, and U'aiilie.

Pirates and starport-based criminals would be interested in obtaining any portion of Sharurshid's cargo. The Terran and other exotic wines are high-value cargo, easily sold on the black and grey markets.

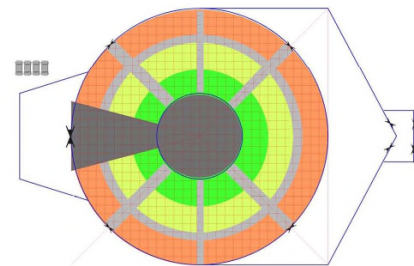
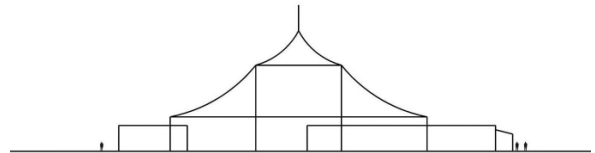
Andii's Personal Cargo

Ten one-volume-ton cargo carriers are found in *Cirque*'s bow cargo bay. Only Andii, Bertii, U'aiilie, and the Security Chief have the codes needed to access them. One container is filled with Andii's personal trade goods for speculation. Six containers are available for small lots (one cubic meter or less) of personal goods of any crew member or performer for transport or speculation — a perk Andii considers important.

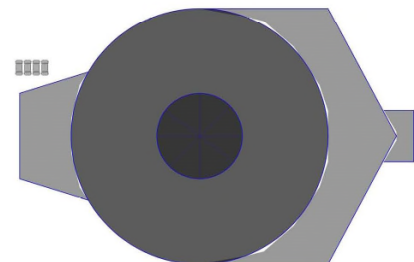
One container carries "Obstinate," a Battle of Rhylanor memorial sculpture destined for Duke Norris' court. The master sculptor who created the piece has indicated that the name is intentionally obscure and open to individual interpretation. Most people viewing the sculpture sense that the artist is contrasting the bravery of the Marches' (and especially Rhylanor's) defense with a vague sense of misguided desperation.

Two more containers are sealed, with no information available to anyone but Andii and Bertii. Nothing whatsoever is stored on *Cirque*'s computers concerning their content.

The last container's contents are far more somber: crematory urns. These hold various unidentified remains of military and civilians who perished in the Battle of Rhylanor. Andii has insisted on inclusiveness, regardless of the loyalties or side taken in the late war; they are all victims of what Andii now sees as a senseless conflict. All of the three human variant races (Solomani, Vilani, and Zhodani) are represented, as are other races including both Aslan and Vargr. All are to be interred with honor in a vault already under construction on Regina; the vault will become the base for Obstinate.



The Tent. Upper: Front-to-rear cross-section. Middle: seating zones and performance area. Peripheral seating is bleacher-style; mid-range seats are tight; and ringside are more spacious. Light grey areas are primary aisles. Dark grey is performance and entry space, including the staging and scaffolding for musicians. The front entry (right) includes concessions and milling-about space. The backstage (left) allows entrances to be smooth and coordinated. The two iris-valve entries from the tent directly outside are used only in emergencies; they are watched for urchins trying to let friends enter for free.



Program Notes: Schedule and Routine Operations

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Running a ship sounds easy. Sure, I'm going to go be a Free Trader. I'm going to get me a Scout. Oh, sure, I'm going to be a great astrogator and get fed bon-bons in bed just for making sure the passengers get to where they want to get. Because I'm a *Math-ee-matty*-call Genius.

Right.

First of all, most of you aren't. Mathematical geniuses, I mean. Most of you can't count to twenty without your shoes off. So forget that cushy job. Second, it's not cushy — a good astrogator worries every minute about getting that ship properly into jump, and coming out where the ship belongs. Want to see a set of chewed-to-bleeding fingernails? Look up your astrogator on the last day of jump.

And the jumping isn't even the *hard* part about running a ship. It's the organizing. Get your ship loaded up. Get it unloaded. Get food, get water, get all sorts of things you need. Get your bills paid so the Port Administrator can't chain you to the up-port with legal paper.

And then, if your "route" involves more than just hauling cargo — oh, geeze. Run a mercenary cruiser, that's easy. Did you remember to buy ammo? What, you bought the wrong caliber bullets? Not enough armor? What, you forgot the tear gas? *How* could you forget the tear gas?

A luxury liner. Some kid refuses to do his business in the toilet, and you didn't bring the chlorine for the pool. Not to mention sterilizing all the galleys, staterooms, freshers and your own fingertips because someone brought an old-fashioned norovirus on board. Vreeper in the flour bins. And not enough parsley to garnish the plates, a *real* disaster.

A safari ship...oh, something that easy, and you can forget what, the piles and piles of data storage for the cameras, the steaks, the K'ree repellent. That K'ree repellent might just keep you alive if you're anywhere near the Two Thousand Worlds.

The messes you can get into running a starfaring *anything*...

Forget it. Stay on the rock you were birthed at. Go work as an accountant. Chances are you'll eat better. Or at least every day.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1103.

General Data (Players)

Operating an interstellar travelling show of any kind would be logistically formidable in a cluster of systems, or even within a single subsector. Operating the same show under Captain Andii's grand vision of crossing a sector, stopping to perform at twenty systems, and arriving at the last stop within a year requires attention to routine.

In theory, Andii can assume that *Cirque* has 18.25 days total for each "leg" (jump-in to jump-out) of the tour. However, her goal is to be on Regina by 001-1112. Thus, each leg is planned to run a 16-day maximum. Seven days are allocated to jump, and nine in-system. This results in a tour of 320 days, leaving a 45-day margin for problems and delays.

Cirque des Sirkas needs as many of the 16 days as possible on the ground. There are no passengers to regale during the jumps. Thus, with

two of the nine days allocated to maneuvering, landing, set-up and take-down, Cirque des Sirkas plans to perform for no more than seven full days.

The overall routine of *Cirque* and her auxiliaries is set to maximize efficiency and allow large blocks of stage time. The secondary object is to make BT1 accessible to the public as needed. While the tent will be erected when atmosphere and other conditions permit, secondary performances can and do occur in BT1's cylindrical center stage. In addition, the smaller stage facility at the center of BT2 are used for rehearsal, recording, live transmissions, transport, eating, sleeping, and any other function to which it need be put.

Adventures happen between and around performances. At times, they may interfere with performances, or delay leaving a system. Andii will count every lost minute, and do everything possible to clear matters up within the time allotted.

Factors of Sharurshid and Advance Sophonts

Advanced notice of Cirque de Sirka Foundation, LIC's planned route and function has preceded the voyage by X-Boat and other mail services. Local agents and factors of Sharurshid, LIC, a major sponsor, have been notified to provide assistance in advance and as requested. They are responsible for advance ticket sales, though the tickets are not dated. Rather, tickets are sold for "Day x of 5, Show 1 of 2." If the sales justify adding days, the run can be extended by no more than two days without permission of the Advance Sophonts. They are also to obtain lists of potential contractors and applicants who will provide local support. The local factors lack authority to make final arrangements because *Cirque's* itinerary is expected to be fluid.

Note that some of the factors will take their job seriously, perhaps as a welcome diversion. Others put the memos into the "permanently to do but un-done" email file. On these worlds, the Advance Sophonts will work harder. If a player party is operating as the Advance Sophonts, the exasperation of dealing with such near-catastrophes can be an adventure in itself.

Advance Sophonts

ISS Scout3-0156 (named "*Grendel's Mother*" by its assigned retired scout) is crewed by its team of Advance Sophonts. These four go ahead on the assigned route, despite the cramped space and misfit nature of the crew. Their job is to get in-system, find out what has already been done for Cirque by Sharurshid's various factors and representatives, and then do the rest. They also put out publicity and the most accurate possible date for *Cirque's* arrival.

The Advance Sophonts keep about one week ahead of *Cirque* herself. Their duty is to quickly finalize arrangements for landing sites, landing permits, performance sites, food handling licenses and vendors, releases, advertising, press releases, additional ticket sales and estimated dates, advance reduced-rate ticket sales for active service members and

Cirque

veterans, local transportation, local employees for the ticket booths and services, contractors to provide refreshments and refreshment stands, porta-johns and other waste management systems, and similar details.

The Advanced Sophonts have appropriate survey information and a plan of action for each new system (in case, as noted above, the local factor has shirked his or her responsibilities), as well as the ID codes of the local factor. Thus, they are able to begin transmitting as soon as they exit jump. They already have possible landing sites chosen. They review information provided and seek out large fields, plains, and other locations large enough for BT1 and BT2, close enough to major transportation lines and facilities, and reasonable in terms of other likely planetary government concerns.

The starport itself presents some opportunities, and in some systems will provide the only reasonable location. However, in the majority of systems, the preference is to be off-port. Off-port facilities provide easier access for local inhabitants and add an informality not found in the starport proper. In addition, starport officials are not interested in the extra security and risk of confusion inherent in the daily crush of audiences. *Cirque des Sirkas* would quite literally be unable to function without these arrangements being made prior to and in place before *Cirque's* arrival.

Finally, the Advance Sophonts return to space at about the time *Cirque* is supposed to arrive. They wait at a pre-arranged jump point for *Cirque* to exit jump space. If time permits, *Cirque* and *Grendel's Mother* may match orbit and dock for a meeting. More often than not, *Grendel's Mother* merely spits the data out in a concentrated data burst and gets on its way with an exchange of pleasantries.

During their time in-system, the Advance Sophonts have opportunities for suitable adventures (or, more often, misadventures) in the course of their daily grind. Indeed, the adventures set out in this book can be assigned to a suitable group of Advance Sophonts if the referee prefers running a smaller campaign to a larger campaign. More than four player characters will have to either double bunk or operate using a larger vessel with a Jump-3 minimum (e.g., a Type-T Patrol Cruiser).

Cirque: In-System

Cirque follows its own routine.

On system entry, she begins broadcasting to announce the arrival of the tour. Clips, reviews and other information from prior systems are transmitted, both to the departing Advance Sophonts and the destination world. At the same time, Andii, Bertii and Wily review the Advance Sophonts' information and contracts. If necessary, cargo is shifted to the fuel shuttle's cargo space (including cargo space made available by collapsible fuel tanks). Performers are prepared and briefed on local laws and situations that must be considered.

As noted, most performance stops total 16 days. The first two and last two days are occupied with landing, set-up, and take-down of the tent and equipment. Performers are brought to the surface in BT1 and BT2 in advance to allow them time for public relations appearances, a formal (but usually short and stylized) circus parade, liberty and to get the first hint of the adventure to come. The following seven days are packed with performances, with each act providing at least two scheduled performances on six of the seven days (the day off is, when possible, for rest and of course adventuring time). The *Cirque des Sirkas* show itself runs two performances every standard day. Musicians and the acting troupes perform between circus shows, or (when possible) at nearby alternate stages.

Geezer Thespian performs at least once daily on the same six days in an independent one-man show. He alternates at least two different one-man acts. One is his famous "Gilgamesh." Another consists of great monologues and soliloquies from various sources throughout human space. Thespian also usually joins other performers in a modernized version of "Duke Vaalearni" (a Vilani-language version of Shakespeare's "King Lear") at least once per planet, playing the title role.

Although he performs in the circus, Comic Juggler also performs a separate thirty-minute show of commentary interspersed with juggling and other tricks, video-recorded every other day before a live audience. The audience pays a separate admission, and the video is transmitted after a delay of several hours. His work is topical and aimed at skewering the pompous and powerful, sometimes at personal risk.

The Zhodani Quixitlatl Mind Reader and magician performs several two-hour sets during the down-time, greatly expanding his act. None of

his tricks use advanced technology (a magician who uses gravitics to float a sawed-in-half android is cheating, not using misdirection).

The Solomani Tribute Band (playing primitive "rock" and similar music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries of old Earth) performs a two-hour set once daily at ear-splitting volumes.

Juggler and Thespian are each major draws, with no seat selling for less than Cr 200. The Solomani Tribute Band tends to draw younger people paying at least Cr 100 per seat. The Great Maxidotl draws Cr 50 per seat.

On the full-cast "rest day," the stages are not left dark and empty. Local groups are invited to perform for audiences to fill the gaps. These performances are recorded auditions, in essence. "Amateur Day on Andii's Stages" carries a lower admission cost for the audience (Cr 25), but also costs far less to produce. On very rare occasions, an act may be good enough to be offered a spot with the tour; this can be used to introduce a new player character. Amateur Day is further detailed in Episode 19: Counting Coup.

After a rest day, the routine is resumed for three more days. On the last day, there is no rest; it is taken up with preparing to leave. The performers are given their last liberty but also advised of their strict boarding times. Each performer is implanted with a locating transceiver above and beyond his, her or its standard communications devices.

Andii will take reasonable steps to retrieve a late performer, but will also on occasion make harsh decisions for those with repeated problems returning. Her rule is "three strikes", but exceptions can be made for either big draws or special circumstances.

The planet-side routine obviously provides some constraints for adventuring. The adventures are worked around performance times, and will generally occur in geographically close proximity to the performances. However, even with two performances per day, unexpected situations will unfold. The middle day with its amateur performances provides time for the entertainer player characters to experience a piece of the growing adventure. In addition, non-entertainer player characters can generally be given greater leeway. This is especially true of *Cirque's* space crew, the documentary crew, and the security details (indeed, the security details exist to minimize hassles for the entertainers, and thus will find themselves in tight spots).

Cirque: Space Routine

The routine in space and during jump is more relaxed. Each act rehearses and works on new variations, usually daily. The documentary crew also spends time recording interviews. Animals are exercised in BT1's ring. Various on-ship interactions and adventures play out. Javert will continue to prowl around for evidence on Thespian and Makeup Artist, as well as his perhaps expanding list of suspects. Bertii will do whatever it is he does in his cabin, as well as handle ship's business. Andii goes through the ship and checks on all of the details for the next stop, as well as crew efficiency. Trysts and arguments will break out. Other issues may be revealed. Competition for "better billing" may include petty sabotage and slights. Andii may even find herself conducting a Captain's Mast to discipline performers, and remind those without a military background that Andii is the Absolute Monarch of *Cirque*.

Used to military conduct and efficiency, Andii will discover that her hands are full, given this cast and crew of artistic types. However, she may also discover the unusual resilience of the artistic soul. People used to highly emotional competitions and the constant threat of rejection bounce back after most rejections.

Other vessels will be encountered inbound and outbound. Adventures may occur from those encounters. Andii is alert for piracy attempts, given Vargr activity and, later on the tour, the political changes in the Sword Worlds. Andii and others may encounter old acquaintances along the way as well. Ships may issue distress calls after they are attacked or vital systems fail. In short, although *Cirque* carries clowns, it is by no means due a careless ride.

The great number of animals on board become a particular concern of all of the crew. The animals are part of *Cirque des Sirkas'* attraction. They must be fed and cared for despite the close environment. The various foodstuffs, from nuts and berries to bales of hay-like plants must all be inspected for troublesome vermin before being left out for food; much of it cannot simply be exposed to vacuum as a precaution. Animal handlers

Cirque

and roustabouts sift through every pitchfork– or shovel-full of hay and grain to locate unusual insects, slugs, and larger animals such as rats and veepeers. The various animals also take part in this process; tree rats and bloodvarks, for example, will be allowed to go over a bail of hay before it goes to the miniphants.

Advance Sophonts' Checklist

- Begin transmitting upon arrival.
- Locate and contact Sharurshid factors.
- Determine what has been prepared; remedy failures.
- Off-port landing permits as necessary.
- Local food preparers.
- Local ticket takers.
- Local sanitation necessities.
- Audience transportation arrangements.
- Cirque des Sirkas transportation arrangements.
- Food replenishment for *Cirque* and auxiliaries.
- Special animal needs replenishment.
- Contact news and interview outlets.
- Arrange paid advertising.
- Arrange word-of-mouth campaigns including social media.
- Contact representatives of system nobles as courtesy.
- Contact representatives of local government as courtesy.
- Determine show scheduling to coordinate local day with “standard days” observed by *Cirque*.
- Announce Amateur Day on Andii’s Stage and the rules.
- Run computer checks on local taboo topics.
- Obtain local news for Comic Juggler’s routine and commentary.
- Arrange charity tickets for veterans and orphans.
- Execute essential contracts.
- Lift to orbit.
- Await *Cirque*’s jump into system.
- Transmit data packet and comments.
- Jump to next destination.

Cirque’s Arrival and Landing Checklist

- Locate and contact Advance Sophonts; download data.
- Remedy any failings of Advance Sophonts.
- Check for major taboos and arrange acts accordingly.
- Take orbit or dock with up-port.
- Courtesy calls to nobles.
- Arrange gas giant fueling using BT3 whenever possible.
- Arrange cargo changes (Sharurshid cargo on board).
- Dispose of any potentially contaminated animal feed before docking. Re-inspect for vermin.
- Provide specific warnings to performers and crew about conduct.
- Provide specific lists of off-limits areas.
- Provide information on sleeping arrangements if off-ship.
- Obtain final landing coordinates and position.
- Land BT1 and BT2.
- Unload cargo pods (tent, food stalls, ticket stalls, etc.). Have pods trucked to tent site if not nearby.
- Begin erecting tent (semi-robotic).
- Transport animals and performers to location of circus parade.
- Hold circus parade.
- Provide interviews for local news organizations.

- Make visits to local hospitals for children and veterans.
- Give personnel a few hours off.

Performance Checklist

- Open the tent.
- Check audiences for security (subtle).
- Seat the audiences.
- If nobles and bigwigs are present ask if they have a sense of humor for the clowns.
- Get acts and performers to their entrances as needed. No, really, *now*. And give me that blasted bottle!
- Introduce Cirque des Sirkas, greet nobles and local bigwigs in audience.
- Big opening.
- Run the acts.
- Avoid mishaps.
- Prepare for closing and curtain calls. No, really, *now*. And give me that blasted bottle!
- Close the show.
- Clean up and set up for next show and audience.

Take-Down Checklist

- Return animals to BT1.
- Store props.
- Take down tent.
- Discover climax of adventure happening just at the wrong time.
- Check all cargo containers for youngsters running away to the circus and other vermin, especially animal feed containers.
- Round up performers who have discovered yet another interesting establishment. No, really, *now*. And give me those three blasted bottles!
- Launch and go.

Transit Checklist

- Mend costumes and props.
- Fine-tune acts and rehearse.
- Learn new performance skills, even if not a performer.
- Record final versions of acts and other material in BT1 or BT2.
- Review briefings regarding next stop.
- Deal with personnel issues.
- Handle ship maintenance issues.
- Run drills and scenarios for emergencies, including combat, hijacking, and boarding.
- Jam with the musicians.
- Feed animals.
- Tend to any potential veterinary issues.
- Yell at the noisy people in the next barracks for not shutting up at night.
- Play games in the BACFUDS once the tanks are empty.
- Follow interesting threads in character arcs. Why is Geezer Thespi-an insisting he’s King Richard today? What was Bertii doing in the BACFUDS tanks last night? What exactly is that stuff the stage-hands are cooking in the barracks? What’s that copper tubing for? What are the Crafty Bear and the Barbarian Knife Thrower making in that forge? Why is Javert such a creepy snoop?
- Explore *Cirque*’s nooks and crannies.
- Engage in personal vices.

Program Notes: Entertainers in an Ongoing Campaign

Cirque des Sirkas: Travelling Entertainers

Cirque des Sirkas is a fish-out-of-water story. Ideally, it takes the players out of their usual roles and comfort zones and places them into new kinds of characters and adventures.

The same is of course true of the characters they play. An Aslan Imperial Marine concerned with honor becomes a tumbler concerned with amusing humans; a decorated war veteran must make sure the show always gets to its next stop. At the same time, an aging, famous actor may have to find the skills to enter a firefight.

T5 assumes that entertainers will possess or gain some traditionally useful game skills and knowledges. It also assumes that military personnel and merchants have hobbies and interests even before play begins. Entertainment skills can be useful in campaigns, as discussed further below.

Whether the referee and players use pre-generated characters or create their own, Cirque encourages well-rounded characters. Cirque des Sirkas is not simply a vast cover for some scheme or another. It is a working entertainment vessel. The referee should use it and run the adventures as such. All entertainers are rolled as characters through one generation table or another. While any character may become a performer of sorts (e.g., the Aslan Tumblers), most are created as Entertainers.

All of the Entertainers created for Cirque were created using the Entertainer categories. Many physical types of performance are treated as specialized Knowledges under the general Skill of Dancer. Because these are specializations, a character may have no more than six levels.

Comic Juggler's Skill is Dancer (Juggler-6). He can learn other knowledges under the Dancer Skill, such as Choreographer or Jazz Dancer. He can also add Athlete skill to a performance, perhaps under the specialized knowledge of Unicycle Riding. Finally, because he is a comedian, his act includes commentary and asides for the audience. He thus has both Actor and Author skills.

What use is he in a scenario? He can distract a crowd, pick pockets, accurately throw bottles at the heads of opponents, accurately toss guns to other characters who have been disarmed, catch-and-return a lobbed grenade in the nick of time, grumble that he didn't sign up for this, and make it all look *easy*. The application of the skill depends on the creativity of the player and fair rulings by the referee. Entertainers aren't simply gunslingers with odd backgrounds. Their backgrounds and skills provide a way for *role-playing*.

Fame

Any entertainer's fame is relevant to any adventure. A well-known entertainer can easily infiltrate at any level simply by playing on his or her celebrity. A celebrity can obtain entry into the homes of the rich and powerful, or the poor and meek. Other PCs can enter along with them as managers, drivers, bodyguards, makeup artists, bubblegum pre-chewers, and in any other roles necessary to an interstellar celebrity's retinue.

This form of infiltration will only work once or twice per planet, however. At some point, people will start believing the supermarket tabloids (or their high-tech equivalent, social media) after seeing enough headlines saying, "Tri-Vid Star Fronting for Jewel Thieves and Kidnap-

pers." With speed-of-jump and distance limiting data transfer, however, such a ploy may occasionally be of use. If over-used, the referee can call the players out, and have it fail because the nemesis of the moment has advance word of the infiltration technique.

Celebrities from the entertainment world (especially actors, musicians, and sports stars, but almost never writers) can also be used as distractions and decoys. Their adoring fans (and their despising detractors) will form mobs to bask in (or destroy) their celebrity. A mob is a wonderful distraction, as anyone knows.

Another obvious adventure hook for is the stalker. A character pursued by obsessed fans must find ways to defend him or herself. The character can find this daunting, as can the adventuring group. Dealing with a stalker can enliven any adventure, or be an adventure in and of itself. After all, how many regulars in a drama series are taken hostage by an obsessed red shirt (usually played by a formerly significant thespian in need of a few spare bucks) in the course of a five-season run? Trick question! *All of them*.

Actors

A less well-known thespian is a far better character to play than a sector-wide star. These characters can be played as agents in deception. Indeed, the crossover between the prior career of actor and that of agent is one worth noting for character generation. A well trained actor, especially one from the live stage, can convincingly take on a character's mannerisms and basic persona for extended periods. They know how to "hold their role." They have training in small things which can enhance or distract the person seeing the role, and avoid sending "tells" that reveal them as actors.

Traveller geezers will recall the "Paris" character of the 1960's "Mission Impossible" series as a good example. An even better example is found in the Heinlein novel *Double Star*: There, the actor replaces an important politician for a brief but important "run of the show." This hides the politician's kidnapping and prevents an interspecies war. In T5, an actor or actress who looks like a VIP can, with proper support and back-up such as persons capable of forgery, take over that person's role in distant places – whether for good or bad (it's *not* good to be Dulinor's stand-in circa 1116).

Dancers and Athletes

Dancer may be considered a catch-all for any entertainer whose skills are primarily based in physical action and coordination. Thus, with some care, a character rolled as a Dancer may be just that — or may be a gymnast (including trapeze and other aerialists), a clown, a mime, a contortionist, most kinds of sports entertainers (when combined with the athlete knowledge base), stunt actors, and so on. The essential elements in each of these endeavors are the ability to move properly and to choreograph one's movements. Coordination with other members of a team is a form of "on the spot choreography."

All of these character types may take on roles and adventure using their particular skills and strengths. Certainly, a large "linebacker" (a bur-

ley Solomani engaged in a pointless and long-forgotten team sport involving primitive battle dress and obloid projectiles bounced against opposing team players) can become an intimidating bodyguard for an important personage despite the most gentle of personalities. Gentle giant or not, the bodyguard will certainly have less and less fun as the VIP being guarded is attacked. Other athletes may find other occupations; the mountaineering expert of today is the cat-burglar of tomorrow.

A circus contortionist is invariably slender and unusually limber. If narrow vents with twists and turns must be crawled, the contortionist can crawl them. Contortionists can also be shipped in properly equipped crates, hide beside corpses in coffins, and undertake similar nasty tasks. Well trained ballet dancers have similar qualities; they can also move quickly and hold uncomfortable positions for extended times (e.g., River Tam of *Firefly* and *Serenity*).

Most dancers are in good physical shape and are likely to be found striking, if not attractive, in many cultures. Thus, whether ethereal or tawdry, dancers may be used as distractions.

Musicians

The musician as a character should never be considered dull. Each often has a second life, as musicians (apart from those in the active military) are notoriously undisciplined and poorly paid unless they are truly famous (when they become notoriously undisciplined and vastly *overpaid*). This truth should not be seen as relating only to rock stars and divas. Mozart's unbalanced brilliance led him to excesses and a pauper's grave.

Such characters obtain many contacts and learn how to obtain *more* contacts. These contacts can usually procure almost anything desired, licit, illicit, or in violation of the local laws of man and physics. The best of musicians may begin their careers in crowded, seedy venues, and thus can obtain underworld contacts. If a musician has played a city before, especially in the lower levels, he/she or his/her retinue can obtain work, illicit substances, illicit weapons, information, secondary contacts of other types, and (of course) quality musical instrument repairs. A down-on-his-luck rock star can be an asset (if kept reasonably sober).

The rare disciplined musician's sideline can and should be something useful, like electronics, computer-related skills gained in composition and performance, counterfeiting or the sort of home chemistry which leads to explosions.

Food/Odor Creators

A very successful army cook may become a chef and become known to the upper classes, and thus work for a better clientele. Those contacts are somewhat limited. However, private chefs in fancy restaurants (like many other entertainers) are sought out by important and powerful people. These people want to meet the person feeding them, if only to make sure that the food isn't poisoned. Thus, chefs are useful as contacts on any planet where they have either run a kitchen or have references.

A chef with a reputation planning on spending a few weeks or days on a planet need simply "hang out a shingle" to obtain the notice of local nobles, celebrities and other gourmets. This puts them into contact with powerful and rich people, who may have jobs to give adventuring groups. Chefs can also be very useful as agents in this regard, because a chef may be brought into the place in which a target resides or a goal is kept. Whenever a chef is a PC, the adventure ultimately goes outside the kitchen.

That said, hot grease makes a handy weapon in hand-to-hand combat. A proper stainless-steel ladle substitutes nicely for a vorpal cudgel. Chefs have a natural environment, and can use their combat skills in that natural environment.

Authors

Authors, especially journalists and reporters, have regular contacts with many people at all levels of society. An investigative reporter knows how to dig into information and how to bribe other people into doing so. Natural curiosity is likely to get their noses put into other peoples' business. Other people are likely to respond by punching the journalist in the nose; this causes development of fighting and medical skills. An investiga-

tive journalist needs only one thing to get him or her into hot water: an editor with a tip or story idea. Note that the terms author and journalist can and should be interpreted widely in this context. Photographers, videographers, and wired-to-the-hilt-with-sound-video-and-computer-clothes blogging documentarians are all authors. They tell stories through multimedia. They are also likely to cause angst among the subjects of the stories.

More sedate authors, like other celebrities, may often find themselves brought into a home or otherwise into unusual venues. Such authors will also find themselves thronged by wannabes who wish them to read or review their work, especially at science fiction conventions. All of these may result in work and adventure opportunities.

Authorship will also provide an extra source of income. The adventurer who can turn his or her life into someone else's reading/entertainment material may know from whence the next meal is coming. The average adventurer may beg on the street in the lean times, or worse yet hire on to a tramp freighter with a clanky jump drive. An author can turn that trip into his or her next royalty-generator.

Animal Trainers and Handlers

Technology can do most of what animals can do — but animals can often do it better, and with more interesting results. Animal trainers and handlers generally come equipped with small but useful assistants. With reasonable rapport and advance coaching, a performing animal can be used to assist in what it does naturally — steal things, embarrass clowns, fly in intricate patterns, and so on. At higher tech levels, they can be equipped with small cams, recording devices, sensors, tracking chips, transceivers (e.g., apparent earrings) and other devices. Properly prepared, an animal handler can be a substantial asset.

Some agents, indeed, make use of animals in their work. A beaker may react to (or work with) a powerful psionic. A tree rat can be a great aid in obtaining keys, jewelry, and other small items. Bloodvarks are trackers. A few examples are built in to scenarios; resourceful PCs should create others.

Unprepared, animals can still be useful. Cuddly animals are distractions. Hunting animals such as garhawks can be sent on the offensive. Kian can be ridden, of course, but their massive haunches also provide striking power; their mouths are used in defense as well. A kian accustomed to a trick-rider's acrobatics may assist the trick-rider in a daring or necessary leap.

The Circus Milieu and Cirque Des Sirkas

Travelling shows are found in many cultures and on many planets. Any planet which has had a pre-technological period and a substantial population will develop its share of itinerant storytellers and actors — bards, gypsies, druids, poets, scholars and shaman all were in show-business. The heroes sung about by the bards are themselves in many ways entertainers. They practice for battles and earn their keeps by performing "feats" and wrestling with the locals. Soothsayers entertain with their nascent psionic abilities (or more often use their abilities of observation to read a crowd or a person's "tells").

Eventually, the best of performers needs either a new act or a new audience, and moves on to another group. This may happen voluntarily, or because one too many sooth has turned out to be annoying to someone with weapons. This begets the profession of the wandering entertainer, and then the troupe of wandering entertainers. As entertainments became more complex, venues became more complex. In larger communities, stages and arenas were created. In others, any sand-pit or natural amphitheater was used.

The somewhat stylized form of entertainment modeled by Cirque des Sirkas derived the central ring on Terra in the 1800's (Solomani reckoning). Terran circus entrepreneur Philip Astley determined that the best diameter for the main ring was thirteen meters because this allowed an acrobatic Terran horseback performer to maintain balance on the cantering animal. It made equestrian feats possible. Cirque's ring is slightly larger, but follows the same principal.

Examples of many entertainers will be found in Cirque des Sirkas, along with large egos and a penchant for finding trouble.

Program Notes: The Standard Stanford Torus

The Standardized Stanford Torus

The Standardized Stanford Torus used in many Imperial systems is constructed using TL 10+ materials and techniques. It has a 2100-meter diameter (about one mile in the old “English” system). Many are constructed using carbon and silicate fibers nano-factured in space. Nanobots weave and spin the fibers and tubes; humans and robots assemble the final product. A TL11+ torus is as much “grown” as it is manufactured.

Each full torus has a designated “north” and “south” from the hub. “East” and “west” are determined traditionally, as if one was standing on the “North Pole” and facing any portion of the hub. West is to the left, and east is to the right.

The primary torus or “spinning wheel” at the rim is 150 meters in diameter. Most segments of the ten contain a standardized “glacial valley” arrangement, with terraces rising steeply to either side. The segments are 660 meters long at the rim (440 deck squares). Some stations have secondary tori closer to the center, providing lower “gravity” for residents or for other purposes.

Each torus is divided into ten standard segments, made from and including three main supporting cable assemblies and the enclosed living/environmental space. Most, though not all, maintain environmental seals between each segment. This provides both a lifeboat in case of significant malfunction, and the ability to have significantly different environments in each segment. Thus, for example, Rhylanor’s Old Station Main Concourse maintains a comfortable “spring-like condition year-around.” Its adjoining segment in the secondary “agro” torus is a humid environment producing grains in a watery “rice paddy” environment.

Like Old Station, standard tori are often produced as twins, sometimes triplets, and occasionally even higher numbers of conjoined tori. Such tori are connected side-by-side, and may employ counter-spin (connecting only at the hub) or synchronous spin (all tori linked and spinning at the same rate, in the same direction). This maximizes the use of sunlight from lighting mirrors and simplifies choices of orbit. However, at sizes much larger than five, other rotating forms (e.g., hollowed-out asteroids) become more useful and less expensive to build and maintain.

As noted, each segment is independently constructed, providing environmental compartmentalization. This is sufficient to prevent explosive decompression of an entire torus. It is not, however, sufficient to prevent all mixing of incompatible environments. Thus, for example, if pollen from Planet A is destructive of flora from Planet B, Planet A’s environment would generally be in one station, Planet B’s in an entirely separate torus.

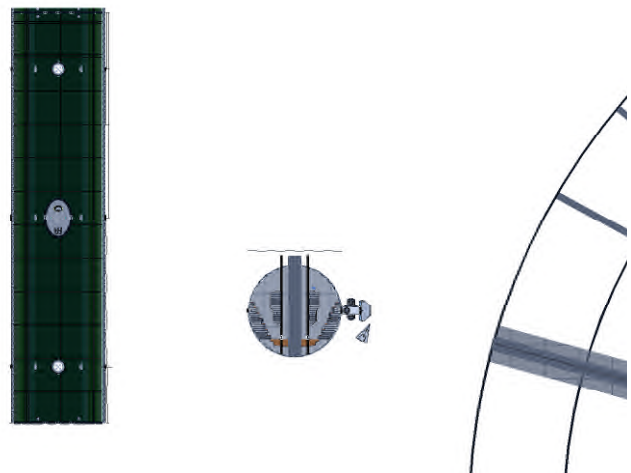
Each segment is supported by a central cable from the hub, with two smaller cables to either side, and two additional small cables at each

connection point. Each of the major support cables is enclosed by airtight bulkheads, reducing the risk of blowout due to catastrophic failure. In addition, these airtight columns allow passage up and down to the hub. The largest, central cable has turbo-car elevators as well as other means of access up and down. Each cable has two personnel lifts which crawl up the cables in long spirals. This allows for inspection and access for deployment of repair nanobots. The columns each have deck levels above the “ground level” entrances allowing space for storage, residences for the elite, access to hanging circles of shops and restaurants, offices, and anything else the referee might imagine. In many tori, “skyscrapers” are constructed around the three cables, but beginning a few deck levels up so as to conserve “valley floor” space.

Four thinner cables provide the final structural tightening at either end of the segment. These are also enclosed, but without more than a narrow crawl space. There are no elevators. As these are considered high security areas, entry to the crawl space requires either an electronic access code or a special physical key.

Each torus segment has three airtight docking ports spaced along the north and south rims (at the horizontal diameter of the segment). Each such port is located across from one of the three main supporting cables. These ports can be used as simple airlocks, or for small craft or starship docking. In the case of paired or multiple wheels these locks provide the location for direct access to the adjoining segment. Access to the tube platform level is the obtained by gangways and elevators inside the structure supporting the terraces, as well as steep exterior stairs.

Access to terrace levels is obtained through valley floor entrances, and (depending on specific design needs,) similar entries spaced along the various terrace levels. External stairs or lifts may also be provided. The multi-deck spaces built into each of the terrace structures are similarly accessed using internal stairways. Again, depending upon the exact needs and desires of each segmented section, as well as for aesthetic purposes, external stairways may also be constructed. In short, the utilitarian basic



1/ Deck plans of the segments are depicted flat, assuming that all of the levels are in fact 440 deck squares “long”, and thus are not perfectly realistic depictions of curved decks. This defect in design has been clearly pointed out. Any harm to the referee resulting from player outrage is really just too bad, and will not lead to liability against the writer, publisher, Far Future Enterprises, or Heartland Publishing.

Cirque

architecture of each segment can be altered to fit the particular needs and desires of the occupants or backers of the particular ring segment. In Rhylanor's Old Station Main Concourse, for example, almost 500 business establishments have "terrace frontage" at four of the available levels. Greenspace terraces contain private homes for vendors and others, as well as rental properties and boarding facilities for mid-term residents (e.g., spacers awaiting their ships, military personnel on leave, and transient maintenance workers).

Additional transportation within tori, and particularly from torus to torus, includes simple walking, SPV's (sophont-powered vehicles such as bicycles, tricycles, rickshaws, and other muscle-powered conveyances) electric vehicles powered by fuel cells or high-capacity batteries, and low-speed trams or monorails. The entire length of the walk from start to return is about 6.6 km. Paved ways are found at the rim, on upper terraces, and sometimes suspended above the dirt-levels minimize waste of acreage in the actively farmed segments. Cables may also support cars near the clear upper portions of segments. These cars are various sizes, have independent drive motors (or are SPVs), and carry from two to twenty passengers at a time.

The tori are almost invariably oriented edge-on to the local primary star in order to limit exposure to radiation, especially when in solar orbit. The shielding afforded by the meters-thick rim prevents significant harm. Giant disk-shaped mirrors orbit nearby, directing sunlight into the thick but clear "window" portions of the inner torus's skin. Complicated louvers reflect sunlight to where it needs to go, but also close to allow for a standard day/night cycle. Supplemental power is often produced by plants in the hub, or in other portions of the station, though solar accumulators are used to limit expense.

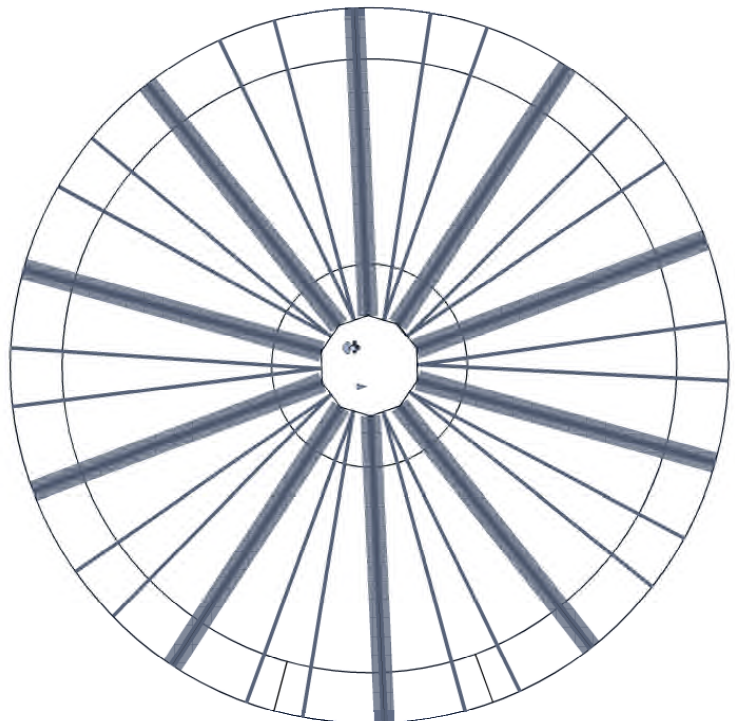
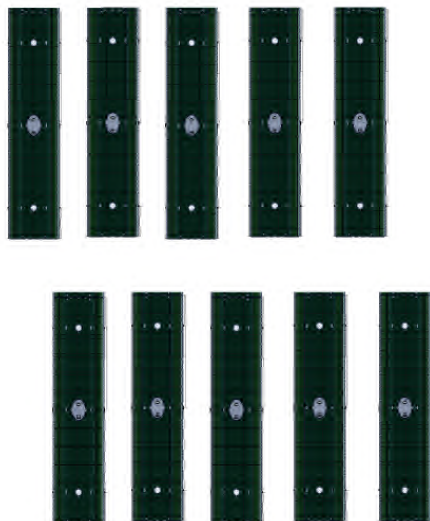
Standard calculations suggest that a standard torus can support and house up to thirty thousand human-sized sophonts at the high end. If a densely populated torus cannot produce enough of its own agricultural products for food, a second nearby (or linked) torus may be used as a farming substation. Such tori often have far fewer than 10,000 residents, obtaining labor from a well automated food production system and possibly even from the primary torus. However, when food leaves one wheel to go to another, essential biomass is lost and must be replaced. There will thus be (to put it most politely) garbage scows or pipes going between the two wheels. "Septic tanker pilot" is an unenviable position sometimes taken by down-on-their-luck space-trained pilots.

Many discussions of rotating stations suggest that docking ports will be in the hub to minimize the difficulty of docking. This is true in the Standard Torus; vessels can dock and be tied down in near-weightless conditions. This is often useful for maintenance, especially of designs not built with landing gear. However, Traveller assumes a high level of computer assistance. Thus, there is no reason that a vessel cannot match its vector to dock with ports on the rim. However, reaction mass or gravitic thrust is used in order to match speed and, when necessary, to prevent station wobble or rotational slowing.

While gravitics make the spinning wheel unnecessary, economy, construction experience and tradition have kept the proven design in use, just as the Type S scout is found throughout the Imperium and beyond. Tori consume less power than many alternative habitat technologies and thus can often rely on solar accumulators to supply their power needs. They tend to be easy to repair and maintain. Many tori remain in use for centuries. Built in 606, Rhylanor's Old Station is considered only middle-aged after a mere five centuries of use. Tori still in use after more than a millennium can be found in the more central areas of the Imperium.

Rhylanor's Old Station is a double-torus constructed in 606, one ring serving primarily as a farming community to support the other. The connected main torus serves as a commercial up-port, and thus sees a number of sophonts moving through each day. The Main Concourse is found in Segment 1 and is a major attraction for visitors from throughout space. Other segments include landing bays, repair and construction bays, and other facilities for ships massing less than 400 volume tons. The Imperial Marines maintain a base and training facility in Segment 10. More detail on the Old Concourse is found in Episode 1. The Zaibon belt, a dying mining community, is replete with spinning wheels.

Most spinning wheels have crews tasked with maintenance, spin control (from a physics perspective, rather than a political one) and of course environmental engineering. Older spacers often take such positions to begin a comfortable retirement. Work includes everything from polishing micrometeor strikes out of the windows (where automated systems cannot) to maintaining the solar mirrors.



Episode 1

Rhylanor • Spinward Marches 2716

A434934-F • A • Hi In Cp • 810 • Im • M2 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

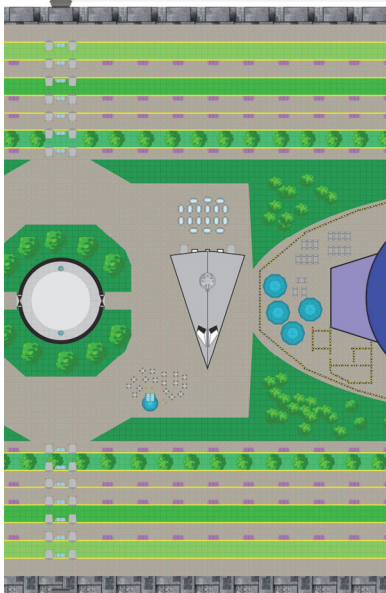
Rhylanor.

A subsector capitol is always a nice place to visit. And Rhylanor's an important one — high technology, a history of great admirals who rose to the occasion — a great place. A place where any admiral on merest whim can become Emperor.

I suppose that's a good thing, right? Good way to get a whole class of ships named after you, not to mention cheap rent on a palace on Capitol. Sure.

I like the old up-port better, though. Old Station, a spinning wheel. I always go in through Old Station, not the modern up-port proper. For one thing, Sharurshid keeps its Rhylanor offices there. Convenient

But it's more than that. Old Station is solid, old-fashioned. Gravity supplied courtesy of Newtonian physics. You don't drift into the sky if power fails. Dual tori over two kilometers across, enough open space to keep you sane, air supplied by old-fashioned agriculture, fruit trees, lovely terraces, fountains carved out of marble and granite, a statue of old Olav the Arrogant, the Admiral who promoted himself to Emperor. It's got families who've been there for generations... a lot of old Solomani names, too, all over the shops. Sure, the Vilani are there, too, but I've heard Duke Leonard complain that it's a Solomani ghetto.



You can bicycle the circumference at Ground or High Terrace level, or down at the rim, or you can be lazy and take the sliders all around. Heck, you can *walk*. You just can't beat a station that's been rotating for hundreds of years, especially when it still smells new. They take care of her, keep her clean. But she has "old world charm" to beat anything on Capitol.

Rhylanor's also got something of an arts scene, or it thinks it has, anyway. Last time I was there, though — well, there was some blasted Vargr playing Hamlet, or maybe it was Ophelia, on the vid feeds. "To growl, or not to growl..."

Maybe if he'd been playing it as an Aslan, it wouldn't be so annoying. Blasted Vargr.

And a mime kept stalking me every time I passed

through the Old Station Concourse to get to Miller's Old Scout. Annoying blasted white-faced beggar, copying the moves and putting the hand out for money. Too bad I couldn't find an unsupervised airlock nearby. That one was a waste of good air.

No one on a spinning wheel likes wasted air.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, early 1107.

General Data (Players)

The subsector capital, Xboat link, and site of two major bases, Rhylanor is a high-population, high-technology Imperial world located in the Rhylanor Subsector of the Spinward Marches. Its orbital shipyards produce both capital ships and smaller vessels for deployment throughout the sector.

Rhylanor is a small planet with a very thin oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere and a reasonably temperate climate. Its location in a cluster just off the Spinward Main provides a useful short cut for high-jump vessels and Xboats but renders the system itself inaccessible to Jump-1 ships. The majority of traffic into Rhylanor comes via the Celepina-Jae Tellona link or from Fulacin to Porozlo. This also has some benefit in system defense.

Rhylanor is also known as the birthplace of Olav hault-Plankwell. As Grand Admiral of the Marches, Olav led the March Fleet in a successful campaign against the Outworld Coalition in the First Frontier War. He followed up this success by leading his fleet to Capitol to become the first Emperor of the Flag. This noble tradition was subsequently emulated by other admirals.

The subsector fleet has its headquarters at Rhylanor, with a system defense squadron being rebuilt and reinforced. The planet also boasts a large naval academy where young officers-to-be undergo their education and training. A large Scout base acts as a communications depot for the Xboat routes as well as a regional planning and command center. The facility is quite extensive and contains training facilities for some of the more specialized Scout roles.

In addition to Rhylanor Startown, other major settlements on Rhylanor include Leba, Liduka, Hegra, Panish, and Kikhimaa City.

Besides its military role, Rhylanor enjoys a reputation as a center for industry, commerce, and education. The Rhylanor Institute of Technology is one of the most prominent hard-science and technological research institutions in the entire Imperium, and is almost certainly the foremost such facility this side of Corridor Sector.

Several megacorporations have their regional headquarters or major installations on Rhylanor. These include the majority of Rhylanor's extensive shipyards. A handful of such facilities are still privately owned, but they are in the minority.

If this were not enough, Rhylanor also has a thriving art community. Live theater and non-digitized performances have been particularly emphasized since the 1050's. The various unions and guilds of actors, techs, and support staff are powerful enough to guarantee that theatrical and creative professionals are paid, but in turn the creative personnel are

Miller's Old Scout Brew Pub, on the West End of the Main Concourse. A scout hull converted into an eating facility, Miller's has tables inside and outside. Note the rear of Cirque des Sirkas' tent in this view.

Cirque

expected to toe the line and not stir up trouble for the guilds that ensure their livelihood.

As one might expect in light of the above, the wafer socket and its ability to produce repeated, perfect performances is unpopular among the majority of performers, which has led to its use being banned by the guilds. Artistically, it tends to produce a lack of variation; variation is idealized by the live performer and many audiences. In addition, it tends to reduce turnover in parts, thus reducing the number of jobs available for up-and-coming thespians. “On Rhylanor, live means really *alive*,” the slogan goes, and this unpredictability is highly prized both by the performers and their audiences.

During the Fifth Frontier War Rhylanor was a primary target of the Zhodani forces. Indeed, post-war analysis suggests that the Zhodani fomented the last war with the sole intent of capturing Rhylanor, though the reason is unclear, as Rhylanor is far enough from Zhodani space that it was a difficult location to reach. Supply lines and open routes for necessary reinforcements could not be assured. Analysts now question why the Zhodani stirred up the Vargr and Sword Worlders and started this war. No sense can be made out of it.

Nonetheless, the entire Outworld Coalition was indeed roused. The Vargr attacked across the Coreward borders. The Sword Worlders occupied Imperial forces to Spinward. Zhodani fleets pushed across the Marches, capturing numerous systems and eventually crossing into Rhylanor’s outer system. They were only stopped because Duke Norris of Regina (previously derided by the Comic Juggler with the question, “Where’s Norris?”) had finally wrested control of the armed forces from Admiral Santanocheev. The Imperial Navy fought hard and suffered significant losses of ships and personnel.

Despite the significant forces they deployed against Rhylanor, no Zhodani ever put “boots on the ground.” They either died in space or fled, some to die in other systems, others captured during the attempted retreats.

Local volunteers also took an active role in defense of the system. Even residents of the Old Station trained and prepared, refurbishing and manning archaic turrets on the dual-wheel station before enemy forces began pouring in through several jump points. Old Station acquitted itself well; its “militia” forces destroyed one Vargr privateer and repelled another that managed to bypass the Imperial blockade.

The Rhylanor system contains relics of the climactic battle: the portion of space known as the Warships’ Graveyard. There the shattered hulks of disabled vessels are being gathered together by tugs to prevent their being a hazard to navigation. The whole area is classified as a no-travel zone, and patrolled to prevent any but military vessels and a few licensed salvage operatives from entering. The area is designated as a war grave by Duke Leonard Stephanos of Rhylanor, who is petitioning the Moot to give this designation Imperial imprimatur.

Old Station on Holiday Eve

Scale: Standard Deck Squares (1.5 meters)

A deck plan of the Main Concourse is included. Establishments discussed are not expressly placed by number, but are on the levels indicated.

The Main Concourse is one of ten Old Station segments. All segments are operated under regulations of the Rhylanor Starport Authority. As such, it is not subject to planetary law. The Starport Authority regulates weapon possession and use within the Concourse, as the area is popular with tourists from Rhylanor and other worlds. Main Concourse is viewed by Rhylanor’s youth as the “ultimate mall” for a hanging out. At least a hundred youths manage to visit on any given day. It is also a dating spot for adults, and a liberty facility for military, scout, and merchant personnel.

Station Security has the right to take custody of any weapon from any person at any time. Failure to surrender a weapon on demand may result in detention. Carrying high-powered weapons is discouraged. Newly purchased firearms, explosives, lasers and similar ranged weapons must be delivered to an on-station hotel or to a properly registered ship for storage in an appropriate locker. Purchasers of edged weapons are encouraged to do the same. Only sophonts carrying proof of legal majority may purchase weapons on station.

Use of weapons of any kind on the concourse subjects the user to detention, questioning, and possible Imperial charges. Station Security is

allowed wide discretion to choose “rough justice” over bringing formal charges, and security personnel have the authority to order miscreants off the station.

There are a few well-known businesses and features in the central portion of the Concourse. From west to east, they are:

1. *Rowland’s Hanger*. The Hanger is a somewhat rough restaurant and bar catering to serious travellers, not for light-hearted tourists.
2. *Secondary cable housing*. Branch offices for various megacorporations rent space in buildings hanging from the cable. The lowest building deck is at least nine meters above the glacial valley level.
3. *Stairs, escalators and elevators* go up the terraced levels to either side of the cable. The elevators and escalators are inside the terraces; stairs are external.
4. *Vilani Dessert Dome*. Features light, sweet foods based on Vilani recipes.
5. *Miller’s Old Scout Brew Pub*. The structure is a salvaged Scout/Courier hull with fittings, drives, controls, furniture, and internal partitions removed. Internally, the pub has open floor plan with tables and kitchen facilities. Brewing and distilling equipment has been built into the fuel tankage areas. Outside seating is also available.
6. *Cirque des Sirkas*. The tent is up, animal pens prepared and occupied. The caterers are working on meal prep, and appropriate security is already in place. From west to east there is a dressing dome and animal housing domes (converted survival domes). There are also one-ton cargo carriers; large animal pens; the Tent; porta-privies in rows to either side of the Tent; and a front reception area for the opening performance. The reception preparation is shown as of twenty-four hours before the opening show.
7. *Central cable housing*. This housing provides an airtight housing all the way to the hub for the segment’s main cable. Cargo and passenger elevators run inside the housing; the cargo elevator runs on a track up the cable. Smaller passenger platforms also follow the cable upward. Large hatches allow movement of cargo in and out of the enclosure. The elevator shafts allow the elevators and platforms to go down to the lowest rim area. *The Imperial Manor Hotel* hangs on the housing, providing exhilarating views to all of its guests.
8. *Four sets of stairs, escalators, and elevators* allow access to the terraces on either side. These are the same in constriction as those previously described.
9. *Stairs to the “subway.”* The subway goes around the rim, allowing faster transit for those in a real rush.
10. *“The Chessboards.”* The park contains two oversized chessboards on slightly raised platforms to provide for life sized games, performance space, soap-box space for orators, and other public uses. Benches provide seating. Two conceptualized sculptures of starships are not art, but have become excellent climbing spaces for children and childish adults. A large, unassigned space hosts various gatherings and functions. Construction is being undertaken to repair damage caused by a training accident during the war. In addition, two dome-kiosks are currently unoccupied.
11. *Interstellar Food Court*. Dome-shaped food kiosks provide a wide variety of food types. These provide “fast food,” rather than high cuisine.
12. *Statue of Olav hault-Plankwell (Olav I, first of the Emperors of the Flag, born on Rhylanor)*.
13. *The Broadside*. The nautical-themed restaurant and pub is frequented by tourists hoping to see real spacer captains. The menus explain that the staff dress in quaint, historically inaccurate costumes intended to evoke British Imperialism (whatever that was).
14. *Secondary Cable*. Same as first secondary cable. The Travellers’ News Service maintains its Rhylanor offices in the building hanging from the cable.
15. *Trevor’s*. Eating and drinking establishment favored by army and marine veterans. The entirely “outside” tables are fixed firmly in place to minimize their misuse during disagreements. The chairs are light plastic, reducing breakage of chairs and bodies during such arguments.

In addition there are many other facilities:

Cirque

Storefronts. One-quarter of the approximately 500 stores and entertainment establishments have entries on this level. With additional available “depth,” these tend to be larger venues. Storefronts, restaurants, bars and theaters with only terrace access (the second and higher levels) tend to be viewed as less desirable establishments, though there are bright spots.

Carts and Kiosks. Small mobile carts and kiosks can be found throughout the concourse, selling everything from Vilani Shish Kabob to cheap souvenirs.

Green-space is found throughout the concourse. Several of the terrace levels are green-space for recreation and more traditional functions such as photosynthesis.

First-Level Storefront Establishments Of Note

1. *Traveller's Aide Society Subsector Offices.*
2. *Imperial Military Recruiting Station.* All formal branches of the Imperial military maintain a recruiting office within this storefront. Blatant attempts are made to appeal to youths in particular.
3. *Concourse Emergency Center.* The Emergency Center, which occupies several storefronts, can handle up to fifteen patients at a time, including trauma victims. Once patients are stabilized, they are transferred to the main hospital in another torus segment.
4. *Donald's Doodads and Data from All Over.* Rocks, toys, antique-looking thingummies, baubles and kitschy souvenirs from all over the sector. None of these items seem to be are worth very much, no matter what the price tag may say. The data compendiums are far more valuable; the proprietor actively buys and sells information from any source. If Donald tells you something is so, believe him; no matter the source, his information is all based on impeccable research. Among the proprietor's prized possessions is a sheet of what appears to be paper, with a simple but vaguely familiar symbol drawn on it. Occasionally, when he's feeling like talking, he takes the sheet of paper from its triple-locked safe, explains that it came to him from an estate sale, and then rips it up. It immediately re-assembles. Most spacers assume it's just a cheap parlor trick in a cheap shop, and all refuse to pay him the Cr 100,000.00 asking price. He would sell it for a tenth of that if someone could explain to him what it really is.
5. *Eaglestone Excursions.* Independent charter tour operator, specializing in adventure touring for the adventurist needing a break. The company owns a number of in-system craft and books charters and services for the wealthy.
6. *Trebor Interstellar Designs.* Ship's architect office specializing in ships of 2400 tons or fewer.
7. *Glesner Personnel Matching.* Headhunting offices specializing in personnel management. Glesner is the sole contractor handling personnel for Sharurshid's Rhylanor Office, Cirque des Sirkas, LIC, and other spacefaring operations. Glesner also holds contracts with numerous guilds and unions. Starship operators throughout the subsector rely upon Glesner's to vet personnel. Fee only if successful.
8. *Osborne Galleries.* Art gallery selling genuine and expensive works of art, including “folk art” from various societies and species throughout the Domain of Deneb, as well as more affordable authorized reproductions. Osborne is currently showing the sculptor's concept model for “Obstinate,” a Masterpiece commissioned by various private citizens of Rhylanor. The final work is being shipped to Norris to be installed by Holiday Eve, 1111 (a year hence).
9. *Smart's Tailor Shop.* Smart's experienced tailors and seamstresses can let out your old dress uniform, or make you a new facsimile that will fool Sector Admiral (Ret.) Santanocheev. Rumors that Smart runs a sweatshop are exaggerated, at least slightly. Smart can also pad a suit to hide most small weapons with ease.
10. *Kundert's Shipboard Pets.* A wide variety of beakers, tree rats, seedspitters, and other small animals commonly found on vessels in the Spinward Marches. The owner also claims to know where one can buy a “breeding pair” of “genuine Terran barn-cats from the woods of deepest, darkest Maine.” A black beaker in the beaker cage stares at any character with a known (to the referee, at least) high psionic potential.
11. *Vallance Gems and Settings.* Well-secured and alarmed establishment which sells genuine and valuable gems.
12. *Evans' Textile Creations.* Evans sells hand-made textile creations, from fine clothing to quilts. Some of her work includes valuable antiques, including a quilt once owned by the Aledon family. It has been fully authenticated, having been among documented gifts to a loyal retainer. The squares include bits fabric said to date from before the Aledon family came to the Spinward Marches.
13. *Hunter's Cyberware Emporium.* Hunter's offers a range of cyberware upgrades including implants and prostheses. Products include both wired and wireless neural computer interfaces, data cores, hearing augmentation, optical sensor implants in any wavelength, prosthetic hand, arm and leg upgrades in a wide variety of configurations, weapon implants, skeletal reinforcing, and Subcutaneous armor. Hunter's expert technicians and surgeons offer a 24-hour turnaround once payment is confirmed. Disclaimer: 1. It is the responsibility of the customer to abide by any and all laws pertaining to implants and concealed weaponry. 2. Hunter's accepts no responsibility in the event of disfigurement, impairment, disability or death. 3. Strictly no refunds.
14. *Rutherford's Editing and Writing Services.* Rutherford provides expert assistance in all written communications, reviving an art that's lost when one relies on computer programs. The proprietor can locate natives of most human and non-human languages spoken within the Domain of Deneb to assist in translation and proofing of texts.
15. *Worj's Physical Books.* Offering and selling the best in both reprints and genuinely old books produced on physical media.
16. *Olav I Museum.* A museum devoted to the life of Olav hault-Plankwell, as well as the history of other “Emperors of the Flag.” A number of authentic artifacts associated with Olav are kept in the museum, under high security.
17. *Hirz's Mind and Body Gym.* A standard gymnasium with exercise equipment, payable on a daily rate. Rumored to be a Psionic Institute.
18. *Dr. Menotti, Exoveterinarian.* Menotti has facilities to handle many types of biology. Bring him a beaker, your family bloodvark, or your favorite geneered atmoslug to cure what ails. No species too exotic.
19. *Calthron and Calthron Investigations.* Neither the size nor location of the office (behind one of the support cables) reflects the real abilities of the company. Note that this is a “Fat Cat” crossover.
20. *Duke Selt's Solomani Curios and Bistro: Featuring oddities and fine foods showcasing the diverse cultures and history of Solomani peoples.* Enjoy Ukrainian Borscht, Chinese Spring Rolls, American Pancakes with real Maple syrup, and even Peruvian Roasted Scorpions with Ghost Peppers. All of these delicacies are offered alongside a staggering display of Solomani cultural novelties that you can take with you for a modest price. Drink, dine, and revel in the glory of the many and varied Solomani cultures. Leave content and a little wiser concerning your friends to Rimward (and your wallet lighter; the real maple syrup costs CR 2,000 for two pancakes' worth).
21. *Beckman Power.* Beckman sells batteries, power cells, and other devices to power almost any piece of equipment, modern or archaic.
22. *Butter's Awards.* If you need a plaque, scroll, engraved power screwdriver, or almost anything else as an award, Butter will prepare it for you within an hour of having the object. He knows where to buy most items, and has discounts arranged with the majority of the merchants on the Concourse.
23. *Phalon Candies.* Phalon sells a wide variety of sweets for every taste.
24. *Thorp's Cleanerbots.* Thorp sells everything from small sweepers to heavy-duty janitorial systems, for the busy housewife or the busy ship's steward.
25. *Selter's Communications.* Selter sells various phones and other communications devices — some so small and discrete that possession without proper authorization is a felony on worlds valuing personal freedom.
26. *Turner Data Retrieval.* If you accidentally erased your holiday pictures, or you want to scare up the data off a methodically erased data storage unit, Turner will do the work for you. Like any good

business person, Turner charges extra for certification that his own computers are wiped clean of the data after it is retrieved.

27. *Erickson's Keys and Locksmith*. Mechanical or electronic, Erickson can copy a key or install a better one.
28. *Appell's Walking Sticks and Staffs*. Under a sign depicting Odin, the Grey Pilgrim of Sword Worlds lore, Appell will sell you any supporting rod you may need or desire, using fine woods from throughout the Domain of Deneb. His best staffs are made of Capon's century wood.
29. *Jukes' Survival Suits*. When you've forgotten your emergency air supply, Jukes can take care of you. Jukes went from comfortable to wealthy during the Fifth Frontier War, and for good reason — his survival gear is the best.
30. *Finnamore Party Supplies*. Every day's a party when you're alive, and Finnamore wants you to supply your days well. Proof of age required for most purchases.
31. *Bell's Supermarket*. Everyone must eat, and a fair number of people reside on Old Station year-around. Bell gets the freshest vegetables, meats, and other foodstuffs available, because the company controls most of the adjoining agro-torus.
32. *Hutton Starship Provisions*. Across the Main Concourse from Bell's, Hutton handles more basic provisions, like protein dispenser refills and liquid purification recharge packets. They maintain a large catalogue of items for every sophont's taste.
33. *Terton Algae*. Terton specializes in pond-scum, doesn't deny it, and doesn't dodge the issue, because your starship air recycling uses pond-scum to keep you *alive*. When you want the best pond-scum, and you don't mean a lawyer, you go to Terton Algae.
34. *Hadden Musical Instruments*. A starship crew needs to nurture its collective soul in the deep and dark of jump, and what better way to pass the time than with good music? Hadden sells everything from reproduction bagpipes (guaranteed to get you unceremoniously decompressed) to the finest stringed instruments, even a massive Grand Piano if you can find space in your lounge for it. The only things Hadden doesn't sell are pre-programmed "instruments" that require no training or talent.
35. *Berry for Zero-G*. If you need powered, counter-spin-stabilized wrenches, screwdrivers, and other tools to make your zero-g repairs, come to Berry.
36. *Carey Planetary Emblems*. There's a fortune in putting your planet's flag or other emblem on hats, shirts, vacc-suit covers, and other clothing — and Carey is making it, one overpriced hat at a time.
37. *Matyola's Firearms*. No traveller should be without a means of self-defense. All identification is carefully checked, and station policy is followed in all cases. So you, kid, yes, *you* — don't try to buy even a BB gun from Matyola. Spacers, though, are welcome and given individual attention.
38. *Cobb's Pharmacy*. Cobbs fills your prescriptions for fungicides, antibiotics, painkillers, and other medications and materials to help you through your latest misadventure.
39. *Heine's Edges*. Heine sells a wide variety of edged weapons, from flint souvenirs to monofilament blades.
40. *Loren the Laser King*. This small store sells only laser weapons, but they all work and they all work well. The owner occasionally spouts off claims that an alternate universe exists in which the Emperor isn't a few years from assassination. His friends and colleagues think him odd, not certifiable — everyone loves Strephon, after all, and Loren is just eccentric.
41. *ReID*. An electronics shop exclusively for ReID brand goods ... personal communicators, portable computers, A/V players, personal music players, etc. ("ReID" is the local retail brand name for Naasirka's consumer electronics range.) ReID can be pronounced as "Re-ID" or "Reed".
42. *Gelinas Duffles*. Spacers' duffles are as individual as they are. Don't go from one ship to another without the best duffle you can buy.
43. *Rowland Bank*.
44. *LeMay Weapon Repair*.
45. *Wendelken Florist*.
46. *Moss Barber Shop*.

Second-Level Establishments of Note

1. *Terhune Formal Wear*. The store caters to humans, with only a small selection of items suitable for non-humans.
2. *Dillon's Buffet Eatery*. With a variety of food types, Dillon's offers somewhat higher quality and comfort than the food provided by the domes and kiosks. It also has Second-Terrace charm overlooking the treetops.
3. *Raymond's Vilani Cuisine*. Vilani food for the pickiest eater of somewhat incompatible life forms. No one knows why someone with a Solomani name is selling Vilani food, but it's as good as anything Grandmother Malikaanasi ever fermented for you.
4. *Net Effect*. A youth-orientated A/V media shop. Well stocked with the latest music files. Net Effect defines itself as a cool alternative to House of Coal's overt trendy-ism.
5. *Joyner's Ship Carpentry*. Joyner's builds special furniture for special ships. If you need an Owner-Aboard suite crafted from Capon's exotic hardwoods (or, for that matter, Mercury's cheap pine), Joyner will fit you out right. Joyner particularly likes 100-year wood from the forests of Capon (Spinward Marches 2324), and will talk your ears off about how the migratory lumberjacks do their best to keep the forests producing. You can pretend interest; *Cirque* plans to stop there.
6. *Reich Electronics*. Reich's specializes in the highest quality local technology in consumer electronics. All items offered for sale are known to incorporate materials from Pannet's nasty mines and collection points.
7. *Engstrom Glassware*. Engstrom sells the kind of solid, heavy glassware that survives heavy maneuvering or a solid crack against a marine's skull. Engstrom has a line of hand-blown glassware from Arkadia's finest craftsmen.
8. *Merx Musculature*. A standard gymnasium with exercise equipment, payable on a daily rate.
9. *Bulldog Court Private Investigations*. The proprietor's got a gun and a grav cycle, and somehow there's always a dame mixed up in his life and assignments. Private investigation undertaken, wrongs righted, justice done and seen to be done. Bulldog can also help with speeding tickets.
10. *Morgan's Formal Wear Rentals*. If you don't want to own the latest in formal wear, but have a reception to go to on Holiday, this is the place to rent what you need. Morgan maintains a large stock of formal wear for males and females of various shapes, sizes, and species. A large, well-catalogued warehouse in another torus segment holds over ten thousand items ("If it's not in style today, wait a decade"), and can pull out appropriate clothing within a half-hour to forty-five minutes.
11. *Smith's Low-Tech Weapons*. Specializes in blades, mechanical projectiles (e.g., bow weapons) and other weapons which can be used at many law levels and in most technology settings. "The other gal's just as dead with an arrow through her eye as a bullet."
12. *Myer's Wormhole Donuts*. Shop specializing in baked and fried circular cakes and hot drinks including caffeine and other stimulants.
13. *House Of Coal*. A trendy youth-oriented A/V media shop. Well stocked with the latest music on all media forms. Also has exclusive local distribution rights to several major offworld video titles (including "Pirates of the Blood Asteroids").
14. *Rhylanor Home Defense Forces Main Offices*. From 1107 through 1109, the offices were filled with volunteers planning the last-ditch battle against invading forces. Now the office is mostly deserted, with only two paid staffers and a handful of aging Fourth Frontier War veterans telling fibs about how they served under Aramais P. Lee the time his ship misjumped into deep space and lived to tell about it.
15. *Hoxter's Hats*. Hoxter's sells all sorts of headgear for all sorts of weather. Proud supplier of *Cirque des Sirkas'* distinctive "baseball-style" crew caps with logo.
16. *Sonderman's Toys*. Toys of all designs, from all over the galaxy. Some sophont toys have small parts that may endanger young children. But, then again, taking a small child on your next trip may endanger them more.

Cirque

17. *Rondot's Ship Customization*. Rondot takes fairly standard ship designs and customizes them to the client's specifications. She knows and studies the plans, and knows that personalization can make a Free Trader into a palace.
18. *Frasier Therapy*. If you've had a bad year and need someone to listen, Frasier is there for you.
19. *"Flame" Ashby's Fire Prevention Systems*. Donnie "Flame" Ashby knows how fires start, how to prevent them, and how to stop them without venting all of your atmosphere into space. Upgrade your ship's fire prevention systems before you try to breath smoke.
20. *Davies' Delightful Donuts*.
21. *Curtin's Curtains*.
22. *Gemstones by van den Heever*.
23. *Boyer's Beyond Bedding Boutique from The Beyond*.
24. *Rathbone's Comics and Graphic Novels*.
25. *Poles Traditional Vilani Craft Brews*.
26. *Thrien's Very Odd Lots*: You need it, we might have it. We have it, you might need it.
27. *Wilson's Medical Supplies*.
28. *Addley's Armory*.
29. *Rogers' Communicators*.
30. *Hammond's Genotyping*.
31. *Dangerous Jay's Terran Tabasco Specialties*.
32. *Barnett Pet Supply*.
33. *Law's Gag Gifts*: When you don't know what to give, give a good laugh. Sit your favorite Vargr on a whoopee cushion!
34. *Fennell Spice Merchants*.
35. *Penrod's Pest Control*.
36. *The O'Neill's Leadership and Management Training School*.
37. *Smith Ironware*.
38. *Steele Rails Model Train Emporium*.
39. *Shafer's Securities and Investments*.
40. *Reger's Seed Supply*: Heirloom seeds, hybrids, and exotics.
41. *Mitford's Pancake House*: Classic Aslan pancakes served 24/7.
42. *Van Wie's Perfumery*. Specializes in Saurus-created scents.
43. *Carpenter's Woodworks*.
44. *Davis' Vehicle Rental*: Bikes, strollers, & personal electric transport devices.
45. *Dufresnes' Collectable Action Figures and Miniatures*.
46. *Borghi's Breads and Pastas*.
47. *Seitz's Ice Cream*: Home of Seitz's original 777 flavors.
48. *Hillers' Suds Palace*.
49. *Henderson's Haven Casino*.
50. *Umphress' Uniforms*.
51. *Lytle's Titles*: Title services for all space vessels.
52. *Reimers-Rawcliffe Life Insurance Agency*.
53. *Heng's Teamwear*: Team shirts, caps and other gear printed or embroidered while you wait.
54. *Sarkes Salvage*.
55. *Fleming's Homeopathic Pharmacopia*.
56. *Young's Game Emporium*.
57. *Watt's Lamps and Lighting*.
58. *Wesson's Costumes and Masques*.
59. *Brooks Biospheres*.
60. *Vernon Game Hall*.
61. *Pearly White's Orthodontia Galactica*.
62. *Seeley's Seasonal Shop*: Gifts and decorations for holidays throughout the sector.
63. *Schuerholz Chocolatiers*.

Third-Level Establishments of Note

1. *Raz's Pasta Bowl*. Tucked away on the Third Level, the Pasta Bowl is found by the curious following the smells of exotic Terran spices like garlic and oregano. Just a window, usually with a line, they only serve two items: large garlic-bread bowls filled with pasta and meat sauce, and liters of thin beer in even thinner plastic cups. The prices are low, the pasta is hot, and no one ever leaves hungry. Spacers down to their last credit but respectful are fed and sent to Glesner's for urgent help.
2. *Fifty Million Names*. Shop specializing in religious documents and iconography from multiple cultures and species.
3. *Frammili's Cartography*. Despite its location in a dingier section of the third level, Frammili's provides the most accurate cartography (planetary and stellar) available in the subsector. Frammili works with Donald to obtain all possible data. She does not discount legend and folklore solely because it appears to be apocryphal, preferring to correlate every scrap of information she can access to locate any place of interest. Frammili maintains several safes full of valuable maps and atlases. Among her projects: she has been commissioned by Aramais P. Lee to determine approximate locations of rogue planets and other extra-solar objects in the Regina Subsector, while another project has her correlating legends of odd appearances and disappearance on and near Regina.
4. *Hemdian Books*. A book store (both printed flimsy and media tile formats) focusing on non-fiction such as textbooks, technical manuals, science journals, and popular science magazines. Mostly new, some second-hand.
5. *Coinich Financial Advisors, LIC*. "Don't leave your financial future to inferior software or A.I.s. Only a sophont, with years of experience, can provide the intuition needed to provide you with a secure retirement. Whether a permanent station resident, on a regular route, or just passing through... we can help. Come in and speak with Aengus MacLaren, or any of our licensed advisers at all hours of station day or night. Member: Rhylanor Stock Exchange (RSE), and Imperial Financial Advisors Association (IFAA)."
6. *Pravda News Service*. The subsector "tabloid" competitor of Traveller News service. Video displays on the walls show lurid stories of various events, stories of questionable accuracy, and tout coverage of the "seriously underplayed threat of Zho sleeper cells ready to rise up and use Ancient installations to enslave us all."
7. *Dale Dips and Condiments from 5,000 Worlds*.
8. *Millard Portable Language Translators*.
9. *Bergstedt's Crom-Burgers*: Berg sells the best crom-burgers in the sector. Forget that Gatlifi fellow on Regina.
10. *Lai's Day Spa and Health Retreat*.
11. *Molesworth's Leather Goods*.
12. *Warnes' Portrait Studio*.
13. *Johnson Gym*.
14. *Collinson's Cheese Cupboard*.
15. *Bell's Silversmith*.
16. *Webber's Baby World*.
17. *Vallat's Fine Wines*.
18. *Draper's Dry Cleaners*.
19. *Sherlock Investigations*.
20. *Lymbery Luxury Confections*.
21. *Crucifix Fine Luggage*.
22. *Wootton's Boots*.
23. *Harris' Electronic Charging Station*.
24. *Rathbone's Rugs and Carpets*.
25. *Kehnen Krispy Kones*.
26. *Orr's Locks*.
27. *Bishop's Bridal Shop and Wedding Boutique*.
28. *Akkerman Martial Arts*.
29. *Marjola's Magic Shop*.
30. *Gibbins' Porch and Patio Furniture*.
31. *Yamaguchi's Dance Studio*.
32. *Brodie's Belts and Bags*.
33. *Paul's Paint and Paper*.
34. *Karlsson Physical Therapy*.
35. *Fields Fireworks*.
36. *Bradshaw's Personalized Stuffed Animals*.
37. *Rosynek's Vilani Viands*.
38. *Boase Private Security*.
39. *Slocum's Hardware*.
40. *Adams Office Supplies*.
41. *Danielson's Oxygen Supply*.
42. *Urbins Acupuncture*.
43. *Vargas Precision Timepieces*.
44. *Bryan's Breads and Buns*.
45. *Howlett's Vargr Karaoke Bar*.
46. *Patterson Personnel*.

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47. *Stanton's Hydroponic Greenhouse Supplies.*
48. *Stafford Private Nursing.*
49. *Shayne Event Staffing.*
50. *Petro Rock Climbing Gear.*
51. *Grimmund's Maze of Mirrors.*
52. *Blood's Pudding Bar.*
53. *Hammond Footwear.*
54. *Mitchell's Mini-Golf and Arcade.*
55. *Gorski Tile and Flooring.*
56. *Lockett's Safe Storage.*
57. *Garnett's Celebrity Memorabilia.*
58. *Schmiedekamp's Soups, Salads, Sandwiches and Sake.*
59. *Saul's Sundries.*
60. *Eveland's Arboretum.*
61. *Hansen's Hats.*
62. *Shocklee's Trapper Supplies.*
63. *Joly's Lunion Jellybeans.*
64. *Thede's Robotic Steeds and Equestrian Shop.*
65. *Heck's Cafeteria.*
66. *Kuzma's Kites.*
67. *Currie's Imaging and Remote Sensing Supplies.*
68. *Reiss's Stringed Instruments.*
69. *Soholt's Salad Bar.*
70. *Fegette's 3-D Printing.* Specializing in Reproduction of Difficult-to-Locate Parts.
71. *Eckman's Seafood.*
72. *Engebos' Exotic Fruits.*
73. *Buck's Billiards.*
74. *Reynolds Sportsmania.*
75. *Byers' Best Cookies.*
76. *Roth's Jewellery & Timepiece Repair.*
77. *Metzger's Munitions.*
78. *Karamales Seafood Shop.*
79. *Kolb's Safes and Lockboxes.*
80. *Johnson's Coin and Credit Exchange.*
81. *Hidalgo Buckles & Belts.*
82. *Davis' Coffee Bar.*
83. *Hand's Therapeutic Massage.*
84. *Shaw's Sleepwear.*
85. *Romero's Gelato.*
86. *Richards' Medical Supply.*
87. *Young's Aslan Cuisine.*
88. *Salisbury's Steak and Eggs.*
89. *Romanowski's Rags:* Second-hand clothing at third-hand prices.
90. *Crocker's Pottery.*
91. *Galliard's Specialty Ammunition.*
92. *Bossi's Bubble Machines.*
93. *Leen's Reader's World.*
94. *Campbell's Plaids & Pipes.*
95. *Rief's Scuba Shop.*
96. *Majer's Minor Electronic Repairs.*
97. *Covert's Cantina.*
98. *Stanton's Tea Time.*
99. *Schultz' Swimwear.*
100. *Brodie's Noodles.*
101. *Campbell's Classic Cupcakes.*
102. *Narucki's Lizard World.*
103. *Reynolds' Camping Equipment.*
104. *MacGregor's Hovercycles.*
105. *Hay's House of Herbs.*
106. *Adler's Anonymous:* Everything you need for not being noticed, including three bushes.
107. *Boisvert Archery Supplies.*
108. *Wong's Farm Gear.*
109. *Greimann's Snowshoes and Skis.*
110. *Stehling's Shaving Supply.*
111. *Slaughter's Salon:* Good looks to die for (but please don't).
112. *Duke's Vilani Apparel.*
113. *Hain's Helmets and Goggles.*
114. *Pritchett's Denim Den.*
115. *Scoggins' Puzzles and Brain Teasers.*

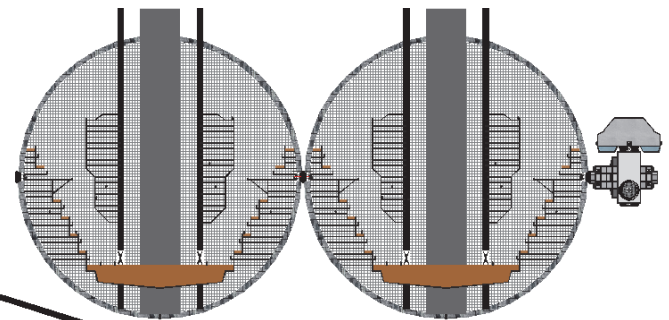
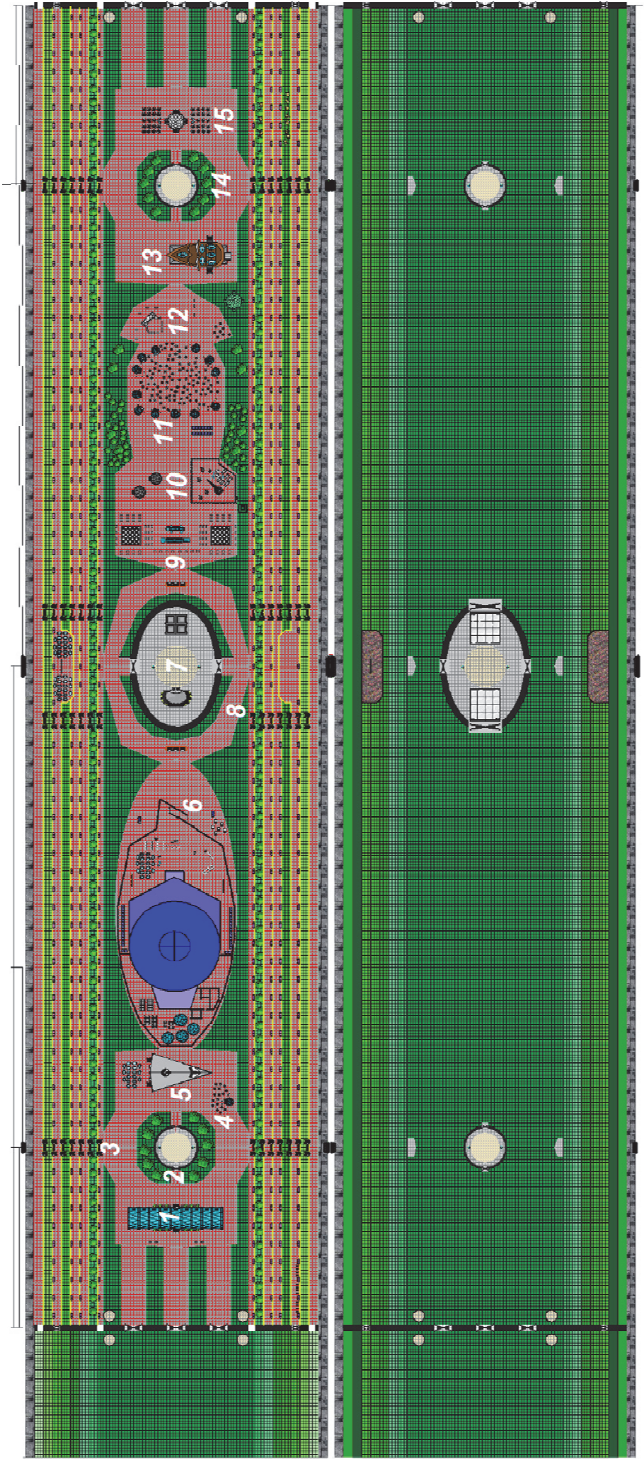
116. *McCulloch' Custom Embroidery.*
117. *Sackett's Station Skateboards.*
118. *Trias' Tavern.*
119. *Blanco's Beerfest.*
120. *Walz' Cutz.*

Fourth-Level Establishments of Note

1. *Kabala Life Coaching.* The shop provides instructional materials and books on numerous ancient religions and magical systems. Some speculate that it is a front for a Zhodani-supported Psionic Institute.
2. *Lee's SPV (Sophont-Powered Vehicle) Sales, Service and Rentals.* The store sells and rents bicycles and tricycles for station use. It is at this level to be convenient to those "riding the upper rim," the track encircling the station on the next terrace above. Operated by a former lawyer claiming to be a distant relative of Aramais P. Lee.
3. *Rhylanor Live Player's Guild (Old Station Office).* Small office maintained for the registration of live performers of all type, and for enforcement of Guild Rules regarding abuse of technological assistance.
4. *Bob's Token Locker.* A competitor of Donald's Doodads and Data from All Over, Bob's sells "trinkets and knickknacks from all over." Seen by many as a simple pawn shop, Bob's is a fair establishment, giving "thirty-day redeemable loans" for items. If the loans are not repaid with one percent interest, the item becomes Bob's for sale. However, Bob's prices are reasonable, given that most spacers in trouble will take less; Bob's loans are generally about 80% of his fair estimate of value. Spacers usually leave without redeeming, so he makes his money. Bob's current prize item is a jeweled ear-stud made from a small Star Sapphire from Derchon (Spinward Marches 2024, which is on *Cirque's* planned route). He will sell it to a PC for a mere Cr 6,500 "because I like your face."
5. *Plankwell's.* A small, seedy bar run by a direct descendant of the long-dead Emperor's second cousin twice removed. Plankwell is rumored to keep his prices low by running a still in the back. However, no one has gone blind yet from a bender at Plankwell's.
6. *Hogajue's Vermin Control.* Hogajue is the being to go to when you have a vermin outbreak in your station warehouse, your hold, or your Main Concourse eatery. Hogajue has a real appetite for vermin control. Using both simplistic chemical poisons and more exotic methods such as DNA-tailored predators, Hogajue is the four-eyed thing that keeps the station clean. Don't forget to buy an eight-pack of Hogajue's Patented Vreepreer Grenades while you're there.
7. *Forester' Aslan Bonsai.*
8. *Mehrholz' Mania Tavern.*
9. *Horrell's Sensor Repairs.*
10. *Levy Optical Specialties.*
11. *Wood's Watering Hole.*
12. *Payne Podiatry.*
13. *Schleusener's Smoked Sausages.*
14. *Rubin's Artist Supply Shop.*
15. *Baxter Beauty Supply.*
16. *Clinite's Specialized Landing Craft Sales Financing Office.*
17. *Foster's Fabrics.*
18. *Rice's Juice Bar.*
19. *Bell's House of Pewter.*
20. *Weiskircher's Wine Emporium.*
21. *Ryng's Compact Starship Gym Equipment.*
22. *Lockhart Crossbows.*
23. *Kowalczewski's Haberdashery.*
24. *Darios' Doubleshots Bar and Grill.*
25. *Connelly's Silicon Grill.*
26. *Miller's Market Research Center.*
27. *Darios' Specialty Gift Wrapping.*
28. *Page's Paper Supply.*
29. *Piper's Plumbing.*
30. *McLearen's Specialty Micro-Satellites.*
31. *Humphreys Drones.*
32. *Linnemann's Ointments and Unguents.*
33. *Holmes' Arbitration Service.*

Cirque

34. *O'Flannagain's Fish and Chips.*
35. *White's Wombat Watering Hole.*
36. *Clark's Creamery.*
37. *Chunie's Lunar Specialties.*
38. *Jones' Junior Gymnasium.*
39. *Osswald Otherworld Outfitters.*
40. *Leymaster Gravitic Repairs.*
41. *Corrin's Cutlery.*
42. *Fuente's Olde-Fashioned Solomani Soda Shoppe.*
43. *Rouse's Finned and Feathered Foods.*
44. *Lauer's Gift Baskets.*
45. *Ueber Candles.*
46. *Lewis' While-You-Wait Specialty Tailoring.*
47. *Simon's Hot Pretzels.*
48. *Ota's Yogurts.*
49. *Weissler Waxworks.*
50. *Headley's Aquariums.*
51. *Maroney's Safe-Storage.*
52. *Townend's Rhylanor Eel Specialties*
53. *Bigland Station Rental Office.*
54. *Anderson's Plush Stuffed Toys.*
55. *Duyker's Very Fine Pies.*
56. *Saint John's Stained Glass Specialties.*
57. *Whalley's Wheel Covers.*
58. *Sacco's Satchels.*



Episode 2

2414 Tureded

Spinward Marches 2414 C565540-9 Ag Ni 614 Im M3 V

Excerpt: *Diary and Dialogues*

You can't swing a tree-rat in the Marches without finding another bucolic nightmare. Usually, though, they're trying to keep the spacers and such away. They think we're all out to despoil their youth.

Well, most of us probably are, as I think about it, but that's not the point. The point is, you can't stop the young from wanting a little of the excitement of strange places to rub off on them in a real personal way. If you get my drift. "Kiss a deraabelar and your dreams will come true." Sure. But the deraabelar might get a behind full of buckshot. Might even deserve it.

Tureded is one of the odd worlds I can think of where they *encourage* a little hanky-panky. From married folk, more the odd. The human gene pool there got a little shallow a few hundred years ago, for one reason or another. They've been playing catch-up, I guess. Six hundred thousand fair-skinned, red-haired kissin' cousins needed to stop kissing each other so much. They know that, so they encourage getting that genetic diversity more diverse. Great for the men — if your gene scan comes up pretty clean, at least. There's fun there for the women, too. They'll happily ask you to hang around for a year or three, or at least sell some spare eggs from your personal hatchery.

It's weird, though, to be in a place where a husband might shoot at you if you *don't* respect him enough to cuckold him. But don't plan to hang around unless you're planning to hang around. The parents — they interview prospects. With bamboo shoots under the fingernails to help get at the truth.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1104

General Data (Players)

An agricultural, non-industrial world, Tureded has a normal climate and a standard oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. The planet is a breadbasket world, supplying foodstuffs across the region, while the port is a reasonably busy trade hub where goods of all types change hands. Its approximately 600,000 inhabitants have plenty of room to spread out. Much of the local farming is accomplished with the aid of computer-guided machinery (essentially low-level robots). The local technology level, as always, reflects what can be manufactured easily on-world; however, the favorable balance of trade allows importation of more advanced products.

"Urban" clusters of course exist, in particular within a few hundred kilometers radius of the starport. Most of the population is well separated by kilometers and long work-days, however, as one might expect on an agricultural world. Thus, even with high-tech communication, regular communal activities are planned for most weekends. No town or village lacks for a Sixday dance, book group, card game, and other meetings. Most local religious activities occur on midweek evenings or Sevenday mornings. The people are an earthy, practical, strong society.

The local representative democracy is designed to prevent non-essential government intrusion into personal matters. The weight of custom, however, controls certain aspects of life, particularly in regard to

family relationships and reproduction. Infant mortality is higher than Imperial averages here due to a combination of solar activity, native viral factors, and a small, non-diverse gene-pool. As a result, marriage and mating customs are rigidly enforced by social pressure despite the low law level.

Marriage is a contract entered into after both careful genetic consideration and multi-level family negotiations. The attraction between two young people is considered a foolish basis for an essential contract. Eligible young bachelors and bachelorettes with a "stake" or expecting to inherit family land must consider potential spouses carefully, and only marry with the unanimous assent of all generations above them. Blushing brides tend to be at least half a decade younger than bridegrooms, but well educated and firm in their desire (and ability) to produce stalwart offspring. Bridegrooms are expected to be providers for wives and children.

No person under the age of twenty-five (25) standard years may marry without family permission. This local custom is of course enforced anywhere off-port. No one will solemnize or record a marriage unless at least one of each party's parents (or a guardian) is a witness. Imperial authorities defer to the pressure on-port where at least one of the parties is a young citizen of Tureded. This respect limits the number of angry mobs of relatives attempting to prevent an on-port elopement by infatuated youngsters trying to circumvent the system.

All adults of good genetic stock are expected to pass on their genes through their marriages. Monogamy is strongly favored as a genetic and financial matter. The only exception is for the introduction of "outside" genes, obtained from off-world, to increase genetic diversity. Children born of such outsiders are supposed to be a subject of male pride, rather than a reminder of cuckolding. These are children who are born into stable marriages with the intention of improving the local breed. Raising one is a privilege.

Even in this regard, however, willing parents are expected to choose wisely. Both spouses generally are involved in the decision. At the same time, no offworlder may leave the port without providing a genetic sample for analysis and posting on the planetary data system to facilitate this process for prospective parents.

Contacts with off-worlders are monitored quite simply; willing women and their husbands scan the postings for favorable mixes, check IDs and insist on medical documentation. Similarly, off-world women are paid to provide viable unfertilized ova or other undifferentiated tissue from which ova or sperm can be generated.

The effort given to expanding the gene pool is not the only effort made to ensure that families are strong and secure. Extended families live close by their kin and take care of each other. The elderly and infirm are rarely cared for outside the home. Overly extended suffering of old age is generally considered unnecessary and even offensive. "He (she) wouldn't put down his (her) own mother if she were half-rotted by cancer" is, perhaps, the ultimate attack on an adult's lack of character.

Despite its farm-belt tendencies, Tureded was viewed as having increasing importance as a trade and shipping center because of its location at a junction for Jump-1 travel from rimward to the Regina, Jewell, and Rhylanor subsectors. Prior to the Fifth Frontier War Tureded was widely expected to be upgraded to a class B Starport. The Scout Service was

Cirque

considering the establishment of a Scout Base, with the apparent intention of an X-Boat link from Rhylanor (Spinward Marches 2716) to Dinomn (Spinward Marches 1912) and Regina (Spinward Marches 1705). However, the independent nature of the locals delayed expansion of the starport and hampered negotiations over the base. When the Fifth Frontier War broke out negotiations were forgotten due to the necessities of war.

On 251-1107 Turededian authorities announced the discovery and arrest of a number of "sleeper" agents in their planetary government. Some of these were first- and second-generation agents who had spent years or decades working their way unobtrusively into families, and then into the highest councils of the planetary government. As war approached, the agents were to break the vital Jump-1 route to Regina and the war zone by turning Turedad against the Imperium and destroying or impounding supply vessels on their way to the front.

Between 180-1109 and 200-1109, the Zhodani 40th Fleet captured Tureded. On 200-1109 the 40th Fleet was forced to halt an important offensive push after discovering that a "secret" base at Fulacin (Spinward Marches 2613) had been compromised. Faced with a choice between retaking a destroyed base and establishing a new one, the 40th Fleet retreated back to Tureded and established their base there. From the Tureded base, the 40th Fleet jumped off to attack and invade both Porozlo (Spinward Marches 2715) and Rhylanor. The 40th Fleet abandoned the Tureded base following to collapse of the campaign.

As is true in any war, a few enemy combatants discovered a preference for the world they invaded. Such non-noble, non-psionic Zhodani deserted and stayed behind. Some married into local families; those families are viewed with suspicion. However, there are also a few parents proudly raising very tall children.

The inhabitants of Tureded believe in self-determination, self-defense, and personal armament. During the Fifth Frontier War, the locals mounted an intensive guerrilla campaign combined with sabotage in the starport facilities. This effectively denied the port to the Zhodani. Both men and women joined in the various guerilla activities.

Children over fourteen rarely leave the home without some armament, especially after the Zhodani occupation. Adults are always armed. Shotguns are popular, as are various rifles. Handguns are also usually available. These are also useful against local predators.

□

Cirque's Planned Route



Episode 4

Equus • Spinward Marches 2417

B555A858-B • S • Wa Ph • 202 • Im • F6 V M1 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Not that many starships are big enough to waste volume on a swimming pool, so a lot of spacers get out of practice. When they get to a place like Equus, it's — well, scary. Equus is the wrong name, I suppose — planet's named after some kind of four-legged kian, but not any land to speak of. If you want to ride a mammal, you'd best get friendly with some of the local dolphins.

Some dolphins, now, some dolphins are good people. I've had a few navigators and pilots in those funny suits that keep their skin wet. Space suits for the air. But they can comp a course, and they get you home. Good marines, too, when they join.

They're a little slow on the idea of property rights, though. Not out of meanness or anything, they just don't get it. Living in pods of maybe twenty — thirty is a big city — and even moving back and forth between pods makes them pretty cooperative. Part of living in the ocean, I guess. "We all work together, and we're all reasonable, and if I need that tool or like that pretty doodad, of course it's ok to borrow it." Most of them have to be taught about human concepts so that they can avoid arguing. I gather that they can comply, and make it a silly game, but they think we're full of ... something ... the way we fence everything off. True communal attitude, that's what they have.

Why did the early Solomani haul so many of their beasts along with them all the way to Spinward? And why change them more than they had to? Were they really looking for help, the way they said? Or were they more interested in proving they could be minor gods, and make intelligence in our own image? They failed at that, if that was the real goal. Never once met a geneered Dolphin who was interested in a proper game of cards with an ante on the table, or buying and selling real estate, or even looking at pictures of pretty girl dolphins.

I don't think it's the god-thing, though, not for the most part. I think it's simpler: the old Solomani were terrified, that's all. Terrified of going out *alone*, without familiar things. Dolphins for the seas and the water worlds. Miniphants to haul wood in the jungle — I hear that there are even a few herds of those in the Sword Worlds. Horses, that's what they called those kian-like beasts. Cats and dogs — they were afraid they wouldn't meet anything like the old house pets. Brought them with us.

Guess they were surprised when they bumped into the first Vargr. Found out someone was playing god before they were. That's never fun, I guess.

You know, the Dolphins don't worship us any more than the Vargr worship the Ancients. They don't take every word we say, every little silly thing we do as guidance from on blasted high. They'll turn on us when they have to, when they think they need to. We made them a bit too much in our own image.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

General Data (Players)

Equus is located on a major trade route to the Rhylanor Subsector. Equus also contains an Imperial Scout Base. The world's population is about 200,000,000 sophonts, primarily human though there is a significant population (approximately 20,000,000) of uplifted Dolphins (Tursiops Galactus). A very small sub-population of humans employs mechanical or medical means to more completely reside in the warm waters.

Equus' limited land mass is almost all swamp or steep mountains rising straight from the oceans. The vast majority of the human population lives in cities in the shallows (both on pylons and undersea), and free-floating arcologies both on and under the surface of deeper waters. Both can be reached by vessels from the downport. Gravitic vehicles also serve to move people and cargo to the arcologies.

In addition to Equus Startown, other major fixed seabed settlements on Equus include Lungfish, Ulir City, Kerouac, and Kagasisli. These settlements combine high-strength pressure structures with gravitic and other technologies to allow traditional seabed colonization. The populations of these cities engage in mining and some forms of farming and sea-herding.

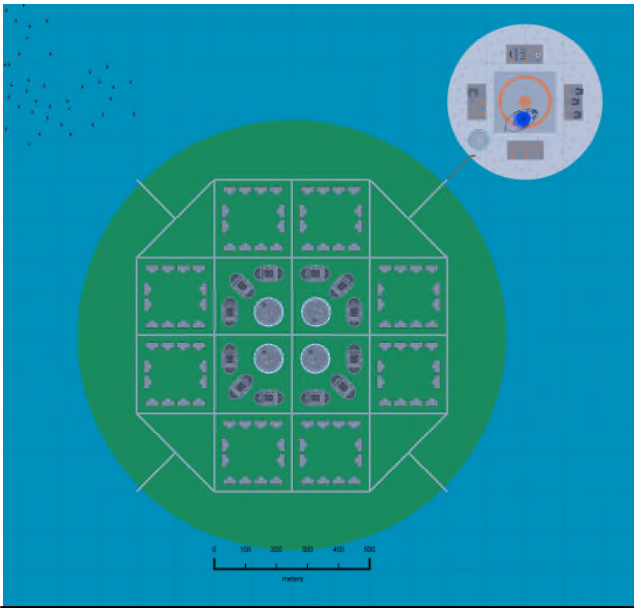
Anistown and Cote D'Azure are two major deepwater surface arcologies built on multiple floating "buckyhems" ranging in size from a few hundred meters in diameter to over a kilometer in diameter. The buckyhems are platforms constructed of advanced materials and supported by multiple floating hemispheres underneath. The "deck" shape can be almost any regular shape, but local custom seems to dictate large circular platforms supported by 100-meter-diameter hemispheres. Stable and heavy enough to support platforms and internal belowdecks works, the buckyhem floats also provide below-surface space for living, agriculture using techniques similar to those in starships, and even landing platforms for commercial starships equipped with gravitic lifters. Anistown is the larger of the two major floating arcologies, its many buckyhems floating near one another in a rough circle with a diameter of over twenty kilometers.

From above, a single buckyhem looks like a circle. From below, multiple flotation hemispheres protrude downward below the water. A large buckyhem such as The Spires can support tall buildings. Support personnel (servants and other staff) and many systems are contained underneath, in the flotation hemispheres. Parkland is found between the buildings.

Other buckyhems, such as Underhill, are more sustainable. Built-up hills contain underground dwellings with some windows, light-shafts, and access points. Almost all surface area is used for farming, grazing animals, and recreational space.

Cousteau, Ballard, Piccard, Cameron, Beebe, Nemo, Nelson and Zissou are clusters of various-sized floating undersea habitats (bubble-clusters). The various structures maintain a fairly constant depth of between ten and fifty meters. Approximately one-seventh can be found at the surface level recharging batteries and performing essential maintenance on any given day. Larger structures may be linked by airtight tubes, allowing easy movement among them. Smaller structures rely on small submersibles or simple skin-diving for passage from one to another.

Cirque



The Spires Buckyhem, and adjoining private starport, with the tent ready for performance. The four large central spires are each fifteen stories, containing spacious luxury units for the most powerful and rich Councilors. Each of the three smaller buildings in the central quadrants are six stories. The eight squares on the perimeter contain large single-family dwellings, as well as a few public buildings. All essential services (e.g., grocery repositories, stores, quarters for support staff, power plants, and other systems are maintained below decks in the flotation hemisphere.

Structures include buckyspheres with ballasted lower hemispheres and various other shapes.

More traditional submersible shapes are also used. Families often dwell in submarine designs that would be recognized by historians of old Earth's twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Only the power sources and life support systems have been modernized to use hydroxyl fuel cells or fusion. These habitats move with the slow annual currents, conducting sustainable gleaning and hunting of natural resources. They also conduct ongoing surveys of the ocean floors, looking for potential mineral sites and other resources.

Equus' inhabitants make their living by seabed mining, fish-farming, and aqua-plant harvesting. Local policies are based firmly in

sustainability. Every new seabed mine is carefully reviewed before the first deep-sea tunneling equipment is allowed to submerge into place. Fishing limits are carefully enforced. Seaweed and plankton growth and health is carefully monitored for any significant imbalance. Both human and dolphin population growth is limited and planned.

Dwellings Typical Underhill Dwelling

Note that the upper dome is at ground level. The other levels are below ground.

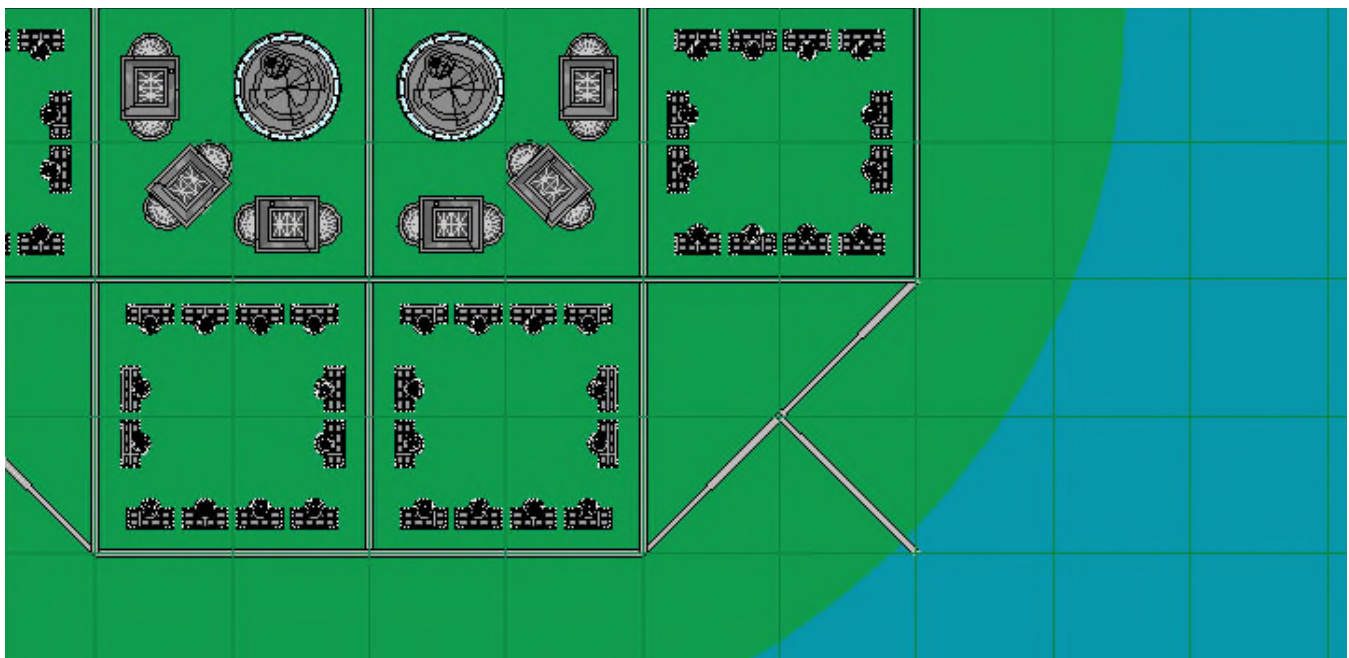
1. Entry door in upper dome.
2. Air conditioning and circulation.
3. Master bedroom, first level.
4. Secondary bedroom.
5. Kitchen.
6. Dining Area.
7. Holographic entertainment center.
8. Closet.
9. General Room (storage, hobby room, etc.)
10. Secondary bedroom.

TYPICAL UNDERHILL FAMILY DWELLING



Devereaux's Penthouse

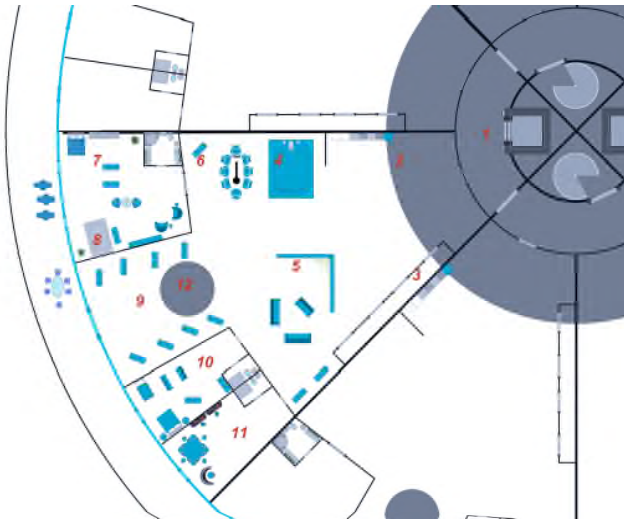
1. Elevator lobby. The entry to each unit locks and has security monitors and features. Grey shading indicates transparent ceiling (skylight) under large central dome.
2. Entry area of apartment. Grey shading indicates transparent ceiling (skylight) under large central dome.
3. Large storage closet.



Cirque

4. Dolphin tank for visiting dolphins.
5. Holographic entertainment center. Note that a large number of kid-based materials can be accessed, although the age-appropriateness may be questionable to either side (i.e., non-custodial parent slightly clueless about kids' current interests and levels).
6. Typical museum-quality display case, of which many are scattered through the apartment. Each case is locked; the glass is thick, shatter-resistant, and alarmed. Each case contains two items; each item is reasonably valued at CR 5,000.00 or more.
7. Master bedroom. Note extravagant size; most spacers would expect this to be a bunkroom.
8. Councilor's personal hot tub.
9. Entertainment area; large number of display cases.
10. Teens' bedroom. Teens are of same gender. Gender is a matter of referee preference.
11. First Councilor's working office. Note numerous computer connections and consoles. Data in these units is heavily encrypted.
12. Domed skylight from rooftop.

□



Dolphins (Tursiops Galactus)

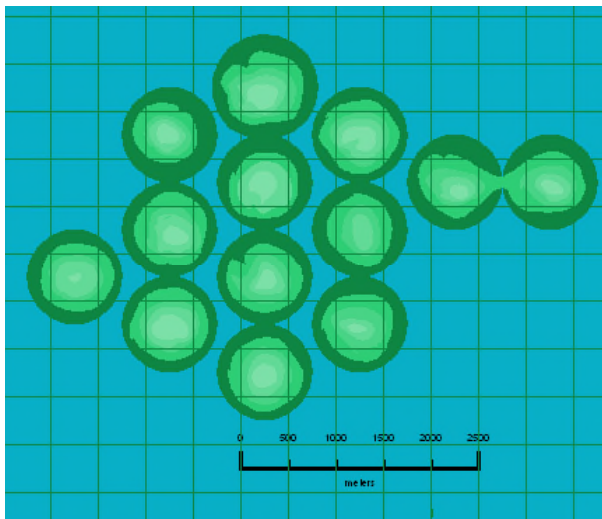
Like the Ursa, Dolphins were raised to sentience by the Solomani corporation GenAssist during the Rule of Man.

Dolphins are a Minor Race whose Home World is Terra/SOL-III. They are found on many water worlds, especially those with a Solomani influence. They are classified as Aquatic/Swimmer, Hunter/Carnivore, Air Breathers. They have no legs or arms, and instead fins and flippers. They must use technology for manipulation and for operation outside a water environment. Dolphin characters are assumed to begin generation at the Young Adult Life Stage with a default knowledge of Waldo Ops -1. For purposes of this sourcebook, they may pursue military and other training, using human tables. Merchants are rare, but not entirely unheard of, due to their lack of understanding of human property concepts. A small minority perceive trading as a "game" and thus do quite well.

Each Dolphin may muster out with an individually fitted Tee Suit, including waldoes and gravitic lifters, as well as weapons. A Dolphin trained for Battle Dress (Battle Dress-1 or higher) may trade the two highest benefit rolls for Dolphin Battle Dress.

Dolphin Basic Stats by Michael J. Morgan

Str 3d6	Life Stage
Gra 2d6	Infancy 2 Year (1/2 term)
Sta 2d6	Childhood 2 Years
Int 2d6	Adolecence 2 Years
Tra 2d6	Young Adult 4 years (1 Term)
Cha 2d6	Adult 8 Years (2 Terms)
	Peak 8 Years
	Mid-Life 8 Years
	Senior 8
	Elder 8
	Retire 8
	60+ years life



The Underhill Buckyhems.



Episode 4

Pannet • Spinward Marches 2519

E9C5677-9 • Fl Ni • 224 • Im • K5 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Pannet. Let's see — a giant volcanic swimming pool filled with heated acid and two million crazy people who slather protective goo over all their heavy-duty suits to go out and gather stuff for other worlds to incorporate into consumer electronics. Blowing your nose without using hand sanitizer gets you a CR 200 fine on the first offense. The starport — a pretentious E-class port, no up-port, no fuel, no mechanics but those you've brought yourself, real live humans loading the ships, and only one watering hole. Oh, it wants to be a "D-class" port, pretends it should because it has some hanger domes...but those are just so freighters will land there at all. The atmosphere can eat through a hull in a week or three. They think it's special that they have a subway tunnel between there and the dome cities a few kilometers off.

Sure, I've been there. Sharurshid ships good wine to the wealthy types, and sometimes the Navy needs stuff they sell before it gets into me-Pods and game consoles. Can't keep the Zhodani honest with just music and video games, we need solid electronics in our *ships*. But I'm always glad to get away from that rotten-egg smell that seeps past all the seals, not to mention all the schoolmarms with their rules.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1105.

General Data (Players)

A non-industrial Imperial world located in the Rhylanor Subsector of the Spinward Marches, Pannet is home to some 2,000,000 sophonts, mostly humans. Its atmosphere is fluid and exotically, insidiously corrosive. The world has a very hot core, and is subject to volcanism. As such, Pannet is a net exporter of various metals and minerals to less richly endowed planets.

Citizens of Pannet are hard workers, for the most part. Each learns young the basics of maintaining the heavy-duty protective suits and vehicles which allow sophonts to function in such a hostile environment, both through regular maintenance and by the careful use of ablatives gels and coatings that guard against the worst effects of the toxic atmosphere.

As burdensome as this may seem to outsiders, the locals merely shrug. They are used to their world. Harvesting its mineral wealth requires careful self-protection and attention to the various types of equipment used.

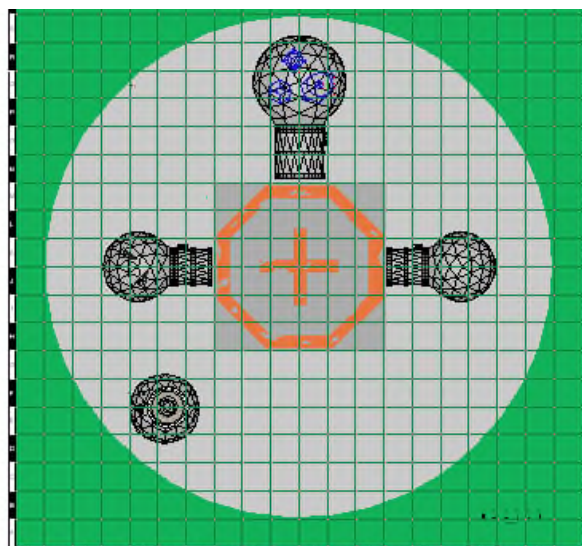
Pannet's people are clustered in several mid-sized domed cities and other sealed environments. Apart from the all-permeating hint of sulfur in the air, the cities could be anywhere in the Imperium.

Pannet's laws are intrusive and rigid, given the regimentation needed to keep the dangerous environment outside where it belongs. For example, Pannet seems to have relatively standard marriage laws. An individual may be legally married to one spouse at a time. Marriages can be terminated by divorce. However, this requires a longer and more intrusive process than on more liberal worlds. In fact, Pannet criminalizes most marital misconduct. Moreover, such criminal laws are enforced, rather than quietly ignored. Any nonsupport of a spouse and/or children is a

felony, as is leaving Pannet to evade a support order. Similar laws accompany other seemingly "civil" activity, from making business contracts to properly disposing of refuse.

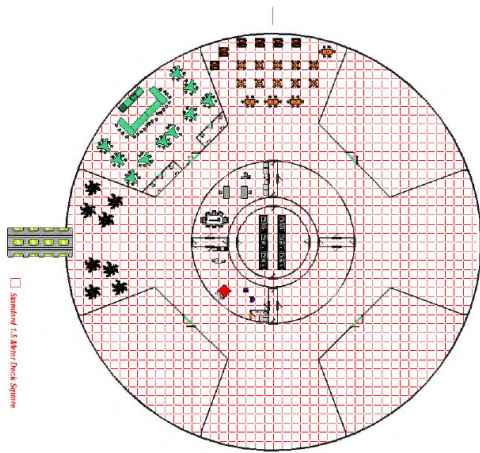
The starport has been at work constructing a two-story circular building since 1105 as part of its ongoing campaign to become a "D" port. The first story contains space for four entertainment establishments, only one of which has been occupied so far. There are also vending machines in a food court. The Port Administrator occupies an efficiency apartment next to the starport office. An enclosed walkway provides access from the subway tunnels.

The second story, intended to be a luxury hotel, is currently a large, bare space.



Starport. Each dome has access to both subways to city and essential access to local waste systems in order to drain and service vessel needs. The separate dome houses the main starport offices and the single "watering hole." Tunnels underneath the domes allow access from one to the next, and also to the starport office building.

Cirque



Cirque des Sirkas' security team has a number of weapons used to stun, tranquilize or temporarily disable disruptive sophonts. Andii prefers to use such weapons in this situation. As noted, however, she will also make heavier weapons available to defend against deadly force. Personal blades and trained animals may also be carried by appropriate characters.

Code	Name	Damage and Hits	Mass	R	Bu	Cost
ALtRP-7	Adv Lt Rocket Pistol-7 Tangier Round	(2) Frag-1 Pen-1	1.84	1	-3	330
ALtSPj-15	Adv Lt Stench Projector-15	(5) Stench-5	0.22	1	-3	790
ALtFPj-11	Adv Lt Flash Projector-11	(5) Flash-5	0.27	1	-3	990
ALtShPj-12	Adv Lt Shock Projector-12	(8) Elec-5 Pain-3	0.27	1	-3	1,300
ALtSPj-15	Adv Lt Sonic Projector-15	(8) Sound-5 Bang-3	0.33	1	-3	720
ALtDP-9	Adv Lt Dart Pistol-9	(5) Bullet-2 Tranq-3	0.36	1	-3	290
ALtDR-9	Adv Lt Dart Rifle-9	(6) Bullet-3 Tranq-3	1.34	4	-3	990
ALtRP-7	Adv Lt Rocket Pistol-7	(6) Bullet-2 Frag-2 Pen-2	1.84	1	-3	330
ALtLP-13	Adv Lt Laser Pistol-13	(6) Burn-4 Pen-2	0.73	3	-3	660
ALtEmpD-11	Adv Lt EMP Designator-11	(5) EMP-5	5.6	4	-4	1,700

Episode 05

Fosey • Spinward Marches 2621

A633656-A • Na Ni Po • 620 • Im • M3 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Some worlds are just lucky to be useful at all. Being in the right place is most of what they have to offer. The smart ones, now, they make the best they can out of little bits of luck like that.

That's Fosey for sure. Not a bad size, but chilly, not really enough atmosphere or water. The warm beaches at the equator get a balmy minus ten degrees on a sweltering summer day. And dry, very dry. Other spots are chillier, of course, but closer to the "water" — good old ice. Not so cold that the dry spots are the best place to live, like other places I can think of. Piping water from a polar ice cap can be a real drag. Great way to get frostbite.

Anyway, what do you do with a place like this?

Avoid it if you can. It's easier to manage in pure vacuum—no "air" to tease you at all. No ice to tempt you to gather instead of bringing your own.

Oh, wait — that barely-an-atmosphere is in a great location. Some nice flat places. Thin air, so it's easy to land and take, off, but an oversized oxygen percentage. You can't breathe it, but there's lots more to compress and borrow.

Oh, sure, that makes this a great place. A truly great place, if you like cold, thin atmospheres. Like no one really likes.

So what you do is, you build warehouses, and more warehouses, and pretty soon, you start collecting all of the lost freight in the Marches, and then the whole domain, maybe the galaxy. All of it. Your left-handed three-eyed binoculars, your right-handed foot-warmers, all those odd socks you were sure got eaten in the ship's laundry, all there. Sword World breakfast cereals and dried prunes. Two hundred credit hammers that didn't make fleet standards, and had to be dumped in favor of five-credit hammers from the local bargain store. Medical supplies, like slightly radioactive tracers that killed patients with anaphylactic shock — but those are fine for low-tech populations that breed like vreepers. Crates and crates of stuff.

Best flea markets in the Marches.

But then there are the vreepers, the real ones. Not native, those nasty little things, not any more than the Norway Rat. Imagine, we have Terran vermin in the Marches, but no one thought to bring a few breeding pairs of barncats. You'd need a blasted big cat to handle a vreeper, anyway. You're better off with a flame-thrower. Some of those warehouses are full of the little nasties. Chew your leg off and give you a dirty look because you're not juicy enough. If you find yourself in one of those places the vreepers have decided they own, you'd better have your full complement of gas grenades, sonics, and so on, because that cat will run. I met a cat once, they're much more sensible than people.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

General Data (Players)

Located in the Mora Subsector of the Spinward Marches, Fosey has a cold climate and a very thin oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. Summer

temperatures in the equatorial zone reach a balmy minus 8° C, considered undesirable by more devoted sunbathers. It is much like the original Mars of old Sol system, though with far more surface "water" (largely glacial ice formed over millennia). The population is clustered around the rim of the main inland icepack in a series of small cities, while the large deserts are barely explored. Though it closely orbits its primary, it was settled as the most attractive and "hospitable" world in the system.

Because it has so little to offer, Fosey has spent the last several hundred years selling its location in a cluster of other worlds. Like a Terran 20th-Century small town at the intersection of major highways, Fosey's government began chanting the mantra "location, location, location." Thus, many, many Imperial credits were spent to attract Oberlindes and its shipyard.

Fosey's yards specialize in importing designs and necessary components for tried-and-true designs up to TL-13, notwithstanding the lower prevailing planetary technology level. In addition, major warehousing and transshipment facilities have been built and maintained. The resulting A Starport has become a major commercial interchange for the cluster.

In addition to the shipyards, the port also has a deserved reputation for accepting long-term storage of various commodities and cargos. This results in auctions, redemption sales, and other ways for warehouse owners to dispose of damaged, unwanted, and forgotten cargoes in an efficient and profitable manner. The starport boasts several "flea-market" spaces where unclaimed and often substandard (low-QREBS) products are sold at bargain prices. While every large starport has such warehouses and businesses, Fosey has made more than a cottage business out of the practice. "If you can't buy it at Fosey, it's not for sale anywhere."

The landlocked glaciers provide water for thousands of square kilometers of greenhouse farming. These units tend to be tightly clustered, even sharing common walls between typical peaked roofs. Advanced cultivation techniques much like those used in orbital habitats allow three-season farming (one season fallow). Fosey is thus reasonably self-sufficient in feeding itself despite its environment. Inevitable gas escape may have slightly increased oxygen percentages in the atmosphere over the last several hundred years, but no significant climate change has been noted.

The vast majority of Fosey's inhabitants are the stalwart warehousemen, salvage specialists, and indoor farmers of the Imperium. They are not explorers or adventurers. Most know of the "wilds" and their great expanses of "perma-moss" only from satellite photos and other remote sensors. They rarely bother looking at these, and the few who do will find surprisingly little data on the flora and fauna of the "outback." Inhabitants of Fosey are unusually content to live their lives in the quiet, settled ways, and rarely go far from the places of their birth. The legendary explorer Bennet Lai da Santos, born on Fosey in 1036, is considered by most locals to be nothing more than a bothersome anomaly, not a role model; he was "more than a little oxygen-deprived," many have said. Outworlders and others interested in the larger world are sometimes teased or insulted as "inSanto's."

This attitude is the backbone of complacency (or contentment) which has kept physical exploration of the outlying deserts to a minimum. Offworlders are often surprised at the difficulty in locating local guides for

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adventuresome excursions to the mountains, or to search for local variations of the “perma-moss” of potential value.

The population shows only slow growth. People do not generally seek to acquire more wealth than they can possibly use for themselves, and most locals live out their lives within a few kilometers of where they were born. At best, they talk about the purported occasional sightings of figures moving through the outback. Claims have been made on occasion that a Yeti-like creature with massive lungs and long, nasty fangs somehow survives on the perma-moss in the Outback, though it purportedly has a taste for human flesh as well.

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Episode 6

Mercury • Spinward Marches 2624

B658663-8 • A • Ag Ni • 304 • Im • F7 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Mercury is named after one of the old Solomani gods. The fast one, I guess. Also a planet from Sol, which was hot and close to the sun. Sometimes people hold onto stuff that's cons old just to be perverse.

This Mercury seems like a nice place to visit, but don't bother if the Imperial authorities are upset with you. They keep an eye on who goes in and out of the port, and they can be petty about stuff like hijacking and espionage. Makes sense, I suppose, considering that the off-port's not much more than a bunch of farms supporting a bunch of training bases. Nothing else there to see – raw recruits and officers on refresher all look the same. Spit, polish, lots of running around and screaming “Ma'am yes ma'am!” and “Sir no Sir!” and “Yes Sergeant, I am a Dim Red Dwarf!”

The big city, Ishmael — oh, what a wonderful place to not visit. A lot of nothing much to see there. It's mainly a bedroom community for the brass and the wealthier farming managers.

Nothing to see anywhere outside Ishmael unless you're a big fan of prison and forced marches. Refuel and head out.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1108.

General Data (Players)

As suggested by Admiral Lee, Mercury is an agricultural world. It is located in the Mora Subsector of the Spinward Marches, and contains both a naval and a scout base. The bases specialize in training exercises for the Imperial Navy, Marines, and for the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. As a result, the world is governed directly by the Imperium. The Navy takes the primary role in this, as its training facilities are extensive and pervasive. The planet serves as a ground base for maneuvers, combat games and training, and as a base for fleet exercises.

The IISS uses the planet and the system to train its personnel in survey and similar functions; as a result, Mercury and the other worlds in the system are among the best mapped in the Spinward Marches. It can truthfully be said that every meter of the surface has been imaged many times. The Scouts maintain a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Database on the world categorizing every building, every bit of infrastructure, and every large crater made during ordnance training.

However, due to the nature of military organizations, most of this information is classified. The extensive images and maps cannot be easily obtained; they are in heavily firewalled systems. This is to avoid cheating scandals in the military, among both active military personnel both in their service and the Navy/Marine training cadres, as well as limiting external espionage. Available information is essentially rationed. This forces trainees to obtain information the way they would in real-world situations: via real-time sensor and imaging scans, as well as direct observation on the ground.

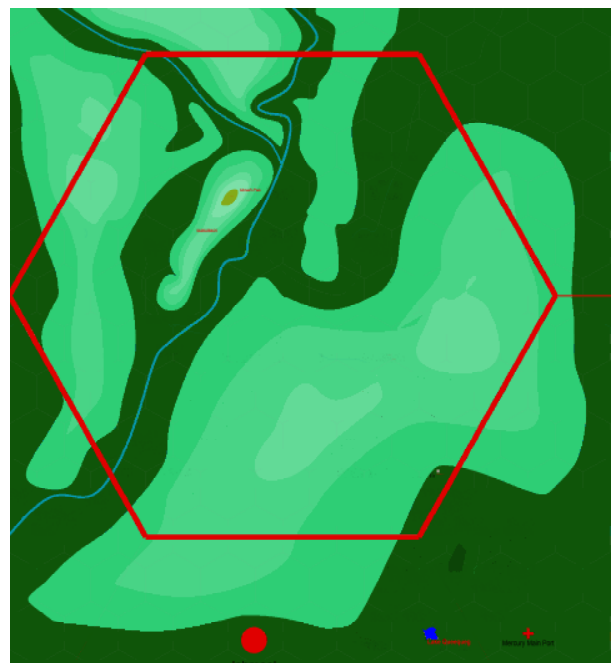
To minimize contamination of the trainees, most vessels are required to stay at the up-port, in geosynchronous orbit above the main city, Ishmael. Only official Navy transports and vessels with special clearance are allowed to go to the down-port. Vessels which approach too closely,

or outside of prescribed vectors and trajectories, are challenged and subject to boarding. Vessels are also subject to intrusive scanning of their computer logs via mandated up-link to up-port Naval systems. Imagery and sensor data regarding the surface is deleted, and virus-like software injected to minimize and erase further scanning of the surface.

The planet has a thin but breathable atmosphere and a somewhat cool climate. Appropriate crops are grown in its more temperate zones. However, with a low local technology level as well, this world is not in the business of mass-producing its food for export. Farming systems are imported at Navy expense. Though farmers own their own land, Navy officials specify what crops and livestock are needed and how it is to be grown. That said, the life of a local farmer is reasonably lucrative; crop failure losses are borne by the Navy, rather than the landowner. With machines and robots to help, the economic model is as kind to the individual farmer as is possible.

Many other civilians provide support for the various bases and populations of military who are stationed here from time to time. In essence, Mercury is a planet in direct service to the military.

Rehabilitation facilities were also erected out of modular materials during the Fifth Frontier War to serve military casualties. Injured combatants needing up to a month of convalescence and therapy were brought to these facilities. They were often put to work in training roles during and after their treatments; many were integrated into the new units as they formed.



Episode 7

Capon • Spinward Marches 2324

B747748-A • N • Ag • 610 • Im • K9 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Another farming paradise. A world of 60,000,000 dullard lumberjacks and shepherds who I would happily hand over to the Zhodani, except that they're too well adjusted for the Thought Police to torture. Trees and more trees, and then some meadows. How can you be adjusted with that sort of lifestyle?

I should be fair – there's no place in the Marches where I'd rather spend Holiday watching concrete harden. Except on Capon it's probably illegal to take a whole day off of work, even for Holiday. And certainly socially unacceptable.

And where there aren't trees, there are geneered sheep. Yes, sheep. There's altogether too much boiled mutton. Bring your dental floss, it's stringy. The beer's pretty good, but they'll never drink more than one a night. Even women with ugly husbands stay sober on Sixday night.

How do you get drunk if you won't drink? *Lumberjacks* who don't drink. I'd rather drink with a buzz-saw than a lumberjack from Capon.

Capon is as close to the Coldest Pit of Tartarus as I've ever been.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1107.

General Data (Players)

Despite its thin, tainted oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere Capon is a lushly forested world. The canopy is thick and rich with secondary life of all types, though adapted. The taint is caused by a higher level of carbon dioxide and various tree pollens that can cause serious delusions, hallucinations, and other mental illness. Humans born on Capon are somewhat less susceptible to such problems due to multiple medical interventions, including locally developed pharmaceuticals. Humans, Vargr and Ursa nonetheless tend to wear filter masks when outdoors. The hallucinations affect Aslan less.

The plant life on Capon is adapted to the thin atmosphere. Oxygen tends to be released below the canopy, increasing the percentage of breathable air. The canopy also tends to trap carbon dioxide produced by animate life and decomposition. A healthy canopy is thus of the essence to the ecosystem. All oxidation occurs more efficiently below the canopy than above.

Capon's main exports are luxury hardwoods and luxury wools. Its farms and orchards provide self-sufficiency. Capon is a major trade-route link and naval base, and is widely reported and advertised to be a pleasant stopover due to the friendly and hard-working local population. Off-worlders are in fact treated courteously, though not effusively. Meals are hot and on-time, and the showers are warm enough to prevent shivering for as long as three minutes; Capon's Tourism Board boasts that "no one has ever been scalded in a hotel shower." There are few civil disturbances or fatal accidents, even in the lumbering industry. People rarely fail to get a good night's sleep, and Imperial taxes are always paid on time.

While Admiral Lee's views are harsh and possibly exaggerated (the Admiral's memoirs are noted for hyperbole, not to mention a few outright lies), the grain of truth at the center is that Capon is a society of puritan

mores. Indeed, the mores are unusually homogenous in a population of this size. Though the citizens may disagree on small matters, they work together smoothly and single-mindedly.

Through careful husbandry, Capon harvests hardwood "century trees" (trees of at least a local century's growth) every year. "Half-century hardwood" is taken from a few forests of faster-growing tree species, but these are less sought after. Capon's lumberjacks do not clear-cut and insist on replacing every "century" tree. They cut selectively. They also insist on ton-for-ton importation of properly sterilized raw fertilizers and soil to account for the biomass which leaves as hardwood.

In short, this is a statistically improbable amalgamation of conservative, stoic, hard-working, single-minded, puritanical eco-minded farmers. Though some of the populace is settled in communities near the starport, farming communities, and various manufacturing centers, millions of people are migratory.

Most of the migratory workers reside in portable housing. Some can move under their own power (the gravitic version of RVs), but most are loaded onto vast gravitic barges for the move from one location to the next. Many communities stay together. Children are educated both within the community, and using links to other teachers in other locations. The society is designed around the mobility necessary to be responsible stewards of the environment.

It should be understood that when Capon was first settled, traditional clear-cutting ruled the day. This helped produce arable land farming and shepherding. However, it also produced ecological damage. As the population grew, the leaders eventually realized that humans would destroy the environment by over-logging. Their ability to reason toward the future seems to have been enhanced by the medications taken to limit the consciousness-altering effects of the atmosphere. Thus, they developed the system currently in effect, becoming careful farmers who minimized the loss of revenue through good management practices.

The Century Harvests are carefully planned, and executed using very clean technologies. Each tree to be harvested is approached by a grav-based mill, snared from above, and tied off using natural but thick hemp-based ropes. The "groundjacks" are the foresters who handle the cutting. Trees do not topple; they are floated through the sky to massive gravitic barges on which they are cut into their component branches and trunks. These are collected and brought to the mills, most of which are near the starport.

The groundjacks are followed by the "planters." Prior to human intervention on Capon, vast swaths of forests were periodically destroyed and renewed by forest fires. The seed pods of the century hardwoods all require heat to germinate. Entirely eco-conscious regarding different local species, the planters gather seed-pods found on the forest floor and start their growth. Because heat is required to trigger growth, small fires are built and tended carefully to avoid major conflagrations that could cause significant damage to the forests. Any saplings found that have already sprouted on their own are transplanted as well. Nets may be draped from the surrounding trees to limit the remaining canopy from growing into the hole which allows the new growth will have enough light as it matures. Otherwise, nature is allowed to take its course; another century tree will soon sprout to replace what has been taken

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Forests also have “tenders.” The tenders are also sometimes known as “tinders,” the Anglic pun not being lost upon this otherwise serious world. As trees are the most valuable planetary export, even natural destruction followed by a century of regrowth is unacceptable. The tenders are charged with removing the worst of the combustible remains of fallen leaves, trees, branches, and other dead foliage from the forest floor. While some fires are inevitable (lightning strikes, for example, do happen), the object is to minimize destruction of the crop. Tenders generally enter the forest through the various holes in the canopy caused by selective harvesting. With some robotic aid, they tend the grounds and haul potential fuel to the access points for removal. However, this is possibly counter-productive, as it reduces the tinder for an ecologically desirable fire.

In terms of their emotional uniformity, the human population is (as Adm. Lee once observed) the “next best thing to the Zhodani.” Though they lack the psionic techniques available in the Consulate, they have a well-developed pharmacological industry based on local plant life, and the will to use it. Starting at age five, each child’s brain structure is scanned using the best available technology. Various direct and indirect tests of brain chemistry are also performed. Each child is then put on a personally optimized mood stabilizer regimen comprised of drugs extracted from the local flora and custom-designed to promote industriousness and reduce distractibility. The high law level thus reflects more than whether the average adventurer is allowed to casually carry weapons. It also reflects the overall governmental intrusion into personal rights.

“People have a right to be stupid and crazy, so long as they don’t expect a free living and don’t screw up the rest of society,” Adm. Lee is reputed to have said. “And I trust them better when I can see a wee bit of infectious crazy oozing out of the corners of their eyes. I know who I’m really dealing with from the color of the ooze.” Capon is decidedly not a world to the taste of anyone who likes his or her companions to be a little bit random. Most of the rigidly-controlled populace interfaces poorly with “randoms” who seek adventure in the forests.

It is likely that Adm. Lee never spent time with tenders during his three or four days on Capon. Tenders are known for their wild side, which includes sometimes refusing to take their medications for days at a time, quaffing down two beers at a sitting, and spinning wild stories of forest-dwelling witches, warlocks, yetis, bigfoots, ten-armed monsters and other menaces. A well-known aphorism on Capon is, “Tenders tell tales.” While no necromancers or unduly hairy wild men have ever been brought back for examination, the forest is without doubt full of both interesting and deadly local fauna.

Dangerous native animals include various pouncers and other carnivores, as well as the occasional crazed antlered herbivores. The deep forest also provides a good environment for insects, warm-blooded flyers, cold-blooded reptilians and carrion-feeders. Groundjacks, planters and tenders are defended by hunters who are allowed to fire only on actual threats. Taking the carcass for any reason is illegal.

Episode 8

Lunion • Spinward Marches 2124

A995984-D • A • Hi In Cp • 810 • Im • G5 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Lunion? “Present your identity documentation. Type in your proper legal name to confirm. Stop typing in your name. Provide retinal scan and fingerprints prior to DNA registration. Spit here for DNA Registration. DNA registration failed, start over. You have retried too many times, please exit the line. Please do not drop your phone while doing so.”

That’s Lunion. You need an advanced degree in data entry just to order a plate of Vilani Ragout. And don’t order the Sword Worlds Steak and Fungus — the robowait automatically pings your ID to a special watch-list. And don’t speed, or violate pinged traffic lanes when you take your air-raft out for a spin with the top down. The bots and scanners and transponder queries keep a tight rein on everything. They know who you are, most likely. And if they don’t, your picture winds up on the news — ‘Do you know this speeding maniac? Help us issue a fine.’ That’s one way to keep the local skyway patrol funded.

And shoplifting — no point. Your bank gets charged if you leave with something anyway. Better to put your thumb to the scan, as if it matters.

Not that they do much with the data. The local laws are reasonably relaxed for a place with so many bureaucrats. So long as you comm in your Form A23TT when you buy a new undershirt, and pay your fines for failing to merge with excessive caution, no one cares what you do. Lots of forms, low expectations.

OK, I’m exaggerating. It’s not really all that bad — for all of the paper shuffle, they have pretty reasonable laws. If you kill someone, there’s a fair amount of paperwork to complete, so they say, but your fine will be under CR 100,000 so long as your grammar is good and you fill in all the fields before you hit “submit.”

Don’t ever get anyone powerful mad at you when you visit Lunion. The bureaucrats are always happy to do a favor for a higher-up. It’s the nature of the beast all over, just more so. The computers can be used to expedite a permit, or to send it right into a black hole.

It’s one of those places where you find a little bit of everyone and everything. It’s on the Spinward Main, not far from those crazed Viking-types in the Sword Worlds. Sophonts of every size, shape, and eyeball count. Shipyards, stations, warehouses — stuff people want, not the un-sellable crap that gets shipped to Fosey — all of that sort of thing. You can meet them all there, so they say, and buy what they’re selling.

I always feel like I’m being watched when I move through. And I don’t mean the local bureaucrats tracking my shoe size. Sure, they do that, but a world like Lunion has more than its share of nosey types.

Spies, not just Imperial ones. They keep an eye on the big spines and little cruisers alike moving through. You can bet that the blasted Vikings and the Zho have people on the ground, maybe watchers in the deep dark, keeping a pile of passive sensors tuned tight to see jumps in and out. I wish I were just paranoid, but I’m not. Some of these dummies even think a cranky retired admiral knows more than he does. I do — but it’s about money these days. I’ve never been on the favorites list. Had to beg Santanocheev to give me a job in the last war. It’s funny when they make small talk about how they haven’t seen this battle-rider or that dreadnought.

Lunion is a good place to pass through with your mouth shut, your billfold out, and your eyes open.

Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1105.

General Data (Players)

Some things have not changed in the far future. “Location, location, location,” is as important in 1111 Imperial as it was on Earth of the 20th Century (Old Reckoning). Lunion’s position on the Jump-1 Spinward Main renders it an essential commercial crossroads. It creates opportunities to rub elbows with members of most sophont species and subspecies. Without doubt, Lunion’s position also makes it a hotbed of politics in the Marches.

This is not to say that decisions are made at Lunion. Lunion’s nobility holds sway over neither Duke Norris of Regina nor Duchess Delphine of Mora. The former has become important because he is willing to act decisively; the latter remains important because Mora was once seen as the unofficial Sector Seat. Both overshadow Lunion, whether Duke Luis of Lunion accepts that fact or not.

The Fifth Frontier War has altered the Marches’ political balance. Duke Luis and others are engaged in the essential machinations of building and rebuilding political connections. This is a current and defining characteristic of dealings on Lunion.

Lunion has a second defining characteristic: its bureaucracy is pervasive. Its high technology level provides sophisticated surveillance. Computer-based systems recognize most faces, and easily can (and do) track individuals’ movements. This competes with the inevitable sophont desire for privacy.

Many crowded, high-technology societies keep regular surveillance in place, both by the government and private individuals. Given its location and the resulting political and social pressures, the local government takes such monitoring to extremes. Interlinked cameras stream data to central computers, maintaining temporary video records (about three years’ worth) of most public places. Private security systems are required to upload their data into the same systems and then erase it.

Personal recognition programs combined with government-issued phones keep reasonably close track of individuals as they move in public. Every child is issued a phone keyed to his/her genetic profile at birth, with upgrades and replacements as necessary. This assists in some private matters; there is little successful shoplifting from brick-and-mortar stores, and missing children are located quickly and easily. With a combination of ubiquitous security and links to the private banking system, the cost of a purchase is automatically deducted from available credits when the individual leaves such a store. Most local residents are thus “absent-mindedly honest.”

Any offworlder leaving the starport is issued a visa/identification phone programmed with the individual’s identity and locally available banking data. A genetic profile is locked in as well. This data is taken from the papers and identifications presented by the individual upon arrival, as well as a cheek-swab. Such identifications are carefully scrutinized

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and cross-checked against available Imperial databases. Only the best forgeries get through, so criminals fleeing Imperial charges are better off staying on-port rather than attempting to mingle with the local population.

Once a local phone is issued, its essential programming can be altered or falsified only with great effort and skill. It is easier to obtain another sophont's phone and use it, though this requires fooling the phone's biometric security system (e.g., by spraying matching synthetic skin on a hand). It is also possible to obtain certain modified phones which legally identify the individual by an alias. These are used by most nobles and officials when they desire anonymity in public. They may be issued for other reasons, such as providing a measure of privacy for confidants, friends, and lovers of the rich and powerful who are to be kept out of the public spotlight. These are also issued to other celebrities on reasonable request, including travelling performers. Anyone whose Fame exceeds 7 is a potential candidate for a lawful alias.

Black-market phones are also available. These are generally phones of people who have died or gone "off the grid," and can be used until the death or disappearance of the proper owner is noted. It is usually easier to obtain the genetic samples needed to fool the phone in these cases. Incautious spacers and tourists are favorite targets of such black marketeers. A small but significant number of offworlders disappear every year.

In addition, bureaucrats periodically go rogue and provide illicit phones for personal profit or other motives. Despite the best efforts, such scandals surface on average once every Imperial year.

Diplomats of non-Imperial governments are exempt from carrying phones issued by the Lunion government, but such diplomatic immunity does not preclude surveillance and identification. To the contrary, known non-Imperial officials' movements are closely observed. Powerful algorithms parse the data, establish patterns and look for deviations from those established patterns. Neither Zhodani nor Sword Worlders pass documents or utilize public "drop points" to transfer data developed by spying.

With all of this stated, the local government maintains a relatively low level of interference with personal choice, even having unusually open laws about carrying weapons. Given the population level and government type, laws and attitudes allowing most firearms to be carried are something of an anomaly. Lunion is a cosmopolitan, accepting, socially liberal society in spite of its regulations.

The local government tends to require a great deal of paperwork in order to pursue one's personal dreams. Admiral Lee's comments exaggerate this in one direction, but are relatively accurate regarding the handling of matters such as traffic infractions. Serious violent crimes and property crimes are certainly not treated lightly, but the judicial system relies heavily on computerized tracking and prosecution.

As any crime-show based on Lunion makes clear, this tracking renders the rumpled detective character almost superfluous when dealing with serious crime. The tracking data may be accessed by police, though only with judicial approval. Such judicial approval is provided by robotic magistrates linked into the stream of data. Thus, an officer seeking to obtain data to identify a suspect or issue a traffic ticket must access the system and request the warrant, uplinking his or her "local" video stream and personal "testimony," transmitted on the spot. The magistrate quickly evaluates the data on the system, determines if a crime or serious infraction is being or has been committed, and determines what movement information will be provided. This generally results in a list of suspects within moments (and often only one named individual).

This efficiency does not trickle down to seedy private investigators or suspicious spouses. The most strictly applied legal right on Lunion is the right to personal privacy. So long as an individual is not violating a penal law and pays his or her debts, all movement information is personal and private. Retailers may not share purchase information with anyone, including advertising and statistical agencies, without the purchaser's very clearly and lawfully obtained consent for each purchase.

In any event, hard, cold, anonymous cash is an entirely legal way to make one's purchases.

The right to privacy is jealously protected by Lunion's Ministry of Movement. This extensive agency maintains the massive datafiles and assures that tracking information is routinely destroyed after an appropriate period of time. It mandates privacy for all tracking and identification. Violations of the right to privacy are reported first to the Ministry. Investigations begin here, and are referred to the police. Internal investigations

and police investigations also look for black marketeers supplying illicit phones.



Episode 9

Derchon • Spinward Marches 2024

C512799-8 • S • Ic Na Pi • 901 • Im • M0 V M7 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

The galaxy is mostly black, without too much land to set foot on. What we set foot on mostly has a central star, and mostly that star is calm. More friend than foe. We like it that way. We keep warm, and we can grow things, and eat things that grow because that star is shining, reasonably constant. Not so many x-rays that we're bothered, less ionization, that sort of thing. A pleasant, friendly star.

Sometimes, though, we hang out around stars that think of us as bug infestations. They'd rather not have us there, and they spray that poison deep into the corners. Except it's worse than poison, it's all the kinds of fire the gods you believe in can invent to burn your soul for eternity. We wouldn't live in those systems if they weren't just plain convenient, but that's the rub — they're usually somewhere between where we started and where we want to be. So we end up living there, or at least the less sane amongst us do.

Derchon's a place like that. A gas-giant moon. Tide-locked to the gas-giant, more or less, so it has a day as long as its orbit, more than fifteen days. Far enough away that the gas giant doesn't do much harm, especially with the cities on the "far" side. But no big, pretty planet to look at in the sky, unless you're near the equator, or on that side.

It's an ice-capped, cold moon world with barely enough atmosphere to be considered "air." The air it has doesn't guard much against the radiation the primary blasts out often enough to make a difference. A couple of times a year the people there have to duck into the shelters and wait out a particularly nasty flare. It can get long, a week or more, depending on whether the radiation hits at early morning.

That's on top of mining ice to drink and such, and living under domes in the Scars.

And the Scars — I'm not sure I could forget I was living in deep rills melted in by a superflare. That's right, one of those. The gas giant's close enough to raise some extra havoc with the primary, and the secondary plays with that even more every thousand years or so. Last time was ten thousand years ago. Think it's about due?

Me, I'd be looking up at that primary every day, wondering when the next 'big one' was due. Another mass ejection of plasma, one that could actually slice into the crust. I'd just as soon live right inside an active volcano. Might die quietly of poison gas asphyxiation, that way.

There's not much water on Derchon, and it's concentrated mostly at the south pole. The locals use convicts to mine the ice, and believe me, the ice miners have it hard. They live on the edge of the ice cap, with nothing much but their barracks and their domes. And the pipeline, of course. The pipeline disappears into the distance, alongside a dirt track that leads back to the Scars.

Thousands of kilometers away from civilization in an airless waste makes for a pretty effective prison. Last time there was a prison break, someone tried to hijack a

crawler. The crawler broke down five kilometers short of a shelter just before a flare. X-rays are fine in small doses, even useful, but it wasn't a small dose. That batch of idiots turned ten years at hard ice mining into a death sentence.

But that's how they live on Derchon. Some of them even like it there. They prove on a daily basis that humanity is completely insane about what planets it infests.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1108.

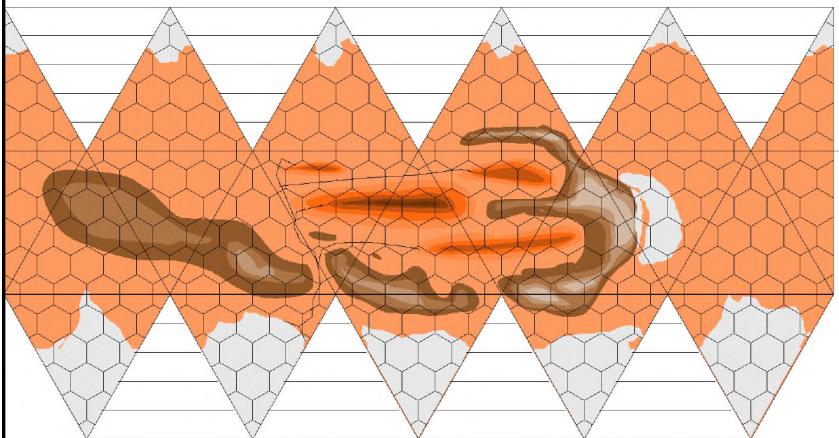
General Data (Players)

An Imperial-aligned world in the Lunion Subsector of the Spinward Marches, Derchon is an ice-capped, cold world with a trace atmosphere. Its population is about 90,000,000, concentrated in the "tropics" of this cold world. Derchon orbits the system's sole gas giant, Langmuir in a tide-locked orbit. This creates a day that is as long as its orbit, 15 standard days and 19 standard hours.

The system's primary is an M0 V "UV Ceti Variable," more commonly called a flare star. Every few days or weeks, radiation bursts (including deadly X-rays) are emitted. Langmuir and Derchon are on the edge of the deadly zone; thus, they are not close enough for the primary to provide real heat, but close enough that carbon-based life would likely die out entirely if the orbit was any closer. Only extremely hardy organisms survive, and they face a high mutation rate due to the regular bursts of radiation. Significant flares requiring humans and their animals to take shelter occur on average four times each standard year. Lesser flares also occur.

Derchon's secondary, an M7 V, is also a flare star, but has no plane-

World Name Derchon (Spinward Marches 2024)



tary bodies worthy of the designation. The primary and secondary orbit their common center of gravity in elliptical orbits, and thus B rarely has any effect on Derchon or Langmuir. The two stars make their closest approach every 835 years. Scientists are reasonably certain that a close approach about 10,000 years ago led to magnetic bridging between A and Langmuir, launching a devastating superflare toward Derchon.

As a result of the long-ago superflare, stellar-ejected mass struck Derchon and boiled away much of its then-thicker atmosphere. Deep rills now called “the Scars” were carved by glancing-and-rolling stellar matter. Pits and caves were also melted out by smaller fragments of the ejected mass. What native life existed prior to that cataclysm was decimated. Native life has regenerated to an extent, but consistent flare activity has guaranteed that only the hardiest life forms survive.

Derchon’s population resides in sealed flare-caves, roofed-over portions of the Scars, under domes, and in other airtight structures. Much of the necessary local agriculture takes place in sealed flare-caves and man-made underground structures; this protects both crops and livestock from ionizing radiation. Cave farms are thus also safety shelters for much of the local population. However, humans are insistent on seeing some hint of sky above, and so tend to reside where they can see it. The largest of the Scar complexes houses a population of seven million.

The relatively stable crust allows for deep burrowing and deep mining. Much of Derchon’s population is heavily involved to one extent or another in mining the various metals and material deposited by the superflare, as well as valuable gems formed by the great temperatures.

All habitats are all equipped with “flare shelters.” Many are simply deeply-buried structures connected by tunnels. Some are simply massive lead-and-concrete blockhouses. Some are deep-buried shelters of multiple levels. The last type is particularly common near the poles, and especially in the ice-mining prison facilities. Some of the pits and caves near the bases of mountains and in the walls of deeper canyons are large enough to have been sealed by the first settlers; they serve as underground farms and population centers, as well as shelters.

Native life on Derchon is limited to hardy but simple organisms due both to the cold and the regular bombardment by X-ray bursts from the primary. Despite the low overall TL of 8, Derchon has an effective TL of 10 in life support technology, reflecting local experience with surviving in caves and shelters. It also imports such technology to supplement local capabilities.

After metals, gems and radioactives, Derchon’s trade resources are products using or manufactured from the hardy organisms which have survived the harsh environment and regular radiation bursts. Harvesting these requires a presence on or near the surface.

“Air” travel is not common, as the atmosphere is too thin for lift bodies. While gravitic vehicles and spacecraft are imported, those are expensive to obtain and service. Thus, most travel involves locally-manufactured fuel-cell powered crawlers with wheels or tracks. Exploration crawlers tend to be massive and heavily shielded, carrying all of the

comforts and safety of home with them. Transport crawlers tend to be light and fast, and lightly shielded. They rely on short, straight lines and flare shelters to protect their occupants. Flare shelters are never spaced more than twenty kilometers apart. The long route to South Pole parallels the pipeline aqueducts, discussed below.

The very high local law level represents a rigid society in general. Survival on this world requires attention to detail. Shelter drills are planned and occur at least once a week. Failing to take shelter as ordered may result in serious penalties, including incarceration on the first offense and loss of the right to procreate after three offenses. As Comic Juggler will quip, “No one likes an overheated gene pool.” Weapons restrictions are also heavily enforced, as shelters can become tense during prolonged flare events. Avoidable waste or pollution of water carries a minimum sentence of one standard year at hard labor. Any abuse of or theft from a flare shelter carries a minimum sentence of twenty standard years, also at hard labor.

The penal system is administered by the Water and Power Authority (WPA, pronounced “Wippa”). The WPA is a critical government institution. It is more than a mere public works department of the local government. Much like the original Mars of the old Sol system, most of Derchon’s water is locked in ice and permafrost. However, while most major human settlements on Derchon are concentrated in the “tropics,” there is a concentrated, easily accessible water source at the southern ice cap. Several large facilities exist nearby to obtain water to replace what is inevitably “lost,” and to keep pace with increased need and demand as the population grows.

Because axial tilt exposes this pole less to the primary, it is somewhat sheltered from flare activity. However, the area is also much colder, its summer is brief, and conditions are harsh. Eighty percent of the workers in the “mine and melts” and related pipelines are convicts. On the other hand, Free Employees with experience (including former convicts) or with essential skills are paid very well for working half of the local year. Both convicts and paid workers are usually awarded “frostbite nicknames,” including some well-known old-timers known as “Three-Fingered Gilii,” “Joe No Toes,” “Ice-Spleen Vreen” and “Stumpy Susan.”

The pipelines themselves, which stretch thousands of kilometers over the exposed surface, are entirely enclosed in concrete-encased aqueducts. These aqueducts also support conduits for high-tension electrical power lines. The power is generated by fuel cells and imported fusion power plants; the water itself is heated to boiling or higher temperatures through the heat-exchangers. The water in the pipeline gradually cools through the concrete of the aqueducts despite plenty of insulation. This system requires workers to inspect the aqueducts. Critical failures can lead to steam burns, as well as radiation injuries from exposure to daily radiation.

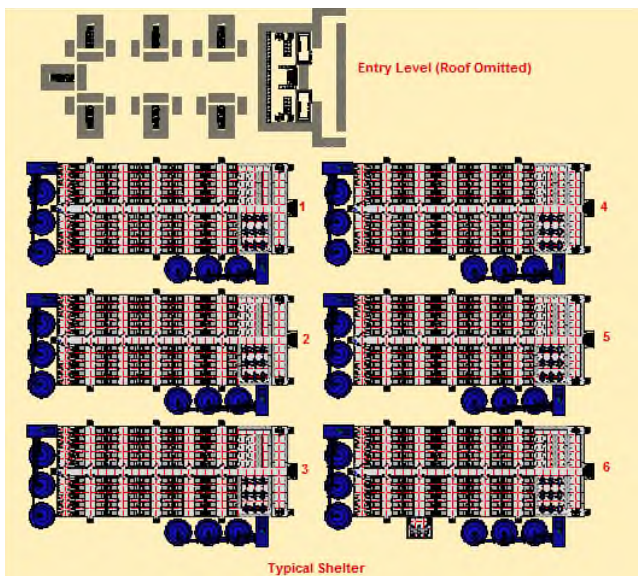
Serious flares are extremely dangerous. Failing to reach a flare shelter in time leads to radiation sickness on a good day, instant death on a *really* bad day.

Derchon hosts an orbital Imperial Interstellar Scout Service Base. The base is generally charged with communications, but is also specifically tasked with two functions, one military and one scientific. The first is watching the Sword Worlds. The second is continued study of the superflare.

The once-crucial watch on the Sword Worlds is being reduced, as such surveillance can now be conducted from Border Worlds (former Sword Worlds systems which aligned with the Imperium following the war). Study of the superflare is ongoing, as it may yield insights into the Darrians’ stellar trigger technology. In addition, the two stars are drawing close to their common barycenter for their closest approach in ten thousand years. Preparations are being made to observe the effect of this approach over the next hundred years.

Both the Scout base and Derchon’s government have placed automated solar observation satellites in orbit around the primary. Solar weather is carefully watched; computer algorithms model and predict likely flare activity on an ongoing basis. A dangerous flare can be predicted with about eighty-five percent certainty.

Flare alerts are sounded on a conservative basis; X-ray bursts travel at the speed of light, and thus would get to Derchon milliseconds *before* an actual reading. As the venerable ice miner “Twenty-Digits-and-All-Her-Organs Sam” said at a press conference on her 100th birthday, “I washed my hands a lot. An’ I never waited until I could see my buddy’s bones X-

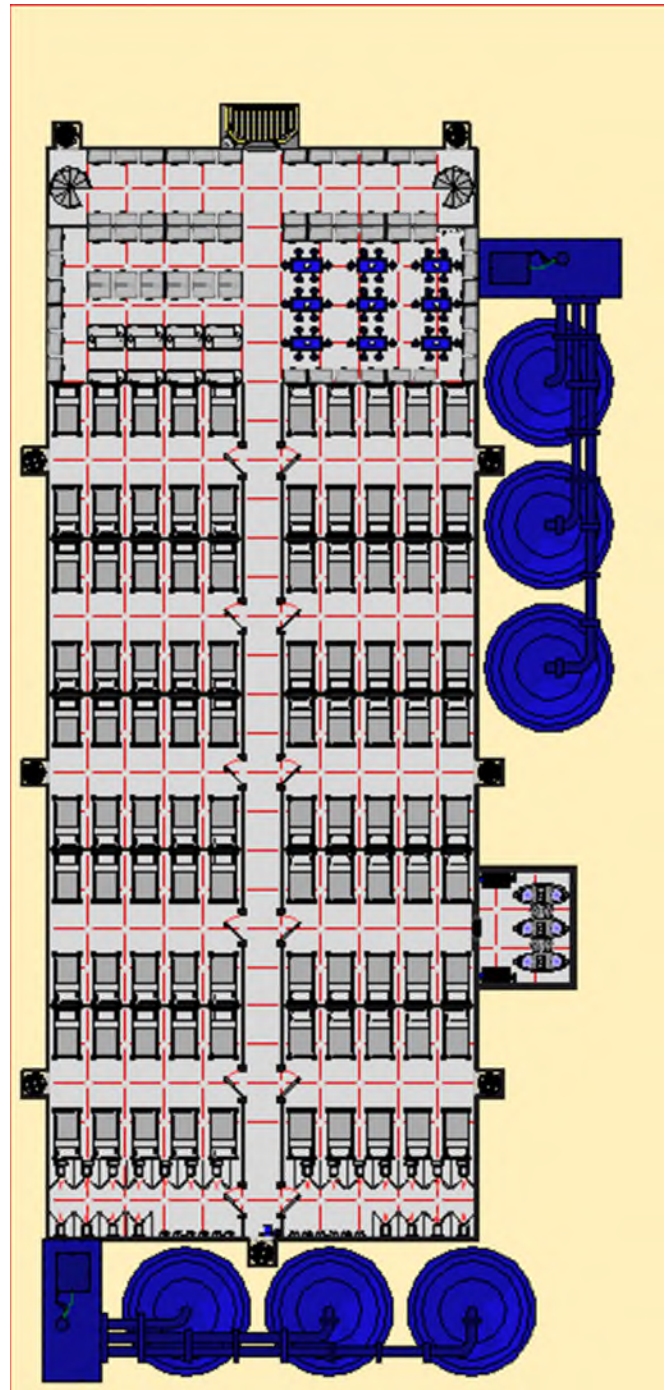
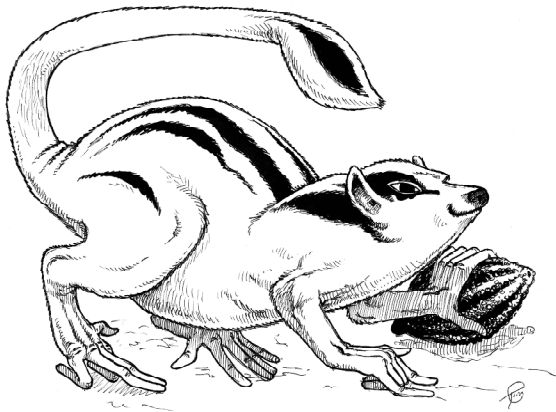


Cirque

rayed onto his skin before I got in t' shelter!"

The clip of that interview has been repeated every subsequent year on Sam's birthday. Her 110th birthday will take place during *Cirque's* visit.

An incidental issue in the system is piracy, as some local pirates have hardened their vessels and sensors to withstand the heavier radiation bursts that occur during the regular flare eruptions so they can take advantage of the reduced sensor acuity during significant flare eruptions (much the way the Red Baron of Earth's first World War preferred to dive out of the sun to pounce on his British adversaries. In this region, pirate crews may be mixed, including Imperial humans, Sword Worlders and Vargr. Despite higher-than-normal Scout traffic through the system and the risk of serious radiation sickness, piracy continues. Gems draw foolishness, after all.



Episode 10: Rabwhar • Spinward Marches 1822 D5448BA-6 • S • Pa Ph Pi • 313 • Im • K5 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Never do business on a world run by someone whose only name is “The General.” For that matter, never live downstream of such people. They forget that the water they, um, *pollute* is the water their supporters need to cook in. No one gets to the top without a lot of people on the lower levels of the pyramid. You have to care about your subordinates. Not to the point that you get decision-paralyzed, but you also can’t just forget that they exist.

Rabwhar is a world where the downstream isn’t clear water, if you get my drift. The General and his pals have a good life. A lot of other people aren’t doing all that badly, but the wealth isn’t shared as nicely as it might be. The haves have, and the have-nots — well, they have less by a good bit. Their water rations are meager and none too clean. Getting dirtier by the day, in fact.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1104.

General Data (Players)

Rabwhar is not a garden world, but it has agricultural tendencies. Its economy is based around harvesting and processing of compounds derived from its plant life. The planet had a thicker atmosphere in the past, and thanks to millennia of outgassing, the local plants have evolved certain unusual properties that are useful in life-support system manufacture and chemical synthesis, such as hyper-oxygenation. Certain unusual properties of these plants, such as hyper-oxygenation, are useful in life-support system manufacture and chemical synthesis. It had a thicker atmosphere in the past; millennia of outgassing caused evolution.

The end result is that though Rabwhar’s atmosphere is thin, it is also comfortably rich in oxygen. This compensates to a degree for the lower air pressure, much as early spacecraft used higher oxygen percentages in their cabin to compensate for lower pressure.

Rabwhar is also a world which has failed to progress technologically much beyond the level of Industrial Age Earth, although the planet did enter its own Atomic Age about thirty years prior to the *Cirque*’s arrival. Plentiful fossil fuels exist, courtesy of multiple die-offs of both plant and animal life that resulted in abundant supplies of fossil fuels. Coal is by far the most plentiful. Petroleum fields abound in several areas. Natural gas can be obtained with little effort. Despite a much smaller population than Earth’s of the classic Industrial Age, the use of fossil-fuel combustion as a staple has tainted the atmosphere from an earlier “pristine” state. Despite the fact that the local technology level entered the atomic age about thirty years ago, the world is experiencing climate change due to its reliance on fossil fuels.

In an effort to stave off climate change before the ecology was irreparably damaged, prior charismatic rulers pushed the development of atomic energy. Simple fission plants have provided both energy and some weapons-grade fissionable material for the last three decades. Unfortunately, the General’s uprising in 1095 disrupted further advancement of atomic technology, or the importation of better equipment. Sixteen years

later, most of the earliest fission plants are close to retirement age and are subject to stringent safety regulations that have retarded efforts toward replacement or upgrading. This in turn means that much of local industry and society remains powered by fossil fuels rather than anything more technologically advanced.

This situation is allowed to continue by the repressive and technologically conservative ideas of the local ruling elite. The primary mode of transportation is therefore the internal combustion engine, which is used to power ground-based trains, some personal automobiles, and simple fixed-wing (but very light) aircraft.

In short, Rabwhar is not merely a backwater. It has become technologically and socially stagnant.

This was not always the case. Until 1095, Rabwhar was ruled by a series of hereditary monarchs, some notably charismatic and forward-looking. This state of affairs ended in 1095, when a particularly unpopular king was overthrown in a coup. He abdicated as revolutionaries seized the capital city, and was replaced by a new government, led by his popular niece. She in turn ruled briefly until the *local* military (*not* the Imperial Army) took control and forced the leaders of the Seventeen Day Democracy into offworld exile.

By 1105 the Democratic Government in Exile of Rabwhar (DGER), based in Shirene (Spinward Marches 2125, a hex away from Lunion) still claimed to be the legitimate rulers of Rabwhar, though the organization had largely degenerated into a band of pirates and raiders.

The Fifth Frontier War allowed the General to strengthen his grip on the government and on resources. Though Rabwhar was not a center of conflict, it is within Jump-3 range of several of the former Sword Worlds, and thus was occasionally attacked by commerce raiders in hit-and-run attacks. It was also briefly held by Sword Worlds forces. The General was largely viewed as a collaborator during this period and is still less than popular with the average citizen. He has not been deposed, however, as he is “the collaborator with all the guns.”

DGER gained new followers as a result of the General’s cooperation with Sword Worlds officials during the occupation. The popular niece remains alive, though she is still in exile, and now has a growing cadre of followers both off and on Rabwhar. She is working to rebuild DGER’s reputation as a respectable revolutionary force and her own status as a legitimate ruler rather than the leader of the rabble the DGER once was. Unfortunately, local elements of DGER are leaning toward terroristic attacks, rather than revolution, as they see no likelihood of future change without action.

The IISS base maintained at the D Starport is at least as large as the civilian port. Its repair facilities rely on expensive imports and parts rebuilt by the local staff. Most of the local staff are brought in from planets with higher technology levels, as local youths who aspire to more are viewed with great suspicion by the ruling junta. It is an “open secret” that the base is involved in covert surveillance of the Sword Worlds.

Loyalty to the Imperium is of course valued now that the Sword Worlds have again been defeated. Imperial service provides opportunities for education, advancement, and financial security that Rabwhar cannot currently offer. That said, youths who join the Imperial forces often find reintegration difficult upon their retirement from the service and their return

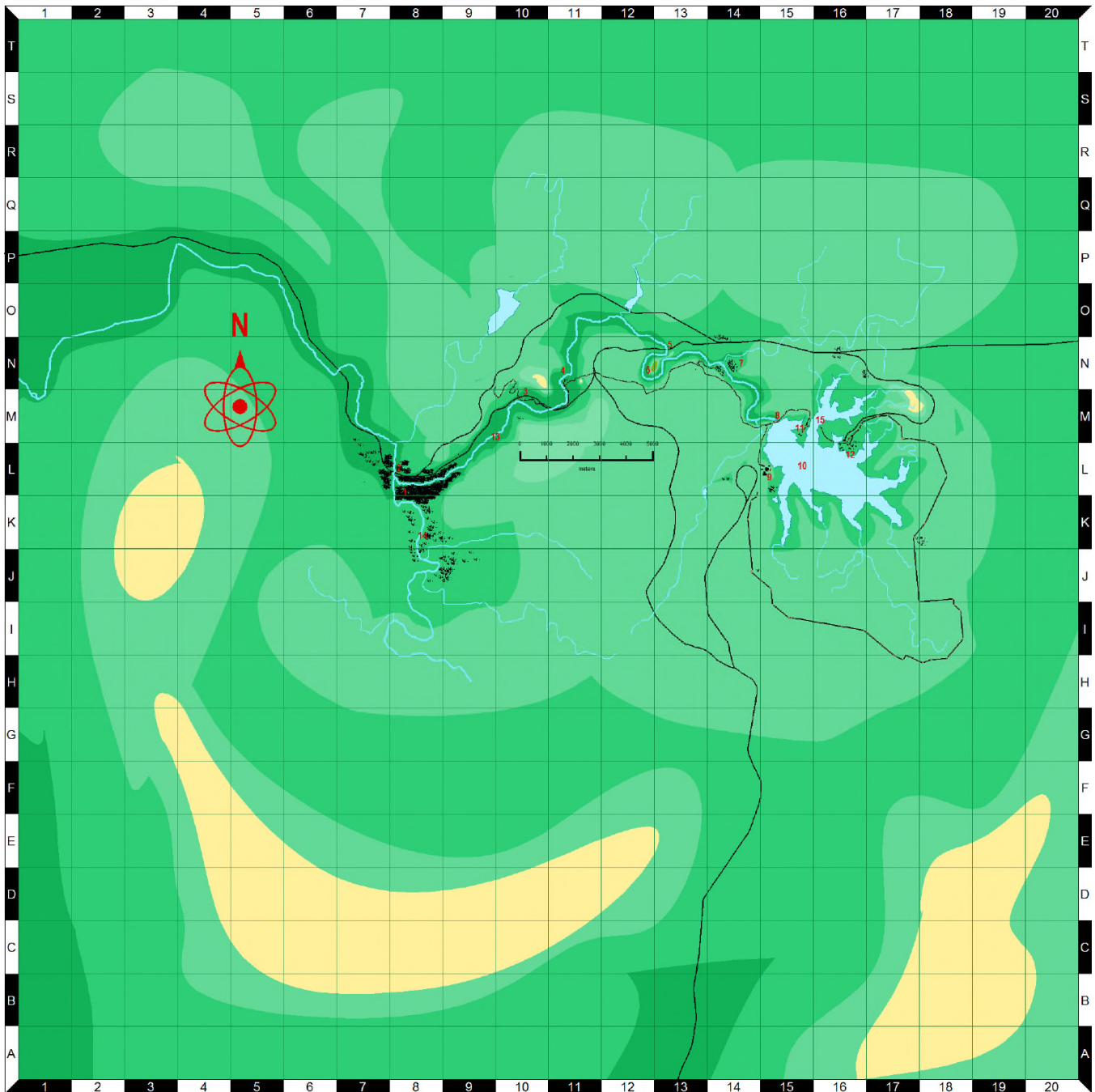
Cirque

to their home world. They have had their horizons opened, only to have them shrunk by the local government and mores. Many thus either never return at all or leave again shortly after they come home. Those who stay are often the ones who find favor with the ruling junta, which values its superior technology-by-importation. Some who return have returned from the Fifth Frontier War, however, have been joining with DGER against the junta.

Though a backwater planet, Rabwhar was on the “official” dividing line between the pre-war Sword Worlds border and the Imperium. In addition, Sternmetal Horizons continues to maintain a small research facility in Rabwhar’s asteroid belt. The system was briefly occupied by Sword World units in 1108, forcing Sternmetal to temporarily abandon the station, but not before assuring itself of the utter elimination of all data and evidence of its work. The General and his ruling junta kept their collective heads down and collaborated with the invaders while claiming to be a captive government, thus managing to hold onto planetary authority.

Several skirmishes took place in the system, eventually resulting in the return of Imperial control. At that point, the junta reaffirmed its full authority as the local government. The Imperium gave it little thought; local government is a local matter, especially when at war with the psychopathic and psionic Zhodani and their belligerent Sword World allies.

Rabwhar also found itself delivering large loads of meat and produce to the railheads during the war; both Imperial and Sword World squadrons must be fed, after all. Thus, its standard of living was reduced for several years and has yet to return to pre-war levels. Needless to say, this has led to anger and discontent among the local population, which is not happy about the continued deprivation despite the return of peace.



Episode 11

Zaibon • Spinward Marches 1825

B000544-B • Ni As Va • 512 • Im • M6 III M3 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

If you watch the aster-oater vids, you'd think all of the prospectors live in shiny new seekers, and all they ever dig out is pure gold and perfectly formed diamonds. You hardly ever see the truth — all the folks living and dying just like the planet-bound, farming and smelting and doing what's necessary to keep the old prospectors and their grimy old cutters and gigs moving from rock to rock. A whole belt grows up, though, and they grow a lot of old-fashioned Spinning Wheels for the growing, and the smelting, and the living, and of course the dying. A living belt has four or five or ten of them, and a hundred or a thousand bolas and bubble worlds...all sorts of things that were thought up before we figured out artificial gravity. Cheap and easy to run. Sensible, a lot of ways.

Spinning Wheels. The standard torus — that's a neat thing. A lot of systems have one or three still hanging around, that's why they're standard. Over two kilometers in diameter, most of them getting natural light at least as a supplement, and they can support ten thousand people easily. Some, more. Great way to farm, great way to manage resources. They make acceptable up-ports, too, and good places to do business, like Rhyllanor's Old Station. Some people can't stand them — old-fashioned spin-for-gravity's too primitive for their delicate inner ears, I suppose. But I like them. I can't think of anything that'll ever make me dislike a Spinning Wheel.

That's why I like Zaibon. It has a lot of old wheels, and a bunch of variations. Too bad they took all the copper out of that belt. Soon enough, they're going to have a whole bunch of empty habitats. A played-out belt dies, mostly. It might live as a stepping-stone... Or, if it's far enough from any borders, it might make a good Depot someday. But Zaibon's a bit too close to the Sword Worlders for that. And worse, their tall pals the Zho.

Maybe the Imperium should plant a proper Navy base at Zaibon. The Zho didn't finish with us the last time they plowed into the Marches. They'll be back. An extra fleet near the border would suit me just fine. Keep the Vikings in line, too.

But they won't. They worry about places like Lunion, and Regina. Sure, Regina's interesting, but it's expendable. What does it have worth protecting? A duke with a buzz cut? Strephon should get off his butt and name Delphine to run the Marches, maybe all of Deneb. Mora, that's a place to protect. And Zaibon, right there on the edge. But it's just going to die away, I think. The Sword Worlders will be able to move in without a mumble. They'll bring the Zho with them.

And the Zho — people get all scared of the mind-reader types, and they're certainly a vile pest. But a lot more Zho are just Proles. 'Just Proles,' you say. Fed gruel and forced to be happy by mind control, that's what the Admiralty thinks. But you know, they make up most of the combat crews, and most of the boots-on-the-ground grunts. I'll bet some of the Zho spies are as telepathic as you or me. Right, *not*.

What? Oh, Zaibon. A dried up place unless they find something new and interesting. So they'll find something. Or they won't.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

General Data (Players)

The Zaibon Belt is fortunately located in Orbit 11 of its large M6 III star, outside the primary's 100-diameter "jump masking" limit. It was once a major belting community, with miners working a large lode of copper and other useful metals. As a result, it became a boom-belt, while planets closer to the star were largely ignored. A bare rock orbits in the habitable zone, a minimum of 33 days away from the belt at a constant 1G.

Though many of the population have lived inside mined-out asteroids all of the varieties of classic spinning colonies are represented in this system: several large O'Neill Cylinders, several Bubbleworlds, several Bernal Spheres, myriad bolas, and various other small habitats. There are also thirty-three (33) separate Standard Stanford Torus variants, each designed to and capable of supporting some 10,000 humans. While some beltlers live in Seekers or other ships and small craft, a belt community requires more care and attention to be successful. Communities require common living facilities, farms, smelting locations, trading posts, and more. Zaibon was and is no different.

The belt is all but played out now. With few other sources of income, the system's community is in decline. The Imperium has not, as yet, seen fit to take over the system as a major Imperial Navy port. Other systems are more threatened, and a new buffer zone has been created in the Border Worlds. Zaibon's population of 500,000 is already seeing a decline as young people seek other belts and other worlds — and as older people die.

With the residential/farming space stations now experiencing numerous vacancies, one suggested solution is for the system to re-invent itself as a tourist and retirement community — "The Old Belt Experience." For the moment, it is producing mild interest from investors. However, with proposed slogans like "Choose an Old, Comfortable Belt," "Come Have a Belt with Us," and the worst (and least grammatical) pun of them all, worst of all, "Suspenders Your Travel in the Old Belt," this plan certainly *can* fail. People rich enough to retire to space stations can do so in their home systems. The rest are at least cautious about Zaibon's proximity to former Sword Worlds systems.

Zaibon also boasts a new concept in the Marches: the amusement wheel. Like its on-world predecessors of other systems, the amusement wheel is devoted to recreation, for both residents and tourists.

The Ferris Wheel is a full-sized resort developed from a 200 year old dual-wheel torus. It was completely refurbished in 1106, before the outbreak of the Fifth Frontier War, with ten separate "theme parks" in its ten segments. The renovations were done as cheaply as possible to save money and time. The Advance Sophonts have arranged performances for *Cirque* in this unique facility.

During the war, the Ferris Wheel became a popular liberty port for smaller vessels. As a result, it also became a popular destination for lower-level spies from the Sword Worlds and the Zhodani Consulate. Since 120-1110, with the Armistice in place, significant attempts have been made to attract visitors from outside the system. The Ferris Wheel Entertainment Consortium considers this part of Zaibon's future: Zaibon will be both a

Cirque

destination and a prototype for similar theme-stations in other systems throughout the Marches.

The Ferris Wheel is a dual Stanford Torus with a joint hub. One of the current tori is primarily a residence for employees and a food production facility. The second provides tourists with ten different “parks” to choose from, and ancillary recreation/dining/lodging facilities. Several of these parks have performance venues.

The basic functions of the park environment, along with the number of visitors from other systems combine to allow a number of adventures. Indeed, if Cirque des Sirkas is ahead of schedule, Captain Andii plans to spend an extra week here.

Colorful fictional characters roam throughout the less serious parks, drawn from hundreds of human traditions and thousands of years of entertainment memories. From enormous fictional cartoon rats to impossibly muscular super-heroes, these characters entertain children and expertly annoy adults. Some such characters are rumored to come from pre-spaceflight Earth; others come from the most recent animated creations of Regina. Even villains appear, in their more amusing and toned-down caricatures; Zhed the Vreeper is often seen retreating from Arturo the Adaptable and his crew. The Pink Beaker World park celebrates the mischievous animal’s adventures.

The belt is also ripe for redevelopment in a different way: station-grown crops familiar to humans fare well. One plan to revitalize the system calls for building new agricultural stations within the Habitable Zone, despite the long trip necessary to get out of the star’s massive 100-diameter limit. These tried-and-true “wheels-in-space” have low power requirements, all or most of which can be supplied by efficient solar panels to cut production costs. Lighting for plant growth can be supplied by the primary itself, with a day/night cycle provided by both mechanical shutters and higher-tech materials with varying opacity. A low rate of spin simulates gravity. Atmosphere recycling is handled by photosynthesis; most stations produce enough food to be self-sustaining. Stations with a low population density can produce a substantial surplus of food and other consumables. In addition, modern computer, robot, and nanobot manufacturing and construction techniques present real efficiencies. In essence, with sufficient energy and raw material, a massive new station shell can be erected without undue discomfort or loss of life. In-system freighters would bring the produce to stations in Orbit 11.

Local technicians and residents have sufficient experience to make this plan work. Though lacking in advertising skill, they hope to go from being miners working a dying claim to “Spinward’s Bread Basket” within two standard decades.

Other business plans include the design and manufacture of smaller habitats for the rich; plans to create retirement habitats for the Marches’ elderly rich; and, of course, plans to attract an Imperial Navy or Scout base to the port.

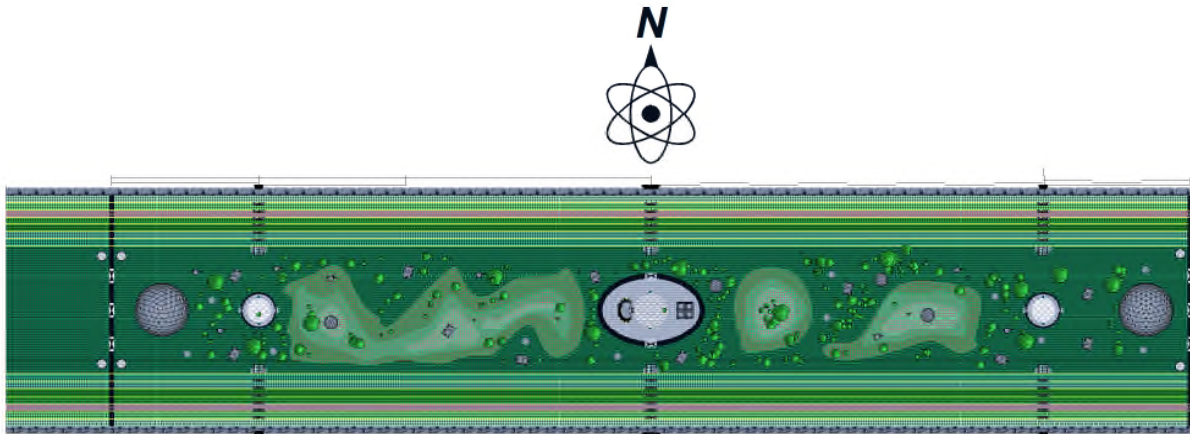
The Pink Beaker

The Pink Beaker is a non-speaking mischievous prankster. Its gender is unclear. It is pursued by a number of villains in the various short holofilms, including Inspector Inept, Victor Vargr, Lord Tree Rat the King of Thieves, Herbert Hoover (a bloodvark) and similar evildoers. In the time-honored tradition, the Pink Beaker is generally inoffensive and not the aggressor. More often than not, elaborate plans go wrong, and the Pink Beaker goes on its merry, jazz-accompanied way.

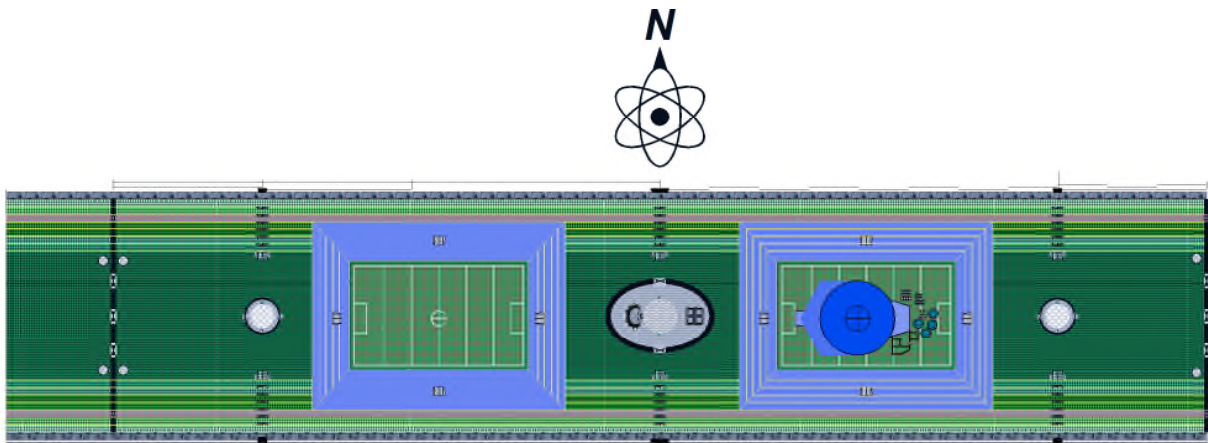
Segment	Name	Environment
1	Waterpark	Subtropical
2	“Pink Beaker World” (Basic Rides and Amusements based on the Ubiquitous Children’s Animation series, “The Pink Beaker.”)	Temperate
3	Aslan and Vargr and Droyne, Oh My! (Exhibitions and rides related to three other Major Races in the Marches)	Temperate
4	Primitive Worlds Resort (“Roughing It, As If”)	Temperate/Rough Terrain
5	Zoo/Aviary/Aquarium	Temperate with Enclosures
6	Team Sports Park	Temperate
7	Scout Adventure Theme Park, Arcades and Museum (Includes Cable-Coaster Ride)	Temperate
8	Old Earth Adventures Theme Park and Museum (An Old-West Show Con-fabulated with Asian, Indian, South American Native, Middle Eastern, and Inuit Culture)	Temperate
9	Old Vland Theme Park	Temperate
10	Ultimate Capture the Flag Live Park	Temperate/Rough Terrain
11	Fruit Orchard 1	Temperate
12	Fruit Orchard 2	Temperate
13	Processing Plants	Temperate
14	Vegetable Protein	Temperate
15	Animal Protein	Temperate
16	Amber Waves of Grain 1	Temperate
17	Amber Waves of Grain 2	Temperate
18	Veggies 1	Temperate
19	Veggies 2	Temperate
20	Rice Paddy	Sub-Tropical

Cirque

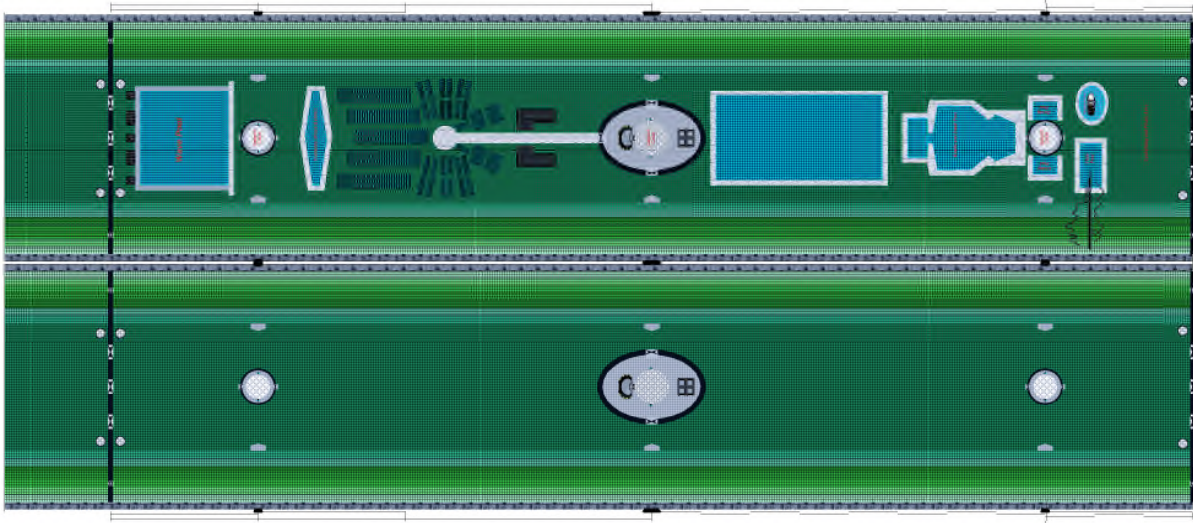
Capture the Flag Segment



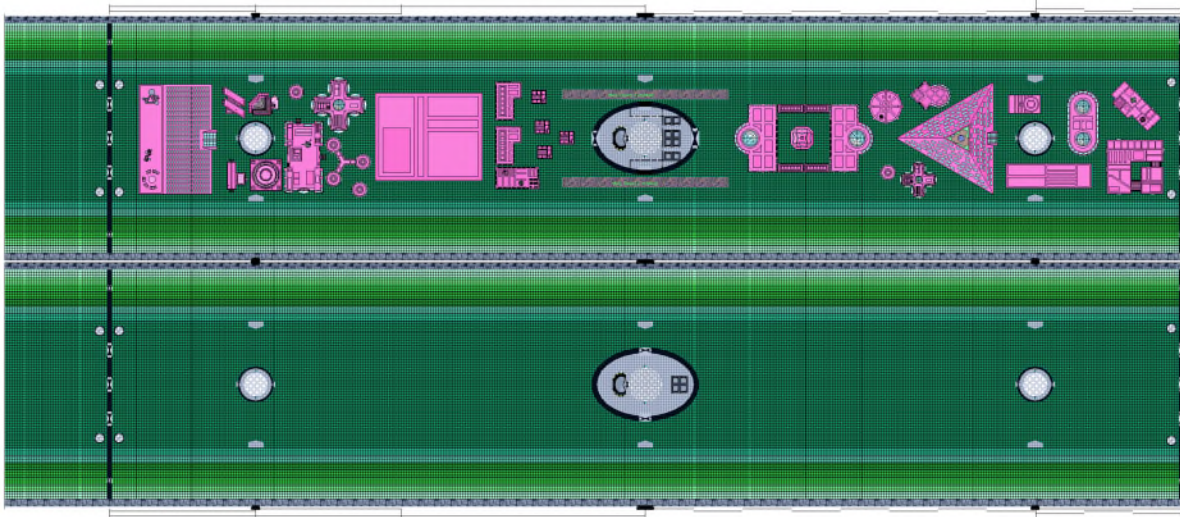
Sports Arena Segment



Water Park Segment



Pink Beaker World Segment



Episode 12

Hofud • Spinward Marches 1524

B666853-A • F • Ga Ri Pa Ph • 601 Sw/BW • G6 V M9V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Oh, I love farm worlds. You know that, right? Yeah. I've said that before. Farming. Guiding the plow behind yoked miniphants. Milking the chickens and getting eggs from the horses like they did on Old Terra. Fresh air and real food.

All that fresh air and good living's enough to make an old admiral suicidal. Give me the stink of a carrier any day.

Hofud, though, I can't complain about. Another sweet little farm world to visit. A little smaller and a touch drier than Vland or Earth. The Spinward Marches would be the breadbasket of the Imperium if it was just a little closer to Capitol. The difference between Hofud and a bunch of other farm worlds – well, the obvious one is that those damned Sword Worlders are running the show. That makes it a touchier place to visit, sometimes. They want to be friends, but then they look over their shoulder as if they expect the Zhodani Thought Police.

I'll say this for Hofud. It's well organized. Run on the scientific method. The people are a bit nicer than the average Sword Worlder. They make some money out of their exports, and they've built up a nice enough port. It has good facilities, too – military and commercial. Heck, Hofud would make a lovely addition to the Marches. I've said so more than once to the folks there, when I've been negotiating for Sharurshid.

A few of them even look a bit thoughtful. "One more foolish war," one high-end vintner said, before she shut up and got all tight-lipped. She taught me about the folly of looking over one nice figure instead of looking closely at a spreadsheet *full* of figures, if you get my drift. But it still worked out. That's one source of fine wine locked up nicely by Sharurshid, even if it cost a few extra credits.

Hofud runs up a particularly nice line of wines, ales, and other alcoholic beverages. They say that there's something a little different in the local fermenting organisms, probably caused by all of the dust that gets into their atmosphere. That ring of theirs drops a lot. Whatever it is, it's nice. I pick up a private stock of my own whenever I get the chance.

The Harvest Festivals are always good parties, too. That time of the year in the 'northern' hemisphere, almost all of the moons are bright and full – they're tide-locked, all but two, and in fairly low orbits. And there's a meteor shower at the same time – dust and rock streaming along behind the 'Three-year Swarm.' Even a few big rocks. So the harvest dances are lit from above, and open-air. Those are pretty nice times. Some of the dances are rustic, some of them are high-dress balls. If you don't get to at least ten dances after the harvest is in, you're either a nasty old spinster or you should bathe more often.

And that's the place to make friends and allies. That tight-fisted vintner...she does a tango that near enough fractured my hip the last time I was there. And she's a tease...keeps smiling and saying, "One more foolish Zho war, and I'll marry you." Not quite a reason to provoke the mind-melters, but...tempting. If you want to be married, anyway.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1107.

General Data (Players)

Most of Hofud's 520 million residents live on the larger of the two continents, Ofrein. The smaller continent, Baaten, is far less populated, with a population of only 60 million.

Prior to the Fifth Frontier War, Hofud was a member of the Sword Worlds Confederation. Its proximity to the border with the Spinward Marches made it strategically important to the Sword Worlds. Its orbital bases had traditionally been important refueling and restocking centers for Sword Worlds military forces. As a result, Hofud was occupied by Imperial forces during the Fifth Frontier War. It was one of the first of the occupied worlds willing to support the Imperium, at least officially.

Sharurshid is credited with having a strong influence on this decision. From 1103 through 1108, Sharurshid built important links with the vintners and brewers of this temperate world. The higher prices obtained for their fine drinkables in the Marches influenced the local feudal technocracy to be favorably disposed toward the Imperial government.

The official friendliness, however, is not shared by all. To the contrary, a significant underground has developed. Opposition cells have formed, sometimes loosely interconnected, and sometimes entirely independent. Some members of the governing technocracy itself did not wish to leave the Sword Worlds in the first place, and are still in a position to aid the opposition. Small terrorist attacks have occurred, and though this activity has not been significant enough to merit an "Amber Zone" alert, safety in numbers is not guaranteed on this world at the current time.

On 067-1111, Sharurshid received significant terrorist threats, and several incendiaries were lobbed at the office building it rented. Thereafter, it relocated all of its off-port offices and personnel to the downport and surrounding startown. Increased security has been put in place.

Despite these issues, as of early 1111 complicated negotiations have been in motion toward the establishment of the Border Worlds Confederation. The new polity is expected to consist of the ten occupied worlds, plus Sacnoth and Tyrffing, with Sting expected to become the primary world in the client state. The end result is that the Border Worlds will become an Imperial client state, rather than an occupied territory. The factions pulling the Border Worlds together are relying on Hofud's reputation for rationality and its significant role as an agricultural producer to provide stability to the prospective buffer state.

Physically, Hofud is unusual in that it has no fewer than 11 moons (all captured asteroids) and a dust ring, unusual features for anything but a gas giant. The moons are generally small and in lower orbits. Most are tide-locked.

The large number of captured moons is believed to have originated with a cluster of asteroids which sweep through the system in an elliptical orbit every three years. The occasional intersection of the orbits allows for the occasional capture. The same intersections in the eons before human settlement resulted in a collision between a moon and an asteroid, disintegrating both and resulting in the dust ring. As noted by Admiral Lee, the northern hemisphere's harvests correspond to passage through this ellipsis.

The moon in the lowest orbit (Rousse), serves as Hofud's up-port. It is a roughly cylindrical, irregular rock twelve kilometers long and varying in thickness, but generally around seven kilometers thick. It orbits the

Cirque

world once every four and one-half (4.5) standard hours. Docking towers have been erected at intervals along the surface. These allow ships of various sizes to latch on for fuel, cargo, and personnel transfers. Piping has been run from various tanks. Habitats have been drilled under the surface, eliminating the need for expensive radiation shielding.

Gudrid Grettisdóttir **The Vintner**

Final UPP: 4A99BC. Age: 52 years.

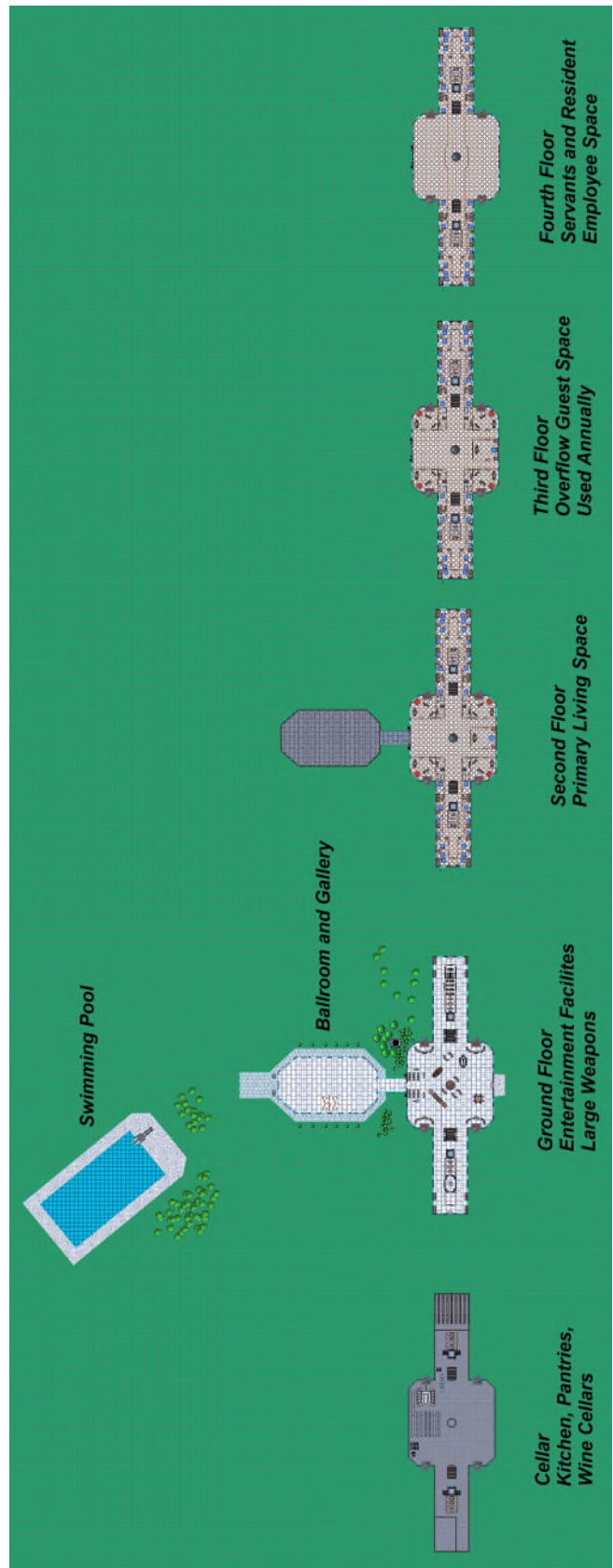
Final Skills: Admin-2, Advocate-5, Art: Chef-1, Broker-5, Bureaucrat-6, Comms-2, Computer-1, Counsellor-1, Diplomat-4, Flyer-1 (Aeronautics -1, Grav-1), Gunner-2 (Screens-1, Turrets-1), Language: Anglic-8, Leader-2, Liaison-2, Pilot-0 (Small Craft-1), Science: Chemistry-1, Tactics-1, Trader-2, Zero G-1.

Terms (9): 3 Education, 6 Noble.

Muster Out (6): KCr 260, KCr 240, C2 +1 (Dex A), Life Insurance, TAS Life Member, Directorship.

Automatics & Non-Rolled Gear: Hand Computer/Comm, Civilian Clothes, Personal Entertainment Library, Professional Library.

BW: Hofud 1524 B666853-A F Ga Ri Pa Ph 601 Sw/BW G6 V M9V.
HW Skills: Trader-1, Art: Chef-1, Trader +1.



Episode 13: Dyrnwyn • Spinward Marches 1522 B958812-A • F • Pa Ph • 201 • SW (Former) • M4 V M8 V

Excerpt: *Diary and Dialogues*

I don't much like Dyrnwyn. I don't like any world with one sun that never sets and another one that plays periodic tricks. I shouldn't have to draw the shades to get to bed, or go to the other side of the world and risk slipping on the ice. I'm getting to an age where falling might be embarrassing. I might not be able to get up.

But it's an interesting world for all that. You expect most of the tide-locked worlds to be roasted rock, and most of them are. But occasionally wind, water and land surprise you, and somehow form systems that work for humans. Dyrnwyn's ocean and continents on the sunward side are set just right. The hottest point is at the "east pole," and it's almost dead center in the ocean basin. Water vapors up, begins to cool and move out, forms gentle breezes all the way to the edge. A little wobble in the twilight zone and a lot of volcanism melts enough ice to keep the oceans in water. In fact, there are some micro-continents, or big islands, being formed there in the mostly dark. They have some wonderful hot springs. I visited a set of them a ways back — 1098, I think it was — and they're great therapy for whatever ails you. Add a big blonde masseuse named Inga, or a little redhead named Freia, for that matter, and you'll go back to the sunlight feeling twenty years younger.

It's a brilliant planetary design, really. Almost makes one believe that the Norse gods found a new place to live after they left old Sol behind. The boring people think the Ancients fooled with it three or four hundred thousand years ago. How are they different from gods if they could do that? Anyway, apart from the general lack of night on the warm side, it's not the worst place in the world.

But I still don't really like it. Kind of dislike it, in fact. More than kind of, maybe.

Those ice-islands are kind of pretty when the second sun is in the sky, half the year. Not much warmer, because it's a bit of a distant companion, but pretty. And the cold-weather hardy lichens bloom in a few places. But I still don't much like it. I got frostbite right after one of those long baths in the hot-springs, had to have all my toes amputated and regrown, so I guess I don't like it.

I also don't love the Sword Worlders. Sure, they started out Terran, a long time ago. One or two at a time, fine people to swap a story with over a hollowed-out horn full of rancid ale. As a whole, though, how do you trust them? They keep tabs on the Zho mood, and when the Zho ships start swarming over the lines, Sword World ships are always nearby to lend a hand. Hard to trust someone who makes common cause with the mind-melters.

I like Dyrnwyn, some. A lot, really. Except that I hate it.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

General Data (Players)

A corporate-governed world in the Sword Worlds subsector of the Spinward Marches, located along the trailing border with the Imperium, Dyrnwyn was formerly a member of the Sword Worlds Confederation.

During the Fifth Frontier War, Dyrnwyn was invaded by Imperial troops on 233-1109 as part of Operation Azhanti Sunrise.

Following the defeat of the Sword Worlds forces, Dyrnwyn came under Imperial occupation and in 1110 was among the border systems that broke off from the Confederation to begin the formation of the pro-Imperial client state called the Border Worlds Federation. In 1111 control of Dyrnwyn is being returned to the Fortam Conglomerate, the planet's Gungnir-based (Spinward Marches 1221) corporate owners as part of a post-war goodwill package.

Dyrnwyn is tidally locked to its primary star despite sitting on the edge of the system's habitable zone. In spite of this unpromising situation, convection and currents render the world habitable, with a "land of the midnight sun" environment on the sunward face. Several larger moons circle the world in almost-perfect orbits. Together with Dyrnwyn's closeness to the primary itself, these contribute to a hot core and substantial volcanic activity. Volcanism is one of several keys to the unusual habitability of such a tide-locked world.

Dyrnwyn contains three main continents: Joekullvetur, Ny Groenland, and Eghvass. Other notable land masses include the coveted Jarthlaug Islands in the ocean circle, which contain the settlement of Katlar. Both the capital city of Svartgardur and the Ahgharad Starport are located on Joekullvetur. These continents ring the ocean on the world's light side, almost as if they were deliberately positioned in the warmest central area of the ocean.

The light side of the planet is mostly ocean with a largely temperate climate. The far side oceans are frozen to a depth of as much as one hundred meters, with average temperatures at the cold "West Pole" nearing -51 degrees C. However, as previously noted, volcanic activity keeps water liquid under a surface layer of ice that becomes relatively thin near the volcanic islands and micro-continents dotting the dark side.

The warmest portion of the ocean, the "East Pole," creates a regular upward flow of warmth and vapor into the atmosphere thanks to a combination of sunlight and volcanism. The atmospheric currents level off and flow outward, keeping the sunward side warm. As vapor moves toward the dark side, much of it precipitates and ultimately returns to the liquid ocean remainder eventually becomes part of the dark-side ice mass.

Currents caused by the core-based heating move water back to the light side oceans, creating a constant conveyor of cooling that prevents the light side from overheating. Without this conveyor effect, the light side would overheat, the temperature would rise dramatically, the oceans evaporate, and the atmosphere boil into space. Human habitation would become impossible as the comfortable "midnight sun" environment ceased to exist.

Most environmental scientists consider this an unlikely "Goldilocks Squared" situation, with some openly speculating that this world was deliberately engineered to be habitable by the Ancients. At least one major religious sect even suggests that the perfection of this system is proof of the Deist Design Theory, notwithstanding scoffers.

Interestingly, the distant companion provides some light to the far side each five planetary years. During this period highly efficient lichens bloom for about a quarter of the local year and then die off, with spores surviving for the next such year.

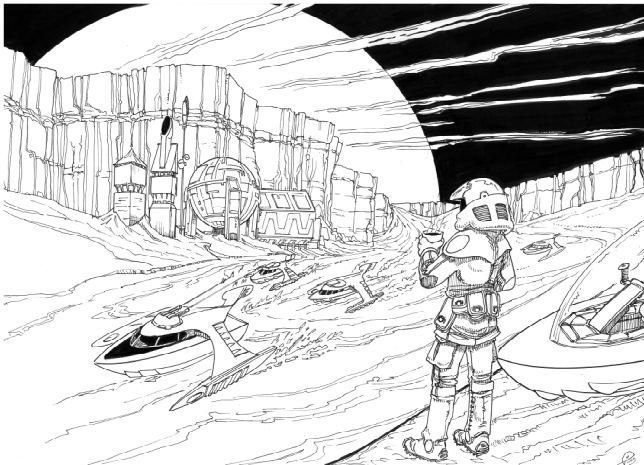
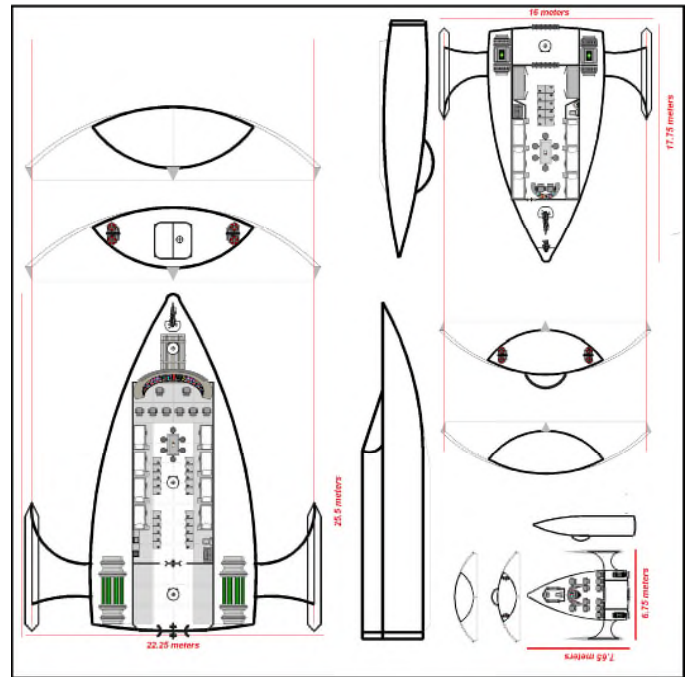
Cirque

This period is creatively named “The Five-Year Bloom,” or “The Bloom” for short. Almost all of Dymwyn’s 200,000,000 inhabitants save time and money to travel onto the dark side for a week or two during Bloom. Ice skimmers carry simple tourists on three-day excursions. The wealthier and more adventuresome spend more time, with loftier goals such as scaling a mountain peak or swimming in one of the suddenly-formed ice-cold equatorial lakes. Pre-fab shelters and tents dot the surface. A few more permanent facilities are also found there, primarily designated for corporate research.

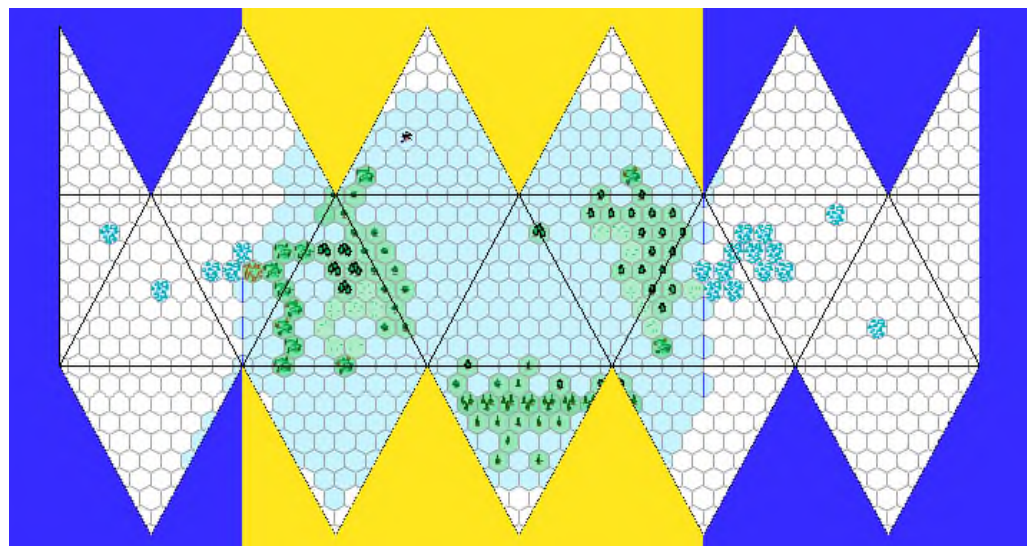
Imperial researchers interested in these uniquely efficient lichens have long sought to study the Bloom, but until recently tensions between the Sword Worlds and the Imperial governments made this all but impossible. One positive outcome of the Fifth Frontier War has been the opening of Dymwyn for study. The first Bloom since the closing of the war began about two months before *Cirque*’s arrival.

The ice skimmer is a standard vehicle, especially for far-side travel. This is long tradition from the days before local gravitic manufacturing. Whether logical or not, the locals simply do not trust gravitics and other flyers in the cold. They also enjoy the feel of skimming across the ice.

Little else is known about this world by Imperial citizens. It is, simply, an oddity.



An Ice-Skimmer Race



Dymwyn in standard mapping format. The sunward side is rimmed in yellow (light grey in grayscale); the sunless side is rimmed in blue (darker grey in grayscale).

Episode 14:

Saurus • Spinward Marches 1320

D888588-7 Ag Ni 820 Im • G8 V M1 V

Excerpt: *Diary and Dialogues*

We all know that Saurus got its name because it's a jungle full of largish reptile-sort-ofs, including some big ones. It would have been just as accurate to call it "Courtroom." Think about it, you'll get the joke. But the fauna and the jungle were just a first impression. There's a lot more to Saurus than that.

For example, jungle rot. If you want jungle rot, Saurus is a great place to visit. The stuff there isn't aggressive, exactly – it's more like it's tenacious. Anything there that figures out how to feed on you gets a grip and keeps it. It won't kill you, not fast, anyway. It wants to keep you alive and kicking.

It can be killed, too. It just takes time, energy, and a tolerance for nasty baths. Nothing like holding your breath and staying under, then coming up and breathing in the stink of sulfur. Ask any old-timer. They've all had the Greenfuzz Rot now and again. They just close their eyes up and enjoy the swim.

Not a tenth of the life there has been catalogued and studied. No one's made a big push, the way they should. Anytime you see that much life, you should drop an entire space station full of labs into orbit. There's probably a cure on Saurus for everything but ingrown toe-nails. Not to mention nice scents for perfume and shampoo.

We've been ignoring that nasty old jungle for a long time. What a waste.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

General Data (Players)

Saurus is yet another agricultural planet with a garden world environment. With a relatively small population of approximately 800,000, the world has not been deeply penetrated by humanity, and much of its surface and native species remain a mystery. The lower technology and population limits the local manufacture of vehicles and exploitation of fossil fuels.

Many of the hardy locals like that.

The law level's implicit weapons restrictions are only enforced within 100 kilometers of "densely" settled areas for simple, practical reasons: local technology does not support enforcement. Weapons are needed in the "outback" to defend against the sometimes large, sometimes hostile, native life forms.

Much of Saurus' economy is supported by the simple and non-intensive gathering of biological resources. Its lush equatorial forests contain numerous life forms with use or potential use in medicines. A number of natural substances can be obtained and distilled. Because the local biochemistry is slightly different from that of standard humanity, the uptake of many of these substances is slower, as are their rate of breakdown in the human body. Thus, substances and drugs against various illnesses take effect more slowly, but they also work for a longer period of time. The same is true of substances and drugs with primarily psychotropic effects.

The more temperate zones are also lush with forests and vegetation of various types. Most communities and farms are located in these zones. The starport is located in the southern temperate zone, near the Amazon Ocean's eastern shore.

Saurus is a mass of life and biodiversity that has yet to be truly exploited despite a thousand years of colonization.

During the Fifth Frontier War, Saurus was subject to regular incursions from the Gram Fleet as part of the Sword Worlds Campaign. On 014-1108 the Imperial Admiralty officially declared the system to be a combat zone. On 168-1108, Saurus was occupied by Sword World forces. Most invaders were eventually pushed off-world when the system was retaken by Imperial forces.

Rumors continually pass through the local population that Sword Worlds troops remain on Saurus. Depending on the day of the week, these Sword Worlders either retain significant weapons and unit discipline, or are simple ragged pockets in rough terrain. Some claim to have seen Sword World vessels lift off from plasma-burned clearings. Many of the old-timers who come in from the "backwoods" with their gathered natural products are ridiculed when they mention these alleged sightings — sightings which are never properly confirmed.

Episode 15

Vilis • Spinward Marches 1119

A593943-A • Hi In • 820 • Im • G5 V M8 V

Excerpt: *Diary and Dialogues*

Vilis was a nice place once, a long time ago. A little small, but very dense with metals and such, so gravity's pretty normal. Smack in the middle of Goldilocks. Sweet air, dense, and enough water for nature's purposes. Enough for human purposes, anyway. Is anyone surprised that the Sword Worlders spread there and started farming? Really, anyone?

Well, that was fine, until they started mining, and then making, and then making more. Internal combustion and external combustion and sideways combustion. Putting needles through the planet's skin, sucking down fossil fuels because it's cheaper to drill than re-invent fusion, or better yet import it. Cheaper to drill for oil and strip-mine than it is to do a lot of things. They got lazy and stupid, smogged it up, dumped toxins in some of their nice almost-deserts... well, this isn't really intelligence. This is ants with an attitude.

Oh, and then we let them join up. How could we not? There's still metal to be mined. Ships to be made, rifle barrels to be bored. More pollution, less food production. You know you've made it in Imperial society when you have to import food from your own orbital stations.

What's that you ask? No, you misunderstand. I love Vilis. Someone needs to keep the Sword-Worlders and Zho at bay. Vilis does a good job at that. The cost of freedom is eternal pollution. A great, capitalist mecca.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1107.

General Data (Players)

Vilis was originally settled by Sword Worlders, but has been associated with the Imperium since 470 in current reckoning. Vilis is now a high population, heavily industrialized world with its originally standard oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere tainted by industrial pollutants. Like pre-Solomoni Earth, pollution has caused global climate change, though a switch to alternative energy has slowed the progress of the damage.

Vilis' exports are primarily manufactured goods, including some warships and of course weaponry. However, the relatively low technology level (in overall Imperial terms) limits its construction of larger warships.

Over eight billion people reside on this relatively small world, resulting in significant crowding, especially in the cities. Food is grown on-planet using efficient means, but as noted the ecology is stressed by the high population and the polluted air. Additional food is imported from orbital habitats, and from other systems. A strong manufacturing base has made all of this possible despite the ecological damage it has wrought.

While some orbital agricultural habitats exist (often older Standard Stanford Toruses), many other platforms were constructed after local manufacturing became capable of large-scale gravitics production. Thus, despite increased expense, many of the newer agricultural habitats are large domed plates. Like "spinning wheels," though, these habitats retain substantial shielding in their bases, which face sunward. Mirrors redirect light toward the domes, and the domes use advanced polarization techniques to simulate a fairly standard day.

The richest manufacturing tycoons of Vilis often reside on gravitically lifted estates. These are set to float above the worst of the smog at ground level, in the in the less dense air of the higher elevations, and above the worst of the smog below. Atmospheric currents move them around the globe, giving them the opportunity for many vistas. Needless to say, this is too expensive for most of the populace, who continue to live in less desirable conditions on the ground.

Vilis was spared direct combat during the war. Both the Zhodani and Sword Worlds seem to have largely bypassed the system. The people of Vilis credit this to the availability of basic defensive vessels and militarized forces, reducing the local effects of the war. As aggressive as the Outworld Coalition had been, they were not foolish enough to lay unnecessary siege to a prepared and fortified Imperial world. Numerous orbital bombardment scares and siege drills kept the populace vigilant. System defense forces were always at high alert. Despite the cessation of hostilities, they currently remain at higher alert than at any time in the twenty years before the war.

Although the planetary government is a representative democracy with a fairly liberal law level, Vilis is nonetheless only slowly ramping down from the war mentality. The people continue to take defense responsibilities seriously, to the point that there are still individuals who refuse to leave their homes without a sidearm in the event of renewed warfare. In addition, areas such as the construction facilities for lower-technology Imperial patrol vessels are heavily guarded.

Because it was deemed a safe haven, Vilis became the destination for many Imperial citizens fleeing combat zones. Some 50,000 people were lucky enough (or panicked enough) to cram into the cargo holds of vessels being evacuated from Saurus, Calit, Garda-Vilis, Frenzie, and other worlds, and were brought to (or dumped at) Vilis.



Episode 16

Arkadia • Spinward Marches 1217

E546845-6 402 Im

Excerpt: *Diary and Dialogues*

Most ambitious parents want their children to grow up to be doctors, lawyers, or Imperial Navy. Arkadia's the only place I can remember visiting where a kid with an admiral's braid on her shoulders plays second fiddle to the one who just got apprenticed to a master glass-blower.

The admiral may keep the commerce flowing, but delicate glassware is the commerce. The Arkadians like commerce. They like it so long as they approve it, anyway. They're snarky that way. Exports have to be approved. Low-grade stuff doesn't get out easily, at least what they call low-grade. Local families have china that a Count would cheat a Baron for. But that stuff doesn't get past the export inspectors. "Don't glut the market with crap," that's the motto.

And it works. When a setting of eight wine glasses goes for a thousand credits because it's certified Daneau of Arkadia stemware, hand-blown and hand-etched, the method works.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1107.

General Data (Players)

Located in the Vilis Subsector of the Spinward Marches, Arkadia has several large moons, producing both complicated tides and significant tectonic activity. As a result, it is a volcanic world, prone to frequent earthquakes and eruptions. It has a reasonably temperate climate and a thin oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere, slightly tainted with volcanic gasses. Its 400,000,000 residents live in well-sealed homes and use filter masks due to the environmental taint. These are locally produced and highly efficient.

Populated areas are often located along fault lines because minerals are mined and gathered there. As a result, construction techniques emphasize sturdy, low-height buildings of fewer than ten stories. Populations are less tightly packed than on many worlds.

Like many worlds in the sector, the local technology level is low. Local transportation is largely ground-based. Ores and deposits are moved via ground-based trains and similar forms of transportation rather than by gravitic or other air-based methods. More valuable items are well guarded. Arkadia's technology level of 6, combined with minimal starport facilities, renders it something of a backwater despite its population in the hundreds of millions.

Local artisans work with various minerals, ores, gemstones, and precious metals, producing everything from exotic jewelry to original sculpture to decorative items using only the planet's own raw materials. Glassware in particular is an unusual but highly prized specialty, as the local silica and mineral based can be used to produce vibrant colors and interesting patterns rarely seen on other worlds. Several artists' colonies have become well known due to the masterworks they produce. Master artisans living in these enclaves attract aggressive, ambitious apprentices from all points of the globe, and even other planets if the student is deemed worthy of the time and attention.

Other crafts and artistic forms are represented as well. Sculptors produce exquisite large and small works from the various types of marble,

granite, sandstone, basalt, and other available stones. Gems and jewelry are well represented, with a special emphasis on chryelephantine statues and other forms that combine precious metals, exotic gems, and organic material. Even the simple granite and marble slabs used for flooring and wall coverings are produced by highly skilled stonecutters. Arkadian green marble is especially coveted across the sector.

"If you want it hand-made, have it made on Arkadia." Arkadia is known for its individualized, often cottage-industry manufacturing. Though mechanization and mass production assuredly exists, it is less pervasive than on most worlds. Extended families often work together to manufacture particular lines of high-quality goods, with skills and styles passed from one generation to the next.

The starport is located in a tectonically secure location many miles away from major population centers. It is a classic E-class starport in its most literal form: a bare, flat, rocky place with a beacon. It is, however, fenced off. All official access points are guarded by the Artisans' Customs Service. All cargo entering or leaving the port is inspected carefully to be sure that proper export permission has been given, as only the highest quality items are allowed to leave Arkadia.

The Congress of Artisans maintains a single Type R subsidized merchant, the *Arkadia II*, which makes one round trip per month between Arkadia and Garda-Vilis. The most valuable cargoes are reserved for export on the vessel. In addition, a number of independent traders have cargo contracts for lesser cargos. The Congress of Artisans also approves all cargos offered for sale to independent purchasers, even down to personal purchases by individuals, as a way of maintaining Arkadia's reputation for producing only the highest quality goods.

The Viscountess Anoria assiduously supports the local government's strict policies. Her levies have concentrated on providing better than adequate system defenses for a world with no starport. Smugglers occasionally attempt to land off-port. They rarely meet with success; they are even less likely to leave with cargo bays loaded.

The artists' collectives are locales of interest to the occasional tourists. Tourists are allowed to purchase anything they want, of course, but must still apply for an export license for anything to be taken off-world. Some tourists have become irate when told that a product will not be approved for export, as "all sales are final" at the collectives, although their ire usually cools when their ships send messages advising of the final boarding call. Travellers' Aid Society materials on Arkadia advise all visitors to confirm that the artisans with whom they deal have an export license, and that items sold have been pre-inspected for minimum quality.

Arcadia's representative democracy is relatively standard among the many worlds which utilize such a system. It has an executive, judicial and legislative branch, each providing checks and balances. There is, however a fourth branch that is unique to Arkadia: the Congress of Artisans.

The Congress of Artisans is essential to this continued prosperity of this relatively low-tech world relatively low-tech world. As most of the planet's exports are high-priced handicrafts and fine decorative items, the powerful Artisan Guilds set and enforce standards for industries, including stone workers, sculptors, metal workers, glass workers, porcelain and china artisans, gem cutters and jewelers. This is to ensure that Arkadia's reputation for producing only the very best quality items is maintained.

Cirque

Rather than risking inferior products entering the stream of interstellar commerce and threatening Arkadia's good name, the Congress of Artisans regularly meets to evaluate and grade works proposed for export. The members also bestow statuses upon these creators of "hard art."

The Congress assembles annually at the capitol city, Tripolitsa, near the starport, to evaluate both large works of art proposed for export and samples of smaller items such as jewelry and glassware. As the various items are evaluated, lots for export are created.

As may be expected, placing a bottleneck on commerce can be upsetting to some. Most artisans understand that the vast majority of the creative individuals and groups maximize profit as a result of this system. However, others suffer from the strict quality control and occasional delay in approving a particular style or product line for export. Accusations of favoritism and prejudice fly during the always-heated congressional debates. Experienced artisans with a long history of solid off-world sales are often derided by their juniors as simply politically connected hacks. Other artisans, regardless of the true quality of their work, claim that their works are unfairly judged.

In addition, those outside the more powerful political circles have repeatedly lobbied both the day-to-day government and the Viscountess Anoria for an expanded starport facility. They argue (correctly) that keeping only an E-class starport minimizes the desire and likelihood that larger vessels will come to trade. A D-class starport would attract other vessels, and perhaps even a few major shippers. The outsiders are often unwilling to accept that their goods are indeed inferior, and exporting them would simply be diluting the value of higher-rated works.

Accusations of prejudice against various outside artisans and styles can be based on any perceived difference. Minimalists of no particular talent often suggest that the subcommittees of the Congress of Artisans simply do not understand their work, which they claim is innovative and deliberate rough rather than sloppy or unskilled. Producers of overly ornate goods accuse the same juries of failing to understand the importance of arcane, busy designs. Artisans from communities with strong religious beliefs claim that the Congress of Artisans are prejudiced against their work based solely on secular (not to say heathen) viewpoints.

Episode 17

1315 Mirriam

E572300-8 N Lo Ni 110 Im F5 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Deserts. Good place for you if you have lung issues. Not so good if you like to drink water on a regular basis. But every now and again, there's a good reason to visit. Sure, dates and figs. You can get lots of dates and figs in a proper desert.

Mirriam...there's a damned improper desert. A worthless sandbox with a little water. Not much in the way of valuable minerals. It must have had better life at some point — breathable atmospheres usually come from life, not just with it — but what's there now is hiding. There are probably petrochemicals under the sand, too, but no one's really interested in drilling for those.

Now there's one reason, and only one, to be in the system: the Zho can use it as a stepping stone. They've tried before, and they'll try again. We can't let them have it, so we've had to put a Navy base in to protect a beach without a beachhead. We can't leave it all to the Darrians and their star-trigger in that little nub of space. Someday, the Zho will figure out a way to neutralize that thing. And anyway, it's not like the Darrians have a million ships and a million star triggers.

So we're defending a damned big ball of sand.

All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia. Wherever the Hades that is.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1108.

General Data (Players)

An unattractive and dry world, Mirriam is nonetheless useful as an Imperial Navy base. Its position near the Zhodani “spur” near the Marches' border makes it tactically necessary to occupy and protect the system. The starport is primarily orbital, on a small moon. The ground facility is rated only “E” because it is lightly used. The Naval Base attached to it — an anomaly in the Imperium — began as an ad hoc defensive outpost during the Fourth Frontier War. Located on Mirriam's airless, rocky moon, it has become permanent to maintain a presence in the system. The base provides refined fuel to Naval vessels only, using aging three-hundred-ton fuel shuttles in constant rotation.

Although desert training exercises are sometimes conducted on Mirriam's surface, there is no ongoing surface base or presence. Mirriam proper is virtually ignored by the Imperial Navy. Approximately one thousand civilians lived on the world below until the outbreak of the Fifth Frontier War. Ten, including the world's knight, resided at the downport, located near the almost-temperate north pole. Most of the remainder of the thousand permanent residents resided nearby, eking out a living in a small mining community. Another eleven arrived before the war: a purported research team chasing down alleged evidence of the Ancients on Mirriam.

All were present when the Zhodani invaded the system in 1108. The starport workers and many miners were able to leave in their single shuttle, but the researchers were away from the port. In the general rout and chaos of Imperial Navy forces attempting to disable the lunar station and cover a retreat, no effort was made to retrieve them. The researchers have not been heard of or seen since.

The general speculation is that these researchers were removed by the Zhodani. The Zho are known to have at least much interest in the Ancients' 300,000 year-old high technology as the Imperials. Minimal postwar efforts to locate these researchers in the form of quick orbital sensor sweeps have found nothing. Diplomatic inquiries have borne no fruit. In fact, the Zho claim to have never stepped beyond the downport's borders, a claim not credited by the Imperial Navy.

Baronet Kimargakkaasugish

Kimargakkaasugish? Met him.

One of Norris' better ideas was to rid himself of that particularly annoying dimwit. Kimargakkaasugish was of the considered belief that all prior theories regarding the Ancients are and were “lushkhenkhik” (Vilani for “poppycock”). In his view, Old Sol's original Mars was the true home of the Ancients. Mankind were the Ancients, possibly along with Vargr. Kimargakkaasugish's kept intriguing all through Regina to secure funds for a major study of this theory.

Norris finally realized that failure disguised as success would rid him of a useless pest for a period of time. He convinced the University of Regina to funnel funds to the Baronet as a research grant to seek evidence of the Ancients on Mirriam. He effectively exiled the fool in 1105. Hope he likes sand.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1106.

Episode 18

Calit • Spinward Marches 1515

C434867-7 • Ph • 0:1413 • 501 IM • K9 V M5 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

I'm not a big fan of passive-aggression. I suspect that most "flag" and "general" officers are about the same. We're trained to apply force to resolve situations disliked by people who outrank us. It doesn't matter what the situation is — a war between two member systems, an invasion by the Zho, or some foolish trade embargo that threatens essential political interests. For what it's worth, we tend to start out with the odd view that an artillery bombardment here and a marine drop there are the best ways to get a mob to pay attention and hand us some respect.

Or fear. Fear will do in place of respect.

And our training and years in command — well, what do you think that does? Dilute our ideas about guns and bombs being useful? Really?

Now and again, though, it's wise to remember that there's more than one way to skin a beaker. You have to always consider the value of sitting back and fighting by doing nothing. Like a little thing I engineered for Sharurshid a few years ago.

Al Morai was getting a little up-starty and annoying, and its less savory sidekicks from Denotam's criminal operations were supporting it. I think someone on Denotam figured that Al Morai would somehow get inroads into the shipping business off Calit if they put pressure on a low-tech world with serious needs for imported atmosphere compressors and technology, what with the local population bursting at the seams.

So, there I was, trying to help both them and Denotam Traders, LIC — Sharurshid has a twenty-five percent interest in Denotam Traders, you never know when a backwater will blossom — and working on a fair deal. We were only looking to grab a five percent markup after all costs. So these mercenaries show up from Denotam. Calit would have had to keep plodding on with its crappy local low-tech solutions if it knuckled under and paid the Danegeld. (Danegeld. A very, very old Terran term that the Sword Worlds has kept alive, just for me to use at the right time.)

Stupid, right? Hundreds of millions surrendering to what, a thousand or so troops and a couple of artillery platforms? With me there, and me having good connections with the Navy, not to mention the IISS? I could have turned it the other way in a heartbeat, and that's not bragging. It's just true.

That wasn't how I decided to skin the beaker, though. I worked out the three-cornered double-cross of all time. I got Calit's government to capitulate. I mean, completely capitulate. Let Denotam win. Roll over, play dead, quiver in fear, and send all the right signals out. Done, and done. Suddenly, Denotam — the planet, not the company — was in charge of Calit. And suddenly, Denotam had the local nobility on its tail about importing improved life support and compressors and such. 'What? You don't think you should have to? You bought it broke, you fix it up.'

And the fun part of it? Well, I told you that the contract was all but done when those dummies showed up and started making threats. Sharurshid had suppliers lined up for all of that tech. A Denotam, LIC freighter was just short of getting loaded.

Why settle for five percent markup from a poor world when you can gouge fifteen percent out of Al Morai?

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1103.

General Data (Players)

Calit is ruled from Denotam. Denotam's ruling coalition is the only functional collaboration of its multiple criminal "governments" (and "functional," like "government" is a relative term). The Calit Governing Coalition Bureau (CGCB) rules with a light hand, taxes lightly, and otherwise keeps out of local "home rule" issues. Denotam became the distant ruler of the world in almost inexplicable circumstances: one of its factions "declared war." In more accurate terms, it decided to threaten Calit to extort "protection money". It sent a small task force (a mercenary contingent, "enforcers"), and made threats in order to collect a "stipend" to stay away. It was, in short, a "protection" racket.

Rather than pay, Calit's government chose passive aggression. They surrendered and handed over the reins of government. Calit was quite firm in its surrender, refusing to take "no" for an answer. The problems of running a world with minimal assets and an increasing population had exhausted many of the local pols. They simply gave in and told the invaders to solve their problems — and promptly notified the subsector Duke and other Imperial authorities of their acquiescence to rule from Denotam. The Duke accepted and enforced the surrender.

In short, the extortion plan backfired completely. As a practical matter, the CGCB is run by experienced bureaucrats hired from various corporations, including AL Morai.

Having become somewhat "stuck" with Calit, the government of Denotam and its Al Morai sponsors are doing everything possible to profit from the arrangement. Prodded into providing improved education, for example, the CGCB bureaucrats carefully test the local school children for their aptitudes. They are guided into skills and professions seen as useful to the economy in the long term. Talented mathematicians find themselves in high-tech "practical calculus" schools learning essential skills and analysis for starship pilots, navigators, and engineers. Those with hospital-ity skills are trained to operate liners and hotels. Aggressive fighters are often diverted into Imperial armed forces, or private militias and mercenary groups. In short, the population is being "mined" for its talented youth.

This process was briefly interrupted during the Fifth Frontier War. Zhodani forces occupied the Calit system and the world itself in 1108. Though they were expelled in 1109 after just over four standard months, the occupation left its mark. The majority of citizens on the world are openly prejudiced against psionics. Psionic shield helmets still abound. Suspected psions find themselves threatened with assassination or are attacked by mobs. Small businesses have been ruined by the suggestion that the owners have the slightest link to the Consulate.

One of Calit's seven notable symbols is a sky-blue octagon, often with a name or names inscribed in darker-blue lettering. These are memorials, and can be found at sites of public deaths, (especially deaths involving serious accidents or violence). Some memorials are unofficial and makeshift; others are officially sanctioned and permanent. It is both illegal and seriously uncouth to tamper with memorials marked with this symbol. Unofficial monuments must be removed after two standard years.

Low-Tech Computers

This adventure relies upon prehistoric (in Traveller terms) electronic computing. Referees and players born after 1970 may well be unfamiliar with the massive mainframes and lack of connectedness assumed for purposes of this adventure, as may the characters they portray. The author, himself almost prehistoric, assures the younger referee that the technology described once existed to hamstring adventurers.

Calit's local technology and resources support large, early mainframes with data storage barely entering the silicon disk age. Manual input is performed at computer terminals (keyboards). Locally manufactured terminals rely on cathode-ray tubes or scrolled paper rather than flat screens or holographic displays. These terminals are hard-wired to the system, and are generally in close proximity to the computer itself. System "crashes" occur daily, and require hours to resolve.

Outside access to early computers generally relies on links via hard-wired analog telephone or communications systems. A modem connected to the analog lines translates keystrokes from the remote terminal into sound. The modem at the computer's end translates the sounds back into digital input. If the computer or modem is not functioning, there can be no outside input. The always-on Internet is wishful thinking.

Local governments, including Tsuduryev, rely on such mainframes to maintain various records (including birth and death records) in databases little better than text files. The "backup" for these records are physical output (printing on paper and similar substances). The central government periodically obtains backups using magnetized tape (those spinning spools shown in pre-1980's SF TV and movies highlighting the advanced technology of the time). If backup tapes are not recorded and physically delivered to the central physical library, nor print-outs delivered, the information is not backed up. It is available only if the computer itself is on and accessed at a terminal.

TAHMAHNI RE-ELECTED TO CURLEY HALL CORNER OFFICE DESPITE CONVICTION FOR ACCEPTING BRIBES

CREDITS HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ELECTORATE

Despite his recent corruption conviction and expected jail sentence, Boris Tahmahni has been re-elected mayor of Tsuduryev. In yesterday's interview, Tahmahni patted the thick red-bound print of the city's daily census reports, kept on a coffee table in his office — the "Red Book."

"I know the people I serve, and I know what they need," he said. "The first thing I do every morning is find out who has a new kid, who's lost a husband or wife, father, mother — and my people reach out to them. New residents, we reach out to them. It's not about me getting a few dollars from the power company, or anything like that. It's because I know my people, and I make sure they know I take care of them. They don't care if I took a bribe."

Tahmahni lit his trademark stogie. "And let me tell you, that ain't gonna change. The main jail ain't that far from Curley Hall. And I can always remodel the holding cells in the police substation to be even closer. I'll be mayor from my cell, mark my words.

"The first thing I'll do every morning? I'll go over the daily census reports, and make sure my people reach out. Yup, update the Red Book. That's how I got elected the first time, got re-elected last week, and that's why I'll be mayor until the day I die."

—Headline Article of the 231-1089 edition of the *Tsuduryev Daily Chronicle*, local newspaper for Tsuduryev. This was the last daily edition ever printed.

Episode 19

Denotam • Spinward Marches 1413

B739573-A • N • Ni • 325 • Im • M2 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

Oh, that place? A balkanized kleptocracy. It's worse than Old Station for pickpockets, highwaymen, con-artists, siphon-snakes, hijackers, clone-nappers, hackers, black-marketeers and smugglers. Well, maybe not smugglers – Al Morai has a monopoly on that little bit of business, especially the ones who smuggle stuff stolen from the military. That makes it a little easier to track it down, at least until they find the next supply officer's weakness. Mostly it's a pallet of guns here, a cargo pod of missiles there, but I heard of one Petty Officer who liked the finer things.

He managed to sell drop suits destined for the marine landings on Calit. Calit, a place Denotam runs. In the middle of the war, mind you. Not something forgivable as a "bookkeeping error." I heard that the marines found him and got took care of it. Outside proper channels. They got a little sloppy, though. Two of them are doing time in the brig for leaving a mess. It led straight back to their platoon. A shame, really – those two missed the drop on Calit. They could have taken some Zho out instead of doing time. Remember, when you're punishing scum, neatness counts.

But that's just half of it. The other half — well, let's just say that the Seven Clans and umpteen tribes, or gangs, or whatever they call themselves, are always looking for some advantage over the other. Mostly it's little stuff, counting coup, that sort of thing. Once in a while, it's all-out-war, or something really foolish. A challenge gets issued, and they go out stealing hats from ladies, or swiping statues, or painting their names on buildings. Juvenile, until something touchy happens and there's a knife-fight, or a bomb set off.

Then there was this time that someone thought of a real challenge — see which clan could terrify another world most and get some protection money from it. Calit, they decided on.

Oh, I told you that story? Well, the other part is what it did back on Denotam. One clan, Glas, had hired the mercenaries, you see. A Clan with tight ties to Al Morai, and Al Morai was getting sucked in deep. They could have been stuck with the bill on their own, because Baroness Lucillian and Viscount What's-His-Name were pressing hard. So Al Morai stepped in and forced Glas to work with the others on Calit. That's how a small world got itself in charge of a big world, with Al Morai footing some of the bill.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1110.

General Data (Players)

A non-industrial Imperial world located in the Vilis Subsector of the Spinward Marches, Denotam has about 300,000 residents and a naval base. The population is almost entirely clustered around the down-port. Both the downport and most of the useful land is on a single small continent. The remainder of the surface is covered by ice under which can be found highly saline oceans.

Like other worlds lacking a breathable atmosphere, Denotam has numerous habitats. Unlike Calit, the habitats are not built deep. Instead,

the small population has spread laterally, building new domes as necessary. The largest dome is Denotam First, only a few kilometers from the starport. Denotam First is about twenty kilometers in diameter, and mostly residential at this point. About 150,000 people live in its neighborhoods. Smaller domes clustered nearby are far less densely populated. These are generally farmland or engineering sites. Several massive domes near the shore house fusion power plants. These generate both power and desalinated water.

The seven independent human governments are not bound by geography. They are instead a melding of clan/tribe/ethnic loyalties, business entities, trade guilds and competing criminal organizations. They are most often known as the Seven Clans.

The clans are not quite as dishonest as has been painted by Adm. Lee. "Kleptocracy" is an exaggeration. However, the Clans have a competitive and oppositional viewpoint born of the struggle to survive on a harsh, thin-atmosphere world orbiting a red dwarf star. The rivalry lives on between and amongst the Seven Clans. At their best, the Clans have been compared to the Aslan, though they lack the majestic propriety and dignity of that species. At their worst, the Clans have been compared to Vargr packs, with the Vargr coming out ahead.

Some, like Lee, oversimplify the system in place as little more than competing criminal enterprises feeding off commerce, the military and each other. The groups are constantly jockeying for position, hoping to unify the world under one rule – the rule of their own group. Each Clan has a single person at its head, though that head has significant support from below. Clans have different formal methods of selecting their heads, but (in the end) the individual with the highest number of loyal adherents wins.

The multiple-Clan structure provides a haven for lawbreakers, who can reside in one quasi-nation's vaguely-defined territory in which certain businesses are legal, while engaging illegally in those businesses elsewhere (often no farther than the next street over). When serious infractions are committed, extra-territorial arrests (which look more like kidnapping) may lead to more widespread conflict.

Clan membership is demonstrated by wearing the clan's emblem on one's clothing or as jewelry. Failing to wear an emblem is a sign of disloyalty.

It is rare to have a standard year in which one of the small nations is not in a declared conflict against another over such activities. Fortunately, the wars tend to be resolved on small battlefields and by specific challenges. The object is often to "count coup" against an opponent, without seriously injuring him or her. When matters get out of hand, just enough injuries and deaths occur to remind both loser and winner that it could have been worse.

The Clans certainly agree on essentials, and cooperate in protecting those. Power and environmental systems are sacrosanct, as are the water systems and many domes providing pressure and farmland.

The Imperium is as aloof to the Clans' spats as it is with other planetary concerns. The Imperial Navy and Baroness Lucillianni are primarily interested in keeping supplies moving and vessels maintained. Imperial forces act off-port only as reasonably necessary to recover its own occasional losses in equipment and materiel. Local gang-wars and shooting

matches are of no import so long as civilian employees report to work. However, Imperial officials attempt to limit the lawlessness from spreading offworld. Local customs agents monitor exports carefully, looking for unlawful shipments of illegally obtained trade goods.

The Al Morai shipping company has a major presence here. Some of its locally educated employees and executives have a poor understanding of “following the law” as expected within the Imperium. Opportunity need not bother to knock before locally raised Al Morai employees go to the door; they maintain a careful watch through every peephole.

Al Morai is more than merely a shipping company; it also privately owns fleet escorts and patrol cruisers to keep its own preferred trade routes free of difficulties. These private forces assisted the Imperial Navy during the Fifth Frontier War, freeing some smaller vessels for combat duty. It also undertook many shipments of essential supplies and war materiel at rock-bottom prices, seeing this as its patriotic duty.

Unfortunately, some of Al Morai’s locally raised employees have seen this as an opportunity to profit via diversion, mis-shipment, and other euphemisms for outright theft. Indeed, Al Morai’s extra-legal activities are currently under investigation by various offices within the Imperium. Rumors are even beginning to spread that honorable veterans have been accused of significant crime, and are on a quest across the Imperium to prove their innocence (see *The Spinward Marches Campaign*, also placed after the end of the Fifth Frontier War).

The Seven Clans

The Seven Clans arose on the first Vilani colony vessel which came to Denotam. The seven sections of settlers were originally denoted as Ay, Bee, Cee, etc. For amusement, they took names of Old Earth’s Scottish clans and engaged in competitions. The head in each clan is referred to as “the [Clan Name],” e.g. “the Anstruther.” Each clan’s prestige of each clan is in reverse alphabetical order to simplify the referee’s job. The referee is free to make his or her job more difficult by re-sorting the clans. The vast majority of people are uninvolved with day-to-day clan business.

Anstruther was associated with operating the colony vessel, which was dismantled and used for the first settlement when the ship’s systems failed. This Clan has the least prestige, as its workers were never properly trained or prepared to settle. The Anstruther is rumbled and appears harried; he deals with most engineering issues for the dome.

Bannatyne is often looked down upon by the other clans because it has stayed with farming. The Clan has a virtual monopoly on local food production. The Bannatyne is dapper and proper, with no evidence that she is an active farmer.

Clelland has recently taken to bootlegging intellectual property. The Clelland boasts of obtaining all recorded entertainment before its official release.

Durie controls most of the alcohol production and distribution on-world. The Durie is the most charming and hospitable of the Clan Heads, and has the refreshments to prove it.

Erskin controls the gambling vices on-world. Erskin himself never rolls the dice on any deal. “Gambling is how people lose money,” she points out.

Fleming is the smallest and most belligerent of the Clans, protecting its territories jealously. It often issues challenges, and seeks a monopoly on weapons deals. The Fleming is always standing across the room from a target. He repeatedly throws a knife a at the target, and hits it — but the Viking Barbarian Knife Thrower is a far better shot.

Glas is currently the most successful of the Clans, with the great majority of the off-port warehousing business. Glas’ strong head mandates a nose-to-the-grindstone attitude, and maintains control of its ranks. Some dissent is coming from the ranks, as the Glas has imposed limits on petty graft within the Warehouses. The Glas has placed a number of people into Al Morai. The Glas is a pin-striped businessman who issues orders to buy, sell, or “Put that mook in his place” as calls interrupt.



Episode 20

Phlume • Spinward Marches 1611

C887624-8 Ag Ni Ga Ri 710 Im G5 V M8 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

You come in to Phlume's Altiplano and see those mountains towering over it. You see the channels of water cutting the rock from the high glaciers. They're impressive, I'll agree. They get so many sappy oohs and aahhs, it makes me homesick for a nasty old swamp. But I get over it, so long as there's work to do.

Well, the first settlers there saw those channels every day, and eventually they named their world after them. They started out there, in the highlands, because the "thin air" up there is closer to human norms. Not many first colonies start high before they go low. Not that many high plains are meccas of fertility, either.

They're nice people, mostly. They argue a lot, and often. If a law needs to be passed, enough of the seven million have to agree for it to go in effect. These things go back and forth for weeks in their Citizen Media, with long speeches and short comments and so on. I don't know how anyone stays friends or married there, the way some of the posts and all go. But in the end, they vote, and it's so. Until someone tries to change the law, or add a codicil. Sometimes, that takes ten or fifteen minutes to come up.

You can become a citizen easily enough. Petition, then get vetted by about five million voting adults. They all get to ask questions. Mostly, they're sensible, and mostly they don't get too personal. You're allowed to keep your tooth-brushing techniques to yourselves, I'm told. Flossing's a different matter.

The only thing those folks tend to agree on is keeping their world nice. They're conservative conservationists, farmers, gatherers. You can stake out a place if you want and live off the land, or you can work the fields on the Altiplano. Either way, you have to treat the place well. Clean up after yourself. You'll never find drink cups tossed by the side of the road.

They even require ton-for-ton replenishment in their shipping contracts. Whatever nitrates and carbon and water leave the planet in crates of food has to come back in crates of...well, you get the drift. Good that they're close to Regina. A lot of that sort of thing gets produced by Imperial politicians, by whom I mean — never mind who I mean. The Phlumians — is that a word? — don't allow a lot of mining, and no drilling or industry that would seriously contaminate a section of the world, so they buy it from worlds that are poisoning themselves to death.

That sort of common sense can't last.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1103.

General Data (Players)

An Imperial, agricultural, non-industrial world located in the Vilis Subsector, Phlume is about the same size as Terra. However, it has a denser atmosphere at sea level. Phlume's 7,000,000 inhabitants engage in farming and gathering agricultural products, including some hunting. A well-managed safari business also operates in the wild lowlands, but strict limits are set on the numbers of animals which may be hunted.

Fruits and vegetables grown on Phlume tend to keep much longer than fruits from other planets in the sector, and thus are found in many ships' holds. Both Phlume and Regina benefit from this agricultural trade: Regina gets premium "gourmet" produce, while the people of Phlume satisfy their craving for luxuries. Phlumian fruit is a gourmet menu item on Regina. This trade works because consumers of Phlume's produce supply the funds to purchase luxuries the Phlumians have neither the technology nor the manufacturing base to produce on-planet, like music players small enough to fit into large ear-rings, robots to assist in the fields, and handheld computers capable of high-variable calculations.

Regina and other agricultural importers do, and they pay well. Also, they are required to return, ton for ton, the nutrients and other material removed from Phlume's soil, which keeps the trade sustainable.

The wisdom of Phlume's masses has been to limit ecologically harmful activities. New land is opened for farming only after extensive environmental impact reviews and much wrangling among the citizenry. As noted by Adm. Lee, mining, oil drilling and similar activities are severely restricted, excepting only a few natural gas extraction sites which also produce abundant helium. The natural gas is used for heating and relatively clean energy generation, while the helium is used to operate blimps, dirigibles, and other airships. These lighter than air craft greatly outnumber imported air/rafts.

Phlume's government, such as it is, is a participatory democracy that functions thanks to simple but effective computer linkages and "social networking." The networks and computers are often imports, though some "hardy individualists" make do with extremely simple units made by one small local company. Debate is often harsh. However, once the majority has determined the law, it is enforced until and unless it can be repealed by a new majority. The planetary government works ceaselessly to maintain an informed citizenry.

The Altiplano, with its majestic views and towering mountains, is the main human settlement location. It is in the temperate zone allowing for year-round agriculture, but also is currently near its capacity for farming and sensible development. Exploration has begun into the "lowlands," with their denser atmosphere and thick vegetation, but most human population is found on this extended highland.

Phlume has five small, airless moons in varying orbits. The nearest functions as such "up port" as the planet requires, and handles transshipping. The others are largely unexplored.

Episode 21

Regina • Spinward Marches 1910

A788899-C • A • Ri Pa Ph Cp An (Amindii) 2 • 703 • Im

F7 V MD M3 V

Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

If you don't make a system like Regina a sector capitol, you're just missing a great literary...what's the word, simile? OK, so I flunked Imperial Lit II. Twice.

I'm a military genius, not some writer with a funny hat and ten pens.

But it fits, doesn't it? Diagram it, it's spectacular. Three suns, two gas giants, a mainworld orbiting a gas giant, six other worlds with breathable atmospheres — a simile for politics. Simile? Metaphor? I've said before, I'm an admiral, not a grammar school teacher.

Strephon would move there in a second, if he thought he could make the Moot go with him. It's the ultimate political statement — everything circles around everything else, but there are big, important players.

All that — but it's also fairly sensible.

Plus, it's the only place in the Marches that makes a really good cromburger. Go to Noddio's and ask for Gatlifi, he'll treat you well.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1107.

General Data (Players)

The Regina system as a whole is set out as an example of system generation at T5 p. 430. As can be seen there, it is a fairly complicated system, with a Primary Star, a Companion star, and a Far Companion star. Numerous notes discuss Regina within T5.

In addition, Canon details of the Regina system are found in the online Traveller Wiki, as well as in other Canon sources. The referee may note that T5 places Regina in a different orbit around the gas giant Assiniboia; this is apparently to avoid tidal locking. Other than that, specifics regarding Regina may be gleaned from those sources, and may be provided to the PCs. In any event, this closing episode does not deal with Regina as such. It revolves around a significant experience in most Traveller PCs' lives — hobnobbing with a powerful subsector Duke. This episode is a denouement and potential bridge to future adventures.

That said, it is enough to know that Regina is somewhat similar to Old Earth, though its atmosphere is more dense and oceans somewhat more expansive. It is distinctive in that it orbits a gas giant, but is within the habitable zone nonetheless. It is worth emphasizing that despite its political and cultural importance, Regina is in some ways a frontier world, literally at the farthest border of the Imperium. It is at the same time a Subsector Capitol, the local seat of Imperial government. The hereditary Duchy has been held by the Caranda family for almost 500 standard years.

Though the Spinward Marches as a whole were seen as being administered from Mora prior to the Fifth Frontier War, that was never an official designation. When Emperor Strephon issued an Imperial Warrant allowing and commanding Duke Norris to prosecute the war, Regina assumed a new importance in the Marches. That position is still in flux — but some dare whisper that Norris is destined for further honor and recognition from Capitol.

Regina is not inhabited by humans alone. Its population of

700,000,000 is only sixty-three percent human (441,000,000 people). Twenty-four percent (168,000,000) are Amindii, a native sophont species not well known off the world. The Amindii are in evidence in the service of Duke Norris and the planet as a whole. The remainder of the population is composed of Aslan (about 21,000,000) and Vargr (about 42,000,000). Thus, the world provides an interesting mix of species.

All of these "Imperialized" races, even the Vargr, were very recently threatened with attack from members of the Outworld Coalition, including Vargr and Zhodani forces. Norris is highly regarded by all four of the sophont species sharing this comfortable world for his leadership and military prowess.

Indeed, at this moment in history, as Holiday Eve 1111 approaches (or, if *Cirque* has unduly delayed, recedes into memory), Regina's citizens find themselves at the center of the new diplomacy between the changing Zhodani Consulate and other polities. The Imperials are proud, unified, and ready for this diplomacy, but also aware that some prognosticators are already seeing a Sixth Frontier War as inevitable within the century. The Zhodani seem always ready to push again, despite the lack of significant territorial gains.

Knighthood as a Ducal Honor

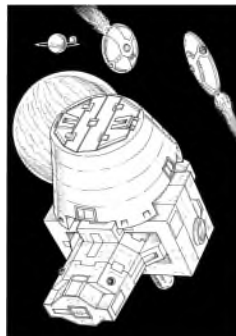
Knighthood may be granted by Imperial subsector dukes, but it is not the same as becoming a Knight in the Noble career path. A Knight in the Noble career path has been given a very specific title, land, and a duty to a particular planet. That form of Knighthood is confirmed by the Iridium Throne's occupant — the Emperor or Empress.

Other forms of Knighthood exist. These are honorary titles carrying no grant of land, nor any income, nor any more benefit than the title itself. These again are granted by the Iridium Throne, though many of those Knights are nominated by the nobility and confirmed by the Emperor or Empress. These are often conferred in a specific Order.

Dukes may invest individuals as "retainers of the household," a status carrying honorifics equivalent to knighthood, at least in the vicinity of the subsector. Such an individual may be referred to as a "Knight Retainer" for clarity. A male retainer of Duke Stephen of Rhyllanor may thus be referred to as "Sir George, Knight Retainer of Rhyllanor." A female retainer of Duke Norris of Regina may be "Lady [or Dame] Georgette, Knight Retainer of Regina." The shortened version for use in society pages and Signal GK messages is "Dame Georgette, KR/Regina." Usages may vary from region to region.

Characters awarded such honors may be justifiably overawed with themselves, at least at first. They should be reminded, though, that such friendship from a Duke is not all warmth and sipping cognac on plush furniture. In fact, friendship with a Duke must be reciprocated, generally in difficult and dangerous situations, and for low pay. "I serve Norris" carries the affirmative obligation to *serve*. It may sometimes also open doors, but is not a guarantee of a comfortable life.

Note that a Ducal Knight Retainer may well be confirmed by the Iridium Throne as a Knight throughout the Imperium. Indeed, a Duke who creates Knights Retainer willy-nilly *without* nominating the majority for Imperial recognition is likely to be seen as incompetent or, worse, scheming at something seditious.



Travellers

Excerpted from “Cirque”

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Excerpt: *Diaries and Dialogues*

What? Why “traipse all through space and back?” What kind of idiot asks a question like that? No, sit, I’ll answer it. Foolish or not.

Travelling gets into your blood or it doesn’t. Most of the carbon-based sophonts I’ve met prefer real gravity and a load of dirt under their feet. They’ll put up with all sorts of rot because they can’t really imagine going all that far from home. It doesn’t matter whether home’s a big old sphere with plenty of fresh air and blue skies or a dinky little spinning wheel in the middle of a belt. People like to be home. Most of them.

But a few of us are pretty much crazy. Crazy like not being like over ninety-nine percent of humans, or Aslan, or Vargr. Maybe it’s crazy in a good way, or maybe we just cope with being crazy. Either way, we go to the next planet and the next star system and the next and the...yeah, right, the *next* next.

This isn’t something new. Human beings started out on old Earth walking out of Africa, to Asia and Europe — look them up, ignoramus —

then over some tiny little land bridge to the Americas. The really crazy ones kept walking, the others set up markers to claim land for themselves. Bet you didn’t know I’ve read up on the history of old Earth, haven’t you? We started there. *We’re* the Ancients. Humanity. Not some other race. Well, I’d like to think so, anyway.

Travelling is something a few humans do, and they lead a few more humans after them, and a few more get born, and then they set down roots and build up cities and mess up pretty worlds and get into all sorts of silly squabbles because they haven’t gone far enough away from each other. That’s the way I see it.

And that’s why I have to get travelling again. Make sure your recorder got all that, kid. It’s one of my gems, sure to be repeated. And repeated, and...yeah, right. Repeated again.

—Adm. Aramais P. Lee, Imperial Navy (Ret.) and Sharurshid Trade Representative, circa 1112.



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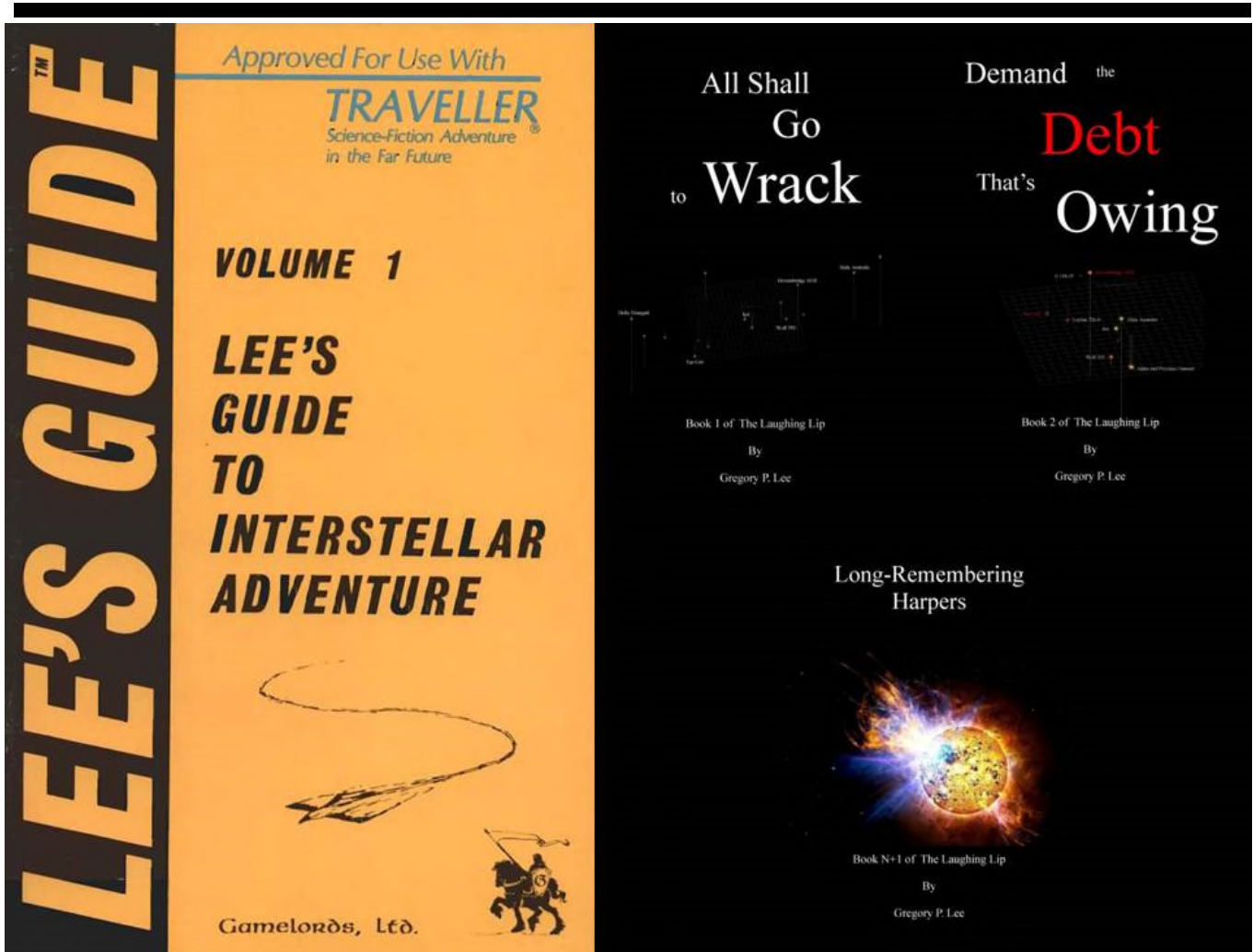
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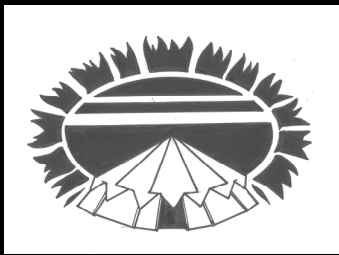


Mythology Repeats Itself™

Cirque

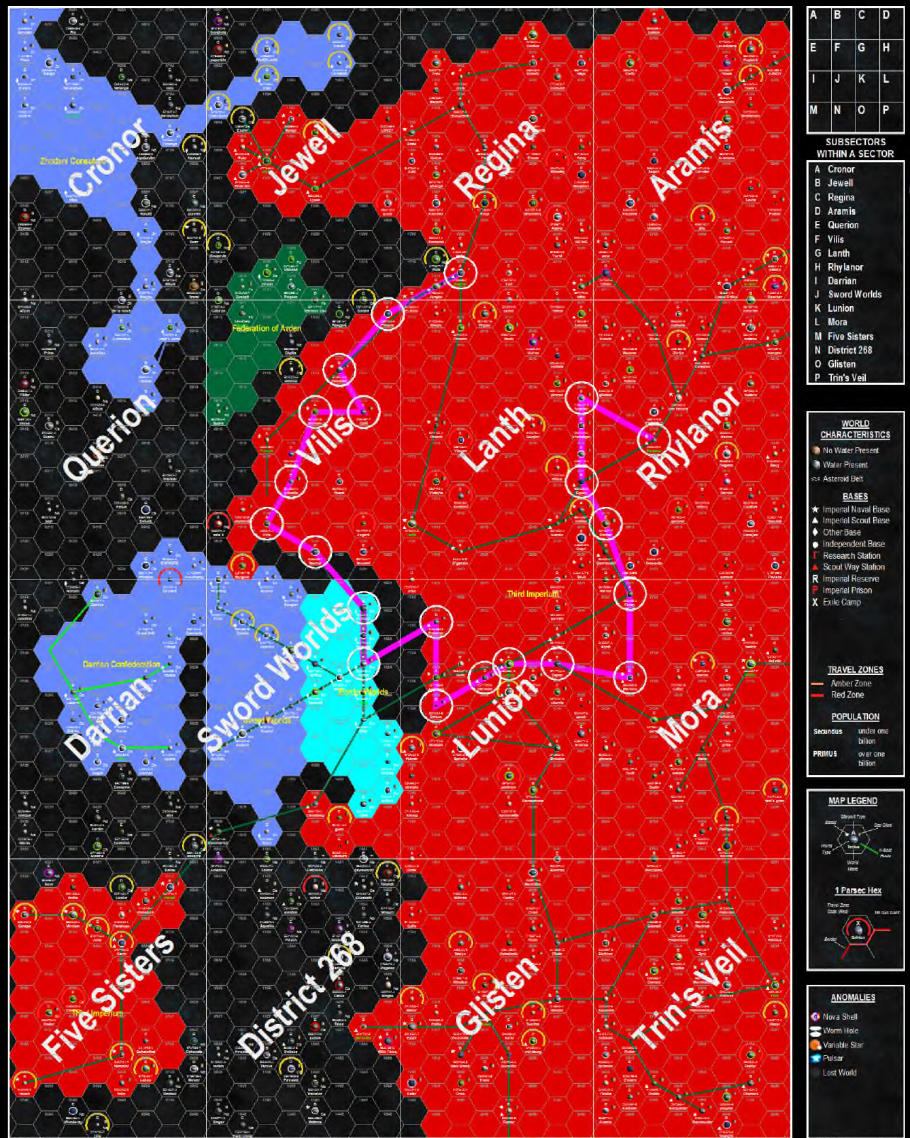
Cirque is an old Terran (French) word for circle or circus, and implies something more than the lowest grade of itinerant performers. *Sirk* (proper plural, *sirka*, improperly pluralized in Anglic as *sirks* or *sirkas*) is a Vilani word meaning "star."

Of interest, a close homophone is *T'sirk*, a Zhodani word meaning literally, "sand soaked with blood after a set duel," which carries a strong connotation condemning unnecessary bloodshed as insanity .



"It was either run away to the circus or the Imperial Navy. Sometimes I think I should have run toward the circus. Better hours, better food, and less being shot at."

-Adm. Aramais P. Lee, circa 1089, Retirement Address.



ROUTE MAP PRODUCED USING PROFANTASY™ COSMOGRAPHER™ TEMPLATE

Spinward Marches

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P

SUBSECTORS WITHIN A SECTOR

A	Cronor
B	Jewell
C	Regina
D	Aramais
E	Querton
F	Villis
G	Lanth
H	Rhylanor
I	Dartian
J	Sword Worlds
K	Lunion
L	Mora
M	Five Sisters
N	District 268
O	Glisten
P	Trin's Veil

WORLD CHARACTERISTICS

- No Water Present
- Water Present
- Asteroid Belt

BASES

- Imperial Naval Base
- Imperial Scout Base
- Civil Base
- Independent Base
- Research Station
- Scout Way Station
- Imperial Reserve
- Imperial Prison
- Exile Camp

TRAVEL ZONES

- Amber Zone
- Red Zone

POPULATION

seconds until one billion

PERIOD or at one billion

MAP LEGEND

- 1 Parsec Hex

ANOMALIES

- Worm Hole
- Variable Star
- Pulsar
- Lost World

Run away, join the circus, and tour the Imperium!

345-1110: Rhylanor. The Fifth Frontier War has ravaged system after system. The Zhodani have once again been pushed out of Imperial space, but at great cost. The Sword Worlds, Zhodani allies-of-convenience, have once again been taught to respect the borders. Vargr militancy has once again reduced to mere piracy.

Nonetheless, civilians and veterans alike have been scarred. The Third Imperium, and particularly the Spinward Marches, must search for a new normal. What heals war-weary worlds and veterans after devastating battles? Who can ease civilian memories of orbital bombardment and teleporting commandos? How does Lt. Commander Andii Houke create a new life after losing both legs in the battle for Rhylanor?

Can a one-ring circus fill the bill?

Can it avoid trouble as it visits twenty-one worlds?

CIRQUE: A LOT LESS CLOWNING THAN EXPECTED!



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