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ZAON

YOUR FUTURE BEGINS HERE

PLAYTEST COPY

- CINEMATIC SCIENCE-FICTION ROLEPLAYING GAME
- SKILL-BASED RESOLUTION SYSTEM—NO CLASSES
- MASSIVE GAME SETTING—THOUSANDS OF WORLDS
- COMPLETE & REALISTIC MODULAR RULES SYSTEM
- REALISTIC CINEMA-STYLE ACTION ADVENTURE
- 300+ NEW PC ALIEN RACES — 20 IN THIS BOOK

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ZAON Studios, Inc.
PO Box 932
Silverton, OR 97381
www.zaon.com

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Credits

DESIGN
JUSTIN WINTERS

DESIGN ADVICE
RUSTY HOLMES
ROB PLEDGER
BRIAN STEARNS

GAME ENGINE AND MECHANICS
JUSTIN WINTERS
TIMOTHY WORSLEY

AUTHOR
JUSTIN WINTERS

EDITORS
NOT YET
NOT YET

PROOFREADERS
NOT YET
NOT YET

ART DIRECTION
ZAON DIGITAL

COVER ART
NOT YET

INTERIOR ART
THE ZAON DIGITAL TEAM
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET
NOT YET

DECKPLANS CARTOGRAPHY
BRIAN STEARNS
JUSTIN WINTERS

SPATIAL CARTOGRAPHY
JUSTIN WINTERS

OFFICIAL MASCOT
FIZGIG

REALITY CHECKING
LEIF GARRETSON
COMPILING LIST
COMPILING LIST
COMPILING LIST
COMPILING LIST

PRODUCERS
NOT YET
NOT YET

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COLOPHON

This book was written and typeset in QuarkXPress™ on a PC running Windows® 2000. Character sheets and diagrams were created using Macromedia FreeHand® and Adobe Illustrator®. Photorealistic, abstract, and "ink" artwork was 3d rendered using Brazil R/S™ on a PC.

Preface

HOW TO PLAY ROLEPLAYING GAMES

Perhaps the most creative and exciting of all games are roleplaying games. Unlike board or card games, roleplaying games are unique in how they challenge a player's creativity, ingenuity, and wit while providing hours of entertainment. Roleplaying games are quite different from other games—similar to acting in a movie or writing a book.

In short, roleplaying games can be best thought of as make-believe games (like 'cops and robbers' you may have played as a child) except that a story is created instead—one from a table around which everyone sits.

This 'story' can also be compared to the story in a novel. In a novel there are usually

— *CONTINUED ON PAGE 283*

Foreword

It all started as a little kid's fascination while running around the yard holding toy model spaceships I was too young to build myself. My father encouraged my creativity, and before long I was busy constructing plastic model kits from my favorite sci-fi TV shows and movies, and later kit-bashes put-together from many different ship models.

Right after starting highschool, a neighbor I met on the bus took me under his wing and taught me D&D... I've been playing ever since.

I've always been very heavily influenced by sci-fi TV shows and movies, and perhaps this is evident in both my writing and artwork. Still, I look upon these sources more as inspiration—and inspire me they do!

I hope you enjoy participating in the beta-testing of this game.

—Justin Winters, April 24, 2002

PARENTAL ADVISORY:

ZAON™ is a science-fiction/fantasy role-playing game that deals with far-future technologies, violence, sex, harsh language, and some magic. Though all of this material is certainly fictional, and for entertainment purposes only, some parents may find discussion of these topics inappropriate for young readers. This game is recommended for mature audiences. Parental discretion is advised for young readers under the age of 17.

ZAON RPG

Introduction

ERRATA version 7.0 rewrite (**STILL TO DO**):
==========

Initiative Rules: Still pending. Will be simplified.

Universe: The colony ships of Earth that escaped the Great Fall had already departed Earth prior to the time of the Great Fall, though heard of it via subspace comm. It is not believed that any ships actually escaped from the Sol system during the attack. Earth was plunged into a 'nuclear winter' for two thousand years. Marauding bands of humans endured in tribal groups, keeping the international English language alive along with many of Earth's customs and beliefs. Approximately 500 years ago the 'hidden archives' were found (NORAD) and many of Earth's technologies began to redevelop. Approximately 300 years ago humans were contacted by the Vagar who helped them further in exchange for allied war help against the Sordrid.

The Za'aan 'rescued' Earth's premier colony ship and began the Rian civilization with them. Rians were genetically enhanced to serve the Za'aan and are superior to Terrans in many ways. The Za'aan were nearly extinct at the time they encountered this Earth colony ship and used the Rians to help rebuild and fight Malon aggression. Unbeknownst to the galaxy, Malons were once a subservient race to the Za'aan who cleverly usurped their masters. Za'aan are the oldest known race in the galaxy with advanced technologies hundreds of millions of years old. There is an "Oh My God" truth behind the Za'aan ultimate goals, but in the meantime they seek to destroy the Malons and the technological secrets stolen by the Malons. There are very few original Zaon warships remaining, and many of those have been dismantled and reverse-engineered by Za'aan scientists seeking to rebuild their technological and scientific knowledgebase that was destroyed along with the Za'aan homeworld by Malon aggression.

Today, life in the fascist Imperium is split. In the coresystems, life is essentially a utopia. Rians who live there refuse to see the truth because of the prosperity they enjoy, albeit many splinter groups seek to reveal the Za'aan truth. In frontier areas, life is often miserable. Rians living in frontier areas as well as most conquered alien worlds/empires represent heavy oppression under Imperial rule where they are forced at their own expense to contribute to the prosperity enjoyed by Rian nationals in the coresystems. A few alien species that have gone along with Za'aan rule and support the Imperium have been welcomed in as citizens, but most races/civilizations live as non-citizen members of the Imperium. Non-citizens still live and work in the Empire much the same as citizens do, but are not accorded any respect and lack most of the human rights enjoyed by Rians. Several organized resistance movements are in place and continually fight Zaon rule in strong conflict. There are even a few rogue naval ships.

Even though some Rians have advanced in politics or military ranks beyond some Za'aan Lords, all Za'aan still enjoy certain honors and respect over their COs despite conforming to the chain of command.

Not all Za'aan know the truth behind Za'aan rule. They have their own hierarchies and inner circles as well. Specifically, there are "Za'aan" and there are "Za'aan Lords". The Za'aan Lords are those who are older members of the species—with the knowledge and power of the original ZAON Imperium prior to the Rian era. Part of the power enjoyed by these Za'aan Lords is non-duplicatable personal technological defenses and weaponry. Za'aan are extremely long-lived, but the latest born are often as "blind" to the Imperium's political intrigue as are its citizens.

Note that much of this Universe data is still being thought-out and developed and is of course subject to change. Discussion of these topics is welcomed here in this thread. Also note that additional information for other nations will be added to the core book as well.

Galaxy Map: Vreen territory to be extended downward to threaten UEN, Wrekiri, etc.

Genetics: A brief section will be included in the technology chapter in order to demonstrate the limits of genetic technology. Vendikans were able to independently effect a number of cosmetic changes to their species, but failed other areas of their genome. They did manage to attain superiority in reflex to better resist their Darcanan-backed enemies, the Rians. Some believe the last success was due to successful espionage in Darcanan/Rian labs. In any event, Vendikan knowledge in this area has since been lost with the collapse of their government. Draaz and Buez are natural aberrations resultant from millennia in markedly different environmental conditions. Organ/limb replacements for those lost by injury or disease are not uncommon to medical science, but also depending on where you are in the galaxy many of the ailments we know of today have cures. Under Darcanan science, nearly all genetic abnormalities can be corrected before birth in Rians and cancer can be treated effectively. In other less advanced nations such as allied territories, things are not quite so advanced.

NET: A section in Chapter Seven (technology) will be added discussing the Net (Internet) and how it works. Unlike today's Internet, the Net is mostly terminal-based and quite secure. Access to information that might be public on today's Internet (like building floorplans) is generally strictly confidential and unavailable on the Net.

The Nature of Zaon

Welcome to Zaon, a vast setting that offers you the chance to harness a variety of science-fiction play styles all within one coherent universe. This universe is held together by a powerful blending of space opera and hard science fiction. Plausible future technologies and realistic game rules have been carefully balanced with the excitement, political intrigue, and popular style elements most of us have come to enjoy in mainstream science-fiction television and film.

Zaon is also about stories that haven't been told yet because it isn't based on any one sci-fi movie or television series. In novels and movies, prominent characters have already captured the prestige and fame of the universe by partaking and completing important story arcs that largely define those fictional settings. Zaon instead provides all of the framework, detail, and intrigue for similarly great fiction, but leaves the character story to you.

Zaon Adventures

Because civilization has spread across the galaxy, life in one corner of the galaxy is often quite different or even downright bizarre compared to territories or republics far away. Adventures might go on indefinitely within a single region of space, or they might span and encompass many areas and thus styles of play. For example, characters could spend their early days on rough and filthy frontier worlds where pirates, warlords, and corrupt law enforcement prevail, only to later become involved in corporate espionage, senatorial power struggles, and computer hacking on any number of heavily populated Imperial premier worlds where affluence and modern technology abound. In other areas of the galaxy, open warfare could keep military campaigns alive and full of secret missions, plans to commandeer or sabotage the latest enemy warship, or even a fight for survival on the battlefield. Eventually, the characters' exploits could lead them to the mystery of ancient alien civilizations, xenoarcheology, and strange unexplained happenings far out on the galactic rim. The possibilities are nearly limitless.

Sourcebooks

Within this core rules book you'll find extensive character creation options, including more than twenty player character species, diverse backgrounds, expansive equipment and weapons lists, and detailed character skill knowledge. You'll also learn the game rules, both basic and advanced, and get an outline of the galaxy and life populating it. However, if roleplaying itself is new to you, then we suggest you read *'How to Play Roleplaying Games'* in the Preface which begins on the previous page.

Each area of the galaxy is full of unique lifeforms, regional governments, and different laws. There is also specialized local equipment and weaponry, and a host of other detail specific to the conditions found in particular styles of play. Since the galaxy is so vast, only a taste of such detail can be provided herein for each area of space, plus material common throughout the galaxy. Regional sourcebooks, however, provide the full attention deserved by each region.

INTRODUCTION

For example, out on the frontier there exist a number of recently introduced species, specialized warlord weaponry, new alien devices, expansive world maps, histories, and descriptions for popular and obscure frontier worlds, and an assortment of renowned or infamous NPCs local to the region. *The Frontier* sourcebook details all of this knowledge and is invaluable to gamemasters and players alike wishing to explore those areas of space or develop special characters not normally seen elsewhere.

All Zaon sourcebooks are fully compatible with one another, as well as with this book, meaning that you can create a special frontier character of a species unique to an emerging frontier territory who is equipped with weapons and equipment unique to his or her people without worry of unbalancing the game or adding any incompatibility with other regions of space. Sure, some of that unique equipment, those infamous NPCs, or new-found species might be relatively or completely unheard of elsewhere in the galaxy, but nothing is stopping the mingling of elements from one region of space with another. Still, various social ramifications could hinder or even endanger a frontier character as they venture into the heartland of the civilized Imperium.

The same applies to other regional sourcebooks as well—each fleshing-out another distinct area of the galaxy. For example, *The Outer Rim* explores xenoarcheology and rumored ancients just as *The Titan Sector* details the Imperial City and intrigue within. Other books describe additional regions of space. Also, future sourcebooks are always being designed and released to either detail existing areas of space or to open up entirely new ones!

Starships and Space Combat

Ships, everything from one-seat starfighters on up to massive warships, are a natural part of most sci-fi settings. They are especially prevalent in the Zaon setting. Throughout this book, its artwork, and various supplements you will see pictures and mention of many ships. Because this is a roleplaying game and not a wargame, you will find only basic descriptions and perhaps some deckplans usable for roleplaying adventures for various ships found in the Zaon universe. You will not find rules for starship combat because those rules are part of the Zaon Wargame.

Massively detailed starship battle simulations are not normally conducive to good roleplaying and so are best handled with roleplaying. However, certain starship piloting and engineering skills described in this book which are used for roleplaying this game can and do work with the specific starship combat rules found in our wargame. This means if desirable, campaigns with cross-pollination of roleplaying with strategic tactical starship warfare is now a goal that can be realized. This might be a wargame where the additional detail of captains, fleet admirals, and their personal abilities are added for additional detail, or it might be where the precision and detail of starship combat is needed for the players roleplaying important crew members as part of their campaign adventure.

In any event, the wargame's rules are a game unto themselves. The wargame not only provides comprehensive yet streamlined rules for starship combat, but also lists full stats and scores for each ship along with a description and history plus cost and other elements that can tie-in to this roleplaying game. Zaon employs highend photorealistic movie-quality special effects shots to picture these ships.

A TASTE OF ZAON:

Stesha prodded the man's body with the tip of her blaster, but there was no sign of life. Nevertheless, she kicked his weapon, sending it sliding across the state room.

"Who is he?" Bryson asked.

"Never mind that! How the hell did he get aboard?" hollered Stesha, kneeling over the body and pressing two of her fingers against the man's neck. Feeling no pulse, she holstered her sidearm and proceeded to check the man's jacket.

A mixture of charred blood and cloth crackled as she lifted the lapel. The first shot had marred the man's shoulder, fusing the jacket material with bone and flesh. The second shot finished the job, having hit the man square in the chest.

"He's clean," Stesha remarked, rising to her feet and brushing her sandy-blond pony tail clear of her shoulder.

"Is he—" Bryson began.

"Syndicate. I'm sure of it," said Stesha flatly.

Just then a beep emanated from Stesha's wristlink. "Yes?" Stesha queried, holding the link below her chin.

A female voice replied, "We're entering the Titan system. I'm dropping out of subspace."

"Roger that," Stesha responded. "Have Ari meet me on the bridge."

"Aye sir," came the reply.

Bryson looked as though he was about to speak, but Stesha walked briskly past him and out the door. Bryson followed.

The blast door slid open with a coarse grind and Stesha stepped onto the bridge; Bryson wasn't far behind. The bridge was small with two consoles, one for the pilot while the other was a tactical station. The captain's chair was raised and situated behind the consoles—more than adequate for a small blockade-running vessel. Seated at the first console was a young woman with long red hair. In front of her was a giant three-piece bay window which provided a sweeping view of the stars—stars which had just materialized out of blue-white streaks.

Monopolizing the center of the viewport was Titan, the Imperial homeworld. From space, Titan was a black world, resembling an obsidian orb streaked and dotted by endless lights. Huge battlestations orbited the planet, with hundreds of thousands of moving ships. Many of the larger vessels, including the massive nineteen-kilometer-long Imperial Command-Ships, ostentatiously patrolled the system in a show of unparalleled force.

"Imperial Port Authority, this is Intrepid Two requesting docking clearance for Imperial City Starport One," stated Stesha in a clear, monotone voice. "We are transmitting our ship's registry now."

No reply came at first, then a crackle of static filtered through the console along with a remote voice, "Acknowledged Intrepid Two. Clearance granted for Starport One. Standby to receive landing course and scheduling."

"Roger that," Stesha replied, releasing a button on the arm of her command chair. Her blue eyes squinted at the viewport.

A moment later a light flashed on the first console and a computerized voice sounded, "Autopilot engaged."

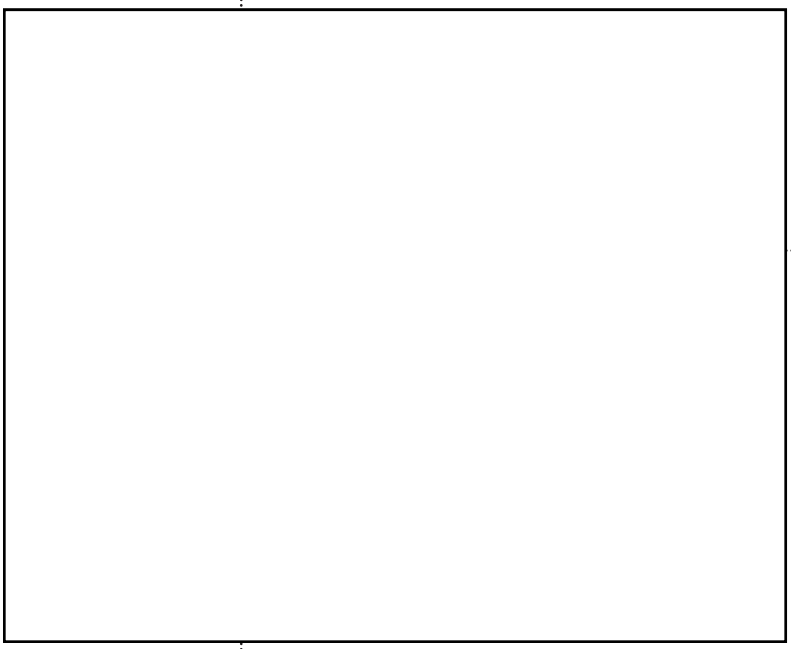
The ship's nose took a sudden dive toward Titan's equator, the area heaviest with lights. There was virtually no cloud cover, so the crew had a clear view of the giant black city planet: Scattered oceans. Giant continents connected by strings of islands. The planet's entire landmass was city structure—most of it at least a kilometer thick.

Starport One, located just outside the Imperial City, was Titan's grandest space port. At least several million vessels landed and departed there each day, and that's counting only commercial ones.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Part One

The Nature of Things



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CHAPTER ONE

Getting to Know the Zaon Universe

A Forgotten Era

It all began with an unsanctioned experiment. The fact humans would stumble upon the galaxy's second biggest secret seems almost inevitable to us now, but back then the very notion of what was uncovered transformed Earth's societies in a single day. If only scientists had better understood the principles of quantum non-locality, the entanglement principles which were tested many decades beforehand in the 1990s, perhaps the discovery of faster-than-light travel would have been easier for the people of Earth to accept.

With that knowledge of course came exploration. And it wasn't long before the galaxy's third greatest secret was revealed—third because, unlike faster-than-light (FTL) travel, it had always been postulated by leading scientists. That secret was the discovery of alien life—and not just life indigenous to another world but also unique, intelligent, sentient life—the encounter with which forever altered the outlook of human and alien societies alike. Humanity stepped-up its exploration of the cosmos following first contact and soon realized that our galaxy was teeming with life, some of which was barbaric and tribal while elsewhere technologically- and socially-sophisticated cultures were prevalent. Not all such life was eager for outside contact, and so the need for defensive weaponry became more apparent than ever.

The Great Fall

Some warned that it was imminent and unavoidable. Some dismissed the notion. Others say the Great Enemy came to ensure their dominance in the galaxy. A few claimed they sought revenge. But no one was ready. The great unknown enemy descended upon Earth like a virulent plague and in only five grisly days the people of Earth had lost everything, including their lives. The once beautiful blue-white pearl of Earth had been reduced to a gray cinder shrouded in dark skies and ravaged by harsh winds. The great enemy then departed never to return again, humanity extinct—or so it believed.

Of the more than 400 vessels carrying human refugees that attempted to leave the Sol system, only three ships are known to have evaded enemy detection and escaped. Each of these long-range colony ships traveled until they exhausted their fuel supplies in hopes of getting far enough from the enemy to go undetected. Two of colony ships refuelled again and again by siphoning hydrogen from gas giants and eventually settled on very remote worlds more than halfway across the galaxy. The long trips took their toll, however, and many of the passengers died from starvation before a habitable world could be found.

Meanwhile on Earth scattered survivors were perishing from disease and famine but a few managed to survive in ancient deep underground military bunkers and missile silos left over from Earth's old cold war. Though none of the primary bunkers stockpiled with humanity's knowledge and resources survived the direct attacks by the enemy, countless smaller ones went undetected in several former countries and became home to the few humans who managed to grow food and survive.

THE ZAON UNIVERSE

A New Beginning

With nearly a complete loss of modern knowledge during the Great Fall, and with new agriculture and other survival needs requiring priority, nearly seven-hundred years passed before humanity would once again take to the stars. Some conjectured that humanity had also lost its will to explore space while others blamed fear that the great enemy would return. In any event, rebuilding a social and technological civilization from scratch was no easy nor quick matter.

Humanity did finally re-explore the stars, but it was not the humans of Earth who would be the first humans to return to space. Humans from one of the colony refugee vessels that successfully escaped during the Great Fall and had claimed a world they called Titan as their new home were the first back in space. These humans, who would later become known as Rians, had established a prosperous yet militaristic empire (the ZAON Imperium) bent by strong fear of the enemy responsible for the Great Fall. Population growth was a primary goal and they were driven by the motto 'Never Again', and they weren't the only ones. Not more than three hundred years later the Venwon, humans descendant from the other colony ship who also survived and ventured far from Earth, had established a defensive line in space and were busily fortifying their position to prepare for the great enemy's eventual return.

The people of Earth were the last of the humans that would again venture to space more than a thousand years after Rians retook to the stars. Many believe the harsh conditions left by the destruction of Earth's ecosystem were mainly to blame, but others cited a strong love for mother Earth that led to massive prioritized efforts to restore her natural beauty. And restore that they did.

The last of the colony ships was not as lucky, but the people aboard did settle on at least two worlds they found semi-inhabitable. These survivors went on to form the Draaz and Buez people on worlds very near one another. Because these two peoples did not go on to develop space technology and were only later eventually encountered by sheer chance, it is not known if any other colonies of humanity are still out there waiting to be welcomed home.

The Human Divide

Both Rian Imperial and Venwon Republic forces were expanding rapidly, fueled by paranoia, and both had lost all hope of any other Earthly survivors of a thousand years past. Now centuries of new exploration and galactic domination followed and put humanity back on the map in a way it had never been before. What was probably an accident or misunderstanding turned into one of the galaxy's bloodiest wars between Rians and Venwon that lasted for over a

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Two freighters and a transport preceded Intrepid Two, the white-hot glow of their drive engines distorting any clear view. Other ships followed, forming an ongoing line of space traffic.

Stesha turned her attention to the bridge blast door as it ground its way open. In the doorway stood a young man. Ari was also human—Rian, if you think there's any difference—with dark brown hair and striking green eyes. His hair was longer than it should have been, flopping precariously over one eye, and it made him look younger than the twenty years he had attained.

"It's about time," scoffed Stesha.

Ari's gaze was fixed on the viewport, his eyes wide with anticipation.

"Are we—" Ari started.

"Are we about to set down in the middle of last place you'd ever thought you'd be?" mocked Stesha. "The answer is Yes."

Ari continued past her until he was right up against the bay window. "It's incredible," Ari grinned into the glass as the city came into view.

"Listen, this isn't going to be another one of your sightseeing adventures. We get in and we get out, drawing as little attention as possible," insisted Stesha. "Besides, this is certainly not the place I fancy being associated with the likes of you."

The ship rocked and a thud echoed through the deck plates.

"Dock secure; umbilicals activated," stated the red-headed pilot.

Stesha nodded, "Good, you'll remain here and notify me of any change in docking status."

"Aye sir," replied the pilot.

"Bryson, Ari, let's go."

The three of them departed the bridge, made their way down a short corridor, and entered the main airlock. Inside, a locker swung open and Stesha removed a utility harness equipped with a knife and four grenades. Strapping on the harness, she passed a similar item to Bryson. They also each stuffed a mini-blaster into their boots and finished their ensemble by donning long black coats.

Stesha paused to look at Ari. He was unarmed and wearing Earth blue-jeans and a button-up shirt. Stesha shook her head slightly and mumbled something about a wolf in sheep's clothing.

"There's a magrail beyond the checkpoint that'll take us into the city," Stesha stated while opening the outer airlock door.

Beyond was a long gangway that spilled out onto the concourse. A sign on the wall read: Port 7, Level 26, Bay 19. The concourse was a busy place. Hundreds of humans and at least a dozen aliens loitered about or passed by quickly. Two uniformed guards, wearing charcoal-gray with a black V-shaped vest, stood by a gate with modern blaster rifles slung over their shoulders. The tracks were on the far side of the gate.

Stesha motioned her two companions forward and through the gate. There was no checkpoint being enforced; the guards were only present to maintain order. Nonetheless, Stesha kept her head low and her face out of sight.

A rush of wind blew through the concourse, stirring up loose papers and tugging on clothes. Then, a ten-car floating train burst through a tunnel opening at the far side of the concourse and whizzed by the Intrepid party with enough wind shear they nearly lost their footing. It quickly came to a halt. A series of doors opened in unison and hundreds of people rushed on and off the train.

Stesha grabbed Ari by the arm and pushed her way onboard, Bryson alongside her. Within seconds, the doors closed and a deep hum sounded from below the train. Some people were sitting, others standing, but no one seemed to feel the train's rapid acceleration.

Passing through a brief tunnel, the train exited the starport and traveled along an open rail suspended far above the cityscape below. Continuing megalopolises extended as far the eye could see. All around, the skyways were jammed with skycars and other trains.

"That's it," Stesha whispered quietly to Ari, pointing out the window.

Ahead was a massive black mountain in the cityscape, more than 29 kilometers high and comprised solely of gigantic towers and superstructures—all interconnected by bridges and skywalks.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

century and which would cost hundreds of millions of lives on both sides. Both forces were strong and eventually the open warfare calmed to miscellaneous skirmishes until an official cease fire treaty was enacted in the year 1581nc (by ZAON Imperial New Calendar, based on the time of the Great Fall).

Following the treaty, a long cold war of military massing persisted for another three centuries until the economic collapse of the Venwon Republic in 1894. The great republic was ruined and soon the people were split into warring factions ruled by ruthless warlords and haphazard bands. Over sixteen billion Venwon died in those internal struggles—far more than in battle against their cousins. Rian forces were then able to move in and secure Vendikar as a ZAON Imperial state world, but would face resistance terrorism to this very day. Meanwhile, warlord loyalists fled Venwon space in all directions, establishing piracy strongholds throughout the known galaxy, powered by the aging Venwon war machines developed during the cold war.

Imperial Expansion

With the collapse of the Venwon Republic, the ZAON Imperium was more powerful than ever, expanding in all directions. No world stood in its way. Some worlds fell peacefully; others through violence. Many soon welcomed Imperial rule to gain the protections it offered, as more and more systems were plagued by Venwon warlords and piracy. Humans were hated by alien civilizations in many regions of space, for they brought with them either tyranny or terror—not a welcome choice, to say the least.

Spacefaring cultures which were built upon technologies inferior to the Imperium's who did not fight were allowed to maintain some of their defensive forces to police their own territories, subject to Imperial oversight. These Imperial states could thus maintain some autonomy, but Imperial decree would never permit the massing of military warships for fear of alien uprising. Over the next several centuries, nearly one hundred worlds home to unique alien cultures were conquered and then indoctrinated into this human Imperium.

The Great War

If it were not for the centuries of Imperial prosperity and military building, the Great War would have been nothing more than a second great fall for humanity. Instead, the Imperial deep-space expeditionary force that was ambushed near the galactic rim managed to repel the advanced enemy forces long enough to warn homeworld. But in the end, that force met with horrible devastation. Weeks later Imperial scouts located the remains of the expeditionary force and were horrified by the charred and twisted wreckage that drifted lifelessly in the darkness of space. A few of the larger hull sections showed blackened scorch marks of boarding, and the scene throughout those lifeless corridors was the most gruesome ever recorded. Ship interiors were literally painted with the bodily remains of their former occupants with such deliberateness that its only purpose could be extreme hatred and a fervent warning.

Based on descriptions from legends passed down since the Great Fall, plus the advanced technology and swift brutal attacks wrought by this new enemy, the Imperial Senate voted to declare this enemy as 'The Great Enemy' responsible for the Great Fall. Many in the Senate were vehemently opposed to this proclamation, as legend told of 'great red pillars of fire' which parted Earth's skies to wreak destruction upon the lands, yet this new enemy fought with weapons of green hue with differing effects. Nevertheless, this was attributed to either distorted tales from distant past or design advances achieved by the enemy.

With this proclamation also came a declaration of war just after the start of year 2341. Word of the Great Enemy's return swept through the Imperium and rallied the citizens, and perhaps this was the Senate's goal all along. But the war did not go well. The Imperial war machine had grown soft in terms of innovation, having previously relied on sheer numbers to overcome its foes.

Over the next few years, the Imperium began losing star system after star system, and major engagements were disastrous at best. The enemy's name had been learned, and it was soon evident that the Imperium would be lost to the Malons and no numbers advantage would change that fact.

Faced with extinction, Rians shifted their desperate focus to innovation. All-new divisions of intelligence were formed, including the now infamous Imperial Safeguards Agency (ISA), and the enemy was studied intently. During the coming decades, Malon warfront advances were slowed by clever counter-intelligence efforts, new weapons based on the enemy's own designs, and new Imperial warship design principles where the Imperium's numbers advantage was used in a manner truly meaningful by constructing vessels far larger in physical size than anything built before.

By the early 2420s, the tables had turned. As one of the older spacefaring races, the Malons had suffered from their own centuries-old technology stagnation. Many believe that the Malons had actually forgotten how to innovate, especially since they have shown little technological progress to this very day. Still, in many areas Malon technology remains clearly superior.

Earth Found

Long after the start of the Great War, in 2755, Imperial intelligence reports initially baffled the Senate by noting what was first believed to be Rians piloting unknown warships fitted with weapons matching the signature of a newly encountered species called the Vagar. The truth, however, wasn't revealed for another nineteen years due to Imperial focus on Malon forces, but was finally realized in 2769 around the time the Malons began losing their own original territory to the Imperium.

It was then Terrans and Rians stood face-to-face for the first time in nearly three thousand years. Where the Terrans were all too eager to meet, the Rians were unusually cautious considering their history with the Venwon, but the meeting went exceptionally well and a new sense of hope and meaning rippled throughout human-dominated space. The Terrans learned of the Malons and the Great War, and Rians learned that the Terrans were just recovering from a war of their own in which they were allied with the Vagar against a strange and deceptive race known as the Sordrid.

Limited cultural exchanges took place shortly thereafter, and the Imperium extended it's borders with the purchase of territory from the Diyo to form what is now called Northwest Passage in order to make way for future commerce and trade. Terran and Rian humanity both benefitted from this new-found trade, with exchange of everything from housewares to broadcast entertainment. Many Rians were intrigued by their mother Earth and returned home

while some Terrans were equally impressed with the technological achievements of the Imperium and soon emigrated to Imperial space. Terran immigrants were welcomed by Rians, as were Rians by humans of Earth.

Current Affairs

Today, the year is 3056 and the Great War continues with the Imperium having gained more territory than it initially lost to the Malons. The future of this war is now uncertain, though, as the Malons have recently enlisted (or forced) the aid of several new alien spacefaring empires along the outer rim, and other new races have been encountered coreward who strongly resist the Imperium's expansion efforts that direction.

Regardless of the strong ancestral ties and open cultural exchanges between Earth and Titan, both maintain discrete territories based on decidedly different governmental structures. There is growing concern among Terrans regarding the relatively immense size of the ZAON Imperium and its expansionistic attitudes and how those attitudes will ultimately impact Earth. Already, Earth's strongest ally, the Vagar, have begun pushing back against Imperial borders with increasing violence which has errupted into outright war, and the Endori who orchestrated the SorGar Peace Treaty between the Vagar and Sordrid which led to the weak formation of the Southern Alliance have been meeting with heads of state throughout the region in an effort to strengthen existing treaties into a strong anti-Imperial force.

Meanwhile, Terrans are growing evermore suspicious of Endori Prime after Earth Intelligence officers partook a supposed ambassadorial exchange and managed to steal several types of Endori particle weapon technology—weapons that bear striking similarity to historical accounts from the Great Fall.

Furthermore, the Vreen have been making war against all of their neighbors except the Diyo, the Coalition States are under Imperial siege and Vagar attack, and many are requesting allied intervention as Coalition refugees flood nearby allied territories. Even the Niveans appear to be more involved than their declared neutrality might first suggest. But to some, regional politics and warfare are the least of their worries following several xenoarcheological discoveries on the furthest galactic rim in the Tartarus Expanse that may point to the current activities of one or more races far older than even the Malons—an ancient race.

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Not more than six minutes had passed when the train came to an abrupt halt at the first of many stops high among the forest of towering buildings. Thereafter, every stop was twenty, maybe thirty, seconds apart with the train traveling more than a kilometer in each instance.

"Our stop," remarked Stesha as the train came to another swift halt without jostling any of its riders.

The doors opened, while a tall man with a narrow face moved his way from the back of the train past the party and stopped, blocking the exit way. Without words, Stesha elbowed him to the side, dragging both Ari and Bryson clear of the doors just before they closed.

"Usually not that rude, are they?" Stesha remarked. "All right, our contact lives on Tristar Avenue over in the Geyser district."

The train had let everyone out on a terrace some eighteen kilometers up, however, the air wasn't noticeably thin. Stesha, Ari, and Bryson walked to the edge of the north terrace where a skywalk spanned to another massive structure with its own terraces also abuzz with activity.

Amid the bridge Ari peered over the railing, staring into the abyss below. There was no ground—at least none that he could see. The sides of the massive skyscrapers were lit all the way down, eventually forming a vanishing point. Above was no different, though he could fancy seeing a tiny point of blue sky.

"Get a move on!" urged Stesha with a piercing glare.

Ari jogged up to join Stesha and Bryson who continued across two more spanning bridges, winding up on Tristar Ave. The avenue was wide, running along the building's side and branching off to other towers. Ground cars streaked by in the outer lanes but crawled along in the curbside ones. Skycars formed a second layer above but weren't restricted to the roadway. Restaurants, boutiques, taverns, and shopping malls lined the avenue. Thousands of people were about on foot, in gravlifts, and seated at sidewalk cafes.

Stesha led Ari and Bryson through an archway and over to an elevator bank. There were generally about two to three hundred floors per median, and as many as 30 medians at the city center. They boarded the next lift which rose to the 104th floor of the eighteenth median they were on. The doors opened to reveal an apartment hall to the left and various shops and restaurants to the right.

Stesha led them down the hall, turned again, and crossed over to Apartment 104-719. There she rang the bell. A minute passed with no answer. She rang it again.

Glancing both directions first, Stesha nodded to Bryson who produced a small plastic case. Pulling wired pins from the item, he snapped the keypad panel off the wall next to the door and spliced into the circuitry. Bryson's fingers were busy manipulating the case's controls when a double beep sounded from the panel and the door latch clicked.

Stesha pushed the door inward and drew her blaster. Bryson patched the keypad and stowed his case, also readying a blaster.

"Wait here," Stesha whispered to Ari who nodded in agreement.

Stesha and Bryson entered the dwelling, each taking a different route inside.

Moments passed, Ari heard nothing. More time passed. Then it came: the shrill sound of blaster bolts. He heard what sounded like Bryson yell-out in pain and saw Stesha run past the end of the entry hall, down the hallway Bryson had taken. Ari hesitated, but ran in, pursuing Stesha.

Stesha was pinned down behind an overturned dining table with four men behind the kitchen counter and island. Bright, fiery-red blaster bolts tore back and forth, shredding the counter and splintering the table top.

"Stay down!" hissed Stesha, glancing back to where Ari was standing.

He ignored her and remained standing. A brilliant white spark of energy flashed in Ari's chest, sweeping outward in a ring of white fire. The ring of energy then solidified, forming a protective translucent dome around him.

Visibly startled, the men shifted their focus toward him and fired. Each of the fiery-red bolts impacted Ari's barrier but were absorbed like rain drops in a pond,

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CHAPTER TWO

Galactic Territories and Travel

The MilkyWay Galaxy

The galaxy is unbelievably huge and although it may appear on maps that most of it has been settled, nothing could be further from the truth. There are over 100 billion stars and tens of billions of planets in the galaxy, and thus only the tiniest fraction of them have been visited. In fact, over 99% of the galaxy's individual star systems remain unexplored. Still, that means several hundred million star systems have been explored.

With that much of the galaxy unexplored, one might believe that there are many undiscovered species (many sentient) awaiting first contact. This is both true and false depending on each species' degree of technological achievement. What is known is that because ships using quantum drive technologies to propel themselves through subspace (the only known method of exceeding the light-speed barrier) are detectable since they cause 'ripples' in quantum subspace as they move, one can be relatively assured that every faster-than-light capable species has been contacted. A few developing races possessing quantum drive technology may have been able to escape detection thus far, but this seems very unlikely—though non-Imperial territories are not as well monitored as are Imperial ones. What is more likely is that civilizations far more advanced than the galactic standard may be able to purposely escape detection, choosing not to reveal themselves. For this, no one can say as there is no real way to gauge what is scientifically possible for such a culture or even if such advanced species exist. Indeed, many Imperialists argue that a truly advanced species would choose to dominate or rule the lesser ones and because none has come forth it can be assumed that none exist. Still, doubt remains.

For civilizations below the *Technology Achievement Level* of Eight (TAL8) which is where the ability to harness quantum drive technology becomes possible, it is widely known that **many** such species (both sentient and not) remain undiscovered. Certainly, many previously unknown sentient species are encountered regularly. This is not because such species wish to remain hidden or want to be found, but rather because the limitations of the speed of light do not allow radio signals (if even present) to escape from a world far enough or fast enough that they can be detected considering the vastness of space and the comparatively slow speed of light. Similarly, sensor scans operate at the speed of light and so cannot be used to probe distant worlds for signs of life—not to mention they would lack the range to do so.

Therefore, the only way new non-FTL-capable species (races below TAL8) can be encountered is when a FTL-capable vessel travels to a new star system or world in order to explore it. There is one factor that makes such explorations a bit more likely than pure happenstance. That factor is modern telescope spectrometers are able to visually ascertain a star or planetoid's fundamental structure and basic elemental makeup by differences in how light is reflected across the cosmos (similar to gravitational lensing), but this is only possible with relatively close (in galactic terms) space bodies. In following, mining survey vessels routinely drop out of subspace and scan nearby solar systems for ore-rich planets. And since most sentient species require resource-rich worlds in which to develop, the chances of finding a sentient race living there increases many fold. Still, by far the majority of worlds do not possess any life, let alone sentient life.

ORIGINS OF SENTIENT LIFE: The term *S3-type humanoids* (short for Spontaneous Simultaneous Sentience

humanoids) refers to the unexplained phenomenon where many different species indigenous to worlds from around the galaxy all seemed to produce sentient life in a vaguely humanoid form and all within a few thousand years of one another. This is not to say that all sentient life is humanoid in form, just that an unusual amount of it is—more so than natural evolution might suggest.

Many scientists believe that the humanoid or centaur (humanoid quadraped) shape is the most logical result of natural evolution—a form that is best suited to manipulate its environment. Others, however, claim that all sentient species are somehow related to one another through a common ancestor (perhaps an ancient race) or through fragments of DNA that were flung across space by comets or a massive explosion. Still, others assert that an alien race was responsible for tampering with the basic building blocks of life on countless worlds. Less accepted theories include religious beliefs in a common creator or god, as well as the idea that all races stem from one that was originally scattered about the galaxy as colonies.

Support for the 'big three' theories exists almost equally. Scientists have demonstrated computer models of evolution and have shown how it is possible for many races to develop similarly through the laws of chaos and environment. Conversely, many dead worlds have been discovered which contain alien ruins and artifacts—evidence that an older ancestral race may have existed. Moreover, reputable sources claim to have seen or encountered starships out on the rim that were highly unusual and immeasurably powerful.

Whatever the case, scientists have thus far been unable to prove any one theory. The phenomenon itself, though, is quite real: Every sentient species encountered in the galaxy to date developed its earliest cultures and signs of intelligence all within thousands years of each other—in cosmic terms, a very, very brief period in galactic history. Since that time, each race has further developed through natural evolution based on differing environments and needs. Obviously, some races industrialized or progressed earlier than others did and hence show superior technological advancements today, while yet others never progressed beyond a sort of primitive tribal existence. Environment seems to be one of the biggest factors in whether a species industrialized and how early it did so. With the galactic community as it exists today, little of this seems to really matter except in the form of politics and territory. And that, to some, is everything.

BEYOND THE GALAXY: Because quantum drive allows a ship to cross the galaxy in about six months, it stands to reason that it might take only six years or so to reach the nearest neighboring galaxy, Andromeda. While this is true, current technology does not allow for enough fuel energy to keep a ship in subspace long enough to reach a 2 million lightyear away destination, much less get home. Hydrogen refueling naturally would be impossible since the space between galaxies is devoid of hydrogen matter. Others also question the practicality of travel between galaxies when the Milky Way itself is still largely unexplored.

Imperial scientists believe that the Nivean Republic, and possibly the Ullians and Malons, may possess the capability to reach Andromeda but those reports have not been substantiated. Even if the Niveans had made the trek, it is reasonably certain that they do not regularly travel there.

Galactic Maps and Territories

DIVISION OF STELLAR TERRITORIES: Worlds, including the homeworlds of some prominent species, are shown on the following galaxy map. Borders detail territory claimed or enforced by each nation. Single-dotted lines show open borders. Indeed, several open borders exist for incorporated Imperial states—larger nations that were peacefully made part of the Imperium and which retain some military autonomy.

Because this map details the entire galaxy and thus only a very few capital worlds within it, other more detailed maps of specific areas show additional large and small colony worlds. A few of the major worlds and some of those with special importance are briefly described in a later chapter (Chapter 6).

THE GALACTIC SECTOR GRID: The galaxy is divided into 100 giant two-dimensional **Sectors**, each of which is further divided into a thousand three-dimensional **Spatial Grids** of space. Each of those Spatial Grids is further divided into one billion three-dimensional **Locations**. There are thus 100 trillion addressed locations in the galaxy, and each of these locations is one lightyear cubed. As a matter of reference, the trinary star system of Alpha Centauri is the nearest star system to the Sol system (of which Earth is the third planet) at 4.3 lightyears, or about 4 Locations, away.

Since the galaxy is largely a flat disc, Sectors are measured in only two-dimensions despite each being a three-dimensional cube. They are measured along the X and Y axis, numbered from 0 to 9 in each axis. X is always read first, so Sector 48 is 4 measurement units horizontal, or East, on the map and 8 units vertical, or South, on the map. This would be near the bottom center of the map. Therefore,

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— *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10*

sending ripples rolling across its fluid surface.

Ari's eyes blazed with a green fire as he raised a steady arm. His outstretched hand flickered with a sapphire-blue radiance as a controlled and powerful stroke of lightning flashed outward, striking one of the assailants and burning him beyond recognition. The blast was so potent that its thunder echoed throughout the dwelling, shattering all of its windows.

The other three men fired again. This time Ari felt a costly drain upon his bodily essences as the bolts were absorbed. He fell to one knee, weakened, but still focused. Stesha seized her advantage and dove clear of the table, landing behind an overstuffed chair, at the same time releasing a halo of gunfire. Another of the men was hit and slumped to the floor.

Three more shots rang out. One originated from Stesha's position but failed to hit its target. The other two slammed into Ari's barrier—this time dissipating the shield altogether.

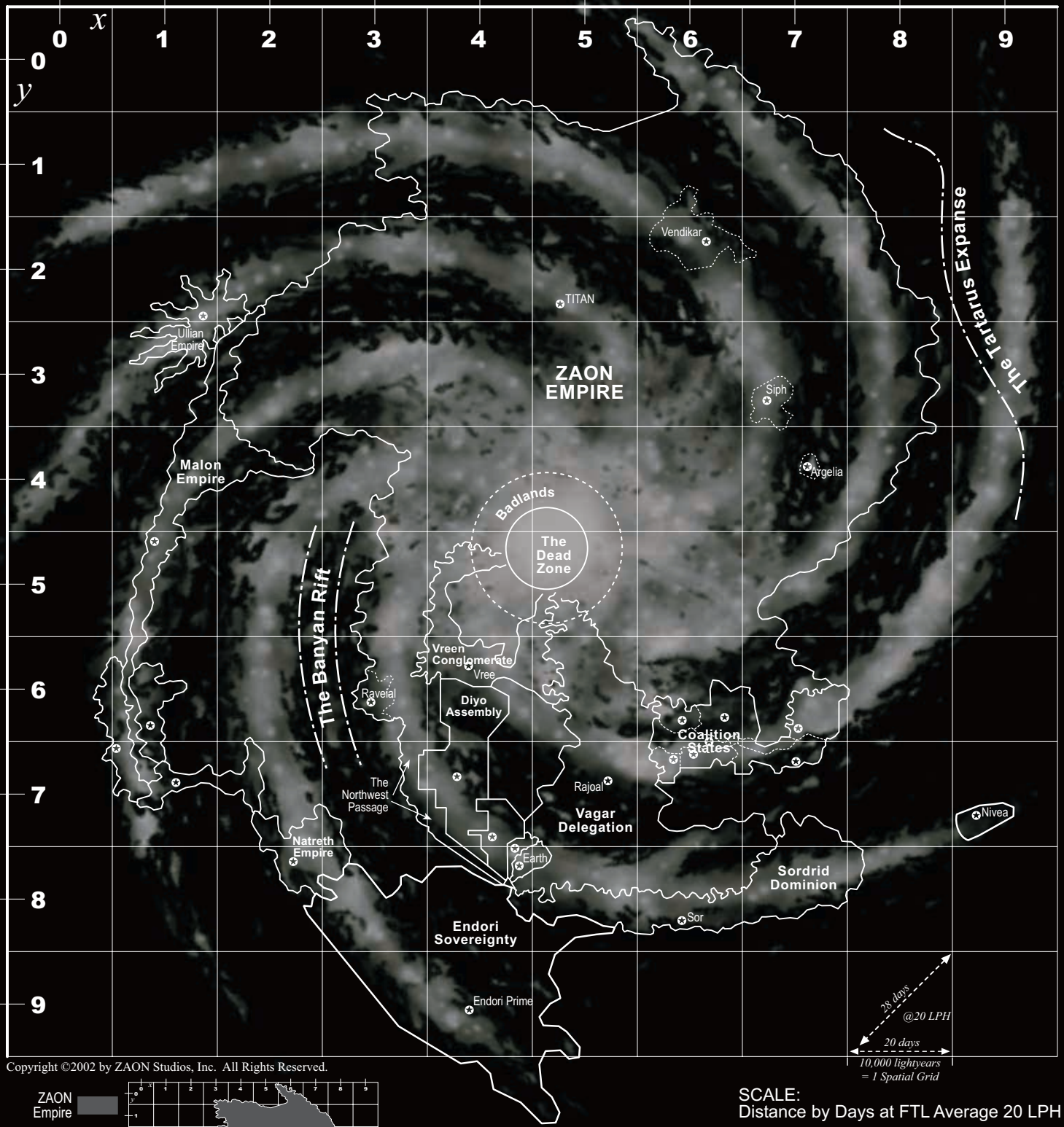
Ari's power was nearly drained and he was now vulnerable. In desperation, he summoned up all of his vital essences and discharged a powerful, forked stroke which hit both of the men, charring their bodies. As those energies leapt from his fingers, Ari collapsed to the floor on the verge of unconsciousness.

Stesha ran over and helped the dazed boy to his feet. "We've got to get you out of here," she said frantically, "Imperial soldiers are sure to come."

She dragged him down the hall and toward the front door—that door suddenly swung open. Standing in the entryway was a tall man with a narrow-face—the man from the train—and four other men behind him...

MilkyWay Galaxy

Division of Stellar Territories



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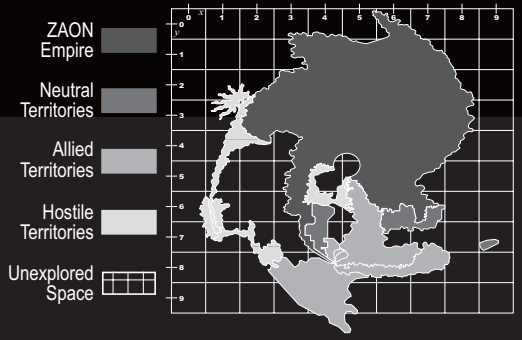
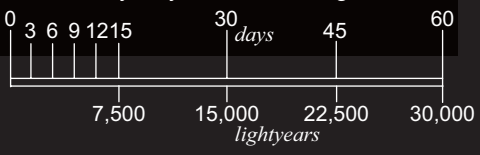


TYPICAL SHIP RANGES WITHOUT REFUELING:

Corvette or Warp Shuttle — 1,000 ly
Blockade Runner or Escort — 2,500 ly
Frigate, Liner, or Light Freighter — 5,000 ly
Destroyer, MidLiner, or Freighter — 10,000 ly
Cruiser, SuperLiner, or SuperFreighter — 20,000 ly
Battleship — 30,000 ly
Flagship or Supership — 40,000 ly

SCALE:
Distance by Days at FTL Average 20 LPH



Sector numbers make it very easy for players to discern the general galactic location mentioned—just from hearing the number.

Spatial Grids, or simply 'Grids', are small (1,000 lighyears across) but significant areas within a Sector. Sectors are giant cubes of space 10,000 lightyears across, and those cubes are further divided into these Spatial Grid cubes. A Sector is therefore measured along its X, Y, and Z axis, and is divided into ten units (0-9) in each axis, forming Grids. For example, 'Spatial Grid 494' is 4 measurement units horizontal on the X axis within the Sector in question, and 9 units vertical along the Y axis as viewed from above, and 4 units in elevation along the Z axis—all relative to the Sector it's contained in. That is, each Sector has a specific yet identically-named 'Grid 494' for instance.

"Captain, we're now crossing over into sector forty-eight, spatial grid seven-three-five. Fuel down to 9%. Our last possible refueling point will be Blackmantle....unless you're actually planning on entering the Triangle?" —Lieutenant Hayes

Locations are measured within each Spatial Grid the same way Spatial Grids are measured within each Sector. However, Locations are divided more finely. Where a Sector is divided into only 10 units (grids) along each axis, a Spatial Grid is divided into 1,000 units (Locations or Coordinates) along **each** grid axis! Again, Locations are read in the order X, then Y, then Z, and range from 000 to 999. A sample Location might read as coordinates 952.207.531, which is effectively 952 measurement units along the X axis, and 207 units along Y, and 531 units in elevation on the Z axis.

The purpose of a Location is for navigation to zero-in on a specific star system, because each Location is a 1-lightyear cubed area. Very rarely more than one star system will occupy a single Location, and these are numbered with an 'a', 'b', or similar notation appended to the Location address, such as 952.207.531.b.

Once a specific star system is located using the Sector, Spatial Grid, Location Coordinates system, **Solar Coordinates** take over and are based on each star's position and radiate outward from there. The reason Solar Coordinates take over is because a single Location (1 lightyear cubed) is 9.3 trillion kilometers across, or roughly 60,000 times the distance from Earth to the Sun, and so needlessly vast for purposes of locating a single world within a star system—worlds that also orbit their sun and thus change position.

Two forms of Solar Coordinates are used: Basic and Advanced. Since sensor scanners can easily scan an entire star system (though scans often take several minutes on up to a few hours for the lightspeed scanner waves to bounce back to the sensor) the Basic system simply numbers the planets in a system by appending a -0 (the sun), -1 (the first planet), -2 (the second planet), -3, etc., to the Location address. For example, 952.207.531-4 would be directions to the fourth planet in the star system at that Location.

"Sector fifty-two? What the frack? While we're at it, why don't we just dock at the nearest Imperial starbase for resupply so they scan our cargo hold!"
—Freighter Captain to a Borderlands Merchant

The advanced solar coordinates system applies direct XYZ distance measurements based on positive or negative integers along the three axis with the star as the origin. Typically, these measurements are made in megameters (thousands of kilometers). Precision such as this is rarely if ever needed for game play, so the basic system is advocated.

USING GALACTIC MAPS DURING PLAY: Understanding the galactic mapping system described above, one can see that the Imperial Homeworld, Titan, shown in detail on the map in the next chapter is located at **52-288-631.315.149-2**. This location can be read, or pronounced, in two different ways: Military (formal) or Civilian (casual).

Military navigation always employs the formal longhand method used by traditional stellar cartographers. Titan's location, noted above, would be read: "***Sector Fifty-Two, Spatial Grid Two-Eight-Eight, at Coordinates Six-Thirty-One by Three-Fifteen by One-Forty-Nine, Point Two.***"

Civilian navigation uses a casual shorthand method. The actual location is sometimes noted without a separating dash: 52288-631.315.149-2. It is pronounced: "*Sector Fifty-Two, Two-Eighty-Eight, at Six-Thirty-One by Three-Fifteen by One-Forty-Nine, Point Two.*" This casual method recognizes that the Sector and Grid numbers can be combined to form a single unique address while maintaining the same meaning as in the formal method. Sometimes, the planet identifier (-2 in Titan's case) is also omitted when no mistake can be made as to which planet is meant.

Many commercial liners (especially larger ships) and other civilian transports often employ military navigation terms whereas pirates, warlords, and individual private vessels often conform to more casual mapping principles. The distinction may seem minor, but many pilots rely on these differences to identify military or large vessels by radio traffic alone.

Galactic Populations

Even considering only known species, the galaxy is home to trillions of individuals, the majority of which are human. Population figures are always changing, but generally speaking all known non-human alien species combined are thought to number less than all of humanity, and some are quite rare such as the documented 208 *million* Calamorane known to exist.

Traveling Between Worlds

Space travel is accomplished via a quantum drive reaction—the details of which are discussed in Chapter 7—which pushes a ship through space at incredible speeds. The galaxy map has a distance key that shows the average distance traveled in days at quantum speeds. This assumes the vessel uses a standard quantum drive system which operates at 20 LPH (Lightyears Per Hour). Some drive systems operate at the slower 10 LPH, or even 5 LPH, but a few of the more advanced ones are capable of 40 LPH or higher. At standard speeds, a full Sector requires about 20 of Titan's 25-hour days to cross straight-through, or around 28 days to cross diagonally. A slower ship (10 LPH) would require 40 and 56 days, respectively, whereas a faster ship (40 LPH) could do it in 10 and 14 days. Therefore, at standard speeds a Spatial Grid (one-tenth of a Sector

in each axis) would require exactly 2 days (50 hours) to cross straight through.

Tremendous speed comes at a price—that of fuel. Luckily, the fuel used to power these quantum reactors is hydrogen which is the most abundant substance in the universe. Still, collecting enough of it to be useful is left to the experts—companies that siphon hydrogen from gas giants throughout the galaxy and then transport that fuel to starbases, commercial space stations, orbital refueling stations, and ports. The typical range of an FTL-capable ship is dependent on both how much fuel it can carry and the ship's size, but most vessels get 20 LY per ton of liquid hydrogen. These ranges are also shown on the galaxy map. Corvette class vessels typically house around 40 tons of fuel. Once a ship has reached its maximum range, it must refuel at any number of refueling ports. Fuel costs range from an inexpensive 5 credits per ton in the Titan Sector, to the average of 20 credits per ton in most areas of space, on up to as much as 50 credits per ton in the Triangle. These ports are usually present at any world with a population of at least one-half million. Most military stations also carry fuel but might not make it available commercially. If a ship were to run out of fuel before reaching a fuel depot, it is stranded in deep space and must have fuel brought to it by a tanker (at around five times the normal cost and requiring a minimum purchase).

"Yes, sector fifty-two. Remember, you're getting a percentage of the profits and you won't find wealthier buyers anywhere else."

—A Borderlands Merchant's reply to a Freighter Captain

Quantum Corridors & Gates

A very expensive and advanced technology possessed only by the Imperium, venerable Endori, and Niveans brings quantum drive travel to a much faster level. The Vagar are also believed to be constructing a gate system as well, with at least 3 gates, but it may be a few years before that network is online. Beyond the propulsion technology of TAL11 required to construct such corridors is the outrageous cost and drain on fuel and construction resources.

Quantum Corridors are special 'tunnels' bored through subspace by huge reactor networks via quantum entanglement principles. Gate stations exist at each end of the corridor to house the necessary reactors and generate the quantum pulse needed to propel batches of vessels through the corrirdors. Travel is at least fifty times faster than standard FTL quantum drive speeds, and as much as 150 times faster along major corridor routes.

Reactor stations are immense and include massive frameworks similar to a shipyard drydock, which ships then pull inside and park to await transit. The diagram and chart below details the two 'sizes' of corridors and where they lead. All Imperial corridors are toll-free in order to promote trade. The Endori network, on the other hand, is off-limits to all except official Endori convoys, and no one is quite sure where the cloaked Nivean gates reside for the Nivean newtork. The forthcoming Vagar system is thought to be a public toll-gate system primarily reserved for military use.

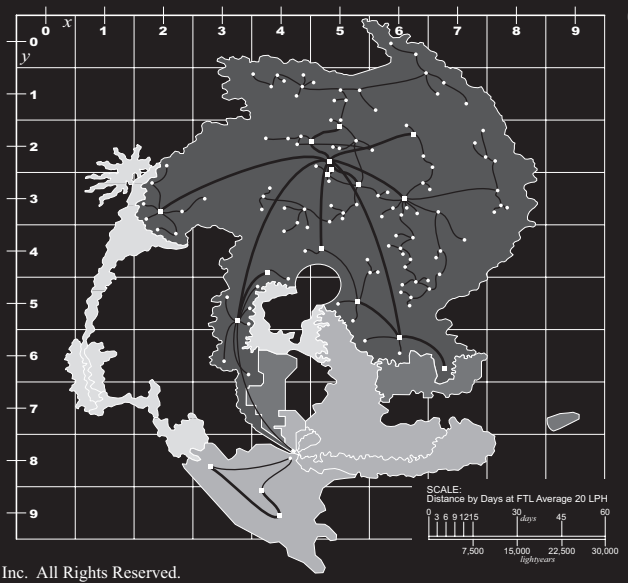
ZAON Empire

Neutral Territories

Allied Territories

Hostile Territories

Unexplored Space



Quantum Corridors & CGates

- = **CGate** (Corridor Gate) — Can accommodate any size ship up to and including an Imperial CommandCarrier (but not an Imperial Starbase). Most CGates are major transit hubs with batch service every 20 minutes or so to a specified corridor-connected location, making wait times under an hour in most cases. Batch transit along major CGate-connected corridors is very fast.
- = **TGate** (Transit Gate) — Ships of Cruiser Class (including many SuperLiners and SuperFreighters) can travel these gates, but ships larger (such as battleships) cannot exit a TGate or travel along a TGate corridor. Batch transit along these corridors is fast. Departure times vary from gate to gate, but average 1 hour.

———— = **Major Corridor** — Corridors between CGates, see above. Transit Time & Speed: **3,000LPH**
For example, travel from Starbase Titanus (orbit of Titan in Sector 52) to Starbase 5 in Sector 35 would require only 12 hours!

———— = **Transit Corridor** — Corridors between TGates. Transit Time & Speed: **1,000LPH**
For example, travel from Imperial Starbase 5 in Sector 35 to Imperial Outpost 481 in Sector 48 near the Triangle would require about 30 hours.

NOTE: Travel involving more than 2 gates (gates between the origin & destination) is not continuous. That is, travelers must arrive and depart at each gate along the way.

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Chapter Three

The ZAON Imperium

Introduction

The largest and most powerful of all galactic nations is the mighty Rian-dominated ZAON Imperium. Spanning two-thirds of the galaxy, the Imperium has set the standard for stellar commerce on many thousands of heavily-populated worlds. To date, no other force has been able to seize and hold Imperial territory and few have even been able to hold on to their own.

Life in the Imperium

The people of the ZAON Imperium include many races of alien beings who flourish in the capitalistic prosperity offered by the Imperium and at the expense of the Imperium's enemies. These non-Rian citizens have learned to work within the Rian system and not in challenge of it because they are not only a minority compared to the vast Rian majority, but also because Rians are only tolerant of other races so long as it benefits the Imperium overall. A constant reminder of this is seen every time a new world of sentient beings is conquered by Imperial might—those who prove they can adapt to Imperial life and become contributing members of society are welcomed in while those prone to resistance, violence, or the slightest anti-Imperial sentiment become the target of genocide. A few have tried to have it both ways by working in secret toward organized resistance, but the Imperial Safeguards Agency (ISA) is just too adept at routing out organized dissension. The few who do manage to meet and operate in secret have thus far been too insignificant to bring about any noticeable change.

Many alien cultures who suffer from poverty, crime, environmental decay, or political discord may actually welcome Imperial rule and the corresponding order and prosperity that accompanies it. Even species that can't compete mentally with Rians in the workplace find satisfaction in secure menial employment. Of course, the Imperium is not without crime or poverty of its own—far from it—but Imperial propaganda would have one believe otherwise.

Rians believe very strongly, almost fanatically, in their government and its core philosophies, but most outsiders despise ZAON greatly for obvious reasons. By way of government, ZAON is a republic with elected officials who form a ruling senate of great power. It is also an empire not only because of expansionistic imperialism but also because it was once ruled by a monarch whose royal bloodline today fulfills an honorary position in government.

IMPERIAL SOCIETY & PROPAGANDA: Most social aspects within the Imperium, including the majority of broadcast entertainment, social stigma, and popular opinion are carefully regulated and manipulated by the government to achieve its three fundamental goals: **Patriotism, Procreation,** and **Capitalism.** Anyone who stands in the way of or threatens these principles is the enemy.

Patriotism is brought about by strong pride in the state, arrogance, and the success of individuals and society alike. Everything is about the state and those who benefit it. Reports of individuals who become wealthy or successful through invention that benefits society, the latest success of Imperial military forces in battle, and any other news of Rians outsmarting or outpowering aliens or enemy humans is promptly reported in grand spectacle to encourage similar behavior. In short, these are the heroes of society. Self-esteem

suffers somewhat in the lower and middle classes of Imperial citizenry, but only insofar as measuring one's self worth compared to the worth of the Imperium overall. Indeed, compared to most aliens and other races of humanity Rians are an arrogant lot.

The opposite of patriotism is met with equal fervor, as treason is shown as the gravest of transgressions punishable by cruel death. Individual accounts of treason are always made public except for matters of national security, and those individuals (and often their families) are ridiculed and condemned by society before sentence is publicly dealt.

The general populace is so fanatically patriotic that it even surpasses the Japanese Imperials of World War II on Earth who were also reppressed in much the same way (see 'Rights and Freedoms', below).

Procreation is the Imperium's longest standing mandate for reasons of outnumbering, outbuilding, and outsmarting all of its enemies. Family is strongly promoted while singles feel increasing societal pressure to marry starting at age 20 (average marriage age is 22) while those who don't by around age 25 are often ostracized to some degree. Singles can escape the majority of this shame by enlisting in military service, but even military personnel are encouraged to head-up families wherever possible.

Pregnancy is a natural expectation within weeks or at most a few months following marriage, and prolonging the dating process for more than a year before marriage is frowned upon. Two children is the bare minimum for true cultural acceptance, and an average of three or four is the norm while economically prosperous families are expected to produce even more.

Everything from legitimate product marketing ads to broadcast entertainment depicts and promotes the family unit. Government has had thousands of years to refine its subliminal perpetuation of prolific procreation. Even behavior that might first appear to be counterproductive to this goal has been cleverly engineered to effect births. For example, rather than society undertaking the losing battle of discouraging same-sex pairings, it instead supports them but with the same societal pressures to raise children. In other words, a male-to-male or female-to-female marriage is neither here nor there—a normal part of society—however such a couple would certainly be frowned upon to the same extent as no-children heterosexual singles or couples if it didn't go on to yield children. In cases such as this, it is customary for a married pair of males to bond with a married pair of females to form a quad-parent family relationship.

Females unfairly endure the greatest pressure to bear children in the Imperium, because males can often fulfill there societal obligations by siring children. Still, the role of both parents is promoted and unfit parents will quickly find their progeny taken by the state. In short, the satisfaction of carefully reared and mentored offspring that go on to become valued members of society is one of the greatest achievements a family can bring about and something that is proudly toted among local social circles—which of course further promotes it.

Capitalism is the third fundamental principle of the Imperium, equal with the other two. Individuals are taught from a very early age to be creative, and careers in business, science, technology, and the military are promoted as the most prestigious. The importance of many superficial elements (such as wealth) are woven into society to encourage success, and government and media make celebrities and heroes of the men and women who excel in business or invention.

All three of these principles (patriotism, procreation, and capitalism) work together and consume the lives of most Imperial citizens. To Rians, life is about family, pride, success, and above all the Imperium.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: In the Imperium, individual rights are nearly always secondary to the rights of society at large. Often, even certain basic rights that citizens might take for granted until they lose those rights are never present to begin with in Imperial society. Aliens (non-humans) by law have the same rights and freedoms that Rians do, though the courts sometimes favor Rians in situations where some room for discretion is possible.

➤The right to free speech is restricted to exclude the right to condemn the government or to promote hate among citizens Rian or otherwise. Though there is a 'free' press, it remains strictly illegal to report any news that might endanger national security or cast the Imperium in an overly bad light. Some very light anti-Imperial news is actually encouraged in order to offer the illusion of a fair and balanced press. However, facts such as unemployment, Residency Camps (see below), suspects arrested but later found innocent, and anything similar, are not reported at all by law.

➤The right to personal power is limited to financial, celebrity, political, and business power only—whereas gaining personal strength via military-grade weaponry, cult or mercenary followers, or personal cybernetic enhancements is illegal because it does not benefit society.

➤The right to small or local government is explicitly denied. This is especially true in the interior, but some frontier worlds bend this precept.

➤There is no right to privacy, and the government is allowed to spy on its own citizens as readily as it does on enemy nations—including random search and consequential seizure of illegal property or evidence. Video surveillance on interior core worlds (e.g., Titan, New Corsica, Olympus, Kaelon, Kaya, etc.) is rampant and if there is proof of a non-defensive crime through video, physical, or forensic evidence then suspects have very few rights. Social stature and wealth play a big part in how well one is treated at a police precinct.

➤Corruption harms the state, so surprisingly there is very little of this thanks to patriotism. It is especially rare in the military, but some small-time white collar corruption and crime does escape ISA interest.

➤Executions for convicted criminals are rampant and public. The 'lucky' are transported to Cooranide instead. Appeals are very limited and sentences of death are carried out by law no later than six month's time from the date of sentencing (often within the first month or two). Although civil cases can be appealed many times to higher and higher courts, most criminal cases can be appealed only once and half of such appeals are not heard by the Appeals court thereby leaving the initial sentence in place.

➤There is no freedom of religion, and organized religion of any kind beyond the immediate family is strictly illegal under the law, carrying penalties ranging from counseling, imprisonment, telepathic mind wipes, or even death. Because of the importance the Imperium places on patriotism and faith in the state, it has elected not to risk citizenry practice of faith in anything else.

➤Even parenting is strictly regulated, and government-run schooling is mandatory for all children in order to instill the proper values the government treats as right and just. Individual parents can lose custody if they attempt to teach values contrary to government principles as readily as through neglect or abuse.

➤Prostitution is legal and open. If more than a dozen clients are serviced per calendar year, however, then the prostitute must be registered and pay a special tax as well as submit to medical screenings. There is very little stigma associated with prostitution within Imperial culture.

➤Hazardous chemicals and addictive substances are also regulated or banned by law in order to protect citizens from themselves.

➤Unemployment rate is about 1½%, though at least 10% of employed persons are in dangerous menial labor jobs, and another 20% despise their administrative office jobs. The other 70% are fairly happy to very happy, depending on wealth and prestige.

PDF Hint
View this map at exactly 138.88% size for sharpest picture

GALAXY: DETAIL MAP

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ZAON

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THE TITAN SECTOR

SECTOR 52
SECTOR 61
TO ARGUS (SECTOR 151)
FIRE NEBULA
TO STARBASE 2 (SECTOR 63)
TO STARBASE 1 (SECTOR 23)
TO STARBASE 5 (SECTOR 35)
TO STARBASE 4 (SECTOR 64)
TO SOTER
TO TRISTAN (SECTOR 62)
TO GAMMON
DOLTOX NEBULA
ALPHA BLAVA II
KIRA GAMMA
KAU GAMMA
KAU TOR
KARF'S POINT
OLD POINT
OLYMPUS
KAELON
TITAN
NEW CORSICA
TRISTAR
BAYA
BETA FORLMAN
NOVLENS
INISTRATE
CETI NAR
WESTWARD
BESKLIN
FLARYN
TORVEND
JEETROI
TRO
ARBOR
BOSKON
SHIOLAS
DEWI
MALLAS
PACIFICA
LABARIA
OLD POINT
TOL
KARF'S POINT
BOSSEVA
BOXDOON
MCKAY
SAXON
BOWALE
WISTERIA
KETZIA
GIANA
TERRAX
ELINAS
ZUBIN
ORBRUN
ALPHA
RIO
RUSH
BOZZLE
AVONDALE
MADISON
RIBO
ABERDEEN
MYRRO
HAVEN
LAZAAR
VASHON
TORELL
SPROED
RAVENSDALE
HAMPSTEAD
URMBERG
LICK
LAVAL
NEEZA
ACKLES
VORTIN
DRAKA
NUBIE
BRAYL
NORMANDY
SLITEX
COWAN
HAMMERSLEY
HUDSON
DEGOYRE
ALDUS
STERLING
MERIDIAN
OZIEL
DIENAR
DIXXTON
ROTAR
STRUZAHNSTEIN
AEOS
OMEGA
PRASAD
FENRIS
THOTH
MENDOZA
ZAVALA
WAYLAND
DIRKWALL
WESTGATE
PERSISTENCE
KALDERRA
VAN DEVER
GREY RAYLAND
ESSENDRA
ESSENDRA SEPHAR
ESSENDRA WESTIN
ESSENDRA MAJOR
ESSENDRA MINOR
ESSENDRA PALACE
ESSENDRA PLAZA
ESSENDRA PLAZA WEST
ESSENDRA PLAZA EAST
ESSENDRA PLAZA NORTH
ESSENDRA PLAZA SOUTH
ESSENDRA PLAZA CENTRAL

➤It is illegal in the Imperium to be homeless. Therefore, everyone must have either permanent residency, hotel accommodations, or have a ship registered as residency on their IdentiCard. Failure to meet this requirement is of no consequence unless found sleeping in a public place which will result in arrest and transport to a Residency Camp. Residency Camps are harsh internment camps located either outside of cities or deep in their lowest levels. Security is high, and getting out is tough even with work training re-education centers inside those camps. Though slavery is illegal, work details are assigned to residents there to offset costs, and not many questions are asked when "non-profit organizations" show up with transports to take shiploads of people to other worlds for "a new start".

➤Police prevalence follows money. Core worlds have significantly more than frontier worlds. Major wealthy cities such as those on Titan, New Corsica, and the like are rampant with police (actually Imperial troops). The upper levels of those cities are the wealthiest districts and have a major law enforcement presence making them extremely safe, whereas lower levels are more dangerous. Police readily fire upon suspects attempting to elude in the lower levels, whereas in the wealthy districts either stun weapons are used or police must chase suspects attempting to elude (to avoid potential harm that may befall prominent or wealthy citizen passerbys). This double standard is well known but not talked about.

➤Class prejudice exists prominently. Wealthy or high-class humans and aliens are welcome in the wealthy districts, but unwealthy or low-class humans and aliens are watched carefully, disrespected, and sometimes harrassed while traveling in wealthy districts. New faces are often given the benefit of the doubt, though attire can play a strong role in snap judgments. Police are always exceedingly polite in wealthy districts, even to unknown presumably low-class or poor individuals in order to be on the safe side in case the individual is of prominence but chooses to dress simply. A quick scan of their IndetiCard may then result in a rather abrupt change in police attitude. Medium-levels and most public venues (neither wealthy nor poor) are rather relaxed, open, and safe with polite and tolerant police. In the lower levels, prominent, respected, or wealthy citizens who happen to be there are almost always believed at their word when being mediated versus low-class or poor citizens and at crime scenes. Obviously, direct evidence will still stand, but much leeway is granted to those who 'deserve' it. In other words, the actual value placed on life in Imperial culture is often based on class, wealth, and prominence.

➤Traffic laws are minimal (even on core worlds). Most is left to driver discretion, but high traffic areas are designated into lanes by the Port Authority. The Port Authority must be obeyed by strict law, however, there is little non-orbital instruction given by the authority to SkyCar pilots. Traffic accidents are a civil matter. Damage to public buildings is generally also a civil matter, but if damages cannot be paid to the state then it becomes a criminal matter. Traffic accidents involving a death are a criminal matter, but police action and penalties vary depending on area (wealthy districts warrant a full forensic investigation, whereas in poverty districts much is open to police discretion, and sometimes no police show at all). Failure to obey the Port Authority will bring down police on the offender immediately. Any failures to obey the authority in orbit (as opposed to the skyways) results in direct and swift military action against the offender. Obviously, provisions are in place for when a faulty navcomputer goes out and also for other problems, which often results in the vessel being tractored. However, deliberate attempts to outmaneuver or evade Port Authority vessels invites immediate fire.

➤Some rights are explicitly granted with limitation, however, including the right to wealth and property. Individuals have the right to the pursuit if happiness, so long as it does not infringe on the community's rights. For example, although individuals may own property, they may not do anything to that property that would lower their neighbor's property values without compensating those neighbors. Individuals have the right to a fair trial by judge (there is no trial by jury) but once found guilty lose nearly all of their rights. Surprisingly, the Imperium allows somewhat broad rights toward self-defense and use of deadly force to protect persons or property from criminal attack.

➤Citizens have the right to bear arms in accordance with the zone they live in. For example, in hostile territory out on the frontier, the right to bear arms extends to many rifle weapons and other lethal protection normally requiring special permits. In most areas, the right to bear a pistol is allowed while rifles are banned (requiring permits). On premier worlds such as Titan, New Corsica, and the like, personal firearms are banned unless covered by special permits, and even then weapons must remain concealed.

➤The right to own starships is explicitly granted by the Imperial constitution, and extends to include the right to any fixed armament on a private vessel—something of a holdover from the days where private starship armament was a basic right to protect against attack from the Great Enemy. Today, this right still serves a place against the the prevalent Venwon pirates and warlords, though its future is uncertain. However, the massing of an armed fleet is expressly forbidden, and the distinction between an armed private ship and a few armed ships making a small fleet is a gray area of the law.

➤➤In short, life in the Imperium is very close to living under martial law. It is no wonder why so many Southern Alliance citizens fear Imperial takeover so greatly, however plenty of individuals value the reduction in crime and other prosperity these laws seem to afford at the expense of freedom. Indeed, the Kovalans, Morg, and Xanticans have since prospered greatly following Imperial rule.

PREJUDICES: Imperial citizens hate treason—not specific alien races. However, there is an air of superiority among Rians for sure and so aliens are rarely treated with the full respect and rights accorded a Rian. But rare is irrational racism. Alien citizens from species considered enemies of the Imperium often encounter the most difficulty and irrational reprisals from citizens while visiting or living within Imperial space. Rians are taught to hate the enemy, and most citizens do not show any compassion for other sentient beings who defy the Imperium. For Rians, the line between love and hate is the same line between patriotism and treason.

Telepaths are generally not trusted by citizens because they are used against them. Telepaths are coveted by businesses and law enforcement for obvious uses of mind-scanning abilities, however this is also why sensitive business leaders, leading scientists, and political officers employ Darcanan advisors for protection because of the natural telepathic dampening fields Darcanan generate. Telepaths who possess manifested talents are required to be licensed and are not allowed to use those powers except in direct action to save a life. Manifest telepaths are also often harassed by law enforcement, and the ISA maintains a special investigative division for tracking and handling those who must be arrested—which, in the case of the manifest telepath, requires little in the way of transgressions.

Government

ZAON government consists of two main types: Planetary and Imperial. Planetary government under Imperial law is a system where each world is led by a Planetary Governor who is usually elected by that world's populace, and who is served by many various district leaders as locally elected. Imperial government is instead comprised of Imperial Senators who are individual representatives of each world and who are always elected by a popular vote on that world.

IMPERIAL SENATE: Imperial government is therefore the most prestigious, for the Senate enacts Imperium-wide law and issues Imperial decrees. Within Imperial society, central government is the most important so that laws and prosperity are consistent for all worlds. Each world elects one Imperial Senator by a world-wide popular vote held once every five years (with no term limits) who represents that world's interests in the Imperial Senate. Because each world supports vastly different populations and varying usefulness to the Imperium's overall prosperity, each Senator carries a Prestige Vote based on many factors. For example, the Senator from Maya casts 102 Prestige Votes while Tristar's Senator casts only 95 Prestige Votes despite having a slightly higher population than Maya—which is due to Maya's higher-tech and leading industries which benefit the Imperium slightly moreso than all of Tristar, making Maya a somewhat more important world.

The basis for Prestige Votes is approximately one such vote for each billion citizens. Each world's prestige increases or decreases that number slightly based on its total contribution to society but rarely varies much from the population base. In extreme cases, such as the world of Glaam which has a population of 4 billion primitive tribal inhabitants, the Glaam Senator is allowed only one-half of one Prestige Vote instead of the customary 4 because his world is not industrialized and contributes little to Imperial prosperity. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Titan is so vast in population and importance that new laws had to be enacted to cap the maximum prestige voting power any one Senator could wield. That new law states that no Senator may represent more than 200 billion citizens. Titan therefore is the only world where more than one Senator is elected, and Titan has six such Senators each representing 150–200 billion citizens.

"Why can't some aliens just accept the fact that Imperial government is better for them? They should thank us for helping them, yet instead they irrationally resist the prosperity and order we bring to their chaos. Nevertheless, we continue to do the right thing by dissolving their corrupt governments and militaries."

—Typical Rian Citizen

The minimum Prestige Vote is 0.1 (one-tenth of a point) which also means the approximate minimum population for a world being allowed to elect an Imperial Senator is around 100 million. A few high-tech worlds that are largely automated are able to elect a one-tenth Prestige Vote Senator with as few as 25 million living beings, but this is rare. A world that cannot qualify to elect a one-tenth point Senator takes no part in Imperial Senate government.

Only Imperial Senators worth one full Prestige point are allowed to directly attend official Senate votes and gatherings at the Imperial Capital located on Titan, and these are called Imperial Grand Senators. Grand Senators are allowed to propose new legislation and submit those proposals for priority ranking to be voted upon. Other Senators worth less than one full Prestige Vote operate from offices located on their representative worlds and receive special televised broadcasts of any Senate proceedings in session. They cast their votes electronically for each vote put to the Senate floor, but they cannot sponsor new legislation or make official motions—but all of their votes do get tallied and applied.

All chamber proceedings are presided over by the Emperor. The Emperor has no voting ability, but is very politically influential and popular—able to sway the votes of many Senators. The Emperor also acts as the honored chairperson responsible for calling the Senate to order, implementing the various proceedings' formalities, and making public declaration of new laws enacted by the Senate.

The Emperor or Empress is the eldest able-bodied crown prince or crown princess of the direct Imperial Family that rises to power upon the death or incapacitation of the reigning Emperor or Empress. The current reigning member of the Imperial family is **Her Imperial Highness, Empress Alexia Adia Zaon.** She is expected to be succeeded soon by her eldest of two sons, **His Imperial Highness, Crown Prince Jayce Arao Zaon.** In honor of the Imperial family, and by lasting decree, the last name of 'ZAON' is reserved exclusively for members of the Imperial family bloodline. It remains treason for any other person to use that name, though the various first and middle names of Imperial family members are quite popular among the populace. More than two thousand years ago, before modern legislation outlawed dictatorships and similar forms of militarized personal power, the Emperor was the sole monarch of the Imperium. Today, the Imperial family is very well educated, trained in politics, and above all masters of leadership and charisma.

SENATE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES: There are several major and minor oversight committees. Each committee is a five person council voted into position by the entire Senate. Once voted into position, these committees become the ultimate authorities over the areas of government they oversee, answerable on large issues to the Senate at large. Oversight committees meet frequently to govern the areas they're responsible for, handling details unworthy of the time and attention of the full Senate. Oversight committees are also entrusted to deal with matters of national security too sensitive to reveal on the senate floor. A Senator may serve in a maximum of one committee only, but so long as individuals are re-elected to the Senate itself those individuals can also be continually re-elected to the same oversight committees if they garner enough votes from their fellow Senators. The entire Senate votes to elect members for each committee once every five years during the Senate's very first session of the year.

One of the most coveted committees that premier Senators often see themselves elected to is the Senate Defense Oversight Committee. The Imperial Commandant who is the chief of the Imperial military answers directly to this committee on military affairs and is also appointed by this committee from the ranks of Naval Governors. While the Commandant is chosen for his or her tactical genius, command charisma, and leadership abilities to direct sector warfare, the committee handles issues such as budget and spending, as well as the politics of warfare.

The other Senate Committee that is also coveted and managed by prominent senators is the Senate Security Oversight Committee responsible for appointing a Director for the Imperial Safeguards Agency and managing that agency's budget and political focus.

Other committees include the Senate Economy Oversight Committee, the Senate Judicial Oversight Committee, and various other less prestigious committees.

PLANETARY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: Planetary and local leaders are responsible for implementing, managing, and upholding Imperial law enacted by the Senate. They may also enact a few local laws as they deem appropriate for their world so long as those laws do not violate Imperial law. A popular vote on each world takes place once every four years to elect a Planetary Governor. In rare cases, there are exceptions to this law especially for worlds with reigning monarchs who are never elected. Each

world is therefore handled on a case-by-case basis. Even an Imperial State alien world led by a monarch or dictatorship must still properly elect its Imperial Senator (see above). For worlds that follow Imperial election laws for the Planetary Governor position, various regions of a planet each also elect Regional Governors who report to the Planetary Governor. Each such region is further divided into districts where a District Director is elected. Finally, each district is divided into local Precincts led by a locally-elected Supervisor who reports to the District Director.

In other words, local neighborhoods elect Supervisors to oversee their areas, while also participating with other adjacent neighborhoods to elect a District Director to manage the overall area. The combined citizens of several areas then go on to elect a Regional Governor to oversee a continent or other large region on a world. Then, the combined votes of the entire world elect the Planetary Governor. Planetary Governors are the ultimate authorities on their worlds, but even they must often report to the one Imperial Senator also elected by world-wide vote. The only exception is Titan, where the position of Planetary Governor wields considerable power given there are six such Imperial Senators on that world.

Generally speaking, the farther away a world is from the Titan Sector and nearby military staging areas, the more latitude Planetary Governors and various local authorities have to enact local law or even bend Imperial law.

Travel between any worlds within the Imperium is quite common for some and doesn't require special visas as all citizens carry an IdentiCard usable throughout the Imperium.

The Imperial Navy & Marines

For the Imperial Navy, there is no comparison at all. Its forces stretch to every corner of the galaxy and provide an impressive show of force at every venture. The mainstay of the Imperial fleet is the mighty Titan-class flagship which, along with the ubiquitous Imperial Battlefighter, has come to serve as a symbol of Imperial might. Flagships measure an incredible nineteen kilometers in length, far outclassing the battleships of all other navies, and Imperial Starbases are significantly larger yet. There are more than 20 billion personnel serving throughout the Imperial armed forces. However, the Imperium is not without its weaknesses—enlisted personnel is one of its greatest in battle (see 'recruitment and training', below).

RANKS AND UNIFORMS: The following outlines the Imperial military hierarchy. Enlisted and Officer ranks can also be compared by the E# and O# codes, which refer to the Enlisted or Officer rank grades equivalences as well as general pay grades.

Navy Enlisted Personnel wear a charcoal-gray uniform. Rank insignia is on the front/back of both sleeve cuffs, and on the left and right front sides of the vertical collar. Note that ranks E6 through E9 are non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks.

E1 - **Recruit** = No insignia (charcoal-gray uniform for ALL enlisted & NCO)
E2 - **Crewman Third Class** = 1 black pip/dot
E3 - **Crewman Second Class** = 2 black pips/dots
E4 - **Crewman First Class** = 3 black pips/dots
E5 - **Corporal** = 1 black chevron stripe
E6 - **Sergeant** = 2 black chevron stripes
E7 - **Staff Sergeant** = 3 black chevron stripes
E8 - **Master Sergeant** = 3 black chevron stripes + 1 black star in the open V
E9 - **Sergeant Major** = 4 black chevron stripes + 1 black star in the open V

Navy Officers wear a white uniform. Rank insignia stripes encircle both sleeve cuffs and are also imprinted on the shoulder tabs. A large full-length stripe extends from the collar, spanning the entire breast. Stars, if present, are located on the cuffs above the stripes, on the shoulder tabs next to the stripes toward the inside, and on the breast near the top very close to the collar. The Imperial officer logo is found on all officer uniforms and is located on the front sides of the vertical collar and in the middle of the shoulder tabs.

O1 - **Junior Ensign** = 1 short black-gold horizontal dash (white uniforms)
O2 - **Ensign** = 2 short black-gold stacked horizontal dashes
O3 - **Junior Lieutenant** = 3 short black-gold stacked horizontal dashes
O4 - **Lieutenant** = 1 full black-gold stripe
O5 - **Lieutenant Commander** = 2 full black-gold stripes
O6 - **Commander** = 3 full black-gold stripes
O7 - **Vice-Admiral** = 4 full black-gold stripes
O8 - **Admiral** = 5 full black-gold stripes
O9 - **Fleet Admiral** = 1 very thick full black-gold stripe + 1 gold star
O10 - **Grand Admiral** = 2 very thick full black-gold stripes + 2 gold stars
O11 - **Naval Governor** = 3 very thick full black-gold stripes + 3 gold stars
O12 - **Imperial Commandant** = 5 large gold stars in cluster

Naval Governors each command a Starbase and regional territory. They report directly to the Imperial Commandant, a position appointed by the Senate Defense Oversight Committee and chosen among the Naval Governors. The Commandant directs total Imperium warfare strategy from Starbase Titanus, but must answer to the Senate.

Marines Enlisted Personnel and Officers wear red and black uniforms similar to Navy, except color. Enlisted and officer uniforms are identical, except for insignia and insignia positions, for purposes of safety on the battlefield. Additional padding and very light shoulder and breast armor is also additional in all marines uniforms compared to the naval uniform. Insignia positioning for enlisted uniforms matches navy enlisted uniforms, and marines officer insignia matches positions for navy officer uniforms except the breast stripe is one-third the length, beginning at the collar-breast seam and continuing down one-third of the way across the breast.

Ranks E6 through E9 are non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks.

E1 - **Recruit** = No insignia
E2 - **Private Third Class** = 1 black pip/dot
E3 - **Private Second Class** = 2 black pips/dots
E4 - **Private First Class** = 3 black pips/dots
E5 - **Corporal** = 1 black chevron stripe
E6 - **Sergeant** = 2 black chevron stripes
E7 - **Staff Sergeant** = 3 black chevron stripes
E8 - **Master Sergeant** = 3 black chevron stripes + 1 black star in the open V
E9 - **Sergeant Major** = 4 black chevron stripes + 1 black star in the open V
O1 - **Junior Sentinel** = 1 short red-black horizontal dash
O2 - **Sentinel** = 2 short red-black stacked horizontal dashes
O3 - **Centurion** = 3 short red-black stacked horizontal dashes
O4 - **Lieutenant** = 1 medium red-black stripe
O5 - **Lieutenant Colonel** = 2 medium red-black stripes
O6 - **Colonel** = 3 medium red-black stripes
O7 - **Lieutenant General** = 4 medium red-black stripes
O8 - **General** = 5 medium red-black stripes
O9 - **Field General** = 1 medium thick red-black stripe + 1 red star

Field General is the highest Marines rank, equivalent to a Fleet Admiral, and reports to either a naval Grand Admiral or Naval Governor depending on assignment. There are more than a dozen Field Generals.

RANK COMMAND: Within the same branch of the service (marines among marines, or crewman among crewman), the chain of command is very strict and an E2 may issue orders to an E1.

Among mixed service personnel, Enlisted persons below E6 from the Navy are not allowed to give orders to enlisted Marines, and vice-versa. Enlisted ranks of E6 or higher, and all officer ranks, may give orders to personnel in either branch of service. In the case of tied rank grades (determined by the E# or O#), the field of battle determines the senior officer. For example, aboard a ship a navy O6 Commander may issue orders to a marines O6 Colonel. Likewise, on the battlefield during a boarding action or on the ground a marines O6 Colonel may issue orders to a navy O6 Commander. Furthermore, there are some restrictions on the type of cross-serv-

ice orders that can be issued by officers and significant restrictions for enlisted personnel.

Several exceptions exist, including shipboard security personnel which are always marines. These marines conform to standard infantry ranking, except that their CO is a navy officer (the *Chief of Security* aboard a ship, which is a navy officer). The Chief of Security's *Executive Security Officer* and all ranking security personnel below him or her are marines. In cases such as this, the naval CO is responsible for all personnel matters, including promotion and assignment of marines in the ship's security force.

There is also some healthy and unhealthy rivalry between Naval and Marines service personnel. Marines stereotype naval personnel more or less as weak and cowardly. Crewman stereotype marines as dumb grunts. Security forces aboard a ship (marines) and their fellow shipmates (navy) have very little rivalry because of their consistent proximity and close-working relationships. Mobile Infantry Forces (troops) stationed aboard larger warships for boarding actions and surface attacks endure moderate rivalry. Standing Armies stationed on various worlds or aboard starbases are the most isolated from naval personnel and consequently most prone to unhealthy rivalry.

RANK POSITIONS: Various duty assignments are often filled by personnel of a particular rank. Also note that 'Captain' is not a rank at all in either branch of the military; it is a position. Examples of the Captain of a ship might be 'Commander Jaysen' or 'Vice-Admiral Hayes' depending on ship size, to cite two.

Titan-class Imperial CommandCarriers are captained by an Admiral, but also have a Grand Admiral aboard who commands the carrier and surrounding fleet. Starbases are captained by Fleet Admirals who report to the Naval Governor aboard who commands the region of space and all fleets assigned to that starbase. Starbase Titanus is captained by a single Grand Admiral who reports to the Imperial Commandant who is also aboard and in turn commands all of the Imperium's forces.

Similarly, an Olympus class battleship is captained by a Vice-Admiral, but also has a Fleet Admiral aboard to administer the support fleet that accompanies that battleship, and the battleship itself. A Maya class dreadnaught is captained by a Commander if part of a fleet, or by a Vice-Admiral if operating alone. Kaelon class destroyers are captained by a Lieutenant Commander if part of a fleet, or by a Commander if operating alone. Smaller vessels may be captained by Lieutenants or Lieutenant Commanders depending on assignment.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING: Because of the Imperium's enormous population and strong patriotism, it has more applications for military service enlistment than it can accept. Therefore only the best applicants are accepted for training and go on to become enlisted personnel or enter officer training programs.

Naval recruitment focuses on intelligence, leadership, creativity, and ingenuity, and training is geared toward accentuating these qualities but within the strict command structure designed to instill obedience. Enlisted personnel are taught to focus on their technical shipboard duties, and most do not adapt well to dangerous wartime conditions in the absence of any present officers where courage is needed and where they must take initiative on their own. Some of the Imperium's enemies have taken and continue to take advantage of this by concentrating their boarding efforts against protected officers because once Imperial leadership is absent the rest of the crew will more easily surrender. Officer training, on the other hand, focuses on tactical and strategic warfare expertise—something Imperial captains are infamous for among their enemies—as well as strong leadership skills. Officers also typically possess some technical expertise from their earlier tours of duty, and it is clear that the Imperium places a great deal of its resources into officer training programs thereby producing leadership and tactical genius of unparalleled skill and talent.

Marines recruitment focuses on physical feats and leadership. Training improves physical attributes but includes extremely harsh psychological conditioning designed to strip away individuality and replace it with strict morale and obedience. Because of this, corruption is essentially non-existent in the Imperial Marines Corps, however, at the expense of little creativity or ingenuity on the battlefield which leaves the Imperium's soldiers fair at best in overall efficacy. Indeed, the fatality rate among infrantry is unusually high due to excessive obedience, courage, and little in the way of intelligent ground tactics. The phrase "no one get's left behind" is a Terran army code of ethics and is unfortunately entirely absent from Imperial Marines which are largely treated as expendable (though propaganda would lead infantry applicants to believe otherwise).

Imperial Safeguards Agency

The Imperium maintains hundreds of agencies, most of which are geared toward improving the quality of life. But there are a few of a more sinister and infamous nature—those for which the end justifies the means. At the top of this list is the **Imperial Safeguards Agency**, or **ISA** (*pronounced: eye ess eigh*).

The ISA is responsible for ensuring the safety of the Imperium from threats both internal and external, though most notably ones of national security. It is headquartered in the Imperial City on Titan, but also maintains primary offices on New Corsica as well as field offices on Tristar, Maya, Regis, Omega, Draken, and every starbase. Overall the agency is relatively large but with few agents, housing only thousands of ISA Agents, hundreds of thousands of Covert Ops Agents, and millions of support staff. As most Imperial citizens and alien nations are painfully aware, no place in the galaxy is outside of this agency's grasp.

There are four principle types of agents: The ***ISA Agent,*** the ***Covert Ops Agent,*** the ***ISA Field Analyst,*** and the ***ISA Analyst.***

ISA AGENT: ISA Agents have broad discretionary powers in affairs of state, the military, and even the private lives of citizens. They are deployed in serious matters only, including investigative roles in nearly all counter-intelligence efforts. Agents have no interest in internal politics, nor do they meddle in such fare, though any politician who becomes corrupt or any individual who gains too much personal power is subject to their inquiry. The actions of agents are never questioned, rarely even by the Senate, and individual agents are able to countermand the orders of high-ranking naval officers (including some types of admirals) when necessary, all in the name of national security.

With nearly unlimited resources, it can be assumed that an agent has access to whatever technologies or monies are needed to accomplish his task. Furthermore, the ISA maintains many supercomputers armed with huge databases used to track and monitor the military, Senate, aliens and their governments, and affairs of citizens—using advanced AI routines to compile lists of potential suspects or other threats. This is not to say that the ISA watches every citizen (it can't), but those who make big enough ripples will eventually wind up on an agent's investigative list.

Individual agents elicit fear in those they investigate, always appear calm and collective (even under fire), and are both physically and mentally impressive. All ISA agents are cloned from specific yet varied genetically-engineered Rian stock and spend their entire lives from birth in heavy training. They have supposedly been conditioned to suppress all emotion, receive the most advanced physical and mental training available anywhere, and are even augmented subtly with internal cybernetics including heads-up displays and targeting systems for their eyes, armored skeletal systems, enhanced strength, and more. They are also said to generate Darcanan-like anti-telepathy fields to a limited degree.

There are two levels of ISA agent: agents and senior agents. Senior agents represent those who have exceeded expectations and who've been outfitted with additional equipment and cybernetics superior to other ISA agents—if such a thing is possible.

No ISA agent is ever to be underestimated. Stories are told of a lone agent who was able to walk into a pirate overlord encampment in the middle of Trade Syndicate territory, killing the overlord and over 40 of his personal bodyguards before being kept at bay by the remaining soldiers. Indeed, some believe they are unstoppable. But agents rarely resort to force. Many are unparalleled masters of investigation and manipulation, able to orchestrate the downfall of corrupt Senators, rebellious world leaders, or enemy aliens, all without laying so much as a finger on anyone. The best are able to also work behind the scenes, rallying their target's friends and trusted allies into becoming treacherous enemies. Both levels of ISA Agents carry a non-official license to kill.

In many ways the ISA is feared more than the Imperial Navy itself. Ask any citizen on the street and you'll find that almost everyone has heard of the ISA, but almost no one has come face-to-face with an ISA agent—and those who have met one fear him to no end. Citizens aware of agents try to avoid them whenever possible, while others are all too eager to assist them in order to make a good name for themselves and hopefully appear more lawful in doing so. A good citizen would never aid, abet, or harbor anyone they knew to be under investigation by an ISA agent.

Agents are known by their characteristic garb: that of a modern black suit, dark glasses, and a special comlink mounted in their suit and linked directly to an earpiece by wire to prevent monitoring of their communications. As cliche as this ensemble may be, many believe it only adds to the fear they elicit in others. Agents never appear in any other way, for none of their actions involve clandestine assignments of infiltration (for that is the purview of Covert Ops Agents, whom they sometimes work with). Their black business suits are said to be lined with advanced weblar and their sunglasses place doubt as to the focus of their attention. Their glasses undoubtedly bestow infrared and thermograph imaging capabilities (though rumor has it that this capability is provided by cybernetic eyes instead), whereas the earpiece and jacket-mounted device is surely a miniature subspace transceiver keeping every agent linked to ISA headquarters (and thus ISA resources) at all times. Other rumors claim that they carry ambassador screens (personal force-fields), but displays of their physical prowess would indicate little need for one. All certainly carry weapons (a special Nova pistol), but all appear more effective by way of personal combat anyway.

COVERT OPS AGENT: These agents are a completely different type of agent compared to the above investigative agent. Covert Ops Agents are recruited from naval and sometimes even civilian ranks and live their entire lives under a cover identity, except when discreetly recalled to ISA HQ (or to meet with an ISA Agent) for debriefing.

Covert Ops Agents vary in terms of ability, but all undergo extensive training for years before being released into the field. All are exceptionally well trained and quite capable. They specialize in social skills primarily, but also possess a full repertoire of assorted technical and combat skills plus very good specialized skill in areas pertinent to their mission assignment. All are additionally trained to resist torture, to manipulate interrogators, and resist telepathic scan. Most have also had their minds 'adjusted' telepathically by extremely high-level Za'aan telepaths who have installed 'blocks' to prevent ISA-critical information (even though these agents operate on a need-to-know basis only) from falling into the wrong hands. Some agents are even telepathic themselves. In fact, telepathic Rians are often recruited by the ISA despite how the ISA's investigative Agents also routinely investigate or harass telepathic beings.

The purpose for these covert agents is to infiltrate and report on all enemies, external and internal. You can find them serving in alien militaries, serving in positions of Imperial and foreign governments, working at various corporations and research facilities, or living as your next-door neighbor. These assignments can vary from intelligence-gathering to the manipulation of an event. For example, a Covert Ops Agent might go undercover as an officer in a foreign navy with the purpose of sabotage or starting a conflict with another nation, or for any other end needed to advance the Imperium's goals.

ISA FIELD ANALYST: Field Analysts are a type of junior investigator used to openly investigate a company's financial records, to interview employees regarding an important matter, or the like. Field Analysts are therefore also deployed on assignments too routine or minor for full ISA Agents.

Field Analysts vary greatly in skill and specialty. Some are nothing more than glorified accountants while others are trained in computer specialties or advanced social skills. They are recruited from military and civilian sectors. All are screened carefully and telepathically scanned for loyalty and compliance, but this sort of screening is less strict as it is for ISA Analysts (see below) because Field Analysts are less privy to vital ISA information.

Occasionally, Field Analysts are assigned to unimportant covert missions to gather basic intelligence. Unless covert, they carry ISA identification marking them as ISA Field Analysts who generate a reaction similar to Earth's twentieth-century IRS investigators.

ISA ANALYST: Analysts are similar to Field Analysts, but instead reside only at ISA headquarters. Their jobs are often computer related, but many exist for various areas of knowledge and specialties. For example, Analysts might specialize in the arts for making various counterfeit items or ID. They might specialize in languages or code-breaking. Some are good at computer hacking. Others analyze alien technologies or new organic lifeforms.

In short, the Analyst's job is to support agents in the field—be they ISA Agents, Covert Ops Agents, or even Field Analysts.

Analysts are carefully recruited from both military and civilian sectors. Loyalty and dedication are paramount, as is superior abilities in one or more areas that make those persons beneficial to the agency. Telepathic scans are very intrusive to ensure compliance, and additional privacy-violating scans are conducted without warning from time to time to ensure continued loyalty.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Triangle and Free Trade Space

Introduction and History

The Southern Alliance is a group of six stellar nations that have banded together militarily by treaty in order to defend against and remain independent of the Imperium. The Endori Sovereignty was the nation to bring the alliance together, some claim forcibly, to set differences aside in order to maintain a united defense against the Imperium. The Vagar Delegation, Kelgari Federation, Sordrid Dominion, Wrekiri Consortium, United Earth Nations, and Endori Sovereignty make up this union, though the alliance between the Vagar and Sordrid is a shaky one at best as both have only just risen from the ashes of ardent war with one another.

Discounting Endori forces whose actual military strength is not known, the Vagar are now the strongest military members having recently replaced the Sordrid who suffered great loss at the hands of combined Vagar and UEN war campaigns. The Vagar are also by far the most populous, but they constitute less than half the Alliance's total population, and this is because many billions of Rians (and Terrans) have settled on Southern Alliance worlds such as Haven.

One of the most diverse and interesting areas of space that resulted from this treaty was the formation of what is known as the 'Triangle'. The Triangle was the brainchild of Endori diplomats whose goal was to create a territory accessible by all Allied members in order to strengthen allied trade. However, something the Endori could not foresee quickly changed the very nature of the Triangle only three years later: The amiable Diyo sold their southern territories (which adjoined Endori, Kelgari, and Triangle space) to the Imperium in exchange for limited mid-size particle beam technology previously of Malon design. As a major economic power, the Imperium established a TGate corridor on the Triangle border at Eridon with the purpose of introducing new competitive trade avenues. The Endori responded by massing a fleet in neutral space between the Endori border and the newly acquired Northwest Passage the Imperium had purchased, and threatened a blockade. Fearing an Imperial-Endori war would destabilize the region too soon following the new and shaky Southern Alliance treaty, and because the neutral Diyo were apparently more open to an Imperial relationship than an Alliance one, Endori diplomats sought and achieved a standing agreement with the Imperium. The agreement stipulated that Imperial military forces would be kept to a minimum in the region and would be banned from entering the Triangle, but civilian Imperial-Alliance trade would be permitted openly—a compromise the Imperium seemed satisfied with for the time being.

> *"That's the fourth Rajovalen-class destroyer we've lost this month in the Hellfire nebula. The Dominion has to be involved! There's no way those warlords could mount such attacks on their own."* —Vagar Fleet General

Though both the Endori and Kelgari signed this Imperial Trade Treaty, the UEN, Wrekiri, and Sordrid abstained while the Vagar voiced vehement opposition having already suffered numerous border incidents with massing Imperial warships along their coreward border. Many believe the Endori are merely buying time and plan to organize an Alliance-backed blockade of the Northwest Passage as soon as relationships improve between Allied members.

Meanwhile, the Imperium is obviously promoting a propaganda campaign designed to change Allied public opinion throughout UEN, Wrekiri, Kelgari, and perhaps Sordrid territories, and thus undermine Endori efforts.

Life in the Triangle

Free Trade Space includes all of the Triangle plus limited space inside of bordering territories such as the UEN, and represents free trade—no taxes or government control of any kind beyond local laws established in the cities or on the worlds where the trade takes place.

"They may be small and hairless, and they may be born without fang or claw, but I can think of no truer friend or ally than Terrans." —Vagar Proverb

Life in the Triangle can vary quite a bit from a relaxed and respectable living on Haven to a fight for survival on the crime-ridden worlds buried deep in the Hellfire Nebula. Safer worlds tend to have larger populations where citizens from many nations come to live free of government control. Crime worlds tend to deal openly in blackmarket goods and services. Some worlds have unique appeal, such as Symphony's underwater cities or Ishtar's religious cults. Local laws in most places are quite lax compared to neighboring Allied territories, but ever changing regional diversity in legalities can catch the unwary off guard. There is also no escaping the prevalent merchant and trade services the Triangle has become famous for.

Most trade and services deal in cash monies in order to escape sales tax and other government-imposed fees, but carry some risk as well. Even dealing in cash can be problematic because so many currencies have made their way into the Triangle. Endori Crown Ingots and Crown Bits are a favored currency thought to be stable and well backed. Terran Credits and Vagarian RajoBars are also used in many areas, but recently (because of the strength of the Imperial financial network) Imperial Credit Chips have seen increased use throughout the region. Most Vagar refuse to deal in credit chips as a matter of honor, and many Southern Alliance loyalists frown on their commercial use as well. Wrekiri and Sordrid currencies have recently been devalued on the open market and so are rarely used.

ALLIED PREJUDICE: Allied factions are mainly divided between the Vagar and Sordrid camps where strong enmity exists. The Endori are also disliked because of their arrogance and presumed role as Alliance leaders. The UEN is strongly allied with the Vagar camp, and the Wrekiri seem pro-Vagar as well despite the Vagar placing restrictions on Wrekiri territorial expansion. The Kelgari are mainly neutral, but a few envoys sent to Sordrid space might suggest a stronger relationship than outwardly apparent.

"'Archanis' did you say? eh, I know the way to Archanis....for a price even you could pay." —Skrow Trader

Prejudice against the Imperium is both common fare and rare depending on where one goes. The fact that the UEN and Imperium share the same species has definitely kept relations warm even though many humans despise the Imperium's oppressive government. Kelgari prejudice remains a mystery, while the Wrekiri have flooded Imperial space with travelers taking advantage of new hunting opportunities. Tensions between the Imperium and the Vagar Delegation are of course no secret, but what is suspected is new Vagar fear that if hard pressed any further the Sordrid may actually ally themselves with Imperial forces in an opportunity to regain territory lost to the Vagar which would consequently spell an end to the fragile Southern Alliance. The HonorGuard (see below) has therefore been on high alert for any Imperial or Sordrid envoys making their way to the other now that travel between the two nations is possible, with orders to stop the envoy at nearly any cost.

Overall, however, the Southern Alliance has been fairly welcoming of new species. Refugees left from worlds conquered by Imperial expansion have fled to the Triangle, creating a kind of melting pot of lost souls that most Alliance citizens have treated well.

Agencies

Of all special Southern Alliance agencies known to operate within the Triangle, the Vagar HonorGuard is the most famous and revered. The Endori's Majestic Intelligence is a close second also known to conduct clandestine missions in the area, and both are on guard for ISA Covert Ops agents.

The HonorGuard is an elite branch of operatives, fighting men, and secret police carefully handpicked by the Vagar Intelligence Bureau (VIB). HonorGuard operatives were once limited only to Vagar, but the Delegation has recently opened its ranks to trusted human, and Wrekiri member species, too.

All HonorGuard operatives are highly trained in both physical and mental matters and are deployed in myriad roles. The HonorGuard are at a disadvantage, however, when confronted by genetically-adjusted and resource-rich ISA agents, for every such meeting which turned combative thus far has ended in disaster for them.

PDF Hint
View this map at exactly 138.88% size for sharpest picture

GALAXY: DETAIL MAP

ZAON

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THE TRIANGLE

"Free Trade Space"

KEY:
- p0 - Population of Hundreds
- p1 - Pop. of 1+ Thousand
- p2 - Pop. of 100+ Thousand
- p3 - Pop. of 1+ Million
- p4 - Pop. of 100+ Million
- p5 - Pop. of 500+ Million
- p6 - Pop. of 1+ Billion
- p7 - Pop. of 10+ Billion
- p8 - Pop. of 100+ Billion
- p9 - Pop. of 1+ Trillion

- F - Fuel / Refueling Depot
- M - Military Station / Outpost

WREKIRI CONSORTIUM

UNITED EARTH NATIONS

SECTOR 43-83S

SECTOR 43-13S

VAGAR DELEGATION

KELGARI FEDERATION

ZAON EMPIRE

ENDORI SOVEREIGNTY

SORDRID DOMINION

HELLFIRE NEBULA

AQUEDUCTION STATION & CENTRAL COMMAND p2 / M / F

PROXIMA p5 / M / F

ROBOJAN p2 / F

POSEIDON II STATION p1 / M / F

KIOTO p4 / F

KBANK p1 / F

MILLER p2 / M / F

HARK p2 / F

WOYO p3 / F

HORIKO p2 / F

YURMI p2

SG-16 p3 / F

SG-18 p3 / M

N-21 p1 / M

YUAN-KI p1 / F

ARMSGUARD p3 / F

AEROWORLD p3 / M / F

SG-5 p3 / F

N-26 p1 / M / F

N-4 p1 / M

HUNTER'S LOFT p1

RIVERSIDE p2

HOLMES WORLD p1

ATLAS STATION p1 / M / F

THOLUS p2

HAVEN p5 / F

RUCKER'S WORLD p0

BROK p1

MISSION p1

BORDERLANDS p2 / F

RAJOBILAR p2 / M / F

RAJOXI p3 / M / F

RAJOZU p3 / F

RAJOGAR p2 / M / F

BLACKMANTLE p4 / F

OBERON p3 / F

SYMPHONY p2

ISHTAR p2

HELLS GATE p2 / F

ARCHANIS p3 / F

BLACKSTAR p2 / F

GRAVEYARD p1

SAR-4 DEFENSE POST p1 / M

SU-SI-BI p2 / M

TO STARBASE 5 (SECTOR 35)

ERIDON p3 / M / F

CASTLEROCK p2 / F

RYAN'S RETREAT p1

PIGLET'S BLUFF p0

PIGLET p1

HARP'S EDGE p1

SY p4 / M

SU-TI-MO p2 / M

ENDORI LISTENING POST 19 p0 / M

ENDORI LISTENING POST 23 p0 / M

ROYAL NEFIRI p4 / M / F

SLAVER'S WORLD p3 / M / F

SU-SI-TO p1 / M

TO MAJESTICA (SECTOR 49)

TO JINGI (SECTOR 38)

GRAND LURIOUS p2 / F

SU-SI-BO p1 / M

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Chapter Five

Threat Empires

Introduction

There are other stellar nations in the Milky Way galaxy other than the Imperium and Southern Alliance, some hostile and some friendly, as well as dangerous natural phenomena. Each of these is described briefly below:

Vreen Federation

The Federation is one of the most ruthless organizations in the galaxy, comprised of many individual fiefdoms which regularly band together long enough to launch offensive strikes. Vreen maintain ever changing territorial borders along both Imperial and Vagar space. Random Vreen attacks along both borders are perhaps the most violent and suicidal in nature of all galactic skirmishes, and the fighting never stops. Even large Imperial fleets that have managed to fully penetrate Vreen space can find no large target to conquer. Rather, countless guerrilla bands of these malicious humanoids and their mobile outposts move about chaotically, using the Badlands to hide and regroup, and always manage to return and perpetuate the violence.

Neither the Imperium nor the Vagar appear to be targeted any more or less over the other, and little sense can be made of Vreen strategy or lack thereof. Vreen technology is both dark and advanced, surpassing some of what is available to Vagar and Imperial shipbuilders.

In addition to an impressive war machine, Vreen agents are among the most sinister known. They are said to rival the HonorGuard in physical ability but are wickedly mischievous in the extreme. For the Vreen, paranoia, enslavement of lesser races, and a quick trigger are the norm. The Vreen appear unwilling to befriend anyone, though somehow the Diyo have managed a peaceful border with them.

The Vreen are said to have a secret facility that houses an intact and stolen Nivean cruiser, which might explain the Vreen's relatively new and advanced technology.

Diyo Assembly

Diyans, an entire race of alien bots said to have destroyed their creators, maintain a powerful but stable empire near the heart of the galaxy. They appear very logical and have established stable borders with the Imperium, Kelgari, and even the irrational Vreen. Little else is known of them, though they are apparently a sentient race as a few select individuals have migrated to bot-friendly regions in oder to live out their existence.

Endori Sovereignty

Not technically a threat empire per se, the massive Endori Sovereignty resides at the southernmost expanse of the galaxy. The Endori are known to be one of the oldest spacefaring races having traveled the stars for tens of thousands of years. But they are also an

old race too content with their power—many say a dying race. Their culture of decadence and royalty has frowned upon careers of science and technology for the last several thousand years, leaving their once supreme navy lagging behind recent Imperial and Allied invention. Furthermore, their outdated tactics and disdain for personal risk or sacrifice leaves their starfighterless navy at a distinct disadvantage. Still, many believe the Royal Navy is a major force to reckon with even today, and individual Endori warcruisers have proved themselves in recent battles time and time again.

One combined area of expertise the Endori have done nothing but continue to advance and perfect is politicts—and all of its posturing, negotiation, diplomacy, deceit, and manipulation. Through these means, and the flexing of their aging naval might, the Endori bully and control their neighboring stellar nations as well as all who oppose them. Many believe they pit neighbor against neighbor with deadly skill to achieve their own ends. No world is said to be completely free of their political grasp.

Sordrid Dominion

Thanks to Vagar propaganda spread during the SorGar war and the decidedly alien appearance and customs of the Sordrid people, the Dominion is viewed with contempt and as a threat by most Southern Alliance citizens. Their war with the Vagar had festered for over 200 years before humans of Earth sided with Vagar forces to turn the tides against them. Their once vast territories were reduced to a narrow expanse of space, and if not for the Endori sponsored SorGar treaty, even less territory would be held today.

Sordrid Generals are renown throughout the region as master strategists, and combined with their capable navy it is widely believed that it would be the Vagar who would have lost the war if not for UEN intervention. Even now, Sordrid warships maintain a distinct advantage over their enemies—a unique hit and run fast attack approach centered on their ability to use large-scale railgun technology to launch entire fighter complements in literal seconds, and all preceded by the carrier's unusually fast and accurate transition from subspace to normal space to engage hostile fleets. Enemy carriers are often able to launch no more than 1/5 of their fighters before Sordrid fighters disable enemy launch and landing bays leaving ample time to go on to destroy those capital fleets while the Sordrid carriers retreat to safety leaving the battle to their expendable and plentiful starfighter forces.

Perhaps more disturbing is the recent cloak of secrecy and closed borders the Sordrid have implemented, which many believe to concern new alliances being forged between the Sordrid and other (perhaps unknown) forces.

The Coalition

The Coalition States include nine individual territories, once warring neighbors but now banded together under a single flag. In many ways, the Coalition has taken an approach similar to the Southern Alliance in hopes of keeping the Imperium and Vagar at bay. Nevertheless, and perhaps an omen for the Alliance, the Coalition has been waging a losing battle along both Imperial and Vagar fronts, and the war has become especially personal along Vagar borders where Vagarian honor seems to have been conveniently forgotten. Reports of civilian casualties on both sides are now beginning to surface, and if it were not for the major enemies surrounding Vagar space then the unimpressive Coalition war machine would have surely been crushed long ago by the battle-hardened Vagar fleet.

Ullian Empire

Perhaps the most unusual and dangerous of all alien empires is the bizarre Ullian Empire, of which very little is known. Technologically, Ullian warships are said to far outclass all others of similar size, and even the smallest of them pack tremendous firepower—supposedly enough to threaten large Imperial warships if such an encounter has ever actually taken place.

Rumor has it that the reason Ullians are so alien and reclusive is because all of their technology, ships, and structures are built solely from living organic biotechnology that is grown. For this reason, it is believed that Ullians find ordinary technological machinery nearly impossible to decipher—just as Imperial personnel would be baffled by Ullian devices.

Even more serious than the foregoing are rumors suggesting Ullians to be a race entirely of powerful telepaths, making those aliens more than a match for most mundanes. Whether this is true or not has never been substantiated, but a scientist did publicly claim to have dissected one, though he could not be located later for an in-depth interview or accounting.

At present, the one fact that can be proven through monitoring of Malon warship deployment is that the Ullians and Malons are and have been at war for some time. Little else is known, including whether or not there is a usual victor in such engagements.

Malon Empire

First contact with the Malons sparked a long and great war with Imperial forces—a war the Malons were first winning, later losing, and now with new allies may be destined to finally win. Malons are a very technologically-advanced species, said to be far older than the Endori. Malon warships are large, devastatingly powerful, and precisely accurate. Corpse evidence recovered from past and present Imperial-Malon engagements revealed that Malons are smaller than humans and quite weak in their natural state, however that all Malons wear powered body armor that dramatically increases their mobility, strength, and resilience. This one fact is what led to the Imperial genetic development of the Xom—a warrior capable of combating the Malon marine during ground and boarding actions.

Imperial progress aimed at neutralizing the Malon threat appears to have picked up pace in recent years with not only a full recovery of territory lost to the Malons early on in the war but also the gain of new long-standing Malon ground. However, the tide of the war may be in danger of reversal now that intelligence reports confirm Malon envoys have successfully enlisted (perhaps forced) alliance and military aid from at least three powerful and unknown spacefaring species stretching from sector 06 to sector 27. Meanwhile, the Imperium continues to step up its forces along the Malon border and at nearby Starbase staging areas.

Nivean Republic

Far beyond the Southern Alliance, located at the tip of the same galactic arm, the Nivean Republic is well out of the way of expanding borders and contested space. Though not as old as the Endori or Malons, Niveans are the most intelligent of known species and their technological achievements have proved nothing short of astonishing. They are the only known species to have designed and deployed reliable and capable cloaking technology, and their propulsion, shielding, and weapons systems are equally impressive. And although individual Niveans can be found throughout the galaxy, those who harbor the republic's technological secrets are watched closely by the Nivean Protectorate—a sharp branch of Nivean intelligence operatives and secret police whose sole purpose is to keep Nivea's secrets on Nivea and nowhere else.

There are many rumors that challenge supposed Nivean political independence—some claiming massive clandestine political involvement while others border on conspiracy theorist paranoia. However, in recent years it may be more than just a coincidence that both Allied and Imperial intelligence have taken increasing interest in Nivean affairs. In fact, unsubstantiated evidence collected by UEN operatives while deep within Endori space seem to point to a cloaked TGate of Nivean design positioned within Endori territory not far from the Sordrid border. Some reports actually suggest that the Niveans may have a number of such gates positioned throughout the galaxy at key locations, and possible Nivean weapon signatures discovered on Imperial hull fragments found among the massive Vagar debris field (which consequently sparked the infamous Imperial-Vagar battle of *Rinos Thane*) may corroborate such reports and point to a clever fueling of hostilities there engineered by Nivean starships operating as deep as the Badlands. Or, it may all be an elaborate ruse. Regardless, many feel the truth will soon reveal itself.

"Terror you know not, until you've been there and watched their dark ships descend upon your disabled fleet. We always just assumed they destroyed us, but sometimes they take you..."

—Imperial Vice-Admiral Rostin on Malon engagements

Natreth Empire

Almost nothing is known of the Natreth—an empire which maintains its own independence from both its Malon-influenced and Endori neighbors. Partitioned from known space by the Banyan Rift (see below) has made contact by Imperial or Allied forces impossible thus far. The Endori claim the Natreth are a reasonable people, despite evidence of some past Natreth-Endori conflicts.

The Dead Zone and Badlands

At the heart of our galaxy lies a region of space so dense with stars that gravimetric and quantum forces make traversing the area impossible. No planets are known to have formed there, additionally leaving the area devoid of value.

Between the impassable Dead Zone and normal space lies what it is known as the Badlands. Here, violent plasmatic discharges, strong gravimetric sheering, and other hostile phenomena make travel difficult and quite treacherous. However, to some who know how to ride the turbulence safely this is an area in which to hide because sensors are unable to scan the Badlands, quantum FTL signatures are impossible to trace, and even standard visibility is reduced to a few thousand meters. Vreen-Imperial, Vreen-Vagar, and Vagar-Imperial military conflicts regularly take place here. A few Venwon warlords are also thought to remain hidden in the Badlands.

The Banyan Rift

An enigmatic natural spatial phenomenon that stretches from the northern reaches of Sector 34 to as far south as the Endori border in Sector 38 was dubbed 'The Banyan Rift' by Imperial explorers. Comprised of unimaginably powerful subspace turbulence, the Rift is entirely impassable via FTL quantum drives. Not even specially shielded FTL probes survived the journey beyond the Rift's outermost invisible quantum storms and tides. And since no stars or worlds seem to exist between the two galactic arms where the Rift resides, only the star systems at the start of the galactic arm in Sector 34 remain unreachable territory. Powerful telescopes have revealed no activity within the Rift, though given the speed of light the picture is thousands of years out of date.

The Tartarus Expanse and the Ancient Races

The ancient races are but rumors, but there are those who believe that our galaxy is home to beings millions or even billions of years older than any we see among us today. Some of these rumors may have been partially validated by unrelated stories of huge alien vessels that would suddenly appear and annihilate or capture lone ships, using technology and power off the sensor scale. But such reports could also indicate an older race, similar to the Ullian or Malon Empires, flexing their might—or even a natural phenomenon as Imperial authorities assert.

Fortunately, such disappearances have occurred far away from the galactic hub, near what is now termed the Tartarus Expanse. Colonists on the worlds of Eden and Nightfall continue to file reports of strange sensor readings, ships that appear and then vanish without a quantum wake, and strange visitors to the planets themselves. But until official expansion efforts extend out into the rim, naval investigation of that area will have to wait. In the meantime, Imperial scientists have attributed these reports to the presence of a new natural phenomena similar to that found in the Banyan Rift, which has led authorities to establish a non-physical border area around the Tartarus Expanse with warnings to all vessels to steer clear of it.

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CHAPTER SIX

Worlds

Major Worlds

The mighty ZAON Imperium dominates many thousands of heavily-populated worlds, and many thousands more constitute mining and agricultural planets that require only minimal inhabitants and are mostly automated. Other stellar nations also have worlds with large populations, but by far the bulk of settled worlds in this galaxy are within Imperial space.

Only certain major worlds and a few smaller ones with special significance are described briefly, below, and these are listed alphabetically. Note that most worlds listed below maintain powerful planetary defense grids capable of thwarting both orbital bombardment and fully suppressing terrorist nuclear threats smuggled in and detonated within cities (see Chapter 7). And, unless otherwise noted, all worlds conform to human-breathable atmospheres and physiology tolerances, including a surface gravity very close to 1.0.

ALPHA BILANA II: (53-214-219.467.408-2) Within the Doltox Nebula exists the Alpha Bilana system. What is of interest to some is the second planet in the system, Alpha Bilana II, which is a dead world but with a breathable atmosphere. In orbit of this planetoid is one of the most secretive research facilities fabled to exist: the home of BioCorps Industries. Several large commercial space stations outfitted with advanced point-defense and capital-grade weaponry to protect the station's clandestine projects are scattered about in geosynchronous orbit. A number of smaller, less well-defended stations are also said to be hidden within the thick sensor-obstructing asteroid ring that encircles Alpha Bilana II. The nature of the BioCorps' research can only be hinted at, but because many of the company's lab projects are handled by self-contained deep-space stations far away from concentrations of personnel and civilization, the work is likely very dangerous or experimental.

A few Imperial starfighters and corvettes patrol the outer worlds of the Alpha Bilana system, but several frigates along with dozens of corvettes and hundreds of starfighters help to protect the larger orbital stations. It is said that an Imperial CommandCarrier, the Imperium's mightiest warship, is within close call of this star system and occasionally visits the main stations. Little or no patrols have been seen in or around the asteroid ring area where the discreet labs are located, for the natural sensor-obstructing radiation emissions play havoc with onboard ship control systems and makes traversing the field hazardous at best. Furthermore, those labs are said to be hidden well and only vessels with the proper ship modifications can safely navigate the field and locate the smaller asteroid-based labs. All forms of communication within the field area are also disrupted due to radio interference and random quantum disruptions.

BOSSEVA: (42-945-004.007.390-4) Bosseva (BOSS-eh-vuh) is the Bossk homeworld. A strong Imperial presence and integration has left Bosseva looking much like any other Imperial state world; at least at first glance.

A distant yellow star showers Bosseva with sunlight. A total of six planetoids orbit this star; Bosseva is the fourth. The worlds beyond Bosseva are gas giants while the inner planets are solid. The Bossk homeworld requires 672 standard days to complete one solar orbit and measures 13,640 kilometers in diameter, has a surface gravity of 1.07 gravities, and a daily spin of 25.3 standard hours. Some 54% of Bosseva's surface is covered by water. Two main oceans separate the land into three masses, or continents. The southern continent supports the most life and settlements. Bosseva's climate is stable

and cool. The southern continent where most of the settlements reside experiences a tight temperature span ranging from 4 to 16 degrees Celsius (40 to 60F).

With heavy Imperial integration, Bosseva's population has grown quickly. The Bossk homeworld is also one of the very few racial homeworlds where all of the settlements and cities have been renamed in InterLak, the Imperial native English tongue. Home to about 9 billion people, 3 billion of which are Bossk, Bosseva is considered an Imperial Premiere world. The remaining 6 billion residents are largely Rian, but there is also a heavy and diverse sprinkling of other species because of the public offices and outreach programs headquartered there.

Bosseva's capital city was renamed to New Geneva by the ZAON Imperium in a show of honor of the United Earth Nations (U.E.N.) headquarters on Earth. New Geneva is by far the largest of the cities on Bosseva and one of the medium-sized cities in the Imperium, home to just over 60 million residents.

The *Imperial Civil Council* is headquartered here, as are many of the public assistance and education state offices. Moreover, the *Imperial Hall and Museum of Treaties* can be found at the heart of New Geneva.

In orbit, the Imperium maintains one battlegroup headed up by an Olympus class battleship and numerous support vessels as a show of respect and to maintain order.

CAMDEN: (53-773-422.862.372-2) Like Kaelon, Camden is yet another up and coming world. Its current population is 2 billion, and the planet's warm oceans and seasonable climate are making it a popular spot for businesses and residents. Camden's solid middle and lower-upper classes have warranted a modern defense grid and two battleships in protective orbit, supported by two battlegroups.

"Of course the ship was built at the Coralis yards... where else would a quality commercial ship be from?"
—Salesman of Light-Armed Freighters

CAPE STAR: (52-455-056.139.821-5) One of the most remarkable Imperial worlds is also one of the least populated. Cape Star, with only 60 million inhabitants, might ordinarily be an unheard of colony to most Imperial citizens if not for the fact that none of those residents reside on the planet's surface. This is because Cape Star is a magnificent gas giant with beautiful layers of discharging gas. Spectacular cloud cities float high above the astounding swirls of liquid gas lit by electrical storms and chaotic turbulence.

Perhaps the most expensive of retreat worlds, hundreds of decadent hotels and resorts are mixed alongside extraordinary condominiums and apartment homes—all with huge bay windows. Lower deck living is the most coveted, as many of those accommodations feature glassteel floors providing complete transparency to the beauty below.

With several high-ranking senators and business executives having settled here, political pressure to provide extensive military protection has resulted in a state-of-the-art defense grid as well as a full battleship. Commanded from the Olympus class battleship is close to half a standard battlegroup which enforce Imperial law and inspect arriving vessels.

COORANIDE: (63-383-954.325.453-4) No one travels to Cooranide of their own accord, for this is the Imperium's dreaded prison world. It is a place of pandemonium and misery. Huge fortresses dot the landscape, many of which are built into the side of great mountains of rock. Security within the facilities is deemed tight, though perhaps only adequate as many escapes occur each year. Still, escaping the prison fortresses on Cooranide is usually a death sentence for the planet itself is the real prison and executioner. Regular winds cut through canyons of cold rock at speeds greater than 50 kph, and frequent windstorms sweep the planet surface at speeds nearly five times that with enough airborne sediment and debris to strip the flesh from living beings. Aside from the heavy fortresses, there are no known caverns or escape from the deadly winds.

Only the violent crime prisoners are sent to Cooranide, and there are more than 2 billion of these criminals. The percentage of non-human prisoners is staggeringly high. Life within the prisons is often short and fraught with every human rights violation known, much of which is brought about by unscrupulous wardens and corrections officers. There are no rights for visitation, but a few individuals with the right clout are allowed to meet with those incarcerated here, should they wish to brave the experience.

In orbit, a lone Maya class dreadnaught heads up the meticulous blockade of this world. It is supported by three Kaelon destroyers, eight highspeed Hunter class frigates, and more than a thousand patrolling starfighters.

CORALIS MAJOR/MINOR: (35-546-644.363.285-3/2) Though not really a frontier world, Coralis Major (regularly referred to as simply 'Coralis') is a bit different than most major Imperial colonies. Foremost is the lack of any significant Imperial offices, as most of Coralis has been built on private enterprise. The largest of industries here are the countless private shipyards where commercial vessels (as well as several quasi military ships) are built and exported to nations in the Southern Alliance as well as throughout the Imperium. Combined, these shipyards are the fourth largest in the Imperium and galaxy. Millions of vessels, including private yachts, blockade runners, personal fighters, ore mining ships, freighters, civilian transports, and shuttles have been manufactured by the Coralis Shipyards. These shipyards do not, however, receive Imperial contracts, nor any Imperial funding or advanced Imperial weapons technology.

Coralis is an arid world, covered mainly by vast deserts and only 11% ocean waters. Water can be scarce at times and is often imported or collected by moisture farms. All agriculture is imported, as are most manufactured goods, but life is not overly harsh. Some 15 billion people reside here, many of them contractors, laborers, and factory workers. Industrial cities on the surface of Coralis Major produce many of the proprietary parts used in the vessels constructed in high orbit above.

Coralis tends to provide most of its own security on the ground and in orbit, but several fast Imperial dreadnaughts are stationed nearby around Coralis Minor, this world's sister planet. Coralis Minor, with its population of 700 *million*, is a military training center with a good support population. Coralis Minor is also arid, much like its more populous cousin.

Coralis Major and Minor are both protected by planetary defense grids, though the shields protecting Coralis Major are weak compared to most Imperial worlds.

From space, both Coralis Major and Coralis Minor appear yellow-orange with little in the way of cloud cover. The small oceans are thick with sand and have a pale complexion. Coralis Major is the third planet in the star system, while Coralis Minor is the second planet.

CORVAN V: (35-996-546.482.845-5) A young industrial world, Corvan V has been settled by lower and middle classes alike.

Most consumer electronics and other high-tech devices are built here. Corvan's 6 billion population are evenly distributed across most of the land masses, but pollution is becoming problematic in some areas and the beaches are no longer safe. Because of its proximity to Vreen space, several military outposts and garrisons are stationed on and around Corvan V. At least five Olympus battleships and several battlegroups operate out of the system.

DÖNO'KA: (63-934-628.428.335-2) Döno'ka (DOE+no++kah), the Kraf'kan homeworld, is not a densely-populated world, as many members of the Kraf'kan species have taken to the stars. The cities that do exist are built in and around the tropical jungles that dominate this world, but leave vast areas of virtually unexplored wilderness open and untamed. Fully 7.4 billion Kraf'kan inhabit Döno'ka and represent 99.98% of the sentient population. The remaining one-and-a-half million or so other sentients that currently inhabit this world are representative of many different races, but all are the invited guests (usually scientists or business representatives) of the Harmonium or private Kraf'kan companies. The police forces are rotated regularly and not considered to be residents.

Dübawa'ta is the capital city and largest settlement on Döno'ka. The city's population is just short of 78 million and represents fully 1% of planet's total population. Dübawa'ta sprawls for over 40 kilometers through the heart of the Dinji'to jungle, and is literally being strangled by the surrounding and integrated vegetation. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to discern where the city ends and the jungle begins.

Many archeological treasures are rumored to exist (long forgotten in the deep jungles), but are not available for study because of harsh immigration and visa controls.

One well-known point of interest to visiting businessman is the mighty *Invention Hall*. This museum occupies the top half of the largest and tallest (640 meters) artificial structure in Dübawa'ta and contains records and often actual displays of every invention developed by the Kraf'kan over the last 400 years. The museum is open to all visitors permitted on Döno'ka.

The Döno'kan star system is centered around the primary yellow star Dö'ka, and includes four planetoids. The first of these four planets is an entirely volcanic world unsuitable for supporting carbon-based life. The second planetoid is Döno'ka, the Kraf'kan homeworld, which completes its solar orbit in a leisurely 512 standard days. The remaining two outer planetoids are gas giants and quite distant from the core system. Döno'ka is a medium-sized world at 12,008 kilometers (7,461 miles) in diameter. Its daily cycle is 22.4 standard hours, and the surface gravity is 0.93 gravities. Döno'ka is also circled by two distant moons, Di'ta and Dö'ta, which are both quite large (3,920 and 4,750 kilometers, respectively). Both moons have a very low albedo, and so are nearly invisible during the day and difficult to view at night. Di'ta and Dö'ta have no atmospheres.

Tropical climates dominate the Kraf'kan homeworld, with narrow bands of temperate wilderness toward the frozen polar regions. A minor axial tilt of 11-degrees results in only minor seasonal changes. Weather phenomena is also narrow with heavy precipitation and humidity. Actual storms and winds above 20 kilometers per hour are nearly unheard of, though excessively heavy rainstorms sometimes result in flash flooding.

Millions of species of plants have been cataloged on this high-oxygen (31.2%) world, as have countless species of animal. Few predatory animals exist (believed to have been exterminated by early Kraf'kan tribes), but several deadly and carnivorous varieties of plants have been noted. The overall food chain thus begins with the tiniest species of plants and algae and also ends with large 'man-eating' trees, though one exception is noteworthy: the megasaur, which is believed to be the largest carnivore on record anywhere in the galaxy.

Only minor orbital Imperial presence is used to monitor traffic and crime. A few frigates and several hundred starfighters operate from a small orbital garrison base.

DRAKEN: (36-986-716.422.510-3) Draken is healthily populated, housing 7 billion residents, but is in many ways considered a frontier world. Its reasonably close border proximity to Skrow territories and the Triangle has intermingled many of the businesses there with those of Skrow and Alliance worlds.

From space, Draken appears aqua-blue with bands of brilliant white clouds. Its numerous island beaches and 79% water surface make Draken a comfortable world where many choose to vacation as well as conduct business. In the cities, none of which rise higher than 500 meters (about 1600 feet), life is similar to a miniaturized version of New Corsica or Tristar. Being so far away from Titan, Imperial law is a bit more relaxed and special tax incentives are offered to businesses.

Draken is resented by Southern Alliance loyalists, for they believe that the Imperium has made life on Draken too attractive—something that could affect political views regarding the Alliance's independence of the Imperium. This has given rise to several extremist groups and terrorist organizations whose aim is to disrupt life on Draken and make Allied citizens fear for their safety there. In turn, the Imperium has stationed healthy numbers of troops on Draken to maintain order while avoiding a strict police state.

Meanwhile, whereas proximity to Diyo-controlled space isn't particularly dangerous given Diyo predictability and stable borders, Vreen warfront areas are quite violent and recently growing ever closer.

Draken is therefore significant for political and tactical reasons. As such, the Imperium has stationed a full 4 battlegroups (each led by an Olympus battleship) in orbit of the world, comprising appropriate support vessels. Additionally, an occasional visit from a CommandCarrier operating from the mammoth Imperial Starbase 5 is not unusual. Draken's planetary defense grid is state-of-the-art and designed to withstand a full fleet assault.

DRIOS: (64-576-505.215.484-3) Drios is the third largest of the Imperial shipyards (also the third largest in the galaxy) and home to over 14 billion people. At least 6 Olympus battlegroups guard this world in conjunction with a potent defense grid.

EARTH: (48-815-426.544.364-3) Earth is a medium-sized world that measures 12,756 kilometers in diameter (7,926 miles), and is the heart of the United Earth Nations (U.E.N.) territory. The human homeworld has a daily rotation cycle of 24 standard hours.

Earth's population now exceeds 19 billion residents making Earth the second most heavily populated non-Imperial world and _____nth most populated in the galaxy.

Geneva is the capital of Earth and the U.E.N. The city has swelled to over 19 million, supports nearly all government bodies, and is thus at the heart of politics.

ENDORI PRIME: (49-354-986.584.303-3) The decadent Endori homeworld supports a dwindling population of six billion sovereign citizens—about half of the Endori galactic population. Primus, the capital of Endori Prime, is a palatial city surrounded by lush, manicured gardens. The Royal Palace itself is located at the city's center. In all, 100 million populate the city, though its walls once housed more than twice that. Endori take great pride in their

architecture. Local shops and buildings of commerce are likened to magnificent palaces by outsiders who have seen them. Attention to detail, relief works, and sundry embellishments are added to every surface, inside and out. Even the military and its warships is grand in design and furnishing. Marbles, tapestries, red carpets, columns, and paintings are used copiously and with taste throughout every construction and starship. Craftsmanship is always superb, the value rising with the significance of the fabrication. Places of central government are truly grand, designed to dwarf and humble visitors.

Outside of the cities lie vast unexplored tropical rain forests, untouched for all time. The climate is breezy in the natural areas, but stabilized by weather control systems around settlements. Endori Prime circles a very large yellow star, requiring 401 standard days to complete its orbit. The homeworld measures 10,050 kilometers in diameter, has a surface pull of 0.96 gravities, and has no moons. Each day fills 33 standard hours.

Endori Prime is of course closed to all non-Endori except for special delegations from Allied nation representatives. One of the three infamous Palace Ships are in protective orbit of Endori Prime, as are more than a thousand aging but deadly Endori cruisers.

GLAAM: (41-347-284.652.549-3) Glaam is a lush tropical world, also homeworld to the Glaam species. A tribal population of 4 billion exists here. This world has little Imperial significance, but many tribal crafts are exported and tourism to Glaam villages is popular enough to warrant a TGate in the start system.

GOMAR: (48-914-364.258.198-2) This is the homeworld of the peaceful Gomarians, giving rise to a population of 3.4 billion, mainly in support of varied merchant businesses. Life is simple on Gomar, a world safely located within the confines of U.E.N. territory. It was first discovered by human explorers from Earth during an early warp drive test experiment. Today, the U.E.N. stations several cruisers along with support vessels in order to protect Gomar's peaceful inhabitants.

HAVEN: (48-735-908.411.326-2) Viewed from space, Haven appears as a golden orb with craggy lines of blue. It is an arid desert world with dunes of sand, rocky plateaus, and the occasional life-giving river. The snow-covered mountains are the source of these rivers, and all population settlements run alongside the waters. Even so, harsh sandstorms sweep the plateaus regularly, preventing most agricultural development.

Just over 900 million people live on Haven, more than any other Triangle world. Haven's popularity extends back to when it was only a mining colony, but the vastness of resources locked away in the planet's crust coupled with its prime location along major Triangle trade routes have since made it a prosperous world. Overall the quality of life on Haven is no better or worse than elsewhere in the Southern Alliance, but its open trade policy to both Alliance and Imperial space has caused growing concern among Allied governments. The fact that much trade exists between Haven and its distant 'Imperial cousin', Draken, has begun to alter trade citizen opinions of the Imperium.

Free Trade Space vessels of light to medium warship caliber comprise Haven's orbital defenses. A modest defense grid (including nuclear dampening) of Imperial design was recently purchased and installed as a two-year civil project.

INDI: (38-366-408.311.645-3) Despite the decadent richness of Endori culture, naturally not every Endori is wealthy and politically significant. Many of those whose reputations have been tarnished or whose fortunes have been ruined wind up on Indi. Indi is still magnificent to behold, but represents the middle and lower classes of Endori culture. Intelligence estimates put at least one hundred of the Sovereignty's deadly cruiser warships in protective orbit of Indi. Naturally, non-Endori visitors are not allowed in Sovereign space.

ISHTAR: (48-735-894.763.481-4) After a mining expedition uncovered a bizarre alien artifact said to be indestructible, cults formed around the rocky quarries on Ishtar. Since that time, these cults have increased in number to around 670,000 permanent residents with half that many more there to visit on religious days. Accounts of strange behavior, unexplained phenomena, and unusual energy readings in and around the quarry has made that area a holy ground worshiped by those who believe in Ishtar's purpose. The 'temple' ground is protected by cult mercenaries, but open to all.

KAELON: (52-843-036.729.834-3) Well placed on the quantum corridor network, Kaelon is a newer colony world rapidly on track to becoming another New Corsica or Tristar. At present, some 22 billion people call Kaelon home. Many tax incentives are being used to lure new businesses to this world, and families as well. With its major business infrastructure, Kaelon is protected by a modern defense grid, several Olympus battleships and support fleets, and thousands of starfighters operating from orbital garrison points. Imperial police protection, strict order, but young attitude is prevalent here. Kaelon is a blue-white world covered by 46% water.

KELGAR: (47-693-218.085.694-3) The Kelgari homeworld was once open to visitors before the time of the Imperial-Vreen war and Imperial-Vagar skirmishes began. These visitors greatly admired the beauty of Kelgar's ancient crystal cities, and their documented stories now form the basis for many documentaries exhibited throughout the Alliance and Imperium. Countless such cities exist, all timeless, and house the planet's estimated 13 billion Kelgari.

Today, Kelgar as well as the bulk of Kelgari space is forbidden to all. The slightly more advanced Kelgari technologies power modern and powerful warships which patrol Kelgari borders constantly. Intelligence reports indicate that the Kelgari may have embarked upon or discovered new weapons technology which is now in preliminary testing. Whatever the case, the Kelgari maintain an expansive no-fly zone throughout the bulk of their territory around their homeworld.

KIRA GAMMA: (53-214-332.012.816-4) A civilian and military population of 200 million work in labs, administrative offices, and support facilities on Kira Gamma. Both the deep space and nebula areas of space adjacent to Kira Gamma, as well as the planet itself, is where the Imperium conducts the majority of its advanced weapons tests. Specially-designed platforms of enormous size are regularly outfitted with mega-particle beam canons as well as new point-defense turrets. A number of asteroids and other stellar bodies native to the nebula are used as test targets. These asteroids are often fitted with special sensor equipment and measuring devices to record weapon effects. Reports indicate that propulsion, sensor, and reactor tests are also conducted in the area.

As the Imperium's premiere military testbed, Kira Gamma is heavily fortified and patrolled regularly. Unauthorized vessels are stopped, boarded, and the occupants arrested. Eight of the Imperium's huge Olympus battlesthips are assigned to the area, along with extensive support fleets and regular visits from CommandCarriers operating out of the Omega system. Furthermore, the Imperium has stepped up its use of quantum detection grids and sensor nets in the area designed to identify and track unauthorized vessels.

MAJESTICA: (49-204-348.215.990-4) A population of 3.3 billion Endori makes Majestica the Sovereignty's premiere colony world, second only to Endori Prime. Naturally, everything on Majestica is palatial and beautifully appointed with incredible attention to detail. Specifically, rumor has it that Majestica is the favored Endori resort world, even more luxurious and relaxed than Endori Prime itself. Of course, despite being closer to Free Trade Space, no one who is not Endori is allowed to visit Majestica or so much as even enter Endori space. A few who have tried to visit this world have wound up working the treacherous mines on Slaver's World near the Sordrid border.

Intelligence estimates place another of the Sovereignty's magnificent palatial superships in orbit of Majestica, along with hundreds of deadly cruisers.

> *"Meridian? What a dump. Why the frack do you want to go there?."*
> —Captain Kirshnir of Hessel Chartered Flights

MAYA: (53-711-638.510.875-2) The fourth most heavily populated world in the galaxy is Maya with just over 92 billion. A massive starfleet of 2 mighty Imperial CommandCarriers, dozens of battleships, and hundreds of capital support vessels keep this business world safe from all military threats. A modern and powerful planetary defense grid further shores up this world's defenses against any possible orbital bombardment or terrorist nuclear threat, and can easily withstand sustained full-scale fleet attacks.

Maya is not unlike New Corsica or Tristar, being one of the Imperium's premiere business worlds, though the megacorps situated here represent many of the galaxy's high-technology research facilities and more liberal business ventures. Ongoing megalopolises stretch across much of the planet's temperate continental plateaus, some city structures rising more than 7 kilometers.

From space, Maya is a black orb with green streaks representing oceans covering 36% of the planet's surface. The green algae in these oceans glows with self-luminescence and provides the foundation for exotic carnivorous sea life. During twilight and night hours, these oceans cast their light into the planet's cloud cover, tinting the landscape.

MERCER: (52-505-165.777.918-3) The bulk of cutting-edge healthcare and medical science research facilities make up over 50% of Mercer's total revenues. Leading pharmaceutical and bio-research companies are also based here, and it is said that a few high-ranking politicians and corporate executives venture here to check-in to the best hospitals in the known galaxy. A total population of 10 billion requires security and strict law enforcement as the norm. Mercer is often toted as one of the safest worlds in the Imperium, due to the added police presence, ISA operatives, and orbital military presence. Mercer is a bright-blue world with frequent rainfall. Natural constituents in the oceans and cloud vapor result in an unusually blue sky that tints the sunlight somewhat.

Several battleships accompanied by battlegroup fleet ships regularly patrol Mercer as added deterrent. The defense grid is thought to be quite capable.

MERIDIAN: (52-085-277.793.110-3) Meridian is heavily populated, home to over 12 billion denizens, but mainly a haven for the lower class. Meridian's population of 12 billion biological beings is less than half the 25 billion bot population busily turning out industry wares. As a heavy industrial center, Meridian supplies many of the mundane manufactured goods imported by other worlds around the Imperium. Various corporations under defense contracts produce parts and hull pieces which are then shipped to the Omega shipyards. Aside from the lower per capita income, Meridian is still a reasonable home for many. Its streets are certainly less clean and orderly than premiere worlds though crime is not a major problem for most. As a strong economic center, Meridian is well defended from space, with several battlegroups. Naturally, the planet supports a powerful defense grid.

From space, Meridian appears gray from thick clouds and heavy pollution. Numerous atmospheric processing plants and terraforming centers are hard at work keeping the air breathable even though the world was fully capable of sustaining life when first settled. Industrial centers spill into most of the city sprawls which serve mainly as massive housing units for low-income workers. Visitors term this a dreary world, with cold high-rise cities built from blue-gray unfinished steel, and countless catwalks and wire-suspended trolleys.

MOG: (65-904-808.324.648-4) Mog (pronounced moeg) is the dark Morg homeworld, heavily polluted with an oxygen-methane atmosphere. It is barely habitable by the Morg whereas visitors must usually wear envirosuits whether outside or not. One-third of the surface is covered by heavily polluted water. A strong mix of oxygen, methane, nitrogen, radon, and krypton gas makes up the breathable air. Powerful winds sweep the surface clean, pulling millions of tons of debris into the turbulent atmosphere and shrouding the world in darkness. The winds are so fierce that arriving spacecraft must get clearance between storms before landing or departing. Mog's natural ecosystem is dead. Everything that remains now is artificial and a few parasitic animals that feed off the city streets.

All of Mog's population is either subterranean or limited to the massive city sprawls that dominate the canyons and trenches (for protection against the turbulent atmosphere). Within these settlements, Mog supports 2.1 billion inhabitants—2 billion of which are Morg. Drokus is the capital city. It is situated at the bottom of the deepest canyon, near the equator. Some 41 million residents live there.

Life on Mog is quite poor, though the Morg do export a great number of medical and pharmaceutical goods at good profit. In fact, Mog is the number two producer of pharmaceutical agents in the galaxy (just behind Mercer). A complete set of societal laws is in place on Mog, but they are rarely enforced. Sickness and widespread epidemics plague much of the city streets and so residents rarely leave their homes. Corruption is rampant and there is healthy black market for medical supplies and services.

NEW CORSICA: (52-044-074.479.429-2) The second most heavily populated planet in the galaxy is New Corsica. As one of the oldest of the Imperial colonies, New Corsica has grown to house just over 98 billion inhabitants. The planet itself is Earth-sized and covered by 62% water but, unlike Titan, New Corsica's city sprawls end at every ocean's edge. Not much in the way of unsettled land remains, and oxygen processing plants are prevalent here. Visitors should expect continuous megalopolises, some more than 11 kilometers high.

From space, New Corsica appears as a white-blue world with large oceans but where most of the continents are dotted by city lights. From the dark side, frequent streaks of bright blue ionized gas rip across the skies in beautiful spectacles visible to both orbiting vessels and planetside residents—and sometimes traveling more than 2,000 kilometers before dissipating.

New Corsica's infrastructure closely resembles that of Titan, and many other megacorporations are also headquartered here. Low

crime and a professional business atmosphere mirrors that found in the Imperial City. Food is of course imported as are most other supplies needed to maintain the planet's struggling infrastructure.

In orbit of this prized world circles 2 CommandCarriers, several battleships, and appropriate support fleet vessels. The ubiquitous Imperial Port Authority again employs massive and sophisticated measures to handle the nearly 15 million vessels which arrive and depart from New Corsica each day. Like Titan, this world is also protected by a robust planetary defense grid consisting of powerful force-fields and nuclear dampers, not to mention a strong orbital defense platform.

NEWPORT: (54-996-912.202.405-3) Renowned throughout the Imperium and the Southern Alliance, Newport is the galaxy's premier resort world. Massive theme parks, adventure rides, zoos containing rare life from around the galaxy, and even televised gladiator arenas are based here. A strong Earth influence can be seen in many of these attractions. Newport maintains a huge support population and other non-related business populations as well. Together, some 2 billion individuals live on Newport. Vacationing tourists account for a billion visitors each month and Newport's accommodations are first-class when it comes to service. The Imperial Port Authority maintains significant operations in orbit so that the heavy traffic can be managed. Additionally, tourists are made to feel safe by a moderate and friendly police force coupled by strong planetary defenses and several Imperial battleships backed up with numerous support vessels and thousands of starfighters.

NIMBUS: (51-547-355.404.808-4) Though primarily a business world, Nimbus has flourishing tourism due to its highly unusual upper atmosphere phenomena. Visible from both the planet's surface as well as from orbit, huge hurricane vortexes churn among the higher cloud layers forming awe-inspiring spectacles. Many are more than a thousand kilometers across, and there are always dozens in effect at any given time. Traffic to and from the surface must be carefully monitored and steered from traffic control stations in orbit and on the planet's surface. It is not unusual to experience long delays or even canceled flights. Overall, Nimbus supports close to one billion residents. Several destroyers and many frigates offer up protection against raids and other military threats.

NIVEA: (97-277-348.064.325-3) The Nivean homeworld is restricted and perhaps the most mysterious of all homeworlds—heavily defended by the most technologically-advanced stellar navy known to exist. Advanced intelligence reports now put the Nivean population there at around sixty million, but this information could easily be flawed given the extremely advanced technology used by Nivean culture. There are even unsubstantiated reports of Nivean cloaking technology having been adapted to the planet itself.

Not even the Imperium knows what lies behind the Nivean borders. Some also believe that cloaked Nivean incursions into several Allied and Imperial territories take place regularly, though recent investigations by the **Imperial Safeguards Agency (ISA)** indicate that the Nivean starforce is not as dangerous as previously suspected.

OCEANUS: (52-556-431.579.054-3) An expensive world largely reserved for the upper class, the surface of great Oceanus is completely covered by oceans. Despite being a large world at 21,480 kilometers in diameter, Oceanus does not have a large volume of liquid water because most of its oceans are no more than thirty or forty meters deep. Endless coral reefs full of exotic sea life speckle all of the warm waters, forming a few atolls here and there. Oceanus' 11 billion residents still leaves this world as the ____nth most populated world in the galaxy. The inhabitants live in hundreds of thousands of floating resort cities, many of which extend down to the seabed. Artificial beaches are commonplace, and many of the galaxy's young and posh businesses are headquartered here in this tropical paradise. Submarines, boats, and ships are as common a mode of transportation as skycars for these residents. As a general rule, most luxuries of life (such as housing, cuisine, and entertainment) are about double the normal cost. Sailing is also a favorite pastime for those who can afford their own boats.

When viewed from space, Oceanus is warm and inviting, a beautiful blue and white orb in orbit of twin suns. No atmospheric processing plants are required, as the ocean's thriving plant life supplies all the oxygen its new inhabitants could need. Indeed, many claim the fresh high-oxygen air has an uncanny sweetness to it. As a wealthy world, security is plentiful and a strong planetary defense grid is one of the most modern in the Imperium. A potent fleet patrols the system, too.

OLYMPUS: (52-415-876.130.284-3) By far the physically largest of the settled worlds, Olympus measures 62,650 kilometers in diameter—about 5 times the diameter of most habitable planets. Its lack of dense core materials leaves the world with manageable gravity of 1.12Gs. From space, Olympus is a blue, white, and yellow colored planet with rings. The rings comprise mainly ice and rock, are visible from the planet's surface, and quite beautiful. Olympus' sun is distant and does not adequately warm the planet. Luckily, stable geothermic activity is abundant and heats the crust to a level capable of supporting life.

Only 27% of Olympus' surface is covered by water, so much of the land remains undeveloped despite the roughly 65 billion inhabitants that reside there, and few cities rise to even a single kilometer. With the fifth highest population of any galactic world, a variety of businesses operate on Olympus, including offices of major corporations as well as countless manufacturing and industrial facilities.

Like all premiere Imperial worlds, Olympus is guarded. An Imperial CommandCarrier and multiple battleships are stationed here at all times. Because of the planet's size and undeveloped land, the planetary defense grid is patchy, protecting only settled areas. The nuclear dampers portion of the grid, however, have been situated around the globe entirely.

OMEGA: (53-206-332.236.157-3) Omega is the Imperium's number one shipbuilding facility. Most of the CommandCarriers and all of the mighty starbases were born at the facilities on and in orbit of Omega. The largest shipyards in the galaxy include onsite manufacturing and industrial parts companies as well as a population of barely 52 billion contractors, laborers, administrators, and their immediate and extended families, making this the sixth most heavily populated world. Much of the population also supports other non-defense related companies and businesses. From space, Omega appears blue-gray in color, a once beautiful world with warm oceans now polluted by industry.

With the great tactical importance of the Omega shipyards, a massive starfleet is kept in orbit at all times. At least 2 (and often 3) full CommandCarrier groups patrol the Omega system regularly. The planetary defense grid is state-of-the-art. Security is very tight both in orbit and on the planet, and visitors are questioned (sometimes interrogated) more thoroughly here than elsewhere.

ORCAS: (53-366-606.455.333-4) Life is harsh on Orcas, a world first settled as a penal colony. Today, around 8 billion lower-class residents claim this dismal world as home, though some unofficial estimates place the population as much higher than this. It is said

that it never stops raining on Orcas, and mudflows cause billions of credits in damage to settlements and cities on an annual basis. Coupled with the rain are cool but stable annual temperatures, a very long day of 81 hours followed by a short night of only 6 hours (due to twin suns), and widespread disease.

The economy is driven mainly by small manufactured exports. Crime is not as rampant as is the lack of proper or modern healthcare and the spread of disease on Orcas, but a few Trade Syndicate sponsored organizations are known to operate in secrecy. Most of the epidemics on Orcas are quite serious, though pose little or no danger to other worlds where modern medical science is available. Nevertheless, Orcas is under a low-grade quarantine that makes departing the world rather difficult if one hasn't the proper connections. The quarantine is enforced by Captain Rurik, a ruthless military commander who captains a lone Maya-class dreadnaught supported by numerous support vessels and outpost garrisons. The primary duty of these forces is to enforce the quarantine and stifle crime.

PACIFICA: (42-854-259.939.355-4) An enigma to Imperial economists who remain baffled by the relatively large civilian population which has settled here, Pacifica is also an Imperial Marines training ground. Temperate but cool conditions coupled with atmospheric phenomena leave Pacifica forever shrouded in heavy fogs and mists.

Military training takes place on the large northern continent, separated from the civilian-settled areas south of the equator by the Osarius ocean. The Imperium uses these vast continental expanses for extended widespread troop warfare exercises. Annual casualties exceed 11,000 per year.

Total population is around 700 million, with only 120 million of that representing military personnel. Because of its military significance, one or more battleships partrol in regular orbit of Pacifica.

PALASADE: (52-445-519.885.611-3) Renowned for its countless beautiful waterfalls, frequent geological plate movements coupled with a large near-orbit moon cause massive shifts in sea waters which flow from basin to basin along many rivers in grand spectacle. Stable rocky precipices provide excellent foundations for city development while offering staggering views of grand falls—some more than two kilometers high. The beauty found here demands a high price, and few can afford to live on Palasade. Still, some 3 billion entrepreneurs, retirees, and business executives live on this world. Tourism is largely forbidden, but many visitors arrive under guise of business. The upperclass citizens here have petitioned for significant naval protection, and so Imperial battlships are accompanied by various support vessels to guard this world.

RAJOAL: (57-734-276.742.350-2) Rajoal is the Vagar homeworld and is also considered one of the Southern Alliance's strongest member nation worlds. It is by far the most heavily-populated non-Imperial world and the eighth most populated in the galaxy. Rajoal circles a bright yellow binary star system. Orbital velocity is brisk, the Vagarian year being completed in only 194 standard days. Thirty-two percent of Rajoal's surface is covered by water. Plains and plateaus constitute the bulk of the surface relief, with the ocean floors carved like massive canyons. Much of the land is arid and desert like. Winds are minimal, leaving temperature soaring in the inner plains. Rajoal measures 12,615 kilometers in diameter. The daily spin is 27.4 standard hours and has a surface gravity of 1.03Gs.

A total of 38 billion Vagar call Rajoal home, and there are relatively no alien residents or visitors. The capital of Rajoal is the city Rajozar. With a population of approaching 500 million, Rajozar is by far the largest city and starport on Rajoal. A variety of plains herbivores and smaller carnivores populate the open deserts and plains. There are also relatively large numbers of small mammals and reptilian creatures which dot the landscapes.

The Vagar have kept the bulk of their military infrastructure at home, making Rajoal the premiere shipyard within that nation. A powerful Vagar fleet maintains presence in the Rajoal system, though the bulk of Vagar forces are spread thin among the many hostile borders the nation constantly defends against.

RAVEIAL: (36-648-791.358.226-2) Home to about 34 billion lifeforms, 31 billion of which are Skrow, Raveial is the Skrow homeworld and the ____nth most heavily populated galactic world. Raveial maintains its own Skrow-based military and only a minor Imperial oversight presence.

It is said that the biggest, best, and most lucrative black markets anywhere in the galaxy are located on Raveial. Certainly, a body can buy virtually anything given the right price and assuming they're cunning enough to avoid attracting the local prince's attention.

As there are hundreds of individual Skrow principalities, some approaching a billion strong, no one capital city exists. Rather, each principality maintains a capital city within a given region as their own. Skrow cities and townships are filthy to say the least, and piles of refuse and non-recyclable junk sometimes pile more than several hundred meters high. Disease is rampant, and the entire atmosphere is stained a putrid yellow-brown from pollution and decaying garbage. City streets are often nothing more than carved pathways winding through compacted trash, with local businesses nearly always dumping immediately outside their doors.

Raveial is 12,170 kilometers in diameter. The planet spins rapidly on its axis, completing a rotation in only 13 standard hours. Raveial completes its orbit around a bright yellow star in 391 standard days.

REGIS: (63-545-299.389.479-2/Starbase-2) Starbase 2 is located within the Regis system. The _____th most populous world in the galaxy, Regis is a rather foreboding world as seen from space. Unique atmospheric phenomenon of discharging gas leaves Regis with a thick fiery-red cloud cover pierced by violent storms of lightning. Though these storms are limited to the upper atmosphere, all of Regis has been shrouded in red twilight, constantly lit by flashes from above. At night is when the red glow and strobing sky is most ominous, for by day much of its fury is drowned out by sunlight.

Just under 28 billion residents call Regis home. Like Tristar and New Corsica, the population has spread to every part of the planet. Unlike those overpopulated worlds, the city sprawls on Regis have more gaps than continuous sprawls and none rise higher than two kilometers.

Regis' close corridor proximity with Siph has spawned a healthy industrial scene which mars much of the planet surface. The galaxy's second largest shipyards are located in orbit and so labor jobs are plentiful. Also in orbit of Regis is a large permanent fleet of Imperial warships, including 2 CommandCarriers, which operate from the nearby Starbase 2. Planetary defense grid shields extend to protect much of the shipyards.

RIVERSIDE: (48-735-714.225.503-3) Rolling hills and plains, beautiful mesas, and sparkling rivers make Riverside a popular new colony among Free Trade spacers and their families. But Riverside is revered by another group as well: the Noraanae, a tribal group of primitive humanoids indigenous to the world and now being driven from their homelands by newcomers. The Noraanae, a highly spiritual people with no written language and limited Intellect, were first

met peacefully by settlers who later turned on them when desirable land was seen as ideal grounds for modern construction. A guerilla war has since developed and more and more Noraanae have acquired and learned to use modern blaster firearms. Life on Riverside can therefore be dangerous at times, but unfortunately for the Noraanae, Free Trade spacers are upping their mercenary counts and staking claim to more of the Noraanae homeland. Population totals have recently risen to 520,000 (not including the several million Noraanae thought to exist). A few members of the Life Now Imperial lobby group have arrived in Free Trade Space to protest the treatment of the Noraanae, and are also supported by several Earth-based advocacy groups, but have been met less than favorably by most Southern Alliance citizens.

RUBICON: (22-763-024.185.487-4) The residents of Rubicon believe their world to be holy and touched by the gods. Despite practice of organized religion being against Imperial law, all of Rubicon's 17 million inhabitants do just that. The Imperium is aware of Rubicon and its purpose but given the remote location there is little Imperial interest. The religion practiced is steeped in secrecy, but seems based on the goal of rising to a higher plane of awareness and personal immortality.

To date, there has been no intelligence gathering efforts with aim of discovering Rubicon's true nature, but if the population of followers continues to rise quickly then just such an inquiry will take place. Current rumor has it that a band of powerful telepaths has gathered and holds power there, but there have also been rumors of strange glowing beings, possibly aliens, who preside over ceremonies. Its proximity to Ullian space has both raised questions and concerns by some, though the followers of Rubicon fear not the world's location nor Imperial intervention.

Although a few Imperial border outposts are quite close by, there is no Imperial presence in orbit of Rubicon.

RYAN'S RETREAT: (48-635-588.373.830-2) Established recently and once in contested space, Ryan's Retreat was mainly a frontier agricultural world. But, to those who knew its secret, this retreat dealt in certain black market services mainly including prostitution. Once swallowed up by Imperial borders, many believed these black market services would be quickly extinguished—nothing could be further from the truth. Ryan's Retreat continues to flourish and provides a variety of personal services that would make any Joplyd jealous.

"Sorry, ma'am. There are no scheduled flights to Ryan's Retreat. Why? Are you looking for work?" —overheard at the Palace Cruiselines ticket counter

Limited ground security protects the minuscule population of around five thousand farmers, black market workers and their customers, and freight companies. There is no orbital protection.

SIPH: (73-277-312.565.405-4) The Median homeworld is huge, measuring about three times the diameter of most habitable worlds, and generates very high gravity—over four times that of the galactic standard. The entire population of 18 billion is Median, for few species could withstand the high gravitational pull. Siph is volcanically active and hot. The Median civilization manufactures a number of the machine parts used aboard commercial and some military starships. Huge defense contracts allow the export of these products to Regis, Omega, and even Drios.

Siph is protected by the Median Dynasty's own capable navy of battleships, dreadnaughts, countless frigates, escorts, and fighters, while the Imperium also maintains one Olympus battleship-led battlegroup as a show of force.

SOR: (68-472-285.048.891-4) Very little is known of the Sordrid homeworld, though intelligence estimates put Sor's population at around 13 billion—all Sordrid. The world is closed to outsiders, including even Southern Alliance ambassadors, but there are scattered reports of Sor being a tropical world riddled with countless variety of fungus, some forming trees more than a kilometer tall.

Intelligence estimates place over half of Sordrid naval forces in protective orbit of Sor, probably at the expense of its total territory, but possibly making it the most heavily guarded Alliance world.

STOWELL: (44-947-054.764.358-4) Known as the largest wrecking yard in the galaxy, Stowell is a rocky industrial planet of 98 to 99 million workers where recycling centers and remanufacturing companies continue to lose pace with the rapid influx of scrapped vessels, space wreckage, mothballed space stations, and old stripped warships. The industry is mainly on the planet's surface or in orbit of it, but the expansive wrecking yard is an area of deep space about half an hour by sublight out from Stowell. Wreckage added to this massive junkyard is given sufficient inertial motion to keep it still and stable in relation to other discarded items so that the entire spaceyard is kept in a stable orbit around the sun and continuously aligned with the planet Stowell throughout its solar year.

The Imperium maintains one of its destroyers, a half dozen frigates, more than fifty corvettes, and hundreds of starfighters to deter junk dealers and scavengers. Still, with several million discarded vessels (most of which are civilian) or fragments thereof, it is hard to protect the entire spaceyard and clever dealers often make off with useful equipment and sometimes even entire vessels. Of course, little of this wreckage is of any real value, but occasionally commercial vessels with relatively minor hull breach damage are found mostly intact within these junk heaps, though sensor, com, weaponry, and shield generation equipment have been stripped.

SUMATRA: (52-305-377.760.593-2) This is the Imperium's premiere food-service and processing world. Produce from over a thousand agricultural worlds wind up here for processing, and over one-hundred thousand animal farms dispensing hundreds of millions of slaughtered livestock are located directly on Sumatra for easy and fast delivery to the wide-array of megacorporations based on Sumatra that specialize in fresh and packaged foods. Sumatra exports account for nearly half of all foodstuffs imported by other Imperial worlds around the galaxy. Sumatra's population of 4 billion represents food manufacturing workers and their families, though most of the work is automated. Sumatra is a temperate world with a 28-hour daily rotation.

The Imperium places food safety and security concerns high on its list of priorities. Raw foodstuffs and finished exports are checked several times before and after delivery to major worlds. Additionally, the Sumatra star system is heavily patrolled and protected by a capable defense fleet consisting of three full battlegroups and an excessive count of patrol frigates and fighters. Visitors are monitored and checked frequently, and many ships in the area are boarded regularly and without warning. A heavy sprinkling of troops on Sumatra's surface keep the planet under martial law.

SYMPHONY: (48-735-714.671.292-5) Symphony is a small but unique border world within Free Trade Space. The planet is entirely ocean with no surface land masses. The seafloor, however,

is less than a kilometer below the surface in most areas and home to a number of undersea domed cities. Rich resource metals are contained in the seabed, but once miners and their families were able to take-in the underwater beauty and exotic ocean life, Symphony became a popular resort world for Southern Alliance citizens and traders. Symphony's current population, including visiting guests, amounts to around 520,000 though is expected to double within the next three years.

TAKARA: (61-185-082.049.313-3) Once carved by glacial rivers, Takara is a beautiful world of immense canyons, sea cliffs, and plateau savannas. Its temperate climate and cool oceans are loved by many, as Takara's population continues to rise. At present, there are 1 billion people living on Takara and more arrive each day. Businesses are mainly local, but a few corporations are headquartered here, too. Additionally, Life Now, a wildlife and environmental advocacy organization has moved its headquarters here fighting to keep Takara pure. Takara's planetary defense grid is only partially operational, but between one and two dreadnaughts supported by several frigates, escorts, and a few hundred starfighters regularly patrol the area.

THARSIS: (62-962-118.675.707-3) Tharsis is one of the Imperium's older colonies, but its population has dwindled to around 1 billion. Originally designated a resort colony, the lush jungles and tropical forests were a vacationer's delight. But all of that changed in 1070 when tourists began dying from fatal encounters with the natural wildlife. Efforts to control the wildlife proved unsuccessful and bad image surrounded Tharsis, destroying its tourism industry. Today, huge theme parks, hotels, and preserves have been stripped and abandoned, many now overrun with wildlife and vegetation. The population continues to fall as businesses closeup shop or relocate to other worlds. Tharsis' declining importance leaves only a few destroyers in orbit for protection, though the planet does maintain a powerful defense grid once used to protect over 10 billion. Tharsis has gained a reputation for some of the best game hunting in the galaxy, though many such hunters never return. Indeed, the remaining population is said to be declining faster by incident than those who can afford to leave.

TITAN: (52-288-631.315.149-2) From space, Titan looks like an obsidian orb, streaked and dotted by endless patterns of lights. Almost the entire planet's land surface has been covered by city structure, most of which is at least one-half kilometer deep. Even some of the ocean areas near heavily populated zones support continuing city sprawls built upon enormous stilts or giant raft structures. A few islands, the polar regions, and Titan's vast ocean areas remain unsettled.

The most astounding feature of Titan is its remarkable infrastructure designed to support the planet's mind-boggling population. Nowhere in the galaxy does any system come close to the efficiency seen in Titan's atmospheric and water processing, management of imports and waste exports, or power generation. All foodstuffs and myriad manufactured goods are imported to Titan in a never-ending cycle. The largest fusion power plants in the galaxy are located far beneath the surface of Titan and supply energy to the entire planet while countless oxygen processing plants help, along with the ocean, to make the air breathable. Most waste products are recycled while others are vaporized. A few items of waste are even exported.

The Imperial City itself is located in the northern hemisphere just above the equator and at over 200 kilometers in diameter is by far the largest single city sprawl anywhere in the galaxy—though it is often difficult to tell where the Imperial City ends and the rest of the city planet begins. At its heart, the Imperial City rises an unspeakable 29 kilometers in height and is home to just over 50 billion residents. The astonishing architecture and city-wide planning in place that make such a fantastic infrastructure viable baffles even the individual engineers that contributed to the massive undertaking long ago. The city's mammoth population represents nearly 5% of all of Titan, which supports just over 1 trillion inhabitants. Of this, less than three-percent are aliens (about 28 billion).

Anything and everything can be found here. Countless fantastic museums, amphitheaters, and arenas exist in and around the Imperial City, and no single living being has ever visited them all. Many of the galaxy's megacorporations are also headquartered here.

Titan's city streets and skyways are clean and orderly, and there is a distinct air of business professionalism just about everywhere—though some crime and poverty can of course be found among the lowest elevations of the city's foundations. Higher up, most of the building architecture is majestic and awe-inspiringly massive, but some have likened it to that which is cold and menacing. Imperial police troops are quite prevalent, and it is no wonder why Titan is among the safest worlds with very little in the way of violent crime.

In orbit of Titan, the Imperium maintains a massive presence aimed as a deterrent to all rival nations. Alongside of Starbase Titanus, which is parked in orbit of Titan, there are exactly 7 of the giant CommandCarriers and thousands of other capital ships stationed at all times within the Titan system. Additional forces are sometimes present as part of special envoys or Senatorial proceedings, and it is not uncommon to see additional CommandCarriers here during annual ceremonies. But Titan's true defenses are planetside. The largest and most powerful planetary screens in the galaxy protect the Imperial homeworld while orbital garrison-like defense platforms offer additional firepower. Several redundant nuclear dampers (see Chapter 7) are in place and prevent large-scale terrorist bombings, inner-city nuclear threats, and orbital bombardment. Titan's defense shield is said to have been designed to withstand an extended full fleet Malon assault.

The only significant danger to citizens of Titan is that which occurs in the skyways and spacelanes. Overcrowding in these trafficways has become such a problem that accidents, including orbital collisions, are not entirely uncommon—Galactic News Network (GNN) reports at least one such collision every few hours. Collisions almost never involve military vessels, but smaller merchant freighters (especially those of older design) are prone. If it were not for the extensive mass transit systems and elaborate and highly sophisticated Imperial Port Authority, accidents would be truly commonplace in light of more than one-hundred million vessels arriving and departing each day.

Overall, Titan is a large world at 22,108 kilometers in diameter, though the planet's surface gravity is a mere .97Gs due to a total mass of just under that of Earth (Earth has greater qauntities of heavy metals and minerals in the planetary core). Technically the surface of Titan is 44% water, but if floating and stilt cities are included then the figure drops to 38%. The land masses comprise many islands and small continents. The largest, Aria, is where the Imperial City rises. Titan has a daily rotation cycle of exactly 25 standard hours, defining the galactic standard day. With its four geosynchronous moons, much of Titan's climate is markedly more stable than that of Earth's. The average temperature is 18 degrees Celsius (64F) and doesn't change much throughout the year. The polar regions are colder and contain unsettled ice caps. The coolest of the climates (near the poles) can drop to freezing on a year-round basis. Temperatures around the equator (and the Imperial City) maintain

21 degrees Celsius (70F) year round with a breeze lowering the temperatures slightly.

Primarily dominated by coniferous plant life, much of Titan's natural ecosystem was eradicated long ago in order to accommodate additional city sprawls. Today, huge artificial gardens help to provide oxygen, as do a number of undersea kelp farms, but the majority is produced by artificial atmospheric processing plants. There is very little in the way of natural animal life which still survives here—and most of what is present has adapted to survive in the polar regions or on the city streets or gardens.

TORANA III: (53-582-124.322.685-3) Although a bit distant, Torana III began as one of the Imperium's first mining colonies. The snow-covered world is quite cold and residents always bundle-up before braving the outdoors. Snowstorms are common and the occasional blizzard wreaks havoc on visitors. Torana's ocean life supplies most of the world's life-giving oxygen, and summers allow the equatorial snow to melt just long enough for life to emerge.

Torana's population is mainly lower class, and most find life to be harsh here. The reason Torana has endured as a mining colony for so long is because the extremely rich and abundant mineral deposits in its crust and mantle have been very difficult to retrieve. Vast labyrinths of titanium mines extend far below the planet's surface, some more than twenty kilometers deep. Mining accidents are not uncommon, but this is a way of life for the residents of Torana III.

"Have you ever been to Tharsis? No?? Then watch your fracking mouth!"
—Ur'hok-Vok, Wrekiri Hunter

From space, Torana appears as a white pearl sprinkled with black speck cities. The 1.2 billion residents are protected by a weak planetary defense field and only a lone destroyer on any regular basis.

TRISTAN: (63-133-945.722.112-3) Also known as iceworld, Tristan is a cold planet with a continuous blanket of snow. Despite harsh weather conditions, some 4 billion persons have settled here in admiration of Tristan's white beauty and snow sports. Various forms of skiing are a regular pastime, and Tristan is also adored by naturalists. The world does house a number of untapped and valuable resources, but residents have thus far managed to keep industry away, making this a sort of winter resort retreat where tourism accounts for most of Tristan's annual revenues.

From space, Tristan is a beautiful white pearl untouched and unmarred by industry. A lone dreadnaught and several destroyers supported by a few outposts orbit this world in defense of it.

TRISTAR: (52-494-063.085.429-3) In most respects, Tristar is identical to New Corsica only it supports a 'mere' 96 billion inhabitants, making it the third most populous world in the galaxy. Another 2 Imperial CommandCarriers and many other warships guard this world, and its planetary defense grid is quite powerful.

Tristar's surface is 59% water and beautiful from space. Its name is derived from the rare trinary star system it orbits, providing a unique three-sunned sky and no full night. In lieu of night, a dim twilight from the weakest of Tristar's suns is favored by those who prefer the dusk. The days can get uncomfortably warm for some, with noontime temperatures regularly soaring to 32 degrees (90F).

ULTIMA: (52-656-664.860.681-3) Ultima is a temperate mountainous world famous throughout the galaxy for its high mountain peaks. The highest, Mount Leviathan, measures 51 kilometers above sea level and is the largest known mountain in the galaxy. Ultima is a relatively large world, measuring 18,350 kilometers in diameter, and has a surface gravity of 1.23Gs. Thirty-eight percent of its surface is covered by water, though the oceans are dotted by numerous islands.

Ultima is regarded for its beauty, but with most of the landmasses consisting of steep slopes, settlements have been difficult. Nevertheless, Ultima's beautiful snow-topped mountains and lush pine-like forests have attracted over 2 billion residents. Many of these residents are retirees, but most represent middle-class families and the many businesses that operate from here. The Imperium has stationed a lone dreadnaught, several destroyers, and additional starfighters in orbit of Ultima as well as a defense grid.

Tourism is a regular industry for Ultima, and the galaxy's hikers, naturalists, and adventure-seekers come to Ultima to climb its mountains. Few have been able to master Mt. Leviathan, and of those fewer yet have been human.

WAYOUL: (48-808-342.115.276-3) The Wrekiri homeworld is called Wayoul, which translates to 'Hunter's Perch'. Wayoul orbits a large red giant star, completing its yearly orbit in 291 standard days. Mildly volcanic, continual tectonic shifts cause frequent earthquakes. Thirty-nine percent of the planet's surface is water, though the distinction between where the ocean begins and the swamps end is difficult to tally. A cool but tropical climate promotes a thick undergrowth and lush jungles over most of the land surface. The polar regions are ice-capped, with temperate regions mainly deserted. A few of the planet's larger animal species have been hunted to extinction, but countless more remain. The jungles are quite dangerous, but to the Wrekiri this is a hunter's paradise.

All of the planet's cities are situated on the outskirts of the jungles and spill over into the temperate desert areas. Most settlements are sparsely populated and few present the feeling of a dense metropolis. The Jungles are reserved for hunting expeditions and competition. Wayoul supports a mere 5.9 billion residents, 5.7 billion of which are Wrekiri. Of the remaining 200 million, 180 million are Vagar while the rest are an assortment of alien races. The capital city is also called Wayoul and boasts a population over 20 million.

No special visas are required to enter Wrekiri territory, but most visitors find Wrekiri attitude harsh to say the least. Both Southern Alliance and Imperial citizens are welcome, but Imperial Naval personnel are refused entry even when on leave. Considerable trade exists between Wrekiri worlds and the rest of the Southern Alliance. Some, albeit not very much, trade also endures with Imperial frontier worlds. The overall level of prosperity is poor, however, as the per capita income is below the galactic poverty line. Wayoul's primary industry is domestic shipbuilding with very few exports.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Understanding Modern Technology

The Marvels of Tomorrow

In Zaon, the laws of physics are no different than they are now. The universe is still the same universe, people are born and people die, but the civilization grows. With that growth comes a deeper understanding of nature and thus more ways to manipulate the environment. Technology has been the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe, and it is these secrets which become the building blocks of better technology. Even today, this cycle has led to many new tools capable of what was once thought impossible or viewed only as magic. In the time of Zaon, that cycle has continued to expand our knowledge and now includes a better understanding of quantum mechanics, gravity, as well as the very fabric of the universe itself. But, despite all of the advancements, humankind has barely scratched the surface of all that there is to know.

MODERN ADVANCES: You may have already noticed several of the technological marvels in widespread use throughout the Zaon universe. Some of the more prominent include the ability of modern starships to travel faster than light, a breakthrough in artificial intelligence (AI) in machines, instantaneous communication across any distance, artificial and anti-gravities, force-fields, and even the medical knowhow to clone and grow replacement body parts.

These technological wonders are no longer exciting new miracles to the people of the Zaon universe, but rather a simple fact of life. Just as the mobile phone was once a marvel of technology to us, it is now an ordinary tool which most take for granted. This is not to say that people have lost interest in or lack enthusiasm for new technologies—quite the contrary. So, one can imagine that the people of tomorrow anticipate and await a time when anti-matter energy can be harnessed, wormhole travel can be mastered, and true immortality can be obtained, just as people once marveled at the idea of landing on the moon or harnessing nuclear power.

Now, you might be wondering how a ship (or anything, for that matter) is able to travel faster-than-light (FTL), how communications can be instantaneous regardless of distance, or how artificial gravity works. Truth is, some of these technologies can be explained and so later in this section for those interested we do just that. However, just as many of the pharmaceuticals in widespread use today operate on unknown methods of action (that is, we haven't a clue how they work; just that they do), some of the technological tools that are a part of the Zaon universe such as force field generation were discovered by accidental experiment and remain a mystery to the scientists who discovered them as well as those who develop the technology—they've just learned that reproducing a course of action leads to a known result. An example of a true mystery to our scientists today (even though we understand its effects) would be the law of gravity—today's scientists just don't have an honest clue how it really works.

MEDICAL ADVANCES: Modern medical science is quite advanced. In addition to a plethora of pharmaceuticals and outpatient techniques, entire limbs or bodily organs can be entirely replaced at premier equipped hospitals given sufficient effort and expense. Replacement of organs is a relatively new and expensive technique performed through 'organ farming' which refers to the rapid growing of replacement parts from the patient's own DNA samples. The growth can take several weeks, and so patients are sometimes artificially sustained prior to transplantation. In effect, nearly every organ in the body can be replaced with the exception of the brain. Neurological repairs can be made on up to the actual

re-connection of a paralyzed victim's spinal cord at leading facilities, but complete reconstruction of a severed cord or replacement remains impossible.

OTHER ADVANCES: Where it is easy to concentrate on the more notable technological advances, it is important to not forget other more mundane ones. Computers, for example, are capable of far more than they were by the end of the twentieth century, and that's not even considering the advent of artificial intelligence. Elevators and lifts now operate with the aid of grav coil plating that compensate for acceleration—thereby allowing for more rapid transit. Food processors have replaced the microwave, serving not only to heat and cook food using high-energy lights, but can also flash-freeze leftovers, reconstitute freeze-dried items, and gently brown dishes like a broiler—all at speeds that far surpass today's microwave. Mass transit subways and trains operate on magnetic or anti-grav principles and can achieve tremendous speeds safely while dampening the inertial effects that would ordinarily be felt by passengers. Anti-grav skycars enable one to quickly reach a destination. Some cultures have even developed building materials and architecture improved such that it is now possible to construct free-standing buildings that are many kilometers in height.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED MUCH: Many new things are possible by way of technology, but many things remain largely unchanged. For example, doors are still used between rooms, and in residential settings plenty of them swing open as we're accustomed instead of using futuristic sliding mechanisms simply due to cost and complexity reasons. People still use sinks, toilets, and showers, though waste waters are recycled more efficiently. Windows can still be broken, though modern glass is considerably more tough and sometimes stronger than steel. People still get hurt and must seek physicians. Monday nights are spent gathered around the televiewer, watching the latest news and sitcom programming. And so on.

WHAT THE UNIVERSE IS NOT: Notwithstanding all the technological advancements, the universe is by no means a magical fantasy land with people puttering around on personal jetpacks, beaming or teleporting from one point to another, or any other such nonsense. Things are only possible if the technological knowhow has made them possible. Furthermore, just because something becomes possible doesn't mean that it either appeals to the populace at large or becomes cost-effective or easier to use than a traditional method. In point of fact, there are many technologies found in the twentieth century world that seem cool and functional at first glance but are later ignored because the old-fashioned way is simply more convenient and/or straightforward. Common sense should apply.

Additionally, some technologies that might seem plausible at first, aren't. Nanotechnology, for instance, doesn't exist in the way many people might assume. Sure, chemical reactions can be used to perform 'micro-surgery' by severing or combining particular molecular bonds, but these capabilities are extremely crude and limited. Other than rumors of microscopic machines used by ancient races, no known species (including Niveans) has been able to create machines or tiny robots small enough to fit the classic science-fiction definition of ***nanotechnology***. Radiation can still kill as well as aid and people are in many ways just as susceptible to viruses as they were centuries ago.

NO TIME TRAVEL: Albeit time travel was once thought to be possible, later science has proven it **impossible.** Even the mighty ancients, those whose races may be billions of years old, can not travel or affect time in any way whatsoever.

An Understanding for Play

Knowing the limits of the technology at your disposal is often a wise strategy, and gamemasters must be especially well-versed to ensure game balance. Players will also benefit from understanding the technologies detailed in this chapter because these are the tools in widespread use by the Imperium and similar nations. It is not, however, required reading for players, as some of the material presented is quite technical. Still, players that would like to know just how to go about placing a 'mobile phone' call to a comrade and what the limits on such calls are, and whether someone is capable of eavesdropping or not, may wish to read on.

On the more technical side, these descriptions represent certain basics, such as the limits of quantum mechanics physics and how this impacts faster-than-light travel. What is not discussed are special technologies limited to a single race, experimental or advanced technologies, and the like. Nor do we dive too deeply into physics theory for obvious reasons.

It is important to point out that players devising even minor new technologies certainly requires far more than what a single scientist could hope to attain—in fact, often huge research and development companies employing thousands of brilliant scientists fail time and time again. To put it another way, if it could be done it's probably already been done considering the sheer population size of the galaxy and the number of well-funded scientists in it. Perhaps equally difficult is the exploitation and reverse-engineering of alien technologies. The idea of a scientist being able to replicate something found in Malon debris, for example, is preposterous. Indeed, even the Imperium's leading research laboratories have been mostly unsuccessful in that regard, even though a few areas (such as particle beam technology) have been deciphered. Much of the reason behind the difficulties concerning alien technology is the rather unusual and 'alien' approach in those designs—differences in the very fundamental nature and principles of those technologies.

So, without further ado, the following paragraphs address the fundamental principles behind many of *"today's"* technologies, following a brief description of ranging technology levels:

Tech Advancement Levels

Because not every culture or species is up to snuff in terms of modern technology (and a few may even exceed it), the basic degree of technological advancement has been classified into Technology Advancement Levels, or Tech Levels, which are abbreviated throughout this book as TAL# (where # is a level of progress between 1 and 20). TAL0, sometimes referred to, indicates no cultural or tool development at all.

The following describes, in the most general terms only, each major degree of technological progress. The time frames necessary for a species to advance from one frame to the next vary not only by species, but also at particular step pairs. For example, going from TAL5 to TAL6 usually requires very little time for most species, but advancing from TAL3 to TAL4 or from TAL8 to TAL9 are major steps indeed. Mathematically, tech-level progression follows a

compound parabola curve with fastest rise between TAL5 and TAL6.

Remain aware, however, that some cultures might be more advanced in certain areas and less advanced in others. The Tech Level assigned to any species is meant only as a general measure of progress. For example, the Imperium and most Southern Alliance states are all TAL10 in general (establishing the galactic standard), however, the Imperium possesses TAL13 particle beam technology, TAL12 particle beam targeting computers, but only TAL9 stealth technology. The Kelgari possess TAL12 gravimetric drive arrays, but mostly TAL10 technology overall. The UEN employs advanced TAL12 stealth technology, but only TAL9 in architecture and superstructure compared to the Imperium's leading TAL15 which allows for vessels and cities of such immense size.

Finally, many nations will actively work against developing nations' efforts to increase their tech levels. For example, the Imperium uses both its military and the ISA to hamper Alliance and other nations' research and development companies' progress.

TAL1—STONE AGE: Cultures of this age have no tools or only very crude ones. Starting fires, basic written communication, taming of animals, and simple pottery are examples of what is possible at this level of development.

TAL2—METAL AGE: Tools are forged from soft and medium metals. Many metal ores are mastered. Planned agriculture, irrigation, and simple roads exist. Ceramics and crafts gain importance. Religion often becomes a powerful motivator.

TAL3—CLASSIC AGE: Early science and basic understanding of physics develops. Mathematical models of reality such as algebra, early calculus, and geometry are realized; basic knowledge of the stars and planets begin to formalize. Tools become more complex but self-powered machines are not possible.

TAL4—INDUSTRIAL AGE: Automation, primitive motorized machines, steam power, manufacturing, and even primitive aircraft. Education of the masses. Capitalism and new forms of social order become possible. Wars are possible on grand or global scale.

TAL5—ATOMIC AGE: Nuclear physics, advanced aircraft, missiles, early lasers and particle beams, automated manufacturing and robotics, and early space probes become possible. Computers are born. Medical science improves dramatically. Population booms.

TAL6—INFORMATION AGE: Advanced computers, genetic research, early artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, early fusion research, refined short-range space shuttles, and powerful Internet information structures exist.

TAL7—FUSION AGE: Fusion power, artificial intelligence, exploration of the solar system and long-range shuttles, early terraforming, advanced lasers, early blasters, large orbital space stations and planetary bases, and even early bots are possible.

TAL8—SUBSPACE ERA: Quantum drive engines, subspace communications, artificial gravity, competent bots, blasters and plasma weapons, huge galactic starships, practical terraforming, early particle star drive engines, and early inertial dampening technology become possible.

TAL9—GENETICS AGE: Genetic engineering and organ farming, capital blaster weapons, early force-fields, advanced artificial intelligence, advanced particle star drives, gravity and anti-gravity field coils, and nuclear dampening generators are possible.

TAL10—CURRENT ERA: [Current Galactic Standard] Advanced fusion reactors, advanced particle star drives, efficient quantum drive, efficient gravimetric drives (though not as fast or maneuverable as particle engines), large-scale capital blasters, advanced point defense weaponry, powerful force-field technology, early tractor-beam technology, and advanced gravity and anti-gravity field coils become mainstay.

TAL11—GRAVIMETRIC AGE: Advanced gravimetric drives replace particle drives, early anti-matter weapons and research, powerful tractor-beam technology, quantum corridor know-how, and medical immunology breakthroughs represent TAL11 technology.

TAL12—ENLIGHTENMENT AGE: Anti-matter particle beam weapons, early anti-matter reactors, advanced multi-spatial defense shields, anti-matter torpedoes, and early cloaking technology become possible.

TAL13—ENERGY ERA: Anti-matter reactors, powerful anti-matter particle beams, practical cloaking technology, and early transspace (artificial wormhole) technology become a reality.

TAL14—EFFICIENCY ERA: TransSpace (artificial wormhole) technology replaces standard quantum subspace travel allowing much faster travel, sensors become sophisticated enough to foil cloaking devices and pinpoint basic shield frequencies, early and limited nanite technology, early genetic mastery and directed evolutionary technology, species immortality, and powerful anti-matter reactors become possible.

TAL16+—AGE OF REFINEMENT: Fully-automated and self-perpetuating technology, simultaneous loss of fundamental technology knowhow, nanite technology eliminates need for labor or real manufacturing, and machines begin to care for themselves and the living.

TAL18+—AGE OF TRUE REASON: Complete separation of technology and life while both endure with immortality, there is a strive for perfection, life pursuits center on philosophy, normal death becomes reversible, a thorough understanding of the universe develops, and early zero-point travel (folding space) begins.

TAL20+—ERA OF PERFECTION: Nanite-based molecular construction combined with limited matter-to-energy and energy-to-matter conversion allows for the complete fabrication, modification, or disassembly of most machines, living organisms, and materials; genetic perfection is reached, practical zero-point travel (folding space) replaces all other modes of distance travel, quantum zero-point energy is tapped providing nearly unlimited power and resources, and knowledge and understanding approach omniscience.

Important Technology

The following in-depth discussions cover power generation, faster-than-light communications and travel, FTL detection, quantum disruptions, modern propulsion, weaponry, artificial gravity and anti-gravity, tractor beams, force-fields, and inertial and nuclear dampers.

Additional information on the technology principles used in handheld weaponry can be found in Chapter 25.

Material of particular importance to players is printed in bold, though once again players may well benefit from an in-depth reading.

FTL COMMUNICATIONS: Faster-than-Light communications (most often referred to as subspace communications) operate on the principle of quantum non-locality. Quantum non-locality was postulated and later validated by Earth scientists during the late twentieth century, and is based on physical laws involving quantum-correlated (entangled) particles. Bell's theorem proved Niels Bhor right and Einstein wrong, which also invalidated Einstein's theories regarding time travel and relativistic time effects. Simply put, quantum entanglement refers to two sub-atomic particles (generally photons) which have a non-local position and thus are unaffected by three dimensional space. The true wonder of quantum non-locality wasn't publicly realized on Earth until the end of the twentieth century (Earth calendar) when it was shown that determination of a correlated particle's spin or polarity in one particle caused instantaneous opposite determination in the correlated particle regardless of the distance separating the correlated particles. What was so astonishing about this experiment was that it proved the link between two particles transcended the speed of light and thus three dimensional space itself.

'Farming' usable particles (qubits) and keeping them housed in portable or fixed communications devices is where the cost of those transceivers arise. Because the subspace transceiver houses particles from which the correlated particles are stored by a subspace carrier company, manipulations to either particle one at a time allows the device to digitally transmit voice, picture, and data in realtime between the unit and any other point in the galaxy where another such unit or capability exists. Once a particle is used, however, its non-locality link is severed. This means that there is a finite amount of data that can be transmitted, but given the incredible number of such particles in each subspace data block most such units can transmit large amounts of data non-stop for decades before requiring replacement. And, where longer running times are anticipated, additional banks of subspace com blocks can be installed in advance.

When a remote user places a 'call', the subspace carrier company (which holds the other correlated particle) then decodes the signal header and routes the signal other particles which in turn is received by the desired subspace recipient. If the other party uses another carrier company, then the data is first routed via subspace to that company. If the recipient is on a local comnet (city or planetside calling network), then the signal is routed to that net for local calling. Obviously, communication can also be initiated by the subspace carrier company (instead of the remote user) or by another remote user which is then passed on to the carrier and then to another user. Therefore, placing a call to a subspace unit obviously does not require knowledge as to the whereabouts of the recipient. All communication is realtime.

Note that all subspace transceivers (as well as all local com links and receivers) have a unique identifier... commonly known as one's "number". A valid subspace transceiver, or any com device within range of a local comnet or a subspace relay transceiver, can place a call to any other transceiver or in-range com device so long as the Address ID (number of the device being called) is known. Naturally, because of the nature of subspace transceivers and comnets, a caller needn't know the location of the receiving party. This principle is very similar to current-day cellphone-to-cellphone calls, except that in the case of subspace transceivers not even the 'phone company' knows the location of the caller.

Data encryption is not necessary as subspace transmissions cannot be monitored or intercepted unless by an unscrupulous subspace carrier company or at the destination or origin itself. Should this be a concern, then data can be user encrypted but the final recipient must have means for decoding the signal as well. Note that most of the subspace carriers are private companies that maintain strict privacy policies and will not divulge information even to Imperial officials. Also note, however, that calls to local comnets leave the subspace carrier's domain once they are passed to those public nets, and so might be intercepted when transmitted by wire or radio.

Though subspace (not local coms) can't be eavesdropped on like a radio wave (because there is no transmission), they can be blocked or scrambled if a powerful subspace jammer is nearby. These jammers are actually small reactor-like devices sometimes installed aboard larger military vessels of cruiser class or larger, and generate quantum disruption waves tuned to the quantum non-locality 'frequencies' of correlated particles used in communications thus interfering with one's ability to make a determination and send data. Jamming is therefore instant and lasts only so long as the jamming reactors continue to fire, affecting only the subspace transceivers within the area of effect radius of the jammer.

Because subspace transceivers involve more than just technology (they rely on a subspace carrier company which acts as a central node for relaying calls), a monthly or annual fee must be paid in order to maintain calling service. Luckily, payment of fees covers the housing of and use of those particles which are unique to a particular subspace com unit and so there are no additional fees per call or for lengthy calls. That is, each subspace com unit uses and requires a flat-rate dedicated service (though eventually the remote subspace transceiver and opposite correlated data block at the carrier company will need to be replaced at significant cost).

Local com-nets, on the other hand, are generally free throughout the galaxy. Com-nets in the Imperium are all government operated, free to the populace, and possess sufficient service to accommodate any communications even during peak periods that might arise during disaster or war. Some Terran com-nets are toll-based; others are free. Vagar com-nets are all toll-based. Endori-operated Triangle nets are toll-free, as are Sordrid ones. Werkiri communication nets are patchy at best, but usually free.

FTL SPACE TRAVEL (QUANTUM DRIVE): Faster-than-light space travel, more commonly referred to as *quantum drive* or *subspace drive,* is a rather unusual phenomenon. FTL-capable ships make use of one or more quantum drive reactors, which allow them to jump to subspace. Although the principle method behind quantum drives is unknown, the state of quantum travel itself is only slightly better understood. 'Subspace' is actually a realspace medium based on principles involving quantum gravity and the near instantaneous speeds of it.

Quantum drive reactors (note there are no quantum 'engines'; just reactors) are specially-tuned reactors—generally much smaller than a ship's main reactor. The only difference besides a much hotter hydrogen burn (requiring significant electroplasma power from the main reactor for maser-induced burn), is a significantly large fuel requirement. These reactors require multiple injectors to provide high-speed streams of constant hydrogen. Quantum field size increases non-proportionately with reactor size, meaning that capital ships use reactors and hydrogen fuel tanks slightly smaller in proportion to those capital ships than those aboard tiny blockade runners

for the same range ability. Further, capital ships often use proportionately larger tanks anyway, thereby dramatically increasing their range. Also, despite quantum reactors requiring many times the fuel input that primary fusion power reactors do, the reactor burn is so hot that quantum vaporization occurs and this very efficiently converts to quantum field energies—meaning FTL reactors can be significantly smaller and far less shielded than main power reactors.

Incidentally, unlike the FTL fuel supply, very small hydrogen fuel tanks are used to power the main reactor, and these typically last for several to many years. When depleted, most ships have the ability to transfer a small portion of hydrogen from the giant FTL fuel tanks in order to replenish the main reactor's fuel reserve, since these giant FTL tanks are refueled frequently anyway.

"You wanna put a call through to where? Frack yeah, it'll be intercepted!"

—Clueless Triangle Merchant in the Titan Sector, for the first time, on business

Fuel depots are located at all major ports planetside, in orbit, and at starbases and some space stations. Fuel is available for a fee. In Imperial space, most fuel is sold by the government to consumers, but some private depots are in operation as well. Private depots usually buy from Imperial tankers, however. Military outposts sometimes maintain small refueling docks, but these are almost never available to the public—used to refuel starfighters assigned to the base. The cost of fuel is regional—see Chapter 2 for typical costs.

Also, FTL reactors cannot be engaged too close to a planet's gravity field or they will fail to function and may damage the reactor. Depending on the world, vessels must generally be about 20,000 kilometers (20 megameters) distant from an average-sized planet (always exactly double the particular world's diameter). Quantum gates (CGates and TGates) can be somewhat closer, because of their stronger tie to quantum subspace (the corridor).

Because of how fast quantum drive is (typically 20 Lightyears Per Hour {LPH}), navigational computers are set to engage and disengage quantum drive down to a few nanoseconds:

Disengaging too late may cause a vessel to enter into a planet's gravitation field which will instead hurl the vessel out of subspace and violently back into normal space—usually with damage to the reactor, sheering damage to the ship's hull, and sometimes annihilation (see below) from reentry inside a planetary mass.

Delays in engaging quantum drive will result in a miscalculated vector that will either require the navcomputer to correct the flight path during subspace travel—which costs fuel efficiency (typically requiring an extra half ton of fuel per arc degree corrected)—or the captain to drop back to normal space only to recalculate and re-engage quantum drive on the correct vector.

There are dangers, however, to even standard quantum drive travel because a ship in subspace is essentially blind to the rest of the galaxy and vice-versa with but one exception (see Quantum Wake Detection later in this chapter). And although the ship is in no danger of collision with anything of small mass, re-entering normal space inside another object of significant size (a moon, planet, or star) is disastrous. Luckily, the vastness of space coupled with shipping and port authorities has kept such accidents to less than a dozen mishaps over the course of all quantum drive history.

Should a vessel happen to enter normal space where such space is already occupied by matter (for example, nebula dust matter or the core of a planet) the effects can vary. For dust, tiny debris, small asteroids, or any other matter that is smaller than the arriving spacecraft, such matter is either shoved aside or annihilated with no damage to the arriver. For planets and other objects with more mass than the arriving starship, such matter cannot expand quickly enough (faster than the speed of light) to make room for the ship and so the ship itself is annihilated instantly with no damage to the planet or other large body.

Since ships are either 'in subspace' or they are not, it is not necessary to accelerate to any particular speed when making the jump to subspace. But ships jumping to quantum drive do make a transitional phase into subspace, taking about one-half second to obtain a quantum drive phase transition. During this one-half second interval, light escaping from the ship will cause the vessel to appear to stretch and/or streak-off in the direction the ship is going. It is important to point out that the ship is already quantum phased at this point and so there is still no chance of it colliding with another object in front of it (the light and visual effect is merely a reflection of what escapes from the traveling vessel). But, because the light trail lasts for that one split second, other nearby starships are able to extrapolate the departing vessel's precise trajectory—and thus compute a probable destination—even if they are not equipped quantum wake sensors. Arrival back into normal space looks the same: the vessel appears to stretch and streak to a quick halt, leaving an energy wake flash.

Vessels traveling at subspace quantum speeds are very fast but with the aid of a navcomputer it is possible to engineer an intercept course accurate enough for two independent vessels to intercept one another in subspace. Ships can also track another vessel's quantum wake and pursue if they have subspace sensors. Additionally, ships equipped to do so can generate a quantum disruption pulse (see later in this chapter) to force a ship back into normal space where it can be intercepted at sublight speeds.

It is also important to understand that ships are able to maneuver using their normal space sublight drive engines within subspace, but such maneuvering has no effect on subspace vectors. In other words, once in subspace picture a giant 'bubble' that the ship is sitting inside. The bubble is moving at FTL speeds—not the ship itself. Within that bubble, the ship can turn around or move about, but the bubble keeps traveling on the same vector. In reality, there is no 'bubble' and thus no limit to how far a ship can move while within subspace, but the distance it moves is no different than when in normal space and thus won't increase or decrease FTL travel times any more than if the ship set course for a destination without using FTL travel in the first place.

One of the reaons why it is important to understand ship movement while within quantum drive space is because realspace speed maintains itself precisely across the transition into or out of subspace. That is, if you're moving at 20,000kph the moment you jump to subspace then you're still moving 20,000kph while in subspace. Most ships that are already in motion at the time they enter subspace deactivate their sublight drives and drift to a halt within subspace and thus have no realspace speed (though they're still moving very fast at FTL speeds, of course). Perhaps more important,

a ship that wishes to be already in motion and moving at a given speed as it drops to normal space had better activate it's sublight engines and allow enough time to accelerate up to the desired speed all while still within subspace travel so that the ship will exit into normal space at that desired sublight speed instead of arriving at a standstill and then accelerating from zero.

There are three cases where two or more ships may be near one another while within subspace. The first is if they sychronize their navcomputers and engage their quantum drives simultaneously. When this happens, each vessel is under its own quantum 'field' and independent ships can move about in any way they desire, using their standard sublight engines, in relation to other ships nearby. Thus, ships could venture off, engage in battle, or maneuver in any way they wish. The second instance is when another vessel far away sets a FTL subspace intercept course in order to close the distance with a target at FTL speeds. This is done by calculating an intercept vector. Two ships moving at the same FTL travel velocity in lightyears per hour (LPH) may or may not be able to intercept one another if traveling at the same speed... this is easily determined mathematically. If the target can be intercepted, and there is enough fuel to alter course inflight to match the target's vector then the ships can engage one another normally. A ship with faster LPH capability may close more rapidly and then slow to match the LPH of the target. The third situation in which ships may be near one another in subspace is if one or more ships gets pulled along by a larger ship jumping to subspace (see Quantum Drive Wells, below). Ships such as this which are not under their own subspace 'fields' are essentially frozen in place relative to the ship that dragged them along. In other words, treat the tag-along as if it were 'physically attached' to the dragging vessel in both distance and orientation. Another way to envision this would be as if the tag-along was frozen in a block of ice with the larger vessel, except where the larger vessel could steer and maneuver the entire ice block. Vessels pulled along for a ride are not actually frozen in time, however—only frozen in physical relation to the ship taking them for a ride. Thus, those tag-alongs can fire their weapons, activate other ship systems, communicate, or just about anything else that does not maneuver the ship. This effect of being 'frozen' in place is known as being held by the 'Mantra Effect'.

Any combat in subspace is treated as identical to combat in normal space. The entire 'battlefield' is simply moving at FTL speeds and so all of the ships on that field behave normally with one another. Weapon energies behave no differently.

Finally, ships that disengage their quantum drives and drop back into normal space cannot re-engage their quantum drives for several minutes (1 to 6 minutes depending on model and type) while the quantum flux within their quantum reactors stabilizes.

In summary, qauntum drive has become the single greatest achievement in terms of expanding horizons, for it has enabled the development of galactic communities and contact between many different species. Like many tools, it is used by both the military to dominate as well as merchants to trade. And although it can be a great means for escape, **the calibration required prior to quantum reactor ignition takes a brief time and often leaves a vessel vulnerable. Luckily, the immense power costs (supplied by the ship's primary reactor) to power the maser systems used inside all quantum reactors to sufficiently and continuosly vaporize the hydrogen fuel that generates quantum travel does not need to begin until the moment subspace travel is actually engaged.**

QUANTUM WAKE DETECTION: Not long after the invention of the quantum drive reactor, scientists learned that ships in subspace caused slight quantum fluctuations in the subspace fabric of normal space that could be detected with special sensor equipment. These fluctuations are always detectable but dissipate the farther they travel like ripples in a pond. Smaller ships with smaller or fewer drive reactors are detectable at even shorter ranges, but typically most ships can be detected at only 20 to 30 lightyears distance. Some of the very large and sensitive sensor equipment aboard huge military warships can detect vessels up to ten times that far, but this is rare.

In addition to detection, each ship emits a unique fluctuation, sometimes referred to as a *quantum signature* or *subspace signature*. Since these signatures are so easily distinguishable, listening posts and port authorities use the effect as each ship's standard subspace transponder frequency (which obviously can't be "turned off"). Once a ship drops to normal space, then a standard radio-frequency transponder is used instead (which can be turned off, though doing so may be illegal in many areas).

Today, most military and some commercial vessels possess sensor equipment able to detect a passing quantum vessel regardless of whether the sensing vessel is in normal space or subspace itself.

In 2990, detection took on a whole new meaning when the Imperial Quantum Detection Grid went online. One of only a few territory-wide grids of its type, the Imperium has stationed listening posts throughout its territory in a net-like fashion, thereby enabling them to detect and track all quantum drive travel in their territory, which of course constitutes the bulk of the galaxy. Occasionally the desperate will actually depart from Imperial space (or even travel outside of the confines of the galaxy) only to re-enter at a later date to avoid course tracking—assuming enough fuel is available. But not all of the Imperium's territory is covered by this grid. The Northwest Passage, for one, is devoid of any detection posts as are several other remote or frontier areas of Imperial space. Interior zones, such as the Titan Sector, in contrast possess several redundant listening posts at each needed location to ensure continued operation even in the event of rare failure of a post.

The listening posts used for the Imperial Quantum Detection Grid are very small self-contained satellites. Because their only emissions are subspace communications, no one has been able to locate such a listening device except by accident. In fact, not even the Imperium knows exactly where each device is. In all, there are thousands of these satellites, and Imperial warships frequently drop out of subspace to deposit new ones. Because these satellites are zero-emission passive-only enclosed devices, even being in proximity to one in normal space doesn't guarantee detection.

The Alliance, Vreen, Coalition, and Malons maintain limited border grids of their own—but these are far less effective than the Imperium's extensive grid array, and consequently detect only ships crossing into their territory and then quickly lose track of those ships. Most also have some 'holes' in them. Homeworlds of these territories, though, such as Earth and Rajoal do have some radial detection grids beyond that granted by sensors directly on those world's orbital defenses.

QUANTUM DISRUPTION PULSE: Special quantum reactors similar to but distinctly different than standard FTL quantum reactors are employed by larger warships in some militaries to

knock other vessels traveling in subspace back into normal space by force. When energized, these reactors release an energy wave pulse that expands spherically outward at 10,000 LPH (effectively instantaneous) to a typical range of 150,000 kilometers or more. Imperial flagships are said to generate pulses that affect a radius of one million kilometers! Large warships (equipped with these pulse reactors) that detect potential subspace targets often change course in subspace to an intercept vector until they they are very close before discharging the pulse to force all vessels, themselves included, back into normal space. Smaller warships generally do not maintain enough fuel to outmaneuver larger warships on a subspace intercept course because the half-ton per arc degree fuel expenditure used to change course underway is not proportional to ship size, and larger warships nearly always carry greater fuel capacities—meaning it is usually impossible to escape the interception unless a faster LPH FTL drive is possessed.

A quantum pulse momentarily disrupts the very fabric of subspace itself. Subspace will stabilize itself given enough time (typically about an hour or so depending on the strength of the pulse). Until subspace restabilizes, no quantum drive reactor can function and all ships in the area are thus unable to jump to subspace. Ships caught in the area of effect must either wait for subspace to stabilize or they may attempt to leave the area through normal sublight flight. Ships later entering the zone at FTL speeds before subspace has stabilized will also immediately be forced to sublight.

Ships that are forced back into normal space are otherwise unharmed. All ships in the area of effect return to normal space in the same positions, speeds, and orientations they were at within subspace at the moment of the pulse. This is why it is important for the ship initiating the pulse to wait until very close (usually weapons range) before releasing the pulse. If the pulse was released while 100,000 kilometers away from the target, the target would only have to travel 50,000 km to escape the typical area of effect while the pursuing vessel would have 100,000 km to travel (more if the target was underway also).

QUANTUM DRIVE WELLS: One of the phenomena of quantum drive travel is the generation of a subspace 'field' that systematically correlates an entire vessel as a single mass object for purposes of its relation to normal space. These fields of quantum energy always extend outside the confines of the ship generating them, to some degree, and can even overlap with other fields without effect. The larger the vessel, the larger its FTL reactors, and the farther the residual field extends. Why this is important is because ships or objects close enough when the field is generated by a large vessel jumping to subspace may be unwillingly pulled along with the larger jumping vessel as follows:

SHIP CLASS	Radius	MAXIMUM DRAG SIZE
Corvette/Warp Shuttle	—	None
Escort/Blockade Runner	40m	Starfighter
Frigate/Liner	100m	Corvette/Shuttle
Destroyer/SuperLiner	200m	BlockadeRunner
Cruiser	300m	Frigate
Battleship	400m	Destroyer
Flagship/Supership	600m	Cruiser
Titan CommandCarrier	1000m	Battleship

Ships pulled along with a larger one remain in subspace for as long as the larger ship does. They cannot maneuver (see Quantum Drive, above) or affect the subspace field unless they are able to generate a quantum disruption pulse of legitimate size and strength to affect the larger ship. These tagalongs will reenter normal space at the same time the larger ship does, but may be momentarily disrupted or disoriented. For this reason, most traveling fleets require that each ship generate its own subspace field, though matched with the lead vessel's by synchronized navcomputers. Also, some vessels such as the Imperial Titan class flagship have specially-tuned starfighters designed to be pulled along by the lead ship without disorientation so that fighters can begin an assault immediately upon reentering normal space. This type of starfighter-tuning is a relatively new technology.

MODERN PROPULSION: Though old-style chemical rocket engines still exist in some areas, as do ion engines, and despite some success with gravimetric drives, nuclear fusion thrust engines are by far the most common. Fusion drive engines are economical, produce extremely high thrust forces efficiently, and are very reliable. Furthermore, fusion thrust is fast at about 150,000kph on average, allowing ships to reach that velocity given enough time to accelerate.

Fusion engines operate on the simple principle of injecting reactor fuel (usually pure hydrogen) in the form of thousands of very tiny portions which are heated to fusion temperatures with either extremely powerful magnetic constriction fields generated inside the engine and/or with the aide of a maser. Constant microfusion detonations in the order of several thousand per second then take place. The engine fire chamber and thruster nozzles are safely protected by extremely powerful magnetic fields against which the microfusion detonations push very hard to generate massive thrust. In the nozzle itself, shifting the balance of magnetic field strength to any given side permits efficacious vectoring of thrust for potent maneuvering.

Engines therefore require two types of 'fuel': Pure hydrogen from the ship's tanks and a great deal of eletrical power channeled directly from the primary reactor via the EPW conduits.

Hydrogen fuel consumption by sublight fusion drives is relatively minor in comparison to quantum FTL drive reactors, but significant enough that sublight drives usually tap the ship's primary hydrogen tanks. Some vessel designs call for separate tanks closer to the sublight engines, but these designs generally also provide for a means to transfer fuel back and forth as needed between FTL and sublight fuel stores. The reason separate tanks are sometimes used is so that in the case of battle damage that might sever a long fuel transfer line that nearby tanks can continue to reliably fuel the engines or reactor.

Because of problems concerning the mass and inertia of a starship combined with need for rapid maneuvering and thus countering of existing inertial vectors, not to mention the stress forces generated at levels lethal to biological beings onboard, fusion engine application would not be practical without the aid of inertial dampers, which are described later in this chapter.

Note that nearly all ships additionally employ limited gravimetric drives for either atmospheric landings and/or for low-velocity reverse (since fusion thrusters can't 'back up').

Finally, some engine designs include a type of 'afterburner' where additional fuel (hydrogen) is sprayed directly into the exhaust very near the point it leaves the engine where temperatures are still hot enough to cause that additional fuel mist to undergo fusion also. This causes additional thrust by pushing back against the engine exhaust cone and port and to some extent upon the surrounding ship surfaces which are always protected with additional armor shield plating. Because this additional burn exceeds the engine's magnetic confinement ability, additional afterburn thrust can only be used for a few brief seconds else the engine nozzle and surrounding armor will begin to superheat and melt. Some capital warships possess engines large enough that a similar principle can be implemented directly inside the engine's firing chamber by simply injecting more hydrogen to undergo fusion than the magnetic fields can repel.

Because huge capital ship engines are so large, massive heat shield armoring can be applied to the engine's interior in order to survive brief periods of thrust that exceed the engine's magnetic containment. However, as with the afterburner design, if the engine is operated at 100+% (known as 'flank speed') for very long the nuclear reaction will begin to superheat and melt the engine's interior—which would damage or destroy that engine.

MODERN WEAPONS: Modern weapons don't only include fancy lasers and blaster guns. Projectile weapons have been refined with better penetration and greater range, and also employ electromagnetic rail technologies as well as the more conventional chemically-driven slug. Grenades and bombs remain very effective, though nuclear bombs are rendered useless on most modern worlds (see Nuclear Dampers, below).

Nevertheless, blasters have become the most popular and prevalent weapon in the galaxy. Blasters are particle accelerators (technically described in Chapter 25) and are found as the main capital-grade weapon aboard most starships. Smaller point-defense weaponry comprise not only blasters, but also rotary plasma guns. A few larger rotary plasma guns are now in use by the Imperium, offering point-defense capability plus full capital-grade assault. A ship's largest weaponry is found on major capital ships and consists of particle beam technology (also technically described in Chapter 25). These spinal-mount cannons generate solid beams of coherent particle energy designed to cut through enemy warships by way of maximum penetration, unlike blasters which fire pulses or bolts of energy that expand their energies on impact making a crater.

Missiles are occasionally used in small-arms fire or as anti-troop assault weaponry, but they are never employed aboard starships except for orbital bombardment and rare clever uses such as the Vagar warship hunter missile. The reason for this follows the development of nuclear damper technology (see later in this chapter) and the power of particle blasters compared to conventional explosives.

ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY, ANTI-GRAVITY, AND GRAVIMETRIC DRIVES: All three of these technologies work off a similar principle: Field coils are used to create and amplify gravitational forces or to cancel existing forces.

Anti-gravity, the process of canceling gravity (such as a planet's), is the most efficient of the methods in use. Gravity field coils are simply reversed with power sufficient to cancel an existing gravitational force. Field coils can be quite small such as those found in a hovercam bot or quite large like the ones that keep enormous superfreighters afloat above a planet's surface. The power requirements to cancel gravity rise exponentially, so where it may require very little power to keep a small ship hovering above the ground, the power and field coil strength required to fight the immense gravitational pull of a neutron star is simply not available to modern science and so ships dare not approach too close. Planets, though, put up little in the way of gravimetric resistance, and so small ships require little in the way of power and field coils needn't be excessively large or heavy duty (even when hovering over large planets)—however, large ships require a great deal of power, large field coils, and immensely powerful structural reinforcements and specialized design engineering in order to keep a ship of that size together because the rest of the ship must sit on the field coils as if they were struts (that is, the field coils are weight bearing points).

Artificial gravity in small amounts is also a very efficient process requiring little power. For gravity generated aboard ships to keep the crew comfortable and on the decks, special field coil spreaders are used. A small low-power field coil is typically mounted in a structural bulkhead where its gravity flow is spread out evenly across a flat deck surface by way of gravity spreaders that keep the artificial gravity planar and focused throughout a deck's surface. The downside to this approach is that the gravity has very short range and so each deck must maintain its own series of field coils. It is typical for decks to maintain redundant and overlapping units so that if a single field coil fails the others can compensate, though of course if the entire area loses power then all such units could go offline resulting in a complete loss of artificial gravity on that deck or series of decks. Most artificial gravity aboard starships is variable to some degree (between zero and perhaps as high as 1.5Gs), but some vessels maintain special alien quarters with additional field coils to generate gravity as high as 4Gs for species such as the Medians. Aboard many ships, however, the gravity is fixed at a particular level and is not user variable.

Gravimetric drives operate in a similar manner to artificial gravity, except employ very powerful heavy duty generators. Depending on the power and design of the generator, considerable propulsion can be had but the power drain is very significant. Most large starships employ gravimetric drives buried in their bow sections so that the ship can reverse course—a handy maneuver when departing some space docks—because a ship's aft-mounted fusion thrusters naturally cannot reverse thrust back into the ship's interior of course. Smaller landing-capable ships do not employ such drives because their anti-grav landing coils can be used to a limited extent to reverse course out of spacedock or to turn around slowly without firing the ship's main engines. The reason large gravimetric drives, on the other hand, are placed at the bow (for reverse) or aft (for a main drive) of a ship the same as a fusion thruster would be is because anything in the path of the gravity 'thrust' will get pushed away hard by powerful though short-range gravitational forces. Most gravimetric drives are slow and of low thrust, and this includes even massive units in place aboard mighty flagships. Though an expensive route compared to fusion thrust, some ships employ gravimetric drives as their primary propulsion which provides faster maneuvering but slower acceleration. Still, some races have developed very superior gravimetric drives, such as the Kelgari, Malons, and Niveans, that compete well with standard microfusion drive engines.

INERTIAL DAMPERS: Based on artificial gravity technologies, specialized field coils are mounted strategically throughout starships in order to generate momentary and sustained gravity pulses whose purpose is to counter inertial effects upon the ship's occupants (personnel and other loose objects). This allows acceleration and sharp maneuvers to go unnoticed by a ship's crew, and the specialized counter forces are evenly transmitted throughout a ship's volume with the only side effect being the 'space anchor' effect (see below).

There are limits to the power and speed at which inertial dampers operate, and so very sudden jolts due to impacts and weapons hits are only partially countered. Also, ships with powerful acceleration abilities often exceed the overall output of their inertial dampers, which can leave the crew able to feel strong acceleration. Starfighters are the most notable case of this and the reason why fighter pilot flightsuits are additionally required to compensate for blood flow during rapid maneuvers. Even some larger warships at maximum acceleration can leave the crew feeling a significant backward pull as the ship rapidly accelerates.

The inertial dampers aboard all but the very oldest spacegoing vessels are automatically managed by computers which control the force, direction, and power requirements. Most vessels have some manual control over the power drain caused by these units and can voluntarily reduce power to such systems to conserve power if need

be, but nearly all systems maintain a minimum power draw for crew safety reasons that cannot be manually disabled without extensive juryrigging.

The one perhaps interesting side effect of inertial damping systems is known commonly as the 'space anchor' effect because of how a vessel's own inertia within space is also countered due to residual counter-graviton build-up in a vessel's mass at the quantum level. Loose contents within a vessel (the crew, unmounted objects, etc.) do not suffer from this build-up, but the main ship's structural framework does. Therefore, vessels that maintain operational inertial damping systems will find themselves actually drifting to a halt even in deep space, and for quite some time even if and after an inertial damping system is disabled. This requires that a ship's engines be kept in continuous operation in order to sustain movement. On the bright side, starfighters and other maneuverable vessels actually employ the space anchor effect to their own advantage by using it to bank rapidly during combat maneuvers. This makes it easier to counter existing thrust vectors and to thus turn more rapidly and at higher speeds (almost in the same manner a jet plane's wings repel air to bank a tight turn). Therefore, skyfighters and starfighters that employ wings for atmospheric maneuvers and inertial dampers as well benefit from the best of both worlds and are able to maneuver with great agility in planetary atmospheres.

TRACTOR (GRAVITY) BEAMS: Also based on artificial-gravity technology, tractor beams are focused columns of gravimetric force used to seize, push, or pull an object. The devices capable of these feats are much more sophisticated than those used in standard gravity field coils. As a result, only capital ships and modern planetside bases of sufficiently advanced technology are outfitted with these gravity beams. Tractor beams are also expensive in terms of cost and power requirements.

SMALL POWER SYSTEMS: The energy-production engines in widespread use are fusion reactors, which replaced their fission-based predecessors long ago. All modern fusion reactors employ an advanced spheromak reaction chamber which is torus shaped (think of a big bagel or donut, some with no hole). Tiny frozen hydrogen fuel pellets are injected into the chamber at a rate of about four to six a second and are initially ignited by a powerful laser or maser beam which superheats the first pellet to over 100 million degrees Kelvin. Tuned microwaves help to keep ignited fuel heated as well as kick-out the helium waste product, while the magnetic confinement compresses the burning fuel to aid in the inertial confinement of the burn-off—and prevents it from pounding the walls of the reaction chamber. Once ignited, additional pellets are ignited by the currently burning pellets, thereby inducing a sustained chain reaction also made possible by the magnetic confinement. Non-neutral raw plasma is siphoned off of the reaction, collected from the chamber, and then guided magnetically via electroplasma waveguide (EPW) conduits to power-consuming systems.

LARGE POWER SYSTEMS: This reactor design is similar to its smaller cousin (see above) but is generally entirely spherical. Instead of torus-shaped field magnets, a pure electric field comprises the center column. From inside the chamber, the nuclear burn is confined to a very tight torus-shape itself, almost spherical and not unlike that of a miniature sun. All such fusion reactors are based on a pure hydrogen reaction. A reaction of this type (getting pure hydrogen to bond with other pure hydrogen) is over twenty orders of magnitude more difficult to achieve than a pB11 reaction but does make for longer-lasting and more abundant fuel supplies since regular hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, while the isotopes of deuterium and tritium are quite rare and also leave mildly radioactive waste. The tiny frozen hydrogen pellets are injected at a rate of eight or more per second in a manner consistent with smaller reactors. In order to achieve the necessary burn temperature and magnetic compression, super maser (microwave amplification by stimulated emission of radiation) systems and enormous magnetic field generators are required. Additionally, the reaction chamber itself is much larger than would normally be needed for a reaction of this size in order to contain the forces produced when igniting or running the reactor—which is not unlike that of a compressed fusion bomb.

All fusion reactors thus require considerable amounts of power to startup because of the laser/maser pulse, but less power to keep the magnetic field coils and microwave systems going after ignition. Therefore, reactors that are not connected to and able to draw upon a power grid (such as those aboard starships or the very large planetside power plants) use huge capacitors which are charged by smaller auxiliary fusion reactors. These capacitors release a charge pulse potent enough to operate the ignition systems while plasma siphoned from the now-started primary reactor itself provides power for its own continued operation.

All reactors, whether aboard ships or planetside, require a supply of liquid hydrogen that is frozen into pellets immediately prior to core injection. Liquid hydrogen is stored in tanks and must be replenished periodically. Aboard starships, there are generally many large tanks used to fuel the FTL reactor(s) and sublight drive engines, but relatively small tanks to fuel the main reactor (all tanks are generally interconnected to permit fuel transfers). Although the main reactor is much larger than the FTL reactor, the rate of fuel injection is much slower and so even small tanks can often fuel such reactors for years before requiring refueling.

Most ships mount only one primary reactor, and up to two very small auxiliary reactors. A few designs call for two or even three medium-sized primary reactors instead of a one huge reactor, but maintenance costs increase and efficiency decreases.

Finally, these types of fusion reactors are aneutronic, meaning that the reaction type does not result in free neutrons. Neutrons are of course the most deadly of radiation and were abundantly emitted from older-style fission reactors as well as early deuterium-tritium/pB11 fusion reactions. Aneutronic reactions and proper heat management keep modern reactors quite safe. Further, because the hydrogen fuel itself is not volatile in a nuclear sense, accidents involving too much fuel injection too quickly simply cause the reaction to cool down and cease—making these modern reactors very safe.

FORCE-FIELDS: Developed by most cultures long after the advent of quantum drive, force fields employ highly-focused spatial charge energy designed to form a spatial distortion field. Force-fields have no effect on the physical properties of matter or energy on either side of the shield. Rather, these shields act more like a wall or barrier. They concentrate at the point of an impact, moving to disperse kinetic energy from a moving object as well as disperse the energies of modern particle weapons. The greater the energy or force, the more focused the field becomes at the point of impact (which also requires that it be powered to more portent levels which draws more power from the ship's main reactor), but there are limits to what a shield generator can endure.

Starship force fields—generally referred to simply as shields—envelop the ship in an ellipsoid bubble, sometimes tightly. Also, each shield has a fixed directional planar field, meaning that it blocks impacts and energy from only one direction (always the outside trying to get in). At any time when an object or energy, such as from a blaster, plasma weapon, a meteorite, free radiation, laser, or particle beam, intersects and strikes a shield the energy is entirely dispersed unless it is greater than what the shield generator can endure (or powered to) in which case some of the energy continues through the barrier unimpeded. For energy weapons this means some of the beam continues straight through, while for a meteorite the speed of it is slowed partially and suddenly. Energy that can't penetrate is dispersed completely, meaning beam weapons do not continue through at all, and a meteorite is slowed greatly and then bounced back off the shield without penetration.

Just as personal body screens can't be layered (that is, only one screen or shield may be worn at a given time), neither can multiple powered shield systems function aboard a ship. Redundant systems therefore contribute no additional protection while simultaneously requiring equal power for each additional generator, thereby reducing power efficiency rapidly and returning nothing. Unpowered generators share the same distortion field with powered generators and so will burn-out immediately if one is powered and another is not. All of this simply means that a ship can only mount one shield generator onboard and if it is destroyed then the ship has no shields. Furthermore, a total of attacks that exceed the shield's overall threshold (such as quite a few smaller attacks or several larger attacks) within a short period of time can cause the generator to overload for a while during which it cannot offer protection. Once the shield generator's internal overload disperses then the shield will suddenly re-energize if it is still being supplied with power.

Force-fields are also polarized, meaning each ship has a designated forward and aft shield (some vessels mount a port/starboard configuration instead). Although a single generator powers 'both shields', the ship's tactical systems can designate and change the power ratio between them given enough time to shift polarity balance. For example, a warship could power its shield systems to maximum and then shift the field balance to 80% forward and 20% aft configuration to provide better defense against attacks launched in front of the vessel. Given some time, that balance could be returned to a 50/50% balance, or to a 30/70% for better aft protection. Most generators can shift their balance no faster than once every five to ten warship combat turns, though the percentage shift at that time can be slight or dramatic.

Shields are normally invisible to normal sight but glow a sharp color (red, green, blue, etc.) at the moment and point of energy weapon impact. Where sound is possible, there is also a loud basal thump.

Shields are invaluable to capital starships in defense against major weapons attacks, but because the shield forms a bubble around the protected vessel, smaller ships such as starfighters are able to pass through the barrier (by slowing down momentary at the point of crossing) in order to get under the shield and attack the vulnerable ship inside. This is the primary tactic used by starfighters versus enemy warships, for the weapons of a starfighter would ordinarily do little good versus strong capital shields. Inside, however, starfighters can fire away, strafing their targets at will. Planetary cities (and sometimes entire worlds) are enveloped by powerful force-fields as well to prevent orbital bombardment.

Starfighters and other very small vehicles can be outfitted with shields, but often these shields don't offer protection sufficient enough to stop the weapons of similar-sized vehicles. For example, grav-tanks and starfighters employ shields that stop small arms fire but generally don't weaken the attacks of other tanks and starfighters enough to prevent the destruction of the protected vehicle because the weapons aboard tanks, starfighters, and assault batteries are typically too large and powerful.

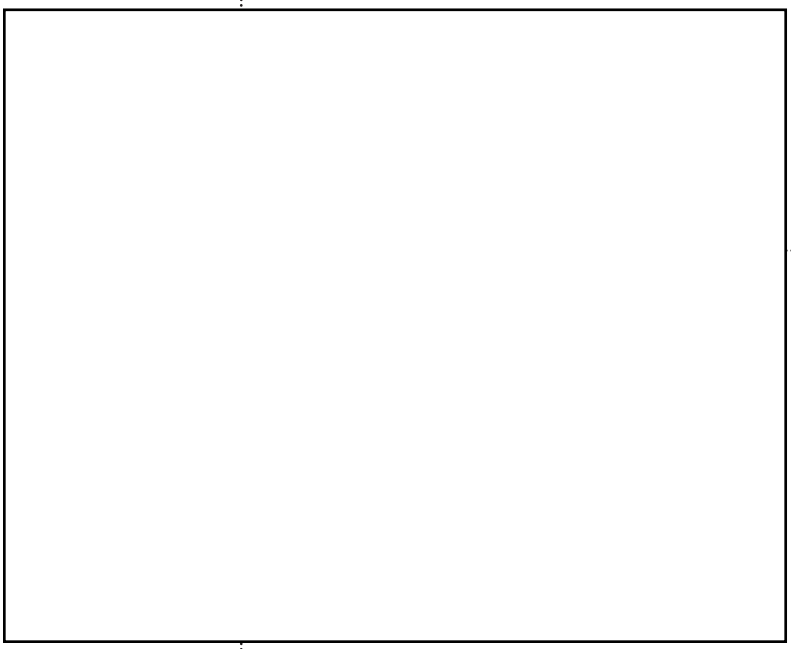
PLANETSIDE NUCLEAR DAMPERS: Most planetside cities (especially modern and important cities) make use of nuclear damper technology in conjunction with their defensive shields. Nuclear dampers are generators that produce a quantum field which inhibits nuclear reactions above a certain threshold. The normal nuclear reactions in living cells and other matter is not affected at all, but larger more forceful reactions are suppressed. Nuclear dampers are not used aboard starships because they reduce fusion thrust output by more than 30% and primary reactor output by more than 50% (as much as 90% on largest vessels). Cities and planets that use these dampers therefore must place their fusion power plants either outside the cities (and thus outside the damping field) or in the case of planet-wide damping fields must bury them deep underground. Planet-wide damping fields are generated by a network or series of damping generators (which generally overlap for safety reasons should one or more generators fail or be sabotaged.)

The reason nuclear dampers are used planet-side is because it renders the threat from nuclear terrorism obsolete. This second principle is very important because of the catastrophic loss of life that could easily result if even a small nuclear device was detonated inside a modern city. Still, because there is a threshold, very small nuclear explosions still detonate unimpeded, and larger ones are suppressed to the explosive output of a small device as well. The thresholds in place protecting most cities and worlds suppress any nuclear bomb (the components of which are not easy to obtain anyway) to the explosive equivalent of tank or mortar shell.

Any flash radiation that might occur along with a stifled nuclear detonation is still delivered to a very weak degree, and modern medical science can usually treat and save all person affected by such weak radioactive levels. Only persons directly at ground zero (very close to the flash point of the bomb or close enough for the concussion damage to prove fatal) are killed, though damage from falling debris is often the greater threat in a crowded city.

Part Two

Character Creation



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CHAPTER EIGHT

Overview of Character Creation

Introduction

Creating a character involves using the rules in the following chapters in order to define character capabilities and weaknesses. The rules help to determine how strong and smart a character is, as well as how agile and personable—these 'ratings' are called Stats (short for Statistics). These, among many other traits, set boundaries on what kinds of obstacles the character can overcome in a given area. For example, a highly intelligent character might be able to crack the enemy's secret code, but be too weak or inexperienced to lead an assault against the enemy's stockade.

The rules therefore help to create a sense of believability or 'realism' in each character, as no one character can know or excel at every task. This sort of 'specialization' also helps to generate dependency between players in a group, as each must rely on another at different points throughout the game.

Sometimes a group of players will all want to create the same or similar type of character. While this is permissible, it might make the characters' jobs all the more difficult. For example, if a group of five players all decide to create militant characters that are highly skilled in hand-to-hand or ranged combat but lack the expertise to pilot a starfreighter, the group as a whole will likely be faced with the possibility of being unable to complete a mission or adventure where the players must commandeer such a freighter. On the other hand, this sort of situation could test the players' roleplaying expertise as they search for an alternative means of reaching their destination or piloting their freighter.

Steps 1-8: Building a Character

Building a character is done in steps, and each step should be completed before moving on to the next one. This overview provides useful tips and summarizes all of the steps in the character creation process—read it first in order to understand the process.

Each step summarized in this Overview corresponds to a Chapter in this book. That is, each chapter provides an in-depth look at the character creation step. For example, Step 1 is detailed in the next chapter, Step 2 in the chapter after that, and so on.

The introduction to each chapter describes in detail the rules for that step. Therefore, after players have familiarized themselves with the overall process of creating a character (described in this Overview), they should then work through each chapter in this part of the book.

It is important, however, for players to review all of the steps outlined in the following chapters (especially Finishing Touches) prior to actually generating a character, as some steps may limit a player's options later.

For example, choosing a particular race or species (the second step) may limit what kinds of background professions are available to him or her. If such a player already knew what kind of role or profession was desired, that player could review the appropriate Background Kits first and then search for a species suitable for that role—rather than the other way around. Cross reference tables

located in some chapters can assist players with planning their character in this manner.

Before You Begin

Developing an abstract character concept should be the first step in making a character. This concept needn't be specific because any details will be worked out toward the end of the character creation process. To start, simply devise a basic idea for the character. Examples include a brute, a technology expert, a clever agent, a scientist, a doctor, an assassin, and so forth. Getting a basic idea will help you select a species and background kit well-suited to your concept. If you can't decide on a base concept, try browsing ahead and taking a look at the various species descriptions and background kits available—these may spark an idea or two.

Players are also encouraged to use the Character Worksheet included at the end of this book in order to track the character's generation and modifications through each step in the character creation process. Once the character is complete, then transfer that information to the permanent Character Record Sheet (also included at the end of this book and okay to photocopy, where so noted, for personal use).

— QuickStart Guide —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤If you're an experienced player already familiar with roleplaying games and can't bring yourself to read through yet another set of in-depth rules, the QuickStart rules will cut right to the chase.

➤You still need to follow-through with each of the 8 steps (represented in 8 sequential chapters) to create a character, but you'll find QuickStart rules at the beginning of every chapter.

➤If you survive the QuickStart character-building experience, then you may also benefit from other quick rules throughout this game. The QuickPlay rules (in Part 3 of this book) may be especially useful. But heed a warning that QuickPlay rules do not take the place of the regular rules as not everything could be squeezed into the QuickPlay sidebars. If you want to know all of the rules, you'll have to at least read that section of the book.

➤Safety First! If you ever get lost or confused by QuickStart rules, just jump back into the main text for clarification. Moreover, you may find useful tips in the main text anyway, so try to take a look when you have time.

Step 1: Starting a New PC

The first chapter in starting a new character does two things. First, it allots you, the player, a set amount of starting Experience Points (XP). These are universal points, similar to Bonus Experience Points (described later), that are used during the character creation process to tailor stats and select or improve skills as well as acquire special options, benefits, or drawbacks. Along with XP, starting monies are issued as well.

Second, it familiarizes you with **Stats.** Stats are the way players and gamemasters keep track of how strong, intelligent, and nimble a character is. There are a total of 11 different stats, and each measures a different facet of the character's prowess.

Thus, each stat is assigned a rating in order to compare one character's prowess to another. These ratings are initially assigned by the particular species chosen. This is because some species are simply stronger, smarter, more clumsy, or faster than others.

Since a character's species sets these ratings to the same value as anyone else of the same species, but since members of the same species would likely vary from individual to individual, players are allowed to 'tailor' their stat ratings by raising or even lowering their stats later during the Character Creation process in order to diversify their characters from the average member of the species they chose. This diversification, however, often has less impact than choosing a different species altogether. Simply, some species have wider ranges in their stats while others do not.

For example, compare two humans: one is likely to be either smarter or stronger (or both) than the other, but both are in the same 'ballpark' when compared to another species, say a bear or a lion.

Step 2: Choosing a Species

Character creation essentially begins with the player selecting a species for his or her character. Each such species offers a unique set of strengths and weaknesses that affect the character's performance in the game. Some races are better suited for combat while others excel at technology or social interaction. The choice the player makes here is a profound one, for it may limit (or enhance) a character's ability to perform in a campaign.

Players should carefully read through Species Templates in Chapter 10 in order to get in-depth information on the biology, sociology, government, homeworld, and history of any races they are considering choosing, as each race has a unique perspective on humankind and are thus treated differently (sometimes poorly) by other races they interact with.

Players should also note that each race costs a different amount of Starting Experience Points. The reason that each species costs a different amount of points is because not all species are inherently equal. Indeed, some species provide many bonus skills and superhuman abilities. Likewise, some species are capable of great diversification while others are very limited and specialized. Choose wisely.

If you're unsure, selecting a Human for your species will give you a wide range of opportunities and good starting resources.

Step 3: Optional Background Kits

Since Zaon is a game of adventure for heroic characters, player characters typically begin play as adults. As such, each character has obviously had a life (and probably at least started a career) prior to beginning play. Who was a character before the start of the game? Background Kits answer this question by providing sample career packages complete with a peak into the character's past, skills and

training the character probably acquired because of this career, and even equipment and wealth commensurate with the chosen background.

Background Kits are an optional step because their purpose is merely to provide guidance to the player during the character creation process. Choosing a Background Kit doesn't give the player or character any advantages in the game other than a sense of purpose and some history to work from. They also list skills important for the character to have, but it is still up to the player to actually 'purchase' these recommended skills later in the character building process. That is, players are free to ignore these guidelines and suggestions if they wish.

Note that a player's species choice may limit which kinds of kits are available. Background Kits are fully explained in Chapter 11.

Step 4: Assign Benefits/Drawbacks

Next, players may purchase benefits and drawbacks for their characters—but doing so is completely optional. Benefits are various advantages that help a character in play. These boons can benefit roleplaying (for example, a character might have a government contact who can supply the character with certain information on a regular basis), a character's abilities (for example, the character is a light sleeper and, hence, prone to wake should the character's group be approached while they sleep), or even a character's wealth. Choosing a benefit costs some of the character's Starting Experience Points—thereby lowering that total.

Conversely, players may accept drawbacks to their character in order to gain additional Starting Experience Points. Drawbacks establish certain weaknesses while leaving the character with additional points to spend on skills, stats, other benefits, or even cybernetic gear. Examples of drawbacks include a powerful enemy (such as an Imperial warship captain whom the player's character wronged or embarrassed in the past), a bad rapsheet, heavy sleeper, a disability, and other hindrances that may impair a character's ability to perform well in certain situations.

Because drawbacks can grant the player additional Starting Experience Points, players are only allowed to choose a maximum of three drawbacks—at most—when making their character. Detailed rules are, of course, outlined in Chapter 12.

Step 5: Improve Skills & Stats

Skills represent specialized knowledge and training, and are used frequently during game play in order to resolve the outcome of character actions. For example, when characters want to climb a steep rock, they would use their Climbing skill. When they need to hot-wire a bulkhead door, they use their Electronics skill.

Skills also have ratings, so a character with a high Climbing skill rating would stand a better chance of scaling the rock. Sure, characters can attempt to climb without the Climbing skill, they just do so at a much lower chance of success.

Also, skills are also based on character stats. Thus, two doctors with the same Surgery skill rating might have different chances of success based on how intelligent they are. Skills have therefore been grouped by the stat they are based upon.

Players will want to select skills they believe will both benefit their character and be complemented by their character's best stats (or make up for poor stats). Additionally, characters may choose to increase their actual stat scores as well.

Skill descriptions and examples of use in play are detailed in Chapter 22 of this game, but how they are added to your character during character creation is explained in Part 2: Chapter 13. How skills are applied during play is described in Part 3 of this book: *Playing the Game.*

Step 6: Calculate Traits

Traits are similar to stats but measure other facets of a character. How fast characters can run or how much damage they can sustain before being rendered unconscious or dead are examples of character traits. Traits are measured differently than character stats and are usually based upon either the character's species, one or more of the character's existing stat scores or skill ratings, or both.

Players need only calculate their traits, using the methods or formulas described for each trait in Chapter 14. Hint: A calculator might be needed.

Step 7: Equipping the Character

Back during Step 1 characters were automatically issued starting money. Often, players will want to purchase equipment items they believe will either be useful during play or may fit with their character's image.

'Going shopping' for a character can be a lot of fun, but be careful: things can be very expensive in the year 3056nc. The universal money of the future is called credits and is abbreviated €, similar to the Euro. Characters might begin with differing amounts of starting credits based on Benefits or Drawbacks they chose (the character's past). Characters may use money during play in order to buy additional equipment and weapons, as well as to purchase shuttle tickets, food, or even to bribe a guard. Most gamemasters will allow their players to use all of this starting money during the character creation process in order to further equip a character if such an act makes sense and fits within the history and background of the character.

Chapter 15: *Equipping the Character* describes how the monetary system works and how to outfit a character. The equipment, weapons, and armor itself is described in detail throughout Part 5 of this book, as are rules for banking and exchange. Note that certain items (especially weapons and armor) carry various 'ratings' and 'traits' that affect the rules of the game. These numbers will make more sense later, after you are familiarized with Part 3: *Playing the Game.*

Step 8: Finishing Touches

At this point the character is complete insofar as game mechanics are concerned, but there is still a key component missing: the role-playing element.

Finishing Touches helps to flesh out a character by establishing believable connections between each character in an adventuring party (group of player characters), as well as setting realistic motivations and an overall drive for the character. Additionally, Chapter 16 helps to brainstorm a character description—not just details like eye and hair color, but also demeanor, style, image, and the like.

Some players actually start with this step and then proceed through Steps 1-7 when creating their characters. That way, they can tailor their stats, background, skills, and equipment to fit with their detailed character concept.

The end of this step is spent copying information from the player's Character Worksheet to the permanent Character Record Sheet.

Advanced Rules

One of the more exciting opportunities available to players of a science-fiction roleplaying game is the chance to play androids, cyborgs and other artificial lifeforms.

In Zaon, players may elect to create characters such as these, but only experienced players should attempt to do so. Players wishing to play these types of characters don't always use the standard rules (Steps 1-8) when making their character. In fact, players wishing to make a bot, for instance, have a supplement all to themselves and don't use Steps 1-8 at all. Cyborgs, on the other hand, use the standard character creation rules with another step added-in (provided for in this book as well as in other sourcebooks).

Telepaths are described in Chapter 22 of this book, but advanced manifest telepathy is described in other books.

QuickStart Rules

Experienced players and players familiar with the Zaon system are encouraged to use the QuickStart rules included near the start of each chapter in this section. QuickStart rules are sidebars of rules abstracts, including summarized formulas found in detail throughout their respective chapters.

Rather than discussing any of the philosophies behind the rules, QuickStart sidebars simply state them along with any mathematical expressions needed to perform the rule in question.

Even so, experienced players will still benefit from reading the rules in their entirety and should do this at some point.

Getting Started

Now that you have an understanding of the character creation process, turn the page and begin following the game rules detailed in each chapter.

A RECAP OF WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING

Start this process with a character idea
Step 1: Starting a New Character (this bestows starting XP)
Step 2: Choose a Species (this costs XP points)
Step 3: Optional Background Kit (optional; provides guidance)
Step 4: Optional Benefits/Drawbacks (costs or grants XP)
Step 5: Improve Skills & Stats (buy/raise skills & stats w/XP)
Step 6: Do the math on derived traits
Step 7: Buy Equipment (no points, but costs money)
Step 8: Finish up with a name, connections, & goals

THE ADVANCED RULES:

Supplement: Bots — Replaces Steps 1–8, above
Supplement: Cyborgs — Insert as Step 4½
Chapter 22: Telepaths — Special

Good Luck!

CHAPTER NINE

Starting a New Character

Introduction

The first step in actually building a new character from scratch is to issue you, the player, an amount of starting Experience Points (XP) and money for your character that you will use to acquire resources and improve that character. In addition, you will learn about 'Stats', which are the defining characteristics of each species and the basis for your character's chance to succeed at given tasks. It's important to understand that both Stats and Skills contribute to a character's overall chance for success at each action during play—understanding each Stat and how it differs from other Stats is therefore important.

The Rules for Starting XP

Player characters in this game are considered a cut above average, and so get more starting XP to apply toward skills and Stat improvements than what is effectively used to build a typical non-player character galactic citizen. However, some gamemasters may actually elect to start player characters out no better off than the typical citizen. Conversely, some gamemasters may wish player characters to begin the game as heavily skilled experts in their fields. Gamemasters therefore occasionally elect to issue less or more Starting Experience Points and starting money for characters in their campaign. In most games, however, players use the 'Normal Starting Characters' preset (recommended) which is outlined below:

NORMAL STARTING CHARACTERS: Unless specifically ordered by your gamemaster, ALL starting characters begin a cut above average with the following:

- **➤100 Starting Experience Points (XP)**
- **➤5,000€ (Starting Money)**

If, for whatever reason, the gamemaster has chosen a more fantastical and superheroic campaign story where 'super-hero' characters are needed, or a tough game heavy with realistic simulation where characters must develop from the ranks of very average stock, then all players in that campaign may receive as many as 200 starting XP or as few as 60, respectively. Most gamemasters begin their campaigns with 100-point characters, but they are not locked into choosing any one extreme should they elect to deviate from the normal 100-point character scheme. Indeed, some gamemasters may have worked out specific starting packages for their game, such as '120 Starting XP', '90 Staring XP', or some other seemingly arbitray amount. This flexibility has been designed into the Zaon system from the ground up, however, **it is strongly recommened that all games begin at the designated 100 Starting XP for Normal Starting Characters, as this is the most best balance between realism and exciting adventure in game play.** Finally, please remember that it is the gamemaster (not the player) who determines the amount of starting XP players will be issued, if different from the normal 100 points.

Understanding Stats

Stats are the way players and gamemasters keep track of how strong, intelligent, and nimble a character is. There are a total of 11 different stats, and each measures a different facet of the character's prowess.

The rating assigned to a stat is called the stat's *score*. Each score consists of two numbers: A main number plus a subscript notation. This subscript notation is the tenths place of the main number.

For example, a score of 4_5 is read as 4.5 (four-point-five). The reason the tenths place is written as a subscript notation is because the tenths place precision in that stat doesn't affect dice rolls very often. It is most certainly used in rolls, but only during special cases called 'Close Calls' (described in Chapter 17 of this game). This means a score of 4.5 is better than a score of 4.0 in terms of probability in succeeding at skills (dice rolls), and so certainly is significant to characters. The higher the better. Scores without a notation such as 3, are read as 3.0.

All stat scores are comparable to that of an average human being which has a score of around 4_5 in most stats. Individual characters' stats may be higher or lower than this depending on whether the character is above or below average in a given area of prowess.

For example, a human soldier would likely have Strength and Reflex stats higher than the typical human citizen would—say around 5 to 5_5 or so in each instead of the normal 4.5. This is not to say that a soldier couldn't have an average Strength stat of 4_5, or even a below average one (say 3_8), but it would make life more challenging to say the least.

Stat scores are initially set by the character's species. If, for example, the player picked a base human (Terran) as a character species, the character would begin with a score of 4.5 in Strength, 4.5 in Agility, 5.0 in Intellect, and so on. Alternatively, the player could pick an alien species and have starting stats higher or lower than these.

The legal range of a stat is also dependent upon the species of the character. For base humans, the Strength stat score ranges from 2.0 (minimum) to 7.0 (maximum), but is different for other human stats! Remember, for Strength this is the normal range for humans and so the lowest score of 2 represents a character either with, or on the verge of, a disability. Also, some breeds of humanity may vary in their minimum, typical, and maximum scores.

For example, a character with an Intellect (intelligence) score of 4.2 might be considered to possess a slight learning disability while a character with a score of 3.0 would be considered borderline mentally retarded, all because the normal Intellect score for humans is 5.0. Similarly, a character with an Intellect of 6.5 would be considered very intelligent while someone with a score of 9.4 would be a certifiable genius. The few 'Einsteins' of the human species may have scores as high as 10 to 11 or so. Different stats therefore have different ranges, and vary by species as well. **Minimums represent the lowest possible score for a species without a major mental or physical handicap (medically speaking), and with scores nearing the Maximum representing less than the top 1% of that species' population.**

Although it is possible for a character to possess a score below their species' minimum due to injury or other temporary or permanent effects, an individual can never exceed the racial maximum without artificial aid such as cybernetics. Other species, however, may have stat ranges far outside of what is considered normal for humans, but they still can't exceed their racial maximums for their species.

A description of each individual stat follows, and each of these is categorized by its type (Physical or Mental). Reflex is grouped with the physical stats but is really a blend of both physical and mental (see below). The letters in parentheses at the beginning of each stat's description denote that stat's abbreviation.

PHYSICAL STATS: Strength, Agility, Precision, Allure, and Reflex.

MENTAL STATS: Intellect, Knowledge, Willpower, Intuition, Ego, and Harmony.

— QuickStart Guide —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤**Normal Starting Characters begin with:**

➥***100 Starting (XP)***

➥***5,000 Starting Credits***

➤**Stat Definitions:** 4_5 is a sample Stat Score. The $(3–6_2)$ parenthetical notation is sample minimum and maximum scores in a particular Stat for a certain species. The subscript notation (e.g., $_5$ as seen in 4_5) is a tenth place for that number, and so 5_3 is read as five-point-three (5.3). The tenth place is ignored except for Close Call rolls (described in Chapter 17 of this book) and is also used during character stat improvements later in this chapter and during the game when XP is spent to raise a stat.

Physical Stats

STRENGTH: (STR) A measure of pure muscle. The higher the score, the stronger the character and the more damage they can do with melee attacks. Strength is also representative of a character's general health, durability, and ability to withstand gravitational forces.

An average base human with a Strength score of 4.5 can lift a maximum of 45 kilograms (100 lbs) overhead for a short period of time, or perform a squat with that weight. Strength also affects the amount of damage a character can inflict with a handheld weapon or bare fist, as well as affecting one's ability to restrain or wrestle an opponent.

The chart below shows the amount of weight a character can pick up and hold for a short period of time. This is called the character's Maximum Lift or Squat weight. As a general rule, characters can carry half that amount for a period of time, and one-quarter the amount somewhat comfortably.

STR:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
max kg:	1	5	20	30	90	230	450	760	1250	1810	2600	3550	4700	6200	7900	9900

Remember, 1,000 kg is one metric ton. To convert to pounds, multiply the amount in kilograms by 2.2 (kg x 2.2 = lbs).

Characters with a high Strength score can also withstand higher gravitational stresses without losing consciousness or dying. As a general rule, characters can withstand roughly equal G-forces to their Strength score for a very short time. For example, a character with a Strength score of about 6.5 through 7.4 could withstand up to a 7 G-force gravity environment for several seconds without passing out, and perhaps another full G or two above that for one-second time periods.

AGILITY: (AGI) Rates a character's balance, grace, and flexibility. Agility is used to perform complex or gross body movements

such as dancing, tightrope walking, and the like. It is also used to determine the accuracy of hand-to-hand and melee weapon attacks.

PRECISION: (PRE) A character's manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination. Used to determine accuracy of ranged weapons fire, success at complex fine motor skills, or to perform delicate movement such as lockpicking.

ALLURE: (ALL) A measure of the character's physical attractiveness as viewed by humans. Allure is central to how others initially respond to a character. A character with high Allure may initially receive a great deal of warm attention (perhaps both wanted and unwanted) as well as help from Good Samaritans until such time that character's Harmony (personality) has a chance to either enhance or spoil the effect.

High Allure possessed by alien species becomes a measure of how adorable, cute, or pleasant the alien is to look at. For example, a cute puppy dog might have an Allure as high as 6 or 7 or so.

Between members of the same or similar species, Allure also plays a role in romantic encounters and can have a powerful influence unless the subject also possesses a high (or higher) Allure or strong Willpower.

REFLEX: (REF) The measure of a character's response time and reflexes. High Reflex doesn't make the character better at tasks—only better at how fast he or she initiates them. A character with a high Reflex can draw a weapon, shoot, dodge an attack, or make a split-second acrobatic maneuver in a starfighter dogfight faster and better than a character with a low Reflex. Reflex is therefore a blending of mental and physical stats insofar as nerve impulse times both within the brain and in the nerves required to reach and activate the muscles—as well as the speed of the mental process to decide to react in the first place.

Mental Stats

INTELLECT: (INT) A measure of cognitive prowess and logical aptitude. Used to measure one's capacity to reason logically and understand. Also reflects the speed of thought, but not necessarily mental reaction time (which is the purview of Reflex). A high Intellect indicates a race with a superior and complex mind. Indeed, some races may possess brains capable of operating with the speed and accuracy of a computer that, when combined with high Intuition (see below) and Reflex, are able to predict another character's actions before that character can actually act on them. A high Intellect combined with a low Reflex stat indicates a slow and methodical reasoner, albeit a brilliant one.

KNOWLEDGE: (KNO) Knowledge rates a character's memory, ability to learn, and competence to apply skilled knowledge (including worldliness). Many professionals, including technicians and mechanics, prize this stat.

WILLPOWER: (WIL) Indicative of mental toughness, determination, and the strength of the psyche. A character with high Willpower can better resist torture, mental anguish, and telepathic attacks. High Willpower also helps a character to stay focused, motivated, and maintain a strong determination for completing a task. A character with high Willpower is also very difficult to manipulate.

INTUITION: (INU) Intuition serves as a basis for common sense, a sixth sense, and the ability to notice detail. Characters with high Intuition are often able to arrive at the correct answer even when sufficient information isn't available. Intuition is also used to measure a character's abstract perception and awareness (for example, to determine whether one notices a guard hiding behind a barricade) and to measure instinctive or behavioral perception (for example, to realize when someone is acting strangely or lying). In many instances, a character with high Intuition can arrive at a similar answer as someone using a high Intellect score to reason their way there—though this isn't the case when dealing with subjects based entirely on reasoning such as complex mathematical formulae in cryptography where Intuition is largely useless.

EGO: (EGO) Expressive of a character's inherent dominance, persuasive ability, and leadership. Used to command respect, manipulate others, instill a belief in a crowd, or con a guard. Characters with high Ego and high Allure (and/or Harmony) can almost always get what they want through social interaction, regardless of the character's actual choice of words. Obviously, though, a good silver-tongued player can more accurately portray a high Ego score during roleplaying.

HARMONY: (HAR) Rates a character's personal magnetism, likableness, and ability to work with and understand other members of society. Characters with high Harmony scores are very outgoing and will often receive more favorable reactions from non-player characters regardless of the character's (player's) actual choice of words or deeds—the character is said to have a magnetic personality. A genuinely nice and outgoing player, though, could certainly roleplay this score in a more believable manner and within character.

➤Go to Chapter 10.

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CHAPTER TEN

Selecting a Species

Introduction

The first real step of character creation is to select a species. Not all species are created equal and therefore each costs a different amount of Starting Experience Points (Starting XP) which may limit the amount one can spend later in the character creation process.

The following pages summarize the character races available to players. All of the necessary game data is included in this chapter, along with a brief summary and illustration of the species in question. Reviewing this information will aid players in comparing the various races and narrowing their decision between them.

Players should, however, pay close attention to other information available for each species that's useful for roleplaying, such as culture, history, and physiology.

The Rules

Choose a species. Species are summarized throughout this chapter. When making your decision, remember that in addition to special abilities, some races may have Biologically-Easy skills which can be of great benefit (as those skill's costs are cut in half or more). Also, beware of species that appear to have many special abilities and good stats but might consequently have very high Starting Experience Point costs—those species are usually highly-specialized and not much good for other tasks—something that could limit your roleplaying experience.

➤**Subtract the number of Starting Experience Points your species costs from your starting total** (typically from a starting total of 100 points). Record this on the Character Worksheet in the space provided. **Note that if the cost of a particular species is higher than the Starting XP you have, it is permissible to look ahead into Chapter 12: Benefits and Drawbacks (and even further ahead to Chatper 13: Improving Skills and Stats) in order to assign Drawbacks or lower starting stat scores which may then raise your starting XP high enough to 'buy' the species in question.**

➤Record your character's starting base stat scores—there are 11 of them, starting with 'STR' and ending with 'HAR'. These should be marked on your Character Worksheet. Only record the actual score and 'exponential' superscript notation (not the two numbers separated by a dash in parentheses—these two numbers are your character's minimum and maximum scores and are used later). Also note that 'SPD' is not really a stat and is recorded separately on the Character Worksheet. Your 11 Stats are:

STR	**—**	***Strength (physical strength)***
AGI	**—**	***Agility (balance and nimbleness)***
PRE	**—**	***Precision (manual dexterity)***
ALL	**—**	***Allure (physical beauty)***
REF	**—**	***Reflex (response timing)***
INT	**—**	***Intellect (intelligence)***
KNO	**—**	***Knowledge (memory and ability to learn)***
WIL	**—**	***Willpower (mental fortitude)***
INU	**—**	***Intuition (perception and awareness)***
EGO	**—**	***Ego (leadership, dominance, and power)***
HAR	**—**	***Harmony (magnetism and likableness)***

These Stats were more thoroughly described in the previous chapter, as was the meaning of the superscript notation in the score.

➤Copy your species' 'SPD', 'Base Life' and 'Minimum Starting Age' into the appropriate spaces on the Character Worksheet. Also make note of any 'Special Abilities/Rules' information about your species—you'll probably want to record these special rules on your final Character Sheet when you're done.

➤Finally, copy the Culturally-Inherent skill information listed for your species on Page 2 of the Character Worksheet. When transferring this information, simply write the skill rating in the first blank column following the skill's name. If your species has 'Biologically-Difficult' skills, then record those as well by noting their negative rating in the same first column following the skill name. Circle Biologically-Easy skills as a note to yourself later that those skills will cost you less when applying Chapter 13 rules.

Note that when a Biologically-Difficult skill notation states 'ALL [stat]' or 'ALL [stat group]' that all skills associated with that particular stat, or all stats in that group, receive the negative skill rating. This could potentially be quite a few stats when the difficulty is applied to all physical or all mental stats, for example.

➤Go to Chapter 10.

The Species

The following pages describe the species available. Note that some species have roleplaying implications because of stigma, past wars with humanity, or current political views. Therefore, be sure to review the demeanor, culture, relations, and biology of your species in detail before making a final decision. Additional information about your species may exist in other parts of the game, such as the Imperium, Southern Alliance, or Threat Empires chapters in Part One.

Also remember that each species costs a different amount of Starting Experience Points which may leave you with more or less to spend later in the character creation process. This is because some species have less diversity in their physical and mental characteristics, while others vary widely.

The number of Starting Experience Points you're left with after 'buying' a species can be quite important, as these points are also used not only to select and improve skills but also to 'buy' special benefits and even cybernetic implants. However, bear in mind that a species with high stats but low skills can still perform many skilled tasks well because stats form the basis of skill ability.

— QuickStart Guide —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Select a species and deduct its Starting Experience Point cost.

➤Record your character's starting stat ratings and review the minimum/maximums for each stat.

➤Record skill and trait data. Note that some skills are Biologically-Difficult for some species and are recorded as a negative number (which will lower the final tally).

Argelian

Pronounced: r+GEE+lee+un
Political Affiliation: Mainly Neutral, Some Imperial
Galactic Prevalence— Rare
Imperium Interior: Rare
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Argelian League: Everywhere (home)
Southern Alliance: Rare
Uncharted Territories: Uncommon
All Other Areas: Exceptionally Rare

GENERAL INFORMATION: As early space travelers, Argelians are infamous for having visited sentient cultures possessing pre-warp technologies. They are physically inferior to most other species, lack the personality skills to mingle well in modern societies, though excel at the collection of knowledge. Because of this, the Argelian people often master far more skills than humans and other races find possible to learn.

DEMEANOR

Argelians are driven by a fascination with technology, skills, and knowledge. Knowing a lot about everything is often preferable to knowing everything about something. Their inquisitive nature can get them into trouble but as long as there is a procedure for getting themselves out of it, they'll find it.

Most of the galactic medium would term Argelians a cold people. This is not entirely true, but Argelians do seem to disregard the civil rights of other sentient species—notably those of TAL6 or less—terming them as primitive. This disregard is partially to blame on lack of compassion fostered by minimal emotional response in the species. Individual, corporate, and governmental expeditions to the homeworlds of other less developed races dates back thousands of years. 'Expeditions' involved the careful study of alien cultures and technologies at the very least, and often included crude or inhumane experiments on abducted individuals. Rumors of memory repression, vivisection, and other ghastly experiments are hearsay, but some evidence seems to support these allegations. One insinuation that appears rather unlikely is the infamous 'anal probe'.

CULTURE

A certain, limited form of prestige is awarded to individual Argelians that have furthered the cause of science. This is especially true when the research is xenobiological in nature and subsequently benefits Argelian medicine or life sciences. Beyond this, status is viewed by Argelians as a trait of more emotional (and thus primitive) species.

Members of the society lack adult rights until the conclusion of adolescence (age 22 for males and 23 for females). From this point forward, adults are accorded all the rights of society as well as all of the responsibilities. Argelians over the age of 300 are sometimes watched suspiciously, and those that demonstrate loss in mental faculty are quickly relieved of their duties and confined to aging centers.

Pairing for family occurs not out of love but from a sense of collaboration. That is, male and females working together as colleagues often pair for life when their work complements one another and thus benefits their overall ability to impact society in terms of scientific advancement.

Argelians are a fastidious people when it comes to their work areas and living spaces. Outsiders term these environments as spartan, but functional. Mealtimes are only when convenient and often accompany work or research in portable packages.

RELATIONS

Though the Argelians bear no ill will toward any species or nation, the reverse is not true. Medians, especially, harbor great hatred for Argelians, having suffered openly from early Argelian experiments of a most heinous nature. Some Terrans also dislike this species for the same reasons, and the Vagar and Raklar races will occasionally attack Argelians on site.

'Grays' is the common slang term for Argelians among many species. They are also known as *Despok* which, in the Vagar tongue, is a vulgar epithet meaning *the dishonrable destroyer of lives.*

BIOLOGY

Argelians are completely hairless with smooth and gray skin. The skin of all individuals appears moist, though it is not, and many Argelians have a dirty white and gray mottled appearance. Their large dark lidless eyes are protected by a thin layer of keratin. Argelians have lost most of their strength, definition, and gross motor coordination, though they have managed to retain much of the fine motor skills and tiny muscle groups within their hands—tools they continue to exercise regularly.

Despite minor dentation, the Argelian digestive tract is no longer able to process solid foodstuffs. With the advent of technology, the species' diet slowly shifted to a nutritious paste and, in the generations that followed, the stomach weakened and the teeth recessed. Argelian blood is very dark, almost black in color. This coloration is due partly from a poor hemoglobin count (leaving the being with inadequate endurance) and also unique pigmentation in all platelets. Conventional, enzymatically-induced semi-conservative replication mechanisms support mitosis in all Argelian cells (with typical meiosis in germ cells). The Argelian haploid genome contains $1.06x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

PROPER NAMES

(examples; females in italics)

Hu Jra Bol Ni
Nik Fra Nee
Lo Jeem Tal Ni
Vee No Mi
Urt Lo Jra
Yik Tal Ni

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -50

PHYSICAL—

Height: 1.5m (5' tall)
Weight: 40kg (90 lbs)
Eyesight: Good
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Poor

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 3_1 ($2–3_9$) INT: 8_1 ($7–9_2$) INU: 3_9 ($3–5_9$)
AGI: 3_4 ($3–4_8$) KNO: 8_6 ($7–10_7$) EGO: 3_1 ($2–4_3$)
PRE: 7_2 ($6–8_0$) WIL: 3_9 ($3–5_9$) HAR: 4_9 ($4–5_5$)
ALL: 3_7 ($3–4_1$)
REF: 3_8 ($3–4_5$) Base Life: 4
SPD: 1-3-$\frac{1}{2}_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 10 *(Lifespan: 160 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—

Alien Technology @ 3
Language, Argel @ 5
Medicine (Any 1 Species) @ 3
Xenobiology @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—

Alien technology
Xenobiology

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—

ALL PHYSICAL @ -2 (i.e., STR, AGI, PRE, & ALL skills)
ALL Ego & Harmony associated skills @ -2

RECOMMENDED KITS—

Doctor
Scientist
Tech

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—

Entertainer
Navy Marine
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper
Martial Artist
Punk
Reporter
Thug

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—

1) **Nightvision:** Although Argelians do not possess infrared or thermographic vision, they do have good nightsight and can see much better in the dark than humans can. As a result, they suffer only a +1 Step Penalty (instead of +3) when performing in darkness.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—

Age 100–129: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -0_5, KNO $+1_0$, EGO/HAR $+0_5$
Age 130–149: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, KNO $+1_0$, INT/INU -1_0
Age 150+ (& every 10 more years): ALL STATS (except KNO) -0_5, KNO $+0_5$

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P3-5/G0-6/R6[8]

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Bangor

Pronounced: bang+gore
Political Affiliation: Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— RARE
Imperium Interior: Essentially None
Imperium Frontier: Very Rare
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Very Rare
Vagar Delegation: Rare
Wrekiri Consortium: Uncommon
Sordrid Dominion: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Uncommon
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Uncommon
Uncharted Territories: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Originally bred for sport in the gladiator pits, Bangor are powerful, deadly, and cunning. Their second set of arms allows them to launch additional attacks during melee. Unfortunately, Bangor are not very bright and perform poorly where mental or social activities are concerned. They prefer warmer climates.

DEMEANOR

Bangor are one of the most violent and aggressive sentient species ever documented. It is for this reason that they are popular as fighters in the gladiator pits. A lower form of consciousness leaves the Bangor valuing blood lust, combat skill, pride, and warrior prestige. Prestige is often the most valued and is held only in the eyes of the Bangor, though is based on the approval of others. In the gladiator pits, Bangor watch the crowds carefully for every sign of approval and pleasure. Elsewhere, many Bangor will stand over a crime they have committed in order to gauge public interest—a trait which often lands them in prison or dead.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Grog, The Grinder
Nog, Bonecrusher
Bog, Slayer
Krag, The Mangler
Kag, TaskMaster
Trog, The Masher

Tattoos and piercings are common among Bangor. Many of the tattoos depict the faces of powerful foes defeated in duel. Body painting is also sometimes practiced.

Most Bangor do not care for space travel as it generates a caged feeling coupled with boredom. Most interesting, though, is that 97% of Bangor have a peculiar habit of uncontrollably falling asleep during space travel, not unlike a narcoleptic episode. Investigators believe the sound of engine rumble is responsible.

CULTURE

Bangor have very little culture to speak of, and what does exist has changed over the generations since the original Bangor were abducted from their homeworld—a location that remains a mystery.

RELATIONS

Because there is no Bangor society or known homeworld, there are no consistent interracial tensions—only consistent aggression. Luckily, Bangor tend to ignore small or frail individuals, only picking on those they consider to be fighters. Where so, Bangor are quick to pick a fight. They especially dislike Xom out of jealousy of the Xom's greater strength, but most Bangor still feel that their additional set of arms and one-on-one fighting skills outweigh that advantage and leave the Bangor superior especially in feats of wrestling. Still, many are cautious in picking fights with Xom.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -90

PHYSICAL—
Height: 2.5m (8' tall)
Weight: 590kg (1,300 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Good

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 10_7 ($8–11_7$) INT: 2_8 ($2–3_6$) INU: 4_6 ($4–8_8$)
AGI: 5_8 ($5–9_0$) KNO: 2_7 ($2–3_8$) EGO: 5_0 ($4–6_0$)
PRE: 3_3 ($2–5_0$) WIL: 4_2 ($3–6_1$) HAR: 2_4 ($1–4_4$)
ALL: 3_2 ($2–3_6$)
REF: 4_3 ($4–6_7$) Base Life: 22
SPD: 2-8-$2_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 11 *(Lifespan: 60 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Climbing @ 2
Dodge @ 1
Intimidation @ 1
Language, InterLak @ 2
Martial Arts @ 2
Wrestling @ 4

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Climbing
Wrestling

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
ALL MENTAL @ -2 (i.e., All INT, KNO, WIL, INU, EGO, HAR skills)
ALL Allure (ALL) associated skills @ -3

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Bodyguard, Gladiator, Mercenary, Punk, Thug

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Arbitrator, Confidence Man, Doctor, Entertainer, Executive, Front Man, Martial Artist, Navy Officer, Navy Trooper, Reporter, Scientist, Spy, Tech

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Four Arms:** Bangor may launch 2 attacks (1 with the upper set of arms and 1 with the lower set) per turn. Neither of these two attacks warrants any penalties, though ranged weapons must be aimed at the SAME target. Alternatively, aiming one attack at a second target imposes a +5 Step Penalty to that AIM roll for the second target.
The non-primary hand of the upper set and the non-primary hand of the lower set can of course also be used but suffer standard penalties for wrong-handedness as well as two-handed fighting penalties. If the Two-Handed Fighting skill is possessed, its value applies to both sets of hands, and so is doubly useful.
2) **Natural Weapons (male only):** Tusks, together, act as a sword for damage purposes (1d6+3). This attack does not receive an AIM to-hit roll itself. Rather, a hand attack must be successful in order to seize prey and bring the tusks to bear. Each hand (usually 1 from upper and 1 from lower unless Two-Handed Fighting penalties are incurred) may make an AIM to-hit roll. If any one hand attack succeeds, the subject is grabbed, the tusks gore, and wrestling rules apply.
3) **Natural Claws:** Base wound damage of 2 points each.
4) **Rapid Healing:** Bangor recover naturally from wounds and stun at twice the normal rate. This doesn't expedite surgery, however.
5) **Large Target:** Bangor are considered to be Large creatures and so warrant the -2 Modifier to Evasion (see Chapter 14).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 40–44: ALL STATS (except KNO) -1_4, KNO $+1_1$
Age 45–54: ALL STATS (except KNO) -1_2, KNO $+1_2$
Age 55+ (& every 5 more years): ALL STATS (except KNO) -1_0, KNO $+1_3$

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T5-7/P4-7/G0-7/R5[7]

BIOLOGY

Inbreeding has narrowed many of the natural Bangor characteristics to the point there exists little difference between members of the species. Male and female Bangor are identical except that females do not bear tusks. Instead, the female mammary glands are located along the cheeks and lower face in the form of swollen pouches. The tusks of the male can reach almost one-half meter in length, are bladed along the fore edge, and pointed sharp.

Skin color ranges from dull gray to silvery-white, and the tough hide eliminates most minor cuts and abrasions. Along the being's head and nape is straight and wiry fur always the same color as the skin. In some individuals, the fur can cover the shoulders and extend down the creature's back, forming a mane. An odor of musk is common. Eye color is solid and tends to be silver or dark gray, albeit some individuals have black eyes.

The powerful and dense musculature of this species is astonishing. With all four arms, the largest of the specimens are able to lift as much as 3,000 kilograms (over three tons). Bone structure is a sturdy skeletal matrix of heavy bones, all of which contain a viscous fluid of marrow designed to rapidly heal and/or regenerate breaks. A strange lining of ligaments tends to set bones automatically after a break, and tusks will completely regrow should they be severed.

Bangor suffer to some degree in the areas of brain physiology and nerve development. Their cerebral cortex is much smaller than that in human specimens, and their nerve relays (especially those leading to the extremities) are fewer resulting in diminished fine motor skills. Cognitive and reactive processes are also limited as a result. The Bangor haploid genome consists of approximately $8.4x10_8$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Bossk

Pronounced: bawsk
Political Affiliation: Mainly Imperial and Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— Common
Imperium Interior: Common
Imperium Frontier: Uncommon
Southern Alliance: Rare
Coalition States: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: When it comes to social interaction and negotiating dangerous diplomatic pitfalls, Bossk are on the front lines. With a natural inclination for social skills, Bossk are unparalleled in ambassadorial roles. They also have a naturally-armored shell for combat protection.

DEMEANOR

Bossk value peace. With a natural edge at diffusing volatilities, Bossk enjoy putting their gifts to work in ambassadorial roles and as mediators. In addition to diplomacy, the species also likes to have fun by socializing and mingling throughout the upper echelons of prestigious clubs, dinners, and charity functions.

Very few species have as much compassion for others as Bossk do. Bossk were the lead proponents of the Southern Alliance Treaty and also founded several hospices and youth outreach programs within the Imperium to improve the quality of life for the improverished.

Starting with early adolescence, Bossk are rigidly trained in the art of etiquette. They learn the practices and standards of dozens of other species, adapting to fit into the highest circles of government. This is not to say that Bossk always adhere to formality—indeed, many relax in recreation all too often.

Proper Names
(examples; females in italics)
Myrulin Wushi
Juraim Farmaley
Orj'uana Neomey
Larfreum
Muonoley
Uumerium Shalishey
Yiblurus Defey

Most Bossk never don clothing, but robes, capes, jewelry, and other garb is common when attending social functions or during formal meetings. These adornments rarely fit the description of 'gaudy', and usually are quite in league with the latest fashion.

Pools of water, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of liquid are greatly feared and avoided by all Bossk. If there is a worst nightmare for members of this race, it is drowning. Since Bossk can drown in as little as a minute (see Biology, below), there is rarely time for rescue. For this reason, Bossk prefer to stay well clear of water deeper than one-half meter.

CULTURE

Bossk culture is situated around centers for learning tolerance, mediation, and governmental diplomacy. Accomplishments in these areas and a life full of socialization determine self-worth.

Status exists only in terms of respect. Individuals (whether Bossk or not) who have become renowned negotiators or socialites are revered. Bossk also respect others who have attained positions of great authority, though they themselves do not envy this kind of status. Every elite function, dinner, or state affair is sure to have a handsome population of Bossk in attendance. Everything from as light as a special movie screening on up to an Imperial Incorporation Ceremony catches the attentions of Bossk from around the galaxy.

Starting Experience Point Cost: -55

Physical—
Height: 1.5m (5' tall)
Weight: 70kg (155 lbs)
Eyesight: Poor
Hearing: Excellent
Smell Sense: Average

Base Stat Scores—

STR: 3_9 ($3–6_2$)	INT: 4_4 ($3–6_9$)	INU: 4_7 ($4–8_1$)
AGI: 3_6 ($2–5_6$)	KNO: 4_0 ($2–7_7$)	EGO: 4_8 ($3–5_5$)
PRE: 3_4 ($3–5_9$)	WIL: 6_1 ($3–6_4$)	HAR: 9_0 ($7–10_2$)
ALL: 3_9 ($3–4_3$)		
REF: 5_2 ($4–7_3$)	Base Life: 5	
SPD: 1-3-n/$a_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 15 *(Lifespan: 90 years)*	

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Charm @ 3
Etiquette @ 3
Language, Bossk @ 4
Language, InterLak @ 5
Language, (Any 1 New) @ 5
Speech @ 2
Xenosociology @ 3

Biologically-Easy Skills—
Languages (any)
Xenosociology

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
Running @ -3
Swimming @ -5
Wrestling @ -4

Recommended Kits—
Arbitrator
Entertainer
Front Man
Kid
Reporter

Not Recommended Kits—
Confidence Man
Navy Marine
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper

Special Abilities / Rules—
1) **Natural Armor:** A Bossk's hard shell offers the following protection—BDR:8 CDR:8 PDR:8 EDR:6 LDR:2 Bossk may not wear additional armor, though they may employ screens.
2) **Natural Defenses:** Bossk can produce an extremely loud screaming shrill once every 3 minutes (180 turns). This shrill causes 1d2 points of stun damage to all hearing beings and 1 point of real damage to glass, crystal, and other high-frequency sensitive objects.
3) **Friendly:** All Bossk-to-NPC initial reactions are warm. That is, Bossk do not need to make Harmony and Allure checks as described in the Gamemaster's section on NPCs.

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 50–74: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, HAR +1_0, KNO/WIL/INU +0_4
Age 75–84: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -0_8, HAR +0_6
Age 85+ (& every 5 more years): ALL STATS (except HAR) -0_5, HAR +0_3

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T3-5/P5-7/G0-7/R6[7]

Bossk voice and language is a soft, flowing tune analogous to a song. Few Bossk speak their language except in the privacy of their own family or between other Bossk when discretion is called for believing that doing so publicly is rude.

RELATIONS

Bossk have no enemies. Bossk themselves, however, are stirred to anger bordering on violence when facing Vreen—a cruel and ruthless race. Bossk also dislike Za'aan for their intimidating demeanor.

BIOLOGY

Male and female Bossk are indistinguishable except by a medical scan. Bossk are mono colored—there are never patterns or variations in their body color. Most specimens are a deep maroon, almost black color. This can vary to light brown, wine, and even russet in some individuals. Shell color is the same but usually a bit lighter in shade.

When in danger, Bossk retain their instinctive ancestral ability to curl up into a tight ball shape. Their head, arms, and legs all retract into the center of the enclosure while the main body arcs a full circle. Curling up in this manner used to provide additional protection versus large predators (preventing their jaws from obtaining a hold), but since the Bossk's armor protects both the front and back

of the creature the act of curling up is of no additional benefit in modern combat scenarios.

A Bossk's external shell is cross-webbed internally and thus also serves as an internal endoskeleton. The shell grows from a large bone-like organ that runs the length of the creature's back and is made of an unusually hard chitinous material. An inline series of three heart organs fire in sequence to circulate blood. Each of the hearts is a single-chambered organ, and in unison they serve as a single multi-chambered heart. Blood pressure is generally a high 210/100 in order to account for the viscous nature of the blood plasma, and so Bossk can risk capillary bursts in even P4 environments however the thickness does not increase the risk of vascular thrombosis. Rather than having a large lung, thousands of tiny ones no more than a millimeter in diameter dot the Bossk's abdomen and back and pore-like openings in the shell and abdomen allow air to reach these organs. Bossk have 1.05 billion DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Calamorane

Pronounced: kalla+more+AIN
Political Affiliation: Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— EXCEPTIONALLY RARE
Imperium Interior: Essentially None
Imperium Frontier: Exceptionally Rare
Southern Alliance: Exceptionally Rare
Coalition States: Exceptionally Rare
Uncharted Territories: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: This is a rare shapeless species highly sought for their philosophical wisdom and affinity for spatial navigation. They are natural telepaths and can physically release a powerful electric shock from their bodies. Their beautifully dark, aqua-blue skin displays marble-like veins of bright green, blue, and fuchsia that gracefully dance about the skin's surface. From their amoeboid bodies, they may extrude a single prehensile pseudopod which they may use for grasping and work.

DEMEANOR

Calamorane are a very gentle, spiritual people not commonly encountered in dense population centers outside of their homeworld. Above all, Calamorane value spiritual enlightenment. Specifically, they view the universe and the history and configuration of the galaxy as sacred. Journeys that take them across the stars provide this enlightenment, which is one of the reasons Calamorane have such affinity for spatial navigation.

To this race, all life is sacred. Because of this belief, Calamorane will go out of their way to help others in times of need. They are not in the least bit xenophobic and they maintain a high standard of moral and ethical principles. The species is not at all concerned with material trappings and so bodily adornment is unheard of. Some individuals do take pride in arranging spectacular and beautiful patterns of light and color in their skin, though.

Calamorane disdain combat and other forms of violence, but they are by no means true pacifists. Members of this species have been known to defend themselves and others with lethal force, and many will not hesitate to deliver their powerful electric shock to anyone threatening them with harm.

CULTURE

Although most Calamorane are encountered as solitary beings, on their homeworld this species has sculpted a highly advanced culture.

Status levels within this race's culture do exist, but these levels have mostly to do with respect earned through philosophical teachings. Schooling comes in the form of metaphysical understanding. These spiritual teachings are passed between members of a family group through poetry, songs of the mind, and art. The knowledge rarely includes historical events of other species, instead concentrating on the nature of the universe.

RELATIONS

Most Calamorane who leave their homeworld to mingle within the galactic community wear a digital device they stimulate electrically that outputs verbal speech. Some individuals of other species lack the patience often required to converse with one of these beings, but no widespread enemies exist.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -45

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.5m (4'10" long)
Weight: 75kg (165 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Poor
Smell Sense: NONE

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 4_2 ($3–7_6$)	INT: 7_0 ($7–7_4$)	INU: 7_6 ($7–10_3$)
AGI: 3_9 ($3–7_0$)	KNO: 3_7 ($3–5_1$)	EGO: 4_2 ($3–6_0$)
PRE: 2_6 ($2–3_0$)	WIL: 6_5 ($5–10_1$)	HAR: 7_3 ($5–8_5$)
ALL: 4_9 ($4–6_1$)		
REF: 2_9 ($2–3_6$)	Base Life: 18	
SPD: 1-2-$\frac{1}{2}_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 6 *(Lifespan: 200 years)*	

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Astrophysics @ 3
Concentration @ 3
Devotion @ 3
Starship Ops, Navigation @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Starship Ops, Navigation

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
ALL PHYSICAL @ -3 (i.e., All STR, AGI, PRE, and ALL skills)

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Arbitrator

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—

Cab Driver	Gladiator	Reporter
Confidence Man	Navy Marine	Scout
Doctor	Navy Officer	Thug
Entertainer	Navy Trooper	
Executive	Punk	

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Natural Telepathy/Empathy:** See Chapter 22.
2) **Prehensile Tentacle:** Form up to 1 prehensile pseudopod limb at a time for grasping and manipulation.
3) **Natural Defenses:** Release a powerful electric discharge once every four turns that will stun anyone in physical contact with the Calamorane. The effect inflicts 2d6 points of stun damage; or 1d6 damage to sensitive electronic equipment. Note that this defensive ability is purely electrical in nature and so armor (other than entirely isolated armor such as a body tank) offers no protection whatsoever. Subjects who are not grounded may thwart some or all of the damage (e.g., a flying creature).
4) **Energy Drain:** Can drain power from devices at a rate of 1 EU per turn. Calamorane may drain a maximum of 100 EU total per day. The Calamorane must be in constant physical contact with an item in order to drain power from it.
5) **Electrical Immunity:** Calamorane suffer no damage from purely electrical attacks up to 10 points of damage in strength. Stronger electrocutions will cause damage, but the first 10 points will be harmlessly absorbed. Natural lightning follows these rules. A telepath's manifested abilities cause full damage, however.
6) **Natural Immunity:** to all standard drugs, poisons, and toxins.
7) **Unusual Shape:** This species cannot wear physical armor of any kind, but may be outfitted with screens (personal force fields) if they can be afforded and worn.
8) **Physically Slow:** Always act in the Slow phase of initiative.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 80–139: ALL MENTAL (except WIL) $+0_5$, WIL $+1_2$
Age 140–189: None
Age 190+ (& every 10 more years): ALL PHYSICAL & REF -2_0

Environmental Tolerances: A [ ]/T3-7/P3-7/G0-9/R6[8]

BIOLOGY

Locomotion is performed through a rapid series of contractions along their ventral surface, much in the same manner as a snake or snail. At their top speed, Calamorane are able to slither nearly as fast as a human can run. They can even spring up to one-half meter or so in order to clear objects or gaps. Despite the species' relatively decent land speed, Calamorane are not fast reacting and are actually incapable of sudden movement.

Calamorane do have a vascular network, but no heart. Fluid movement is achieved via peristaltic motion within each vessel.

One immediately noticeable trait of the species is a complete lack of any digestive system or bodily orifices. This is because the Calamorane do not feed in the classic sense, but rather absorb energy as their driving life force. They still must periodically absorb

water and some nutrients, and this is conducted through the skin of the pseudopod.

The genetic structure of the species contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs, which include a total of 78,452 distinct gene codes. Imperial genetic mapping has also identified approximately 70 memo groups (coded instinctive instructions).

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Darcanan

Pronounced: DAR+cannon
Political Affiliation: Mainly Neutral, Independent
Galactic Prevalence— Uncommon
Imperium Interior: Uncommon
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance: Rare
Coalition States: Very Rare
Malon Empire: Essentially None
Ullian Empire: Essentially None
All Other Areas: Exceptionally Rare

GENERAL INFORMATION: Darcanan are a dark and enigmatic lot; cold and calculating. Darcanan are said to be the galactic historians, recording all that happens for some higher purpose. They are impervious to telepathic intrusion and automatically block telepathic powers in their vicinity. Darcanan are often used as advisors and security by high-ranking officials—their ability to protect these officials from telepathic scan being quite coveted.

DEMEANOR

Darcanan appear to be a very logical lot, mostly devoid of emotion, but much of that is behavioral conditioning. The Darcanan mind has been harshly trained to retain knowledge in the most remarkable manner. Individuals are often so focused on the monitoring of, recording, and study of galactic events, social politics and intrigue, and social interaction that they themselves have become withdrawn. Darcanan tend to treat life as a massive lab experient, where they are the clinician observing from afar and free of the experiment's effects. Some even seem to forget their own mortality.

Proper Names
(examples; females in italics)
Da'rel
Varek
Bravir'ran
Gos'farel
Da'jav'ran
Bak'vril

A few Darcanan are more human in behavior, and these are rarely suspected of being Jazaa (see Culture, below). The more strange and withdrawn a Darcanan is, the more suspect they become.

CULTURE

Darcanan are certainly mysterious, but some outsiders believe Darcanan purposely foster the rumors and intrigue surrounding their people. Unusual or not, the majority of Darcanan are simply contributing members of society. However, it is widely known that a few select Darcanan belong to what is only termed *Jazaa,* which means 'The Inner Circle'—but no Darcanan has ever openly talked about or admitted to such membership publicly. What Jazaa is or what the organization does is officially unknown (assuming it even exists), but some speculate it is a secret organization of Darcanan serving as galactic historians; perhaps in service of some higher purpose or being.

RELATIONS

Darcanan are rarely trusted, but others who employ them often cast such doubts aside over time. They have no cultural enemies, and this is not surprising since few Darcanan speak out with opinion sharp enough to attract new enemies or attention. Darcanan are listeners.

The only truly peculiar event in Darcanan history is that they sought out the ZAON Imperium before the Imperium was aware that the Darcanan homeworld even existed. Where most new races often endeavor to keep their homeworlds secret from the Imperium for as long as possible, the Darcanan actually approached the Imperial Senate, demanding they be incorporated into Imperial society under any terms Imperial government wished to impose.

Darcanan also seem to go out of their way to avoid direct contact with Za'aan, but no one is quite sure why—indeed, it appears many

Starting Experience Point Cost: -90

Physical—
Height: 1.8m (5'11" tall)
Weight: 70kg (150 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

Base Stat Scores—

STR: 3_7 (2–5_6)	INT: 6_2 (6–6_7)	INU: 4_2 (4–6_7)
AGI: 4_2 (3–6_8)	KNO: 11_2 (8–12_1)	EGO: 7_7 (6–8_7)
PRE: 3_8 (3–4_9)	WIL: 7_8 (7–10_9)	HAR: 3_8 (3–4_9)
ALL: 4_1 (3–5_3)		
REF: 5_7 (5–7_5)	Base Life: 5	
SPD: $1\text{-}2\text{-}1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 20 *(Lifespan: 190 years)*	

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Concentration @ 3
Computer Operation @ 3
Cryptography @ 3
Interstellar Law @ 4
History @ 5
Language, Darcanan @ 5
Language, InterLak @ 5
Resist Interrogation @ 5

Biologically-Easy Skills—
All WILL-associated skills
Note: This does not include other MENTAL (INT, INU, etc.) skills.

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
ALL PHYSICAL @ -2 (i.e., All STR, AGI, PRE, & ALL skills)
ALL Harmony (HAR) associated skills @ -3

Recommended Kits—
None

Not Recommended Kits—
All Background Kits are Not Recommended

Special Abilities / Rules—
1) **No Sleep:** No rest or sleep is required.
2) **Psion Dampening Aura (Anti-Telepathy Field):** Darcanan generate a constant aura that blocks all psion-based (telepathic) activity within a 10 meter radius per point of Willpower (1 meter per fractional point of WIL) of their person. All forms of scanning, MindSpeech, sensing, and the like are nullified. Darcanan can further sense the attempted use of telepathy within this area. This sense doesn't tell the Darcanan who is using the telepathy—only that it has been or is being attempted. Additionally, Darcanan can make a Tough Ego Check to determine the general compass direction of the telepathic attempt.
Important: The anti-telepathic aura is not normally controllable by the Darcanan. In other words, most Darcanan cannot voluntarily lower the aura to premit telepathic activity, however, Darcanan can learn the technique to suppress their aura for very short periods of time. Characters wishing to temporarily lower their aura in order to permit momentary use of telepathic abilities by other beings must succeed at a Very Difficult raw Willpower Action Check. If successful, the aura is lowered for 1d8 game turns (approximately 1-8 seconds), during which time any telepathic abilities may be used normally. Whether or not the Darcanan is successful at an attempt, he or she may not attempt aura suppression again for 1d6 minutes. Finally, note that telepaths are always aware of whether any Darcanan aura is in effect or not so long as the telepath is physically located within the dampening field radius. If the telepath is located outside the radius, but attempts to mind scan into a dampened zone, those effects disperse at the zone perimeter and go no farther. Therefore, establishing contact with a mind in a protected area would fail.
Note: The aura effect remains potent even if a Darcanan is reduced to unconsciouness, but will begin to fade shortly after a Darcanan's death and fully cease within 11 to 20 minutes of death.
3) **Eidetic Social Memory:** Darcanan remember every face, identity, politicking, and social event they're exposed to. This ability does not apply to facts, figures, technical, or schooled knowledge—only social and political happenings and intrigue. Despite their ability to recall social events and people, they are poor social minglers themselves.

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 100–149: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -0_8, KNO/WIL $+1_1$
Age 150–179: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, KNO/WIL $+1_0$
Age 180+ (& every 10 more years): ALL STATS (except KNO) -0_8, KNO $+0_6$

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T3-6/P3-5/G0-6/R6[8]

Darcanan don't understand why, either. Just that they were taught to do so.

BIOLOGY

Darcanan are one of the closest in resemblance to the human race. Their internal organ structure is slightly different, however, and their gray skin always bears the trademark bluish-hue and cool touch. Darcanan are also hairless.

The Darcanan genome is fairly close to humanity's in terms of total gene and base pair counts. Even their chromosomes are similar, though their sixth chromosome bears the equivalence of a human's sixth and seventh chromosomes combined. Darcanan have a total of two less chromosomes than humans which prevents interbreeding with humans.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Draeg

Pronounced: drayg
Political Affiliation: Mainly Independent, Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— Uncommon
Imperium Interior: Rare
Imperium Frontier: Uncommon
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Exceptionally Rare
Vagar Delegation: Exceptionally Rare
Wrekiri Consortium: Uncommon
Kelgari Federation: Essentially None
Sordrid Dominion: Rare
Endori Sovereignty: Essentially None
Triangle: Common
Coalition States: Uncommon to Rare
Uncharted Territories: Uncommon
All Other Areas: Exceptionally Rare

GENERAL INFORMATION: Draeg are greatly feared, stronger than other species, personally dangerous and imposing, and hated throughout the known galaxy. They are mean, conniving, physically powerful, dangerous, and cruel—or are they? Conflicting rumors and stories revolve around the Draeg, but what is fact is this: During the SorGar war the Draeg, sided with the Sordrid, did most of the Sordrid 'dirty work' committing atrocities and war crimes beyond imagination as ordered by their Sordrid masters. In turn, the Vagar and Terrans also stooped to new levels by wreaking atrocities back upon the Draeg that eventually led to the poisoning of the Draeg homeworld—which now lies abandoned and dead.

CULTURE AND RELATIONS

Proper Names
(examples; there are no female Draeg)
Gogtarra
Sengmont
Norrantgo
Yaegonna
Korrank
Daggamonak

The Draeg are a beaten people, conditioned to violence like abused and tortured animals. They fight to survive and make a new home for themselves—something the Allied races do not allow the Draeg to do.

Most individuals are quick to anger, very suspicious of all other races, and nearly always jump to the defensive when confronted by anyone. But Draeg are also highly intelligent, thoughtful, and diligent planners, which few take them for upon first glance. Stories told as fact describe Draeg as vicious and deadly; beasts to be controlled and dangers to be eliminated.

Today, Draeg wander the Triangle, Southern Alliance, and open galaxy in haphazard bands and as individuals. A few remaining Draeg warships have lost their way and continue with guerrilla tactics against unarmed civilian colonies along Terran and Vagar border space, making life for other Draeg simply looking to survive much more difficult because of Allied reprisals. Most Draeg, though, have sought just to end the violence and establish a new home for themselves only to be driven from those worlds time and time again before able to thrive there. The unofficially sanctioned genocide and mass extermination of Draeg by Vagar and UEN militaries continues to this very day, for no Vagar or Terran has forgotten the carnage of the SorGar war nor the cruel slaying of defenseless civilians by rogue Draeg warcruisers today. The Terran and Vagar people have demanded their governments take action to end the Draeg threat. And unlike the Sordrid protected by treaty, the Draeg are in the middle of UEN and Vagar territory with no advocates to legislate or speak out on their behalf.

Behind the cold, jaded, and hardened Draeg exterior, and unbeknownst to most, lies deep compassion and sensitivity rarely seen in public. Draeg culture and myth teaches this compassion and places great importance on family and the caring for all life. It is not unusual for four or more generations of Draeg to dine at the same table nightly, and family members regularly put their own lives on the line to protect their fellow kin. Before the war, and still practiced today whenever possible, hardships such as homelessness, hunger, and lack of healthcare or training were nowhere to be found in Draeg society, for no Draeg would sit by while kin suffered in this manner. And where families would share and care for their own members thereof, whole families would additionally assist other families that were disadvantaged even when of no relation. Draeg customs for compassion were also interpreted to apply to other species as

Starting Experience Point Cost: -50

Physical—
Height: 2.1m (7' tall)
Weight: 200kg (440 lbs)
Eyesight: Good
Hearing: Good
Smell Sense: Average

Base Stat Scores—

STR: 8_5 ($7–9_2$)	INT: 6_0 ($3–8_8$)	INU: 3_6 ($2–4_4$)
AGI: 5_0 ($4–7_7$)	KNO: 4_5 ($2–6_4$)	EGO: 5_8 ($5–7_0$)
PRE: 5_0 ($3–7_3$)	WIL: 7_2 ($5–8_9$)	HAR: 3_7 ($2–5_5$)
ALL: 1_9 ($1–2_8$)		
REF: 6_0 ($4–7_9$)	Base Life: 9	
SPD: $1\text{-}6\text{-}1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 10 *(Lifespan: 90 years)*	

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Language, InterLak @ 3
Language, Draeg @ 4
Martial Arts @ 3

Biologically-Easy Skills—
None

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
Carousing/Gaming @ -2
Charm @ -3
Etiquette @ -2
Seduction @ -4

Recommended Kits—
Bodyguard
Bounty Hunter
Martial Artist
Mercenary
Professional Criminal

Not Recommended Kits—
Arbitrator
Entertainer
Reporter

Special Abilities / Rules—
1) **Natural Special Weapon Ability (Firespitting):** Draeg possess two special glands in their jaw beneath the tongue. The first can spray a high-pressure stream of liquid chemical that becomes highly inflammable and ignites immediately when mixed with the second chemical which is introduced in small quantities as a spray forward of the tongue. The result is a 'flamethrower' effect that can be used once per day for every full point of Strength possessed (8_5 STR would allow 8 uses per day) to a distance of 10 meters (Short range only) at AIM+2. Each spray inflicts 1d6 wound damage with continued burning of flammable materials (because they catch fire), resulting in more damage depending on length of burn.
2) **Desert and Heat Resistance:** Draeg thrive in hot desert-like conditions, though such conditions are not required. Complete lack of water even at high temperatures can be endured for months. Draeg can also withstand high temperature ovenlike environments—up to 260 degrees centigrade (500F)—without ill effect.
3) **Species Enmity:** Draeg are the blood enemies of all Vagar and Terrans and have been for many centuries. Furthermore, the majority of galactic species (feeding from Vagar and Terran propaganda) express anywhere from disdain to overt hatred against Draeg individuals. There are few places in the galaxy Draeg are welcome. Draeg are regularly feared and attacked in public (legally in most areas).

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 50–69: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, INT/WIL -0_8, KNO/HAR $+0_5$
Age 70–79: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, INT/WIL -1_0, KNO/HAR $+0_3$
Age 80+ (& every 10 more years): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T5-9/P3-7/G0-7/R5[7]

well—at least prior to the war. Today most Draeg find it difficult to put such teachings to practice in a universe filled with hate and intolerance.

All Draeg practice warrior fighting skills, the basics of which are already in place at birth. Aggression and need for duel are part of Draeg at the biological level, though controllable and restrained by conscious thought. Among other Draeg, sparring is practiced daily. Entire cultural customs have been developed around the act of combat and duels. Specialized weaponry, such as the bladed *Quintarra* polearm staff carry special significance within family units and are passed down through the generations. And while any Draeg would choose Quintarra over a modern firearm, Draeg are not blind to the benefits of modern ranged weapons and their importance in military defense. As a result of the war, many Quintarras have been refitted to mount blaster weapons of Draeg manufacture similar to Skrow sidearms. And, the few Draeg warships, shuttles, and scouts that remain have been upgraded to include modern (as of the war) Sordrid technology—though original Draeg innovation wasn't far behind.

BIOLOGY

The most notable biological features of Draeg aside from their extreme tolerance for oven-like temperatures, their ability to survive in heat without water for months at a time, and their ability to spit liquid fire is the fact that all Draeg are 'male'. Draeg evolved in a symbiotic relationship with a hardy seedpod plant which many Draeg fertilize. The hardy crop grows almost everywhere and is resistant to most herbicides and even wildfires. While the seedpod plant, called *draegeus,* is entirely vegetable in composition, the plant mixes the animal genetic material of multiple Draeg fertilizations and then promotes growth into embryos that develop for three months inside a leaf pod before opening to birth infant Draeg who are mammalian with reptilian appearance.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Young recall the vague memories, teachings, and ideology of their parents via instinctive encoded DNA instruction and are fully capable of fending for themselves at birth even in the absence of parents. However, because of the importance placed on family in Draeg culture, parents will often wait days or even weeks by their seedling pods for the birthing of their young.

Many stellar nations regularly dust draegeus fields with poisons to destroy crops before Draeg can be born. Dusting efforts have been intensified as of late given the ease of Draeg propagation and the military and population threats imposed by Draeg biology and custom. Unpopulated worlds where draegeus crops are replanted by Draeg more than once are often destroyed at the biosphere/environment level to prevent future plantations.

Because Draeg propagate in this manner, individual Draeg have difficulty comprehending human sexuality, the practice of sexual partnering with a mate, and the allure of sexual desire. They also find women of other species fascinating, but otherwise no different from their male counterparts.

The Draeg haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

Endori

Pronounced: in+DOOR+ee
Political Affiliation: Mainly Independent, Alliance, Some Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— UNCOMMON
Imperium Interior: Essentially None
Imperium Frontier: Essentially None
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Very Rare
Vagar Delegation: Exceptionally Rare
Wrekiri Consortium: Exceptionally Rare
Kelgari Federation: Essentially None
Sordrid Dominion: Very Rare
Endori Sovereignty: Everywhere
Triangle: Rare
Coalition States: Exceptionally Rare
Diyo Assembly: Exceptionally Rare
Nivean Republic: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Stemming from a mighty monarchy, rivals of the ZAON Imperium, Endori are an aristocratic bunch, graceful and proud. Endori are distinguishable from humans by their slender agile forms, six-fingered hands, slanted ears, and sharp yet delicate features. Individuals pursue careers as diverse as humans do, but most maintain an aristocratic image and etiquette appropriate to their royalty.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -35

PHYSICAL—

Height:	1.9m (6'2" tall)	Eyesight: Average
Weight:	55kg (125 lbs)	Hearing: Average
		Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 3_6 ($2–5_2$)	INT: 5_0 ($3–7_1$)	INU: 5_5 ($4–9_6$)
AGI: 5_0 ($4–7_9$)	KNO: 3_4 ($3–5_5$)	EGO: 5_5 ($5–8_8$)
PRE: 4_7 ($4–6_7$)	WIL: 3_4 ($3–5_8$)	HAR: 4_1 ($3–5_9$)
ALL: 5_9 ($4–7_4$)		
REF: 3_9 ($3–5_4$)	Base Life: 5	
SPD: $1\text{-}4\text{-}1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 12 *(Lifespan: 110 years)*	

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Etiquette @ 4; Language, InterLak OR Endori @ 6

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Streetwise @ -4; Xenosociology @ -3

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Arbitrator; Executive; Front Man

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Gladiator; Navy Marine; Navy Trooper; Punk; Scientist; Tech; Thug

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
None

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 45–69: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, KNO -0_9, INU/EGO $+0_7$
Age 70–89: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -0_6, INT/INU $+0_8$
Age 90+ (& every 7 more years): ALL STATS -0_5

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

DEMEANOR

Endori are a people concerned with status, etiquette, and patriotism. Most believe strongly in their sovereign way of life and are willing to die in order to protect it. Honor is also important, and so few Endori will lie or cheat others—especially their own kind.

The protection and prosperity of the mighty Endori Sovereignty is usually the prime concern and value of every Endori citizen. Proper training in etiquette is also important for without it one would not be acceptable to society.

Endori are egotistical and sometimes downright arrogant. They fully believe that their species is supreme, as is their way of life. Obviously, this attitude clashes with many other species, so interactions have not always been peaceful. Likewise, where individuals believe that the preservation of Endori life is of paramount importance, they are not compassionate when it comes to other species.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Bahwari Hesphemior
Swori Moi'ous
Laramar Euromi Mussar De'Moissoh
Uri'hi Meo'phous Foohemi Weomious

Endori etiquette demands many pleasantries, and so most individuals are soft-spoken, exceedingly polite, but crisp and high-minded. Insults to other 'less-worthy' individuals (especially other species) are generally masterful and voiced so that the insulted may be unaware or incapable of understanding, while simultaneously providing amusement for other listeners.

Proper hygiene is exigent, followed by proper attire. Clothing is exceedingly expensive and only of the finest craftsmanship. The long-standing fashion of the people includes elaborate low-hanging tail coats extravagantly decorated with meticulous gold embroidery, brocade fabric surcoats, finely-ruffled lawn shirts, stocking clocks, and silks. Endori are abhorred by poor hygiene, cheap dress, and bad manners. They won't associate themselves with the 'lower classes' but also won't stand to be disparaged. They view hand-to-hand violence as crude, though they are not above such acts if their station is being questioned by an outsider.

CULTURE

The Endori's aristocratic culture is conservative by outside standards, and overly pretentious as well. Their culture's roots are very old and proven, extending back millennia. Class structure within the sovereignty is at the center of Endori life. Where individuals were once born with their particular social standing, today they must partially earn it. The workforce, military non-officer servicemen, and educators are among the lowest of the classes. The aristocracy comprises barons, dukes, sovereign dukes, and the emperor.

Women were once treated with no respect whatsoever, but today they share much of the same status as their male counterparts. Still, there has only been one female sovereign duchess, and no female emperor to date. Women are also still forbidden to serve in the Royal militaries.

The formation of families is very old-fashioned, with arranged marriages commonly practiced. Endori culture is, in some regards, in the midst of a revolution as more and more individuals are refusing to comply with marriage arrangements. Pairings involving other social classes, species, or the same sex are strictly forbidden, though voiced desires for each has increased ten-fold in the last few decades. A vegetarian diet makes mealtimes frequent and large, placing banquets and feasting at the forefront of social gatherings. Spreads are always exquisite and immense effort goes into the preparation of meals. Food art is an important expression of this effort. Banquet parties form the backbone of recreation as well, with after dinner drinking often turning to carousing.

Endri, the Endori language of nationalists, is an almost musical tongue spoken in soft, flowing tones. An example is *Jari syu'nomi eurash'ous*, which translates to *I am the one whom you invited*.

Endori take great pride in their architecture. Local places of commerce are likened to magnificent palaces by outsiders who have seen them. Attention to detail, relief works, and sundry embellishments are added to every surface, inside and out. Even the military is grand in design and furnishing. Marbles, tapestries, red carpets, columns, and paintings are used copiously and with taste throughout every construction and starship. Craftsmanship is always superb, the value rising with the significance of the fabrication. Places of central government are truly grand, designed to dwarf visitors.

RELATIONS

Not one species actually likes the Endori, but few hate them either. Several growing groups of Terrans blame the Endori for the Great Fall and are spreading hate, and Xanticans seek revenge and freedom for their brethren still enslaved by the Endori.

Endori are naturally arrogant themselves and are not particularly fond of humanity though they hide this very well. Among Endori culture, humans of all breeds are known as as *Huwarri*, which in Endri carries two translations: *"amiable being"* and also *"dispicable apemen"*. The former translation is the public one whereas the second is the one true translation known among the Endori.

BIOLOGY

Endori are slightly taller than humans are, measuring 1.9 meters in height (about 6' 2" high). Contrarily, their slender forms weigh less (about 55 kilograms). Their hands are six-fingered (five fingers and one opposable thumb) as are their feet. Hair and skin color is always fair, and eyes are invariably a pale blue iris on white. Skin texture is smooth and entirely hairless except for atop the head, even in males. Finally, whereas Endori DNA is very similar to human DNA, it is not compatible. The species' haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Human (Terran)

Pronounced: HUE+mun (TAIR+un)
Political Affiliation: Mainly Alliance, Some Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— Rians EVERYWHERE; Terrans are COMMON
Imperium Interior: Very Rare
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Everywhere
Vagar Delegation: Common
Wrekiri Consortium: Uncommon
Kelgari Federation: Very Rare
Sordrid Dominion: Essentially None
Endori Sovereignty: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Everywhere
Coalition States: Uncommon to Rare
Uncharted Territories: Very Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Humans in general are by far the most prevalent of all species (mainly the vast Rian-human populations of the Imperium), but it is specifically the Terrans who represent all of the 'classic' races and heritages from mother Earth and thus all the wonderful diversity found in humanity. For Terrans, hair, skin, and eye color vary greatly as do body types. Humans possess a diverse range of stats, though most adhere closely to the averages. Some humans are born with remarkable specialized aptitude in areas of Intellect, Ego, Harmony, and Knowledge (hence the high maximum allowable stat scores in those areas).

DEMEANOR

Most humans are amiable people, and possess the harmony to work well together and with other species. Also an impressionable people, some humans have adopted the demeanor and even culture of alien species.

Terrans, specifically, pride themselves on their own diversity and as a result tend to be very accepting of and interested in alien cultures. Terrans can be the kindest and most compassionate people one might ever meet, but they can also be the most ruthless and cruel of all species. The vast majority lie somewhere in between, though heavily shifted in favor of kindness and openness. Terrans look out for one another in this galaxy teeming with alien life—much of it hostile.

CULTURE

All Terran cultures place great value on life and freedom, seeing life as wondrous, freedom as priceless, and both as worth defending to the very end.

Because of how Terrans from all over Earth's continents were forced to work together in the decades and centuries that followed the Great Fall, there has been some blending of the once discrete cultures of Earth, as well as the loss of many languages (the two world languages are now English and Spanish). Earth's new modern cultures in this time of ZAON maintain their flavor and uniqueness but coupled with a few of the best attributes from other Earthly cultures. Now gone are the old rivalry which once existed between various races and nations of old Earth.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Jason Harrison
Akira Yamamoto
Julie Ridley
Dolores Sanchez
Marc Sanderson
Tan Chen
Linda Jackson
Allen Stark
Dmitry Fedorov
Eric Flemming
Kate Smith
Michael Hawkings
Jeff Johnson
Narain Kumar
Dennis Rogers
Kevin Scott
Benjamin Ward
Amanda Roth
Chad Lee
Sergei Chernov

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -30

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.8m (5'11" tall)
Weight: 75kg (165 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 4_5 ($2–7_0$) INT: 5_0 ($3–11_2$) INU: 4_5 ($2–9_8$)
AGI: 4_5 ($2–7_9$) KNO: 4_5 ($3–9_1$) EGO: 4_5 ($3–11_0$)
PRE: 4_5 ($2–8_1$) WIL: 4_5 ($2–7_7$) HAR: 7_0 ($4–10_7$)
ALL: 4_5 ($2–10_0$)
REF: 4_5 ($3–7_1$) Base Life: 6
SPD: $1\text{-}5\text{-}1_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 12 *(Lifespan: 130 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Language, InterLak @ 4

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
None

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Any/All

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
None

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Extra Heroism:** Humans begin play with one extra Heroism point (2 total).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 60–74: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO/HAR $+1_0$
Age 75–109: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO $+0_5$
Age 110+ (& every 10 more): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

RELATIONS

Terrans and Vagar have gotten along very well since the first Vagar warship entered Earth's orbit hundreds of years ago. The other Terran neighbor, the Wrekiri, are also on amicable terms. Endori and Kelgari are seen more neutrally, but still openly. Sordrid, on the other hand, are viewed by Terrans as one of the greatest evils ever to travel the stars. Many Terrans died alongside Vagar in the SorGar (Sordrid-Vagar) war. And even today when the Endori attempt to enforce the Allied peace treaty, Terrans still fall victim to Sordrid attack and vice-versa.

The Diyo are viewed with some mistrust following their sale of their southern border region to the Imperium where the Northwest Passage now exists. Recently, stories of the Vreen and Coalition States as told by the Vagar have raised concern among Terrans and prompted new budget increases in military spending. Most Terrans, especially military personnel accustomed to working alongside Vagar advisors, have begun to view Coalition races as the enemy. Beyond that, Terrans become rather ignorant of the other galactic races.

Many species envy humanity (thanks to the Rians) because of their prevalence and thus the standards they set forth and impose upon others throughout the galaxy.

BIOLOGY

The human haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs, divided among 22 pairs of autosomes and 1 pair of sex chromosomes for a total of 46 chromosomes. Terrans can thus breed with any other sub-race or species of humanity, including Rians, Venwon, and so on.

As a whole, Terrans haven't changed much in the last several thousand years, though they are all a bit taller

now. Terrans represent the most diverse traits seen in humanity with varied body types, hair color, eye color, hair covering, facial structures, skin color from black to pale, and more.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Human, Draaz

Pronounced: HUE+mun, DRAWZ
Political Affiliation: Neutral, Alliance, Imperial
Galactic Prevalence— Rians EVERYWHERE; Draaz are RARE
Imperium Interior: Very Rare
Imperium Frontier: Uncommon
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Uncommon
Vagar Delegation: Rare
Wrekiri Consortium: Uncommon
Triangle: Uncommon
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Very Rare
Uncharted Territories: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Draaz are a proud race of humanity who value strength, endurance, and above all athletics. They are descendant from one of Earth's earliest colonies who were cut off from all travel and communication with Terrans following the Great Fall. Isolated on this world named Naro for thousands of years where climates eventually shifted harshly to the hot, Draaz are golden-dark-skinned, dark eyed, rugged, hairless, and have solid square-shaped powerful builds suited to a rough nomadic life.

DEMEANOR

With thousands of years in isolation, Draaz are among the least 'human' in demeanor of all the human races in the galaxy. They are perceived as crude, rough, and dangerous, but also as honest, direct, and respectful. They are sometimes sought for sports because of their athletic prowess.

While Draaz are proud of their physical strength and endurance they explicitly dislike those who use strength to bully the weak. Their ethics often demand that they intervene in acts of 'chivalry' for men or women being bullied.

Draaz know nothing of the etiquette or procedure common the to the galactic community. Their nomadic life of the desert has left them a very practical and to-the-point people. Draaz often have great difficulty grasping the humor of others, at times finding it insulting. Similarly the subtle humor of the Draaz is often lost on those around them. Draaz seek emotional well-being through accomplishments, planning, and deeds as opposed to frivolous recreation and humor (but those who have spent a great deal of time among members of the galactic community have begun to enjoy common recreation and comedy).

CULTURE

Draaz are tribal, basic, and have returned to many of the fundamentals of human existence. They are trained hunters, gatherers, sportsmen, and plainsmen. Even following their discovery and reintegration into the galactic community, many chose to remain on their home-world of Naro, and even those who did leave to explore the galaxy cling to their tribal traditions.

Their nomadic nature does give them a wanderlust and so many have sought duties aboard merchant freighters as mercenaries or explorers. Since their reintroduction to space travel, Draaz have traveled to all corners of the galaxy and while they are rarely encountered in great numbers there are few places where a Draaz has not been seen.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Hok
Pakateko
Veebe
Oktovenek
Shimi

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -30

PHYSICAL—
Height: 2.0m (6'6" tall)
Weight: 110kg (240 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 6_8 ($5–8_4$)	INT: 4_2 ($3–5_9$)	INU: 4_5 ($2–9_8$)
AGI: 4_5 ($2–7_9$)	KNO: 2_7 ($3–5_6$)	EGO: 4_5 ($3–11_0$)
PRE: 4_8 ($2–8_1$)	WIL: 6_0 ($4–8_7$)	HAR: 5_7 ($4–8_0$)
ALL: 4_2 ($3–6_7$)		
REF: 5_0 ($4–7_6$)	Base Life: 7	
SPD: $1\text{-}5\text{-}1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 11 *(Lifespan: 90 years)*	

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Language, InterLak @ 2
Language, Naronese @ 4
Martial Arts @ 2

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
None

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Any/All

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
None

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Extra Heroism:** Humans begin play with one extra Heroism point (2 total).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 50–64: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO/HAR $+1_0$
Age 65–79: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO $+0_5$
Age 80+ (& every 10 more): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

Few have any use for technology, but some Draaz have learned the value of it and fashioned new hunting weapons from technology, including specialized spears, nets, and tracking equipment. All have welcomed collaboration and interaction with Wrekiri, learning much from that species.

As nomads, from a very early age every member within a tribe is taught the martial art of 'Durra'—a wrestling and combat fighting style which is used to defend the wandering tribe from dishonorable raiders as well as the natural predators found on Naro. It also teaches Draaz from early childhood the importance of courage and standing up for oneself.

One of the greatest shames a Draaz can suffer stem from acts of weak willpower, indecisiveness, and following unworthy leaders. They tend not to recognize police and military authorities of governments—anything larger than a tribe—but know when to submit so as to not needlessly endanger themselves or companions (such as bowing to an Imperial customs inspection within Imperial space). They will, however, bow to the will of anyone whom they owe 'Kraa'. Kraa is a form of oath or respect given by Draaz to others who have earned their respect, admiration, or debt, and is thus similar to an oath of fealty though it is sometimes assumed as in the case of tribal hierarchy. For example, a Draaz owes Kraa to his or her Tuk-Nok (tribal leader; see below). Draaz also often swear Kraa to friends or lovers regardless of race or species. If a Draaz swears Kraa to another it is a matter of great honor and respect. In the case of friends or mates it is most common for both parties to swear Kraa to each other meaning each may accommodate the other without acknowledging the other as a superior—making them equal in each others' eyes. If Kraa is sworn to a person who does not return the oath, such as in the case of a debt, then the Draaz owes allegiance and acknowledges the other as

a superior. This does not in any way make the Draaz a slave, and no Draaz sworn by Kraa will idly endure disrespect from a master.

Draaz tribal structure is centered around the tribal leader who is called a Tuk-Nok—an individual who has mastered both the wisdom of the tribe as well as its strength. The reigning Tuk-Nok of a given tribe (tribes rarely exceed fifty members) will select from among the most promising adolescents in the tribe three who will become his children and family. Three years of tests, courageous hunts, and punishment are used to draw out the best of the lot. The best of the three becomes known as the Tuk-Nok's 'son' (regardless of gender). This son is then taken on as a direct apprentice who is taught all of the Tok-Nok's wisdom, much of which is passed down through the generations of leaders. But no Tuk-Nok son is allowed to merely adopt his elder's teachings without challenging each of them. Challenging the wisdom teaches the son to think for himself and to make changes where warranted for the betterment of the entire tribe—the markings of a true leader.

Also within the tribe are designated positions, including story-telling, cooking, farming, and so on. These positions are filled by those whose talents lie in the given area of expertise; and passed down to each generation through apprenticeships.

Sports are of great importance to tribe morale. Both intratribe and intertribe contests of Durra are common. Following their reintroduction to the galactic community, many of these contests are now televised and commercialized. Additionally, some Draaz have pursued other galactic sports professionally.

Finally, the Draaz native tongue of Naronese is a closely guarded secret among tribe members. Language records due exist with ISA, government, and some commercial organizations, but none are complete. General public translations are minimal or non-existent, and so Draaz do enjoy a certain degree of privacy when conversing in their native tongue. An interesting fact that is somewhat more public is the lack of any differentiation between males and females as far as pronoun use. Indeed, male and female Draaz are rarely treated differently.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

RELATIONS

Most species respect the Draaz—even some who do not respect humanity in general. The Vagar and Wrekiri favor them for their Kraa honor and hunting traditions, respectively.

Endori despise Draaz and openly enslave them as crude beasts of burden when captured within or near Endori territory. Indeed, Endori see them as animals and will openly insult and speak of them within earshot (or even directly in front of them) just as one might discuss a dog or mule—because the animal could not possibly comprehend the exchange. This fact enrages Draaz to no end, but given Endori standing law throughout the Sovereignty (which technically must be enforced under Allied law in other Allied states) which decrees that one thousand Draaz will be put to death for every one sovereign Endori who is assaulted or killed by a Draaz, most Draaz both avoid Endori and make great allowances for their dishonorable and insulting behavior.

BIOLOGY

The human haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs, divided among 22 pairs of autosomes and 1 pair of sex chromosomes for a total of 46 chromosomes. Draaz can breed with any other sub-race or species of humanity, including Rians, Venwon, Terrans, and so on.

The harsh desert conditions of Naro have, over thousands of years of natural selection, altered the appearance and biology of Draaz to some extent. Draaz are tall, square-bodied, and powerful. Their skin is rugged, golden-dark, and hairless.

Human, Rian

Pronounced: HUE+mun, REE+un
Political Affiliation: Mainly Imperial, Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— EVERYWHERE
Imperium Interior: Everywhere
Imperium Frontier: Everywhere
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Common
Vagar Delegation: Rare
Wrekiri Consortium: Rare
Kelgari Federation: Very Rare
Sordrid Dominion: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Common
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Uncommon
Uncharted Territories: Common
All Other Areas: Exceptionally Rare

GENERAL INFORMATION: Humans of Rian descent were originally genetically altered by the Za'aan, are the most prevalent species anywhere in the galaxy by a wide margin, and extremely long-lived with little apparent aging. Rians tend to have a slightly more slender frame, narrow at the hips with broad shoulders and a very high metabolism, somewhat narrower faces, dark to light-brown hair (rarely sandy blond hair; and true blond, platinum, and red are nonexistent), eyes of brown, green, and blue (greens and blues are very common, but no hazel or gray), and skin color ranging from fair to very light brown only. Body hair is minimal compared to Terrans, and males are incapable of growing full beards. Traits are much narrower than seen in Earth humans, and don't portray any one Terran ethnicity of Earth's past.

DEMEANOR

Rians are superior in many ways to basic humans, and they very well know it. Most Rians maintain an air of supremacy when among other races and aliens—some of which has certainly rubbed off from their masters, the Za'aan.

Although their physical traits are not very diverse, their demeanor varies as greatly as it does in Terrans—from kindness to cruelty to downright odd. Nevertheless, Rians are indeed more conformist in their attitudes and behaviors.

CULTURE AND BIOLOGY

Rian culture shares its roots in both the original Terran colony that it was and also in that of the Za'aan Lords who oversee them today.

Among Rians, patriotism and family are of paramount importance. A close analogy to Rian patriotism might be the Japanese of Earth during the World War II era because regardless of personal goals and business most Rians place the good of the Imperium before themselves.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Aric Harson
Braden Sorrenson
Adia Jensen
Jayce Harding
Ki Sharrone
Hayden Markson
Colt Nemmings
Zack Astin
Ria JoHansen
Trinity Laurelson
Ares Nighton
Bryson Raysmar
Dar Jameson
Raiden Lawson
Zara Kurson
Adrien Hale
Adriel Rethal
Jaron Nomar
Austin Ironside
Karmia Rigel
Nasser Hammings
Atira Larson
Yelena Townson
Kale Kirshner
Stesha Norming
Taydrian Armings
Ari Stetson
Julia Colton

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -45

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.8m (6'1" tall)
Weight: 75kg (165 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 3_9 ($2–5_9$) INT: 5_5 ($4–11_2$) INU: 4_5 ($2–9_8$)
AGI: 5_0 ($2–7_2$) KNO: 5_5 ($4–9_5$) EGO: 6_0 ($4–11_6$)
PRE: 5_0 ($4–9_0$) WIL: 4_5 ($2–7_7$) HAR: 7_0 ($4–10_7$)
ALL: 7_0 ($6–10_0$)
REF: 4_5 ($3–7_1$) Base Life: 6
SPD: $1\text{-}5\text{-}1_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 12 *(Lifespan: 400 years)*†

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Language, InterLak @ 4

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
None

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Any/All

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
None

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Extra Heroism:** Humans begin play with one extra Heroism point (2 total).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS†—
Age 380–389: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO/HAR $+1_0$
Age 390–399: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO $+0_5$
Age 400+ (& every 4 more): ALL STATS -1_0

†One of the benefits of Za'aan genetic engineering of Rian DNA is very long lifespans and where apparent age matches Terran humans until only about age 20 or so, at which point Rians experience very little apparent aging until the last few years of their lives. To find a Rian's apparent Terran age (for any Rian older than age 20), simply divide the Rian's age by 10. For example, a 320 year-old Rian would appear aged similar to a 32 year-old Terran. However, starting at around age 380, Rians rapidly age gaining two apparent years for every year thereafter. So while a 380 year-old Rian would appear only 38 on Terran terms, a 390 year-old Rian would apear 58 and a 400 year-old Rian would appear 78.

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

Family is important because it has been ingrained in Rians by Za'aan teachings. The goal of every family is to raise several children (as many as is feasible) which is one of the reasons why Rians outnumber all of the species in the galaxy combined. An even greater reason for their massive populace is found in Imperium law and also in Rian DNA. Female Rians are highly fertile, though all pregnancies result in fatal miscarriages by the end of the first trimester killing both the mother and fetus—which in principle (and by Imperium law) forces pregnant female Rians to report to any of countless maturation facilities, prior to the end of their first trimester, where their embryos are endoscopically removed and placed in maturation chambers and allowed to grow and develop fully in only two months rather than the typical nine. Maturation facilities are controlled and staffed at the highest levels exclusively by Za'aan Lords, and the secrets of embryo stabilization are tightly controlled by them (without which 99.9% of such embryos fail to develop even if placed in the womb of a Terran surrogate). Upon 'birth' from these chambers, infants are returned to their families for rearing. Rumors of 'free births' among Rian women residing in Frontier areas of the Imperium made possible by a Frontier organi-

zation that has purportedly solved the secrets of Rian miscarriages has been spreading rapidly throughout the Imperium. Entire families have upped and moved to Frontier areas presumably based on these rumors.

In the Imperium, women who have not married early enough in their lives are still encouraged by Rian culture to conceive, and Imperium State monetary subsidies are in place by Za'aan decree to enable good parenting and rearing of multiple children. Where good parenting is not possible due to career (such as dedicated military service), children are preferably reared by grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other extended family—most of which are culturally honored to receive such duties.

An extension of Rian patriotism and protection of the family is military service. There is a very high enlistment rate due to this patriotism, and not everyone is accepted despite the massive size of the Imperium military. And, as long as the number of applicants exceeds the number of allowable enlistments as governed by budget, the Imperial armed forces enjoys the 'pick-of-the-litter' and thus corresponding quality and devotion which helps to keep the Imperium as the sole galactic superpower.

Indeed, even those who do not enlist tend to be very pro-military, and various 'Fleet Week' festivals rank among the most popular in Rian society, with servicemen enjoying prestige and honor while in port.

Exceptions also exist, and there is no shortage of neutral privateers and merchants hard at work taking advantage of a prosperous economy and capitalistic society. As a result, Rians are nearly always the dominant or at least most prevalent species in every corner of the galaxy.

In any event, military duty in no way excuses one from the pressure to conceive offspring. Active-duty personnel are encouraged to mate frequently even when offspring will be raised by extended family or foster homes.

Appreciation for artwork has become one of the true cherished freedoms of the Rian people, for both loyal Imperialists and the underground, despite few pursuing the artist profession. The expression and form of statues, paintings, and other artistic creations regularly include subtle hints that tell of the oppression Rians live beneath every day. Even Imperial loyalists, many of whom see the subtle hints and messages delivered in art, rarely if ever speak out against it because even when they prefer the government they live under they can still appreciate the truths and emotional stories told by other humans, friend or foe. The fact that most Za'aan are blind to such subtle messages leaves this as the only remaining true freedom of expression.

RELATIONS

Many species envy humanity (specifically Rians) because of their prevalence and thus the standards they set forth and impose upon others throughout the galaxy.

Nevertheless, Rians tend to get along well with most species despite somewhat supremacist Rian attitudes—probably due largely to the fact that most species must interact and do business with Rians in order to survive and compete in an ever-increasingly interconnected galactic economy.

Terrans have welcomed Rian contact for the most part and there are many cultural and entertainment exchanges between the two races of humanity, but there remains much fear, uncertainty, and moral objection to the Imperium.

Likewise, most Allied members tend to tolerate Rians thanks to Terran devotion and support of the Alliance, but pro-Imperium Rians (ZAON citizens) are generally not liked. Vagar especially dislike most Rians, and view Imperialists as the enemy ever since the start of border wars along the coreward and northern Vagar territories where many Vagar continue to die in losing struggles against the massive Imperial war machine.

GENETICS AND HEALTHCARE

The human haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs, divided among 22 pairs of autosomes and 1 pair of sex chromosomes for a total of 46 chromosomes. Despite their genetic tampering, Rians can interbreed with any other sub-race or species of humanity, including Terrans, Venwon, and so on.

Rians born in the interior of the Imperium receive the most advanced medical care, including the erasure of any anomalous gene pairs at maturation facilities, which might lead to genetic diseases or cancer. Many parents also choose desirable traits in their offspring at such facilities if the embryos are turned over to Za'aan care early enough, such as a particular eye or hair color. However, all Rians possess less physical strength than their physique would suggest—a deliberate feat of DNA encoding that reduces nerve firing in muscle tissue to keep Za'aan Lords as far atop the physical prowess ladder as possible. Terrans and other human breeds often use this to their advantage as well.

Rians are also extremely long-lived thanks to Za'aan engineering of their DNA and additionally maintain young apparent age throughout most of their lifespan (see notes in Game Information & Stats box on the previous page).

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Human, Turaani

Pronounced: HUE+mun, ter+RON+ee
Political Affiliation: Imperial
Galactic Prevalence— Rians Everywhere; Turaani are Rare
Imperium Interior: Uncommon
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Rare
Triangle: Rare
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Rare and still coveted as property by some, the Turaani race was originally bred exclusively by Emperor Turaan using Rian stock and genetic engineering during the second Imperial dynasty for his royal court pleasures. These humans were bred for exceptional beauty, moderate strength, and to be charming. All can excel at modeling, acting, dancing, and other entertainment careers, and many do just that. Some claim their appeal goes beyond beauty and includes subtle energies or pheromones that were genetically engineered into the Turaani genome.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -35

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.8m (6'1" tall)
Weight: 85kg (185 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 5_4 ($4–7_0$) INT: 4_5 ($4–6_4$) INU: 4_5 ($2–9_8$)
AGI: 4_5 ($2–7_9$) KNO: 3_1 ($3–6_0$) EGO: 3_6 ($3–6_2$)
PRE: 5_0 ($4–7_1$) WIL: 2_4 ($2–5_8$) HAR: 7_8 ($6–10_9$)
ALL: 8_8 ($8–11_0$)
REF: 4_5 ($3–7_1$) Base Life: 6
SPD: $1\text{-}5\text{-}1_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 12 *(Lifespan: 90 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Language, InterLak @ 4 Charm @ 2
Seduction @ 2

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
None

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Any/All

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
None

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Extra Heroism:** Humans begin play with one extra Heroism point (2 total).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 70–84: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO/HAR $+1_0$
Age 85–89: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO $+0_5$
Age 90+ (& every 10 more): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

DEMEANOR AND CULTURE

Today, Turaani are well-known, revered, yet largely narcissistic and bent on carnal pleasures. Their charm, seductive personalities, and alluring beauty make them highly desirable, but it is extraordinarily rare for a Turaani to take a member of another human sub-race (let alone an alien) as a permanent and genuine mate—for that they seek one another to maintain their bloodline. They do, however, exploit other races of humanity (as well as many aliens) for money, power, and reputation by way of subtle manipulation, flirting, and either brief or long-term 'escort' duties. But such interaction is not entirely one-sided, for anyone with a Turaani on his or her arm as a trophy is automatically elevated in stature and prestige among most human cultures. Other Turaani of lower station seek employment as exotic dancers and common escorts, while a few seek adventure and exploration among the stars.

Because Turaani bear children only within their own race, many traditions are passed from one generation to the next. Specifically, many secret and clever methods to charm, seduction, and manipulation are ingrained in all Turaani from a very early age. Turaani are taught to walk and move with the grace of both royalty and a runway model, to speak with the eloquence of an ambassador, and to enhance carnal pleasures beyond imagination.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Amirra Neeson
William Narsay
Nadia Fa'Mezzo
Alec Ryder
Josh Norling
Myrella Kylandran
Shawni Looraam

Part of their original genetic conditioning has left every member of the Turaani race highly amorous and strictly bisexual—able to enjoy carnal relations with either the same or opposite sex equally. And though not telepathic in the classic sense, most Turaani seem to empathically sense and read the intimate desires of others around them with an uncanny accuracy.

Because Turaani are so artistic, many of the galaxy's most beautiful works of art, including paintings and sculptures, have been produced by Turaani artists. One of the traits of Turaani art is the near chemically-induced feelings that 'exude' from it. Turaani art is not just to be seen, but also felt, heard, and its aroma breathed. Though not scientifically investigated, there seems to be some truth to the inclusion of bodily pheromones in each work of art by the artist which help to evoke the proper emotions in those present to appreciate the art in person. And while most art is deemed beautiful and serene, evoking pleasant feelings, arousal, and even euphoria, a few alternative pieces have been known to convey great sadness to the point of several purported cases of suicide by those who spent too much time near such pieces.

RELATIONS

Many individuals envy Turaani for the attention and prestige Turaani enjoy by default and without having earned. Nearly all members of the various human races find it very difficult to genuinely dislike or hate Turaani. For aliens, this is somewhat easier—especially the Vagar who are entirely unaffected by Turaani pheromones (see below) and find the enamored reactions of their Terran allies quite amusing.

Most other alien races pay Turaani little attention, but a few such as the Darcanan, Joplyd, Skrow, Xom, and Za'aan find themselves as easily enthralled as humans are.

It is noteworthy to know that Bossk find Turaani both a rival and a threat to fundamental Bossk ideals and ambassadorial duties. Bossk are publicly outspoken against Turaani and continually warn against any political involvement by them.

BIOLOGY

The human haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs, divided among 22 pairs of autosomes and 1 pair of sex chromosomes for a total of 46 chromosomes. Turaani can thus breed with any other sub-race or species of humanity, including Rians, Venwon, and so on, but greater than ninety-nine percent of them mate only within their own race. Unlike Rians, Turaani can actually give live

birth to offspring without having to report to maturation facilities. Law, however, still forbids natural birth for Turaani in the Imperium.

Though not substantiated publicly by science, it is common knowledge that Turaani biology produces specialized airborne pheromones which attack the central nervous system, weakening one's will and heightening sexual desire. Humans of all races are very susceptible to these pheromones, but most alien races are partially or wholly resistant. Additional fast-acting chemical agents are present in Turaani saliva (and passed in much greater concentrations via other fluids present during sexual contact) that significantly prolong carnal ecstasy only to then induce contentment followed by strong need for sleep.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Youthful appearance is another genetically-programmed trait among Turaani, and most maintain an apparent age of early to mid twenties until roughly age eighty when distinct signs of aging set in rapidly and are quickly followed by death.

Human, Venwon

Pronounced: HUE+mun, ven+WON
Political Affiliation: Neutral, Independent, Imperial
Galactic Prevalence— Rians EVERYWHERE; Venwon UNCOMMON
Imperium Interior: Uncommon
Imperium Frontier: Common
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Uncommon
Vagar Delegation: Very Rare
Wrekiri Consortium: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Uncommon
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Rare
Uncharted Territories: Very Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Venwon are somewhat exotic looking, an unusual pairing of bloodlines and genetic manipulation resulting in humans of distinct Asian descent except with red hair (a few blonds and browns) and green or gray eyes only. The range of features is quite narrow. Venwon are known for their fast reflexes and light builds, and they are stronger than they appear.

DEMEANOR

Venwon are known for their curiosity, their passion, and their energetic personalities. They value personal technology, cybernetics, and the pursuit to enhance oneself to be better than thy neighbor.

CULTURE

Venwon are descendent from one of Titan's first colonies which was thought destroyed by Malon forces deep within Imperial territory. Venwon sought isolation from both Malon and Za'aan control and went into hiding for thousands of years where their own unique culture developed. During that time, Venwon scientists attempted to rid themselves of Za'aan genetic 'contaminants' by carefully and subtly reworking their own genetic code with somewhat unexpected results. Additionally, Venwon culture began to embrace cybernetic technology with great passion and fervor. Personal enhancements, organ replacements, and integrated military weaponry became the norm.

Following the loss of the Venwon war of independence against the Imperium once they were again discovered, Venwon were scattered throughout the galaxy—some were reintegrated into Imperial society throughout the interior and frontier sectors, while others escaped using the aging Venwon fleet to form warlord bands and pirate factions, whereas the remaining few fled to other parts of the galaxy to begin a new life.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Sarez Watanabe
Neo Venwar
Hiroshi Nima
Dey'won Anawon
Usensi Femawa

Regardless of the path chosen, nearly all Venwon retain their love of bio-integrated cybernetic technology, and many continue to violate Imperial law by adopting many personal enhancements.

RELATIONS

Venwon are a highly divided people, both for and against the Imperium. Following reintegration, many Venwon have adapted to become productive and patriotic members of Imperial society. Many, however, belong to the Resistance movement now sweeping across the Imperium with the goal of ridding the Imperium of all Za'aan control. Knowing who is friend or foe among the Venwon is a tricky business that even the ISA has difficulty determining. However, both the patriots and the resistance fighters are similarly outspoken against Venwon warlords—groups of marauding Venwon armed with aging Venwon warships who prey upon the shipping lanes throughout the Imperium's frontier sectors. A branch of these warlords have setup intricate organized crime networks within various galactic communities, including the Imperium. Indeed, the last remnants of old Earth mafia live on through the Venwon.

Then there are the independents, those who've taken up residency in the Southern Alliance or Coalition States who have been welcomed in those areas as valued members of society. But wherever one goes in the galaxy, Venwon can generally be found at least in small numbers but it is still no easier to tell friend from foe—a determination best made quickly given Venwon passion for their political and sociological beliefs.

Many non-human species envy humanity (specifically Rians) because of their prevalence and thus the standards they set forth and impose upon others throughout the galaxy.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -30

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.7m (5'9" tall)
Weight: 70kg (155 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 4_2 ($3–6_5$)	INT: 5_0 ($3–11_2$)	INU: 4_1 ($3–6_3$)
AGI: 4_9 ($3–7_9$)	KNO: 4_5 ($3–9_1$)	EGO: 4_5 ($3–11_0$)
PRE: 4_5 ($2–8_1$)	WIL: 4_5 ($2–7_7$)	HAR: 5_1 ($3–6_5$)
ALL: 5_3 ($4–8_0$)		
REF: 6_2 ($5–8_6$)	Base Life: 6	
SPD: $1\text{-}5\text{-}1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 12 *(Lifespan: 120 years)*	

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Language, InterLak @ 4

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
None

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Any/All

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
None

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Extra Heroism:** Humans begin play with one extra Heroism point (2 total).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 60–74: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO/HAR $+1_0$
Age 75–109: ALL PHYS & REF -1_0, KNO $+0_5$
Age 110+ (& every 10 more): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

BIOLOGY

The human haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs, divided among 22 pairs of autosomes and 1 pair of sex chromosomes for a total of 46 chromosomes. Venwon can thus breed with any other sub-race or species of humanity, including Rians, Terrans, and so on.

SPECIES

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Joplyd

Pronounced: JAW+pled
Political Affiliation: Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— Uncommon
Imperium Interior: Uncommon
Imperium Frontier: Uncommon
Southern Alliance—
Endori Sovereignty: Essentially None
Triangle: Common
Other Allied Areas: Rare
Coalition States: Very Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: The party animals of the galaxy. Joplyd are fast moving, precise, and personable. They rarely have time to apply themselves seriously, but when they do they make great tech specialists. A powerful intuition also makes this race particularly adept at scouting and spy missions.

DEMEANOR

Earning the title "Party Animals of the Galaxy" requires a certain amount of dedication to the cause. Strong social skills lend themselves to rave networking and gatherings, while vices become the topic of choice at every event. In the eyes of the Joplyd (all four of them), the meaning of life revolves around the belief in living for the moment. This means that future planning is secondary, because fate will guide one as it wills (though planning for the immediate future such as organizing a bash or rave is normal). Joplyd are not an evil people. They do not seek lives of crime, nor do they treat life without value. On the contrary, Joplyd wish happiness upon all—they're just a bit superficial in how they show it.

Etiquette is one area where Joplyd fall especially short. Joplyd have loud, whiny voices. They are boisterous, rowdy, and disorderly most of the time, always making inappropriate comments at the most inopportune moments. Mouthing off to anyone and everyone is a common practice, but luckily individual Joplyd are rarely taken seriously when they do. And since these beings avoid the upper echelons of elite social circles, their lack of grace usually goes unpunished.

Proper Names
(examples; females in italics)
Sifl
Sven
Poggy
Grass
Lips
Dooby

Joplyd can prove physically repulsive at times, too, often foaming themselves when excited, passing gas, and excreting waste wherever convenient. Nearly all are also obsessed with pornography and spend at least a third of their waking hours immersed in it, and frequently make lewd comments and gestures toward females of any species. In short, these beings have redefined rude, crude, and obnoxious. Joplyd are also about as far from vain as one can get. They usually dispense with clothes, but will sometimes wear trendy items or accessories. Everything from cybernetic implants to tattoos and piercings to razor art is part of their peculiar lives.

CULTURE

True Joplyd culture can no longer be identified as the species has fully integrated into the galactic community. The lack of any known homeworld has left some guessing as to the origins of these beings.

RELATIONS

Most of the largest raves and underground parties are organized by Joplyd. And, unless the gathering is limited to the socially elite, at least one Joplyd can be expected to attend. For this reason, most who know Joplyd appreciate and respect these socialites. Outside of recreational environments these beings tend to annoy just about everyone—especially physically large species such as Bangor or Xom. Joplyd are not in the least bit fearful of large beings, however, and male Bangor and Xom are advised to think twice before attempting to combat a Joplyd (who usually fight dirty).

BIOLOGY

Both of the Joplyd's hands and feet end in suction-cupped digits. This allows the creature to walk along sheer surfaces with ease as well as grasp a variety of objects.

In addition to the two black eyes set in the being's head, the two antennae also terminate with a tiny eye used for peripheral, aft, and

Starting Experience Point Cost: -50

Physical—
Height: 1.0m (3'2 tall)
Weight: 14kg (30 lbs)
Eyesight: Excellent
Hearing: Good
Smell Sense: Average

Base Stat Scores—

STR: 2_9 (2–3_7)	INT: 4_5 (4–6_2)	INU: 7_9 (7–12_0)
AGI: 6_2 (5–9_1)	KNO: 3_4 (2–4_3)	EGO: 4_3 (4–6_4)
PRE: 3_7 (3–5_4)	WIL: 2_4 (1–2_8)	HAR: 7_5 (6–9_4)
ALL: 3_9 (3–4_4)		
REF: 9_5 (8–10_3)	Base Life: 4	
SPD: 1-4-$3_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 8 *(Lifespan: 50 years)*	

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Carousing/Gaming @ 4
Language, InterLak @ 4
Pickpocket @ 3
Streetwise @ 4

Biologically-Easy Skills—
None

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
Concentration @ -3
Interrogation @ -4
Intimidation @ -5
Wrestling @ -3

Recommended Kits—

Cab Driver	Privateer	Scout
Fighter Pilot	Professional Criminal	Spy
Kid	Punk	Tech

Not Recommended Kits—

Bodyguard	Mercenary	Navy Trooper
Confidence Man	Navy Marine	Reporter
Martial Artist	Navy Officer	Thug

Special Abilities / Rules—

1) **Vacuum Tolerance/Natural Immunity:** Joplyd have an air bladder that enables them to survive in a vacuum for up to 10 hours for every 1 point of Willpower (1 hour per fractional point of WIL). They also have gills for breathing underwater indefinitely, and are further unaffected by smoke, gasses (stun, reactive, and poisonous), as well as all harmful effects from street drugs and pharmaceuticals not specific to their physiology (of which there are very few).

2) **Healing/Regeneration:** Joplyd have the ability to regrow lost limbs and heal from mortal damage without scarring. So long as they are not killed, Joplyd heal 1 point of Wound Damage each day.

3) **Scale Sheer Surfaces:** By way of suction-cupped feet, Joplyd can scale walls and ceilings as easily as they walk along the floor. These cups are also strongly muscled and rimmed with tiny gripping claws that similarly permit vertical movement along rough or rocky surfaces.

4) **Addictions:** All Joplyd have one or more addictions (e.g., caffeine, nicotine, steroids, sugar, pornography, etc.). Substance addictions must be absorbed at least four times per day or the Joplyd will begin sustaining 1 point of Wound Damage for each 'dose' missed (cumulative). Furthermore, this damage cannot be healed or regenerated by any means until the addiction is satisfied. Luckily, aside from the addiction itself, these substances do not in and of themselves cause damage to the Joplyd's body as they would in humans and other species.

5) **Small Target:** Joplyd warrant the +2 bonus to Evasion.

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 35–39: REF -1_0, INU/HAR +1_0
Age 40–49: STR -0_4, AGI/REF -1_2, INU/HAR +0_6
Age 50+ (& every 2 more years): ALL STATS -2_5

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[ ]/T3-7/P0 -7/G0-7/R7[9]

overhead vision. This second set of eyes gives the species total awareness of its surroundings. Skin is smooth with a scaled texture, and is primarily gray with a banded or mottled appearance. Joplyd do not exude any natural odor, but many are addicted a variety of obnoxious vices.

A string of eleven hearts in series run along the dorsal region of the Joplyd's body, pumping blood throughout a complex vascular network. Specialized gills exist for extracting oxygen from water and airy environments, and a muscular air bladder can compress enough oxygen to sustain the being in O2-depleted environments for several hours. These organs, like other tissues, can be regenerated if damaged. The Joplyd gut is disproportionately large and can become quite bloated in gluttonous specimens.

Despite a nematode appearance, Joplyd have a highly-advanced nervous system. Neurotransmissions are faster than in most sentient species, but the cerebral cortex is not so enhanced. The result is fast motor reflexes and steady precision. The Joplyd genetic structure includes some 900 million DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Kelgari

Pronounced: kell+GAR+ree
Political Affiliation: Mainly Neutral, Alliance
Galactic Prevalence— RARE
Imperium Interior: Exceptionally Rare
Imperium Frontier: Essentially None
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Very Rare
Vagar Delegation: Exceptionally Rare
Kelgari Federation: Everywhere
Sordrid Dominion: Very Rare
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Efficiency fanatics, Kelgari disdain the waste of time, resources, and effort. They are secretive toward outsiders; intelligent and willful. They fear personal combat because despite advanced agility and precision, their reflexes leave much to be desired.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
K-19-517B-31A21-1
K-17-398C-52F93-1
K-18-938A-11C45-0
K-11-109B-21A31-2
K-10-768B-32B88-1
K-15-310D-41C01-2

DEMEANOR

Kelgari are cordial, but almost machine-like with their stoic responses. Many races find them efficient to work with in business, but few care for the apparent lack of emotion or thoughtfulness. Kelgari prefer careers of science and technology where they can apply their intellect, dedication, and manual precision to good use.

Something most species find quite impersonal is how Kelgari are not given proper names but instead assigned a serial number for identification.

CULTURE

Kelgari are less interested in politics, social affairs, and gossip, but they do manage good security within their territory and have apparently not lagged in military technologies.

All Kelgari are part of the hive—something analogous to the manner in which ants work together in a strong community and only their own community. In Kelgari culture, the individual is not important. Therefore, when an individual leaves the hive to pursue a personal agenda elsewhere in the galactic community, they are treated as traitors (though they are not hunted; simply banished from Federation space).

Kelgari architecture is sterile but quite functional. Their ship designs tend to carry somewhat more 'flavor', but only in exterior appearance.

RELATIONS

Individual Kelgari seem especially well suited to working with Kraf'kan, whom they get along with quite well. Other species are inclined to teat Kelgari almost like bots or machines, and the emotion-driven Bossk find Kelgari diplomacy a great challenge. Kelgari respect the Niveans for their achievements in science, but manage a watchful eye on their Wrekiri neighbors whom are prone to violence and conflict.

BIOLOGY

The Kelgair genome contains 980 million DNA nucleotide pairs.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -40

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.7m (5'7" tall)
Weight: 70kg (150 lbs)
Eyesight: Good/Average
Hearing: Poor
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 3_3 ($3–4_2$)	INT: 5_5 ($5–9_7$)	INU: 3_1 ($1–3_8$)
AGI: 5_5 ($5–6_5$)	KNO: 5_1 ($4–6_3$)	EGO: 4_3 ($2–5_2$)
PRE: 5_5 ($4–7_1$)	WIL: 7_0 ($5–9_5$)	HAR: 4_7 ($4–6_1$)
ALL: 3_5 ($3–3_9$)		
REF: 3_1 ($2–3_8$)	Base Life: 8	
SPD: 2-3-$1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 5 *(Lifespan: 55 years)*	

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Awareness @ 2
Botany @ 2
Computer Operation @ 2
Hide Thoughts @ 2

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Awareness

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Acting @ -4
Carousing/Gaming @ -3
Disguise @ -3
Manipulation @ -2

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Doctor
Scientist
Tech

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Kid
Punk
Thug

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Hive Harmony:** When Kelgari are dealing with other Kelgari, their Harmony (HAR) stat is treated as being 3 points higher (a +3 modifier) which naturally improves interpersonal skill use among the hive as well.
2) **Multifaceted Eyes:** Kelgari eyes are non-directional providing sight both forward, behind, above, and below simultaneously. Their eyesight is good in this respect, but their ability to focus on detail or view at a great distance is only average.
3) **Tail Pincer:** Though not sharp or usable as a weapon, their tail pincer allows them to clamp onto objects with sufficient strength to support their own body weight. Thus, a Kelgari could hang from a ceiling fixture using their tail pincer, but couldn't wield a weapon or attack with it.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 30–49: ALL STATS -0_7
Age 50+ (& every 5 more years): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T3-5/P5-7/G0-7/R6[7]

SPECIES

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Kraf'kan

Pronounced: KRAF+kun
Political Affiliation: Mainly Neutral, Some Imperial
Galactic Prevalence— RARE
Imperium Interior: Very Rare
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance: Rare
Coalition States: Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Obsessed with invention, these technology-consumed people are highly sought for their engineering skills. Although rarely hostile, a second set of arms does allow them to launch more attacks and certainly benefits their technical skills. A life of technology has left little time for understanding of social interaction.

DEMEANOR

Kraf'kan are typically an agreeable, inquisitive, and sometimes gullible species. They are usually quite respectful of other races, though often get themselves into trouble through unintended insults or offenses. Generally immature with regard to social graces, Kraf'kan would rather leave social interaction to others while pursuing a loner's life of machine interaction.

Above all else, Kraf'kan value technology and not just the resulting benefit of technology, but also the genius involved with how that technology is put together and what processes led to the invention of it in the first place. In simpler terms, Kraf'kan are tinkerers and can easily devote all of their time to the understanding of a technology's workings. Where human and other scientists can grow frustrated and bored with a specific technological concept, Kraf'kan will continue to explore a puzzle until they have either deciphered its secrets or until they have improved upon the original design.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Dönak'ta
Dinö'tak
Dôn'kat'ka
Dëkto'ta
Dånð'pa
Dötka'ki

Kraf'kan are usually equally oblivious to danger when such danger is present in the form of hostilities in others. As Kraf'kan have difficulty reaching a state of emotional anger, they tend to forget the sometimes violent and unpredictable behavior that can be provoked in other species. Kraf'kan are remarkably easy-going, largely because they are so oblivious to subtle (and sometimes blatant) conversational connotations and because they rarely take personal offense to insults assuming they've even noticed such an insult in the first place.

CULTURE

Kraf'kan culture is both primitive and advanced. It is primitive with regard to helping its members meet sociological needs, but advanced insofar as structure and peace are concerned. Historically, the Kraf'kan culture began as a very materialistic society that promoted selfishness and even war. Today their society is vastly different, but the notion of materials remains strong while the desire for having or owning them is not.

RELATIONS

Kraf'kan are highly sought as private commerical engineers. They have no racial hatred or enemies, but frustrate some individuals.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -50

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.3m (4'2" tall)
Weight: 70kg (155 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 4_3 ($4–6_1$) INT: 4_9 ($3–6_7$) INU: 3_2 ($3–5_5$)
AGI: 4_1 ($3–6_6$) KNO: 6_9 ($5–9_1$) EGO: 3_7 ($3–5_3$)
PRE: 4_5 ($3–5_4$) WIL: 8_2 ($6–9_7$) HAR: 3_9 ($2–5_3$)
ALL: 3_9 ($3–4_4$)
REF: 3_6 ($2–5_2$) Base Life: 5
SPD: I-3-$I_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 9 *(Lifespan: 50 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Computer Maintenance/Repair @ 2
Computer Operation @ 1
Concentration @ 3
Electronics @ 2
Lang, Kraf'kan OR InterLak @ 4
Mechanics @ 2

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Bot Technology/Repair
Craft Maintenance/Repair
Electronics
Lockpicking
Mechanics
Starship Ops, Engineering

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
ALL Allure, Ego, and Harmony-associated skills @ -4

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Doctor
Jack-Of-All-Trades
Scientist
Tech

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Arbitrator
Confidence Man
Entertainer
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Determination:** Kraf'kan may choose to re-attempt any failed INT or KNO-associated skill Action Check even where second attempts aren't normally allowed (as noted in each skill description). This determination ability can only be used once on any one failed task roll, and only if the second attempt makes sense at the GM's discretion.
2) **Four Arms:** Kraf'kan may launch 2 attacks (1 with the upper set of arms and 1 with the lower set) per turn. Neither of these two attacks warrants any penalties, though ranged weapons must be aimed at the SAME target. Alternatively, aiming one attack at a second target imposes a +5 Step Penalty on the AIM roll for the second target.
The non-primary hand of the upper set and the non-primary hand of the lower set can of course also be used but suffer standard penalties for wrong-handedness as well as two-handed fighting penalties. If the Two-Handed Fighting skill is possessed, its value applies to both sets of hands, and so is doubly useful.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 35–39: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, KNO $+1_1$, WIL $+0_6$
Age 40–49: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, INT/WIL/INU/EGO/HAR -0_7
Age 50+ (& every 5 more years): ALL STATS -0_8

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T5-7/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

BIOLOGY

The Kraf'kan people are neither mammalian nor reptilian by Earth standards, but possess qualities of both. Their leathery skin is somewhat scaled and they also have a mane of wiry hair. Their leathery skin ranges in color from gray to grayish-purple, with grayish-blue being most common. The leathery skin grows softer on the being's palms and soles, and is softest (comparable to human skin) on the fingertips and toes. Along the Kraf'kan's back, as well as the tops of the arms, thighs, shins, and backs of the hand, the leathery skin grows hardest until it actually becomes scaled. These scales are quite small and layered heavily, providing protection against minor scrapes and abrasions. The being is generally odorless, except when a new layer of skin is freshly exposed after shedding—the shedding process occurring about once every other month and requiring only a few short days where the skin and scales slough off in small patches at which time a slight pungent odor can be detected.

All of the Kraf'kan's appendage joints are double-jointed (notably causing the knee and elbow joints to appear slightly bulbous), and allow some movement in the normally opposite direction. Kraf'kan

feet, especially, are unusual for a closely humanoid form. The foot has toes to the fore and aft of the structure (like an open Kraf'kan hand), enabling the being to walk backward with great deftness.

RH factors limit hemoglobin-to-oxygen attraction and bonding to reduced efficiency levels—an anatomical inefficiency which leaves the Kraf'kan prone to tire quickly. A single, three-chambered heart circulates blood from a two-organ pulmonary tract and then on through a vascular network; including four renal organs with superior screening ability that also incorporate (and replace) the functions found in the human liver. Average blood pressure is 80/40 (a pressure level expected with the Kraf'kan's 0.93G homeworld) which can occasionally cause the being spells of dizziness and even blackouts during 3 to 4G accelerations.

Conventional, enzymatically-induced semiconservative replication mechanisms support mitosis in all Kraf'kan cells (with typical meiosis in germ cells). The Kraf'kan haploid genome contains $9.7x10_8$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Morg

Pronounced: morg
Political Affiliation: Mainly Imperial and Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— RARE
Imperium Interior: Exceptionally Rare
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance: Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: No two Morg are exactly alike, though several dozen archetypes exist. This is a species who has tampered with its own genetic code so much that each new birth is a patchwork of unmatched appendages and organs. Players can actually build their Morg abominations from a list of various parts.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Nemafoglaranokous
Messakarglennoum
Sogolimeesakous
Mouriakousniholog
Leskogvakibloubuk
Miklentikutlorak

DEMEANOR

Morg are generally a reclusive people obsessed with genetics, medicine, and other sciences. They are far from social, but more than capable of interaction between members of their own people and those who accept them.

RELATIONS

Many species are repulsed by Morg.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -25

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.4m (4'8" tall)
Weight: 70kg (155 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—

STR: 4_0 ($3–6_5$)	INT: 5_2 ($4–6_8$)	INU: 3_5 ($3–7_5$)
AGI: 4_5 ($3–7_0$)	KNO: 4_0 ($3–8_4$)	EGO: 6_5 ($5–7_5$)
PRE: 3_8 ($2–5_7$)	WIL: 3_8 ($3–6_3$)	HAR: 3_5 ($2–5_8$)
ALL: 2_1 ($1–3_2$)		
REF: 4_2 ($3–6_3$)	Base Life: 7	
SPD: 1-3-$½_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 7 *(Lifespan: 40-60 years)*	

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Language, InterLak @ 4
Language, Morgeus @ 4
Science, Genetics @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Science, Any 1 Skill (choose)

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Carousing/Gaming @ -3
Disguise @ -4
Manipulation @ -1
Seduction @ -6

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Jack-Of-All-Trades
Mercenary
Scientist

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Confidence Man
Entertainer
Executive
Martial Artist
Navy Marine
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper
Reporter

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—

1) **Physical Differences:** As no two Morg are exactly alike, players must construct or 'piece-together' their Morg characters using the Genetic Tables (see below). Note that players must spend additional Starting Experience Points to build-on any of these options desired. Otherwise, they are left with a base morg with only one arm.

Environmental Tolerances: Aom[f]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R8[9]

MORG GENETIC TABLES—
Players who choose to play Morg characters must additionally select one option from each of the following tables by spending some or all of their **Starting Experience Points**. Default options represent commonly seen anatomy and do not XP beyond the Morg's base 25 cost. Note that all Morg begin this process with one left hand, which is always the same.

Head Option [XP Cost]

1) [Default] Wide head with hair, two dark brown eyes, flared nostrils, and all molar teeth.
2) [-5 XP] Narrow head with bony ridge atop, eyes with good vision and nightvision (not infrared).
3) [-7 XP] Hammerhead with wide-angle peripheral vision. Four eyes; two set in forehead and one at each end of the lateral extension; results in enhanced awareness (+2 to all Awareness Checks). Hearing is also advanced, enabling good directional discernment.
4) [-12 XP] Stalked head. Small round head sits atop a snaky neck that rises another one-third meter in height. Large peaked ears collect sonar-like waves emitted by a special vocal organ that results in radar-like nightvision to a distance of 20 meters. Two beady black eyes provide normal vision as well.
5) [-11 XP] Flat head with long snout provides excellent olfactory capability (like a hound). Eyesight and hearing are typical. Can discern identity by scent.

Right Arm Option [XP Cost]

1) [Default] None; left arm only.
2) [-7 XP] Arm with 4-fingered hand; same as left.
3) [-12 XP] Prehensile tentacle arm lined with suction cups. Allows rudimentary grasping, but not manipulation. Tentacle can be used like a whip (see Weapons), but only measures 2 meters long.
4) [-15 XP] Oversized arm with taloned claw. This arm possesses a Strength score 2 points higher than the rest of the body and is grossly oversized. The claws can be used for 1d3 points of Wound Damage. The claw cannot perform delicate work.
5) [-20 XP] Arm with pincer claw. This arm possesses normal strength, but the pincer itself has a Strength of 10 capable of severing a steel pipe. When used for attack, the pincer can inflict 1d6 points of Wound Damage but is often too small to sever a limb.
6) [-15 XP] Huge arm ending in a knobby club. This arm possesses a Strength score 2 points higher than the rest of the body and is grossly oversized. The club strikes for 1d6 Stun Damage (plus Strength bonus).
7) [-18 XP] Double Arm. That is, the right side of the body sports two smaller arms, each capable of performing delicate work. These hands can be used to fire weapons, but standard penalties for two-handed fighting apply to both of these hands.
8) [-33 XP] Prehensile snake arm with jaws. This arm is capable of only rudimentary grasping, but can bite opponents for 1 point of Wound Damage plus injects a poison. The poison causes weakness, imposing a +1 Step Penalty to all actions. Poison effects from additional bites are cumulative.

Legs/Feet Option [XP Cost]

1) [Default] Two stubby legs with round flat feet.
2) [-12 XP] Flippers that reduce land movement Speed but bestow much improve swimming Speed. Speed trait goes from 1-3-1/2 to 1-2-3.
3) [-13 XP] Snaky mass of tentacles. Speed is reduced to 1-2-1. These dozen or so tentacles are prehensile but can only be used for rudimentary grasping. The mass allows the Morg to climb (natural Climbing skill of 5) and hang from trees.
4) [-20 XP] Strong hopping legs with flat feet. Can be used to leap up to 3 meters high and 4 meters forward. Normal movement is accomplished by hopping and results in a Speed of 1-6-1/2.

Tail Option [XP Cost]

1) [Default] None
2) [-12 XP] Prehensile 2-meter-long tail. Capable of only rudimentary grasping with a Strength score 1 point less than the rest of the body.
3) [-25 XP] Bladed tail. This 2-meter-long tail ends in a sharp knife like projection (made of hard keratin). The tail can be used as a weapon (an extra attack without penalties) that causes 1d6 points of Wound Damage. If the Morg is using other hand, melee, or ranged weapons during the same turn, then the tail must be directed at the same target else penalties for attacking two independent targest are warranted.

Wings Option [XP Cost]

1) [Default] None
2) [-50 XP] Small scaly wings capable of limited flight. AirSpeed equals 4, and the Morg can only remain airborne for 1 turn for every point of Strength.
3) [-85 XP] Large feathered wings capable of AirSpeed of 9. Morg can carry weight equal to their own body weight (or fly in up to 2 gravities), but this slows their AirSpeed to 4. Cost combined with normal Morg XP cost may require purchase of a Drawback.

Other Body Options [XP Cost]

1) [Default] None
2) [-12 XP] Gills allow underwater breathing in addition to the normal oxygen and methane-capable lungs.
3) [-23 XP] Antennae can be used to detect the presence of other creatures. Normal detection range can be up to 20 meters, depending on wind conditions, but direction or type cannot be determined—only presence (how many different lifeforms).
4) [-20 XP] Frog tongue can be extended up to 2 meters in length and is sticky at the end. Small bits of food and other objects weighing less than 2 kilograms (about 4 pounds) can be retrieved.
5) [-50 XP] Venom spray. Glands under the tongue allow venom to be sprayed up to 3 meters away. AIM is 6 and causes blindness in most species (those without natural or artificial eye protection). Blindness lasts for 1d6 hours and causes considerable inflammation and swelling. The spray can be used four times per day.
6) [GM's Discretion] Other

BIOLOGY

Much of what existed of the Morg prior to the eugenics era has been long forgotten. For over a century now, Morg have existed in their new shape that engineered by their ancestors and constantly manipulated by today's scientists. For the Morg, the eugenics era began with both a need to adapt physically to their changing home-world and to reach the goal of genetic perfection. Unfortunately, this science came too early for the Morg. Today, their DNA structure is so complicated that not even Nivean scientists have been able to offer any hope for peace.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—

Age 30+ (& every 10 more years): ALL STATS -1_0

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Nivean

Pronounced: nih+VEE+un
Political Affiliation: Mainly Independent, Some Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— VERY RARE
Imperium Interior: Very Rare
Imperium Frontier: Essentially None
Southern Alliance—
Endori Sovereignty: Very Rare
Triangle: Essentially None
Other Allied Areas: Exceptionally Rare
Coalition States: U
Nivean Republic: Common
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: One of the most technologically advanced races known, Niveans are also the most intelligent of known species, as well as one of the older spacefaring races. They're not very strong or fast, but their mental faculties are unmatched in sheer intellect. Natural telepathy is, of course, powerful. A Nivean's snail-like body can also travel along walls and ceilings.

DEMEANOR

Niveans are thought of as cold, unemotional beings, but this is far from the truth. In reality, Niveans experience a range of emotion very similar to humans except in the areas of love and lust. They are an extremely intelligent, resourceful, and calculating species.

Individuals tend to value different things, much in the same way that humans do, but most place some emphasis on science and technology. Many Niveans also believe that their advanced intellect make them a superior species, and so egos run high.

PROPER NAMES
(examples)
Nespheas
Teesorofan
Yefesteas
Uziefious
Rapheous
Ozieleftous

Niveans have difficulty identifying with other species. They do not comprehend many of the fundamental emotions, such as love, lust, or anger. Albeit most Niveans classify themselves as a higher form of life, they are not without compassion for others. Few would kill other beings in cold blood, but the inhumane treatment of sentient life might be justified if science or technology could be advanced.

Niveans disdain anything crude. By this, everything from a street brute to an Imperial marine is thought to be inferior and dangerous to all. Similarly, they view crude technologies as inferior, whether or not the machine produces the same effect as a refined one.

CULTURE

Niveans have not yet spoken openly of their culture, and so little is known. Rumor has it that the Nivean homeworld, out on the far end of the galactic arm, is hidden from view and sensors by a massive cloaking device.

RELATIONS

Although all Niveans are innately telepathic due to their brilliant intellect, many find it easier to communicate verbally with other species. They are able to resort to a whispered speech by siphoning and expelling air from their air siphon, bending and shaping its aperture.

Many species are distrustful of Niveans, largely because of all the rumors and hearsay regarding the species' supposed involvement in galactic politics despite Nivean statements to the contrary. The Sordrid and Endori appear most friendly toward Nivean Nationals, but individual Niveans have made a home for themselves in various nations throughout the galaxy. Morg tend to be somewhat resentful of Niveans, for they believe the Nivean government continues to withold vital medical knowledge and gene resequencing technology that could save the Morg people—technology the Niveans claim not to possess. Za'aan, despite possessing a more powerful mind over all, are also somewhat jealous of the Nivean's sheer intellect and the superior telepathic mind programming talents it would allow them. The Vagar are also growing more suspicious of Nivean government.

Of the more bizarre relations, all Niveans appear to despise (sometimes openly) Darcanan, yet no one has been able to conjecture why. The opinion is apparentlly somewhat mutual, as members of both species have gone out of their way to avoid the other.

BIOLOGY

General Nivean body structure parallels that of certain cephalopods found on Earth. The Nivean head descends from a vertical trunk that serves as the foot. Bodily organs are housed in a large pouch-like bag that hangs from the back side of the trunk and is nearly as big as the foot itself. The bottom of the foot is slick and suctions to whatever surface is being traversed. Movement is accomplished via a

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -55

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.6m (5'2" tall)
Weight: 60kg (130 lbs)
Eyesight: Good
Hearing: Poor
Smell Sense: Excellent

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 3_5 ($3–3_9$) INT: 10_5 ($9–13_5$) INU: 7_3 ($6–9_0$)
AGI: 3_8 ($3–5_7$) KNO: 7_5 ($6–9_6$) EGO: 5_5 ($4–6_9$)
PRE: 5_5 ($4–7_2$) WIL: 3_9 ($3–6_5$) HAR: 4_5 ($4–6_0$)
ALL: 3_9 ($3–4_6$)
REF: 2_5 ($2–3_5$) Base Life: 5
SPD: ½-1-$1_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 42 *(Lifespan: 400 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Climbing @ 5
Concentration @ 3
Physics @ 4
Science (choice new) @ 4
Starship Ops OR Pilot (any) @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Chemistry
Climbing
Physics
Science, Specialized

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Acrobatics/Tumbling @ -4
Carousing/Gaming @ -3
Devotion @ -3
Dodge @ -4
Interrogation @ -2
Jumping @ -3
Martial Arts @ -4
Running @ -3
Streetwise @ -4
Wrestling @ -4

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Doctor
Scientist

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Bodyguard
Cab Driver
Confidence Man
Entertainer
Gladiator
Martial Artist
Navy Marine
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper
Punk
Reporter
Thug

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Natural Telepathy/Empathy:** See Chapter 22.
2) **Climb Sheer Surfaces:** Niveans can apply their Climbing Action Checks to rough or rocky walls or even ceilings, and can always climb smooth surfaces without a check.
2) **Gills for Water Breathing:** Niveans are at home in water just as well as in airy environments.
4) **Equipment Option:** For an additional Starting XP Point cost of 10, Niveans can begin play with a Nivean Battlewand (see equipment).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 200–299: INT +0_6, KNO +1_2
Age 300–379: INT/KNO +0_5, WIL -1_0, INU/EGO -0_9
Age 380+ (& every 40 more years): ALL STATS -1_7

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T5-6/P3-7/G0-6/R6[9]

series of wave-like constrictions identical to land snails and slugs. Nivean skin is moist to the touch, but not sticky. Coloration is always a very pale cream, almost translucent, with some specimens being littered with faint orange speckles. Niveans exude no odor. Niveans are simultaneous hermaphrodites. That is, each Nivean possesses both male and female reproductive organs.

DNA structure consists of 1.6 billion nucleotide pairs, broken into 101,720 distinct genes.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Nooma

Pronounced: NEW+muh
Political Affiliation: Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— VERY RARE
Imperium Interior: Exceptionally Rare
Imperium Frontier: Very Rare
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Very Rare
Kelgari Federation: Very Rare
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: These cute faerie-like beings haven't a worry in the world. Prodigious fliers, Nooma are one of the most agile species on record. This race performs well as scouts, entertainers, and sidekicks. They also have a special chameleon ability which can confuse potential attackers.

DEMEANOR

Nooma are pleasant and playful beings who seldom worry about the realities of life. Sometimes, this carefree attitude and their light-hearted intentions can cause other sentients to dismiss Nooma as childlike entities. The truth is that Nooma can be serious (and often are), they simply choose not to dwell on the negative or unpleasant aspects of any situation.

Nooma value freedom above all else. The worst nightmare for any Nooma is to be caged so that one could not fly about, exploring his or her environment. This is the primary reason why Nooma never settle in any one place for more than a few years because they desire to keep exploring their freedom. Nooma who have been caged in the past nearly always begin wailing and screaming incessantly until released.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)
Wipper
Jo-Jo
Naomi
Chu-Chu
Bimi
Pookie

Always with a light attitude, Nooma maintain excellent standards of ethics and morals. They never intend harm upon others, nor even insults, but they sometimes inadvertently annoy those with short tempers or a dislike of childlike behavior. Overall, they are a compassionate species and, for that reason, make excellent medical doctors and assistants. Nooma are a clean and generally polite people, although some are unintentionally rude because of their rapid speech and propensity for interruption. Occasionally, Nooma invite attack upon themselves through inadvertent taunting, but nearly all Nooma do not condone or even comprehend violence. This is not to say that all Nooma are this way. Indeed, a few carry mini-blasters and know how to use them.

CULTURE

The Nooma culture is one of individuals and differing customs. This is predominantly due to a lack of any known homeworld or place of central gathering. Nooma place no emphasis on status or the wisdom of elders. In fact, they are hardly aware of the status grades employed by other species, even when it is in the extreme such as the difference between an official ambassador versus a common worker.

RELATIONS

There exists no standard relations between Nooma and other species, but most find them amiable. Xom and Bangor, however, are known for tempers that flare in the presence of these beings.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -85

PHYSICAL—
Height: 1.0m (3' tall)
Weight: 4kg (9 lbs)
Eyesight: Good
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Average

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 1_7 ($1–2_4$) INT: 4_1 ($2–5_0$) INU: 6_5 ($4–8_4$)
AGI: 7_5 ($5–10_5$) KNO: 3_2 ($1–4_2$) EGO: 2_5 ($1–4_5$)
PRE: 2_8 ($2–4_5$) WIL: 3_2 ($2–4_5$) HAR: 6_5 ($4–8_5$)
ALL: 6_1 ($5–7_0$)
REF: 7_5 ($6–8_5$) Base Life: 2
SPD: ½-2-n/a, fly 5 $_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 8 *(Lifespan: 25 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Acrobatics/Tumbling @ 3
Charm @ 3
Language, InterLak @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Concentration @ -5
Intimidation @ -6
Interrogation @ -5
Martial Arts @ -3
Swimming @ -4
Wrestling @ -5

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Entertainer
Kid
Scout
Spy

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Cab Driver
Executive
Gladiator
Martial Artist
Mercenary
Navy Marine
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper
Reporter
Thug

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Natural Flight:** Nooma have translucent faerie-like wings that enable them to fly up to a Speed of 5 (5 meters per second). They may carry a maximum weight equal to their own body weight (equal to about 4kg), but for every 1 kg carried their AirSpeed is slowed by 1. Thus, a Nooma carrying 2 kg of weight could only fly at a speed of 3 meters per turn.They may likewise fly in up to 2 gravities carrying no additional weight (their increased body weight is the extra weight 'carried').
2) **Natural Defenses (Bedazzle):** The transparent housefly-like wings of all Nooma contain a network of veins that carry bright neon-colored fluids. By way of flapping their wings and rapidly altering these glowing colors, Nooma are able to confuse many predators (sentient or otherwise). Because these colors can be so bright and literally expel tiny sparkles of glowing energy in a shower of glitter, a Nooma's Evasion trait is temporarily raised 3 points while using this ability. That is, if a particular Nooma's normal Evasion trait was, say 9, then it would increase to 12 with the Bedazzle ability. Note that Nooma must expend additional biochemical energies in order to use this power, and it is tiring as well. Because of this, Nooma may use their Bedazzle ability for a maximum of 8 turns (consecutive or otherwise) per day. After 8 turns of use, they can only recharge their ability with sleep (1 turn per full hour).
3) **Unusual Size:** Because of the Nooma's unusual size and weight restrictions, they cannot wear armor (except weblar) nor employ screens.
4) **Small Target:** Remember, Nooma are Small-sized and so add 2 to their Evasion trait when calculating it (see Chapter 14).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 17–19: ALL STATS -0_5
Age 20–22: ALL STATS -0_5
Age 23+ (& every 2 more years): ALL STATS -1_0, -Loss of Flight Abilities

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T5-6/P2-7/G0-6/R5[7]

BIOLOGY

Skin tone is a smooth peach or apricot color with a few specimens having golden or golden-brown coloration. Their wings are transparent but possess a chameleon ability, allowing a variety of brilliant neon colors. All Nooma are hairless except for an upright tuft of brightly colored hair atop their heads. These tufts are typically fuchsia, red-orange, bright yellow, or pale blue, but many other colors have been seen as well. Unlike the wings, a Nooma's hair color cannot be altered naturally. A Nooma's eyes are large and dark-brown in color. Most specimens also exude a sweet, honey-like scent.

The Nooma DNA structure is not altogether different than a human's, with a haploid genome of 880 million DNA nucleotide pairs divided among a total of 48 chromosomes. Imperial genetic mapping has identified a total of 63,825 distinct genes including some 31 memo groups (coded instinctive instructions).

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Skrow

Pronounced: skrou OR skroe
Political Affiliation: Mainly Neutral, Independent
Galactic Prevalence— Common
Imperium Interior: Rare
Imperium Frontier: Common
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Rare
Vagar Delegation: Uncommon
Wrekiri Consortium: Common
Kelgari Federation: Very Rare
Sordrid Dominion: Rare
Endori Sovereignty: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Common
Coalition States: Uncommon
Vreen Conglomerate: Very Rare
Ullian Empire: Essentially None
Uncharted Territories: Rare
All Other Areas: Exceptionally Rare

GENERAL INFORMATION: The best damn fighter pilots in the galaxy, Skrow are also natural fliers. Their beak and talons act as natural weapons, and the race is physically stronger than appearances suggest. Known for careers of piracy, smuggling, and organized crime, Skrow are not particularly trusted or known for fairness.

DEMEANOR

Skrow are driven by their strong instincts and selfish demeanor. They strive to obtain wealth and glory, and individuals often adorn themselves with copious amounts of gaudy jewelry and rich but often tattered clothes. The nest, always kept as filthy as possible to thwart skrice (see below), is also a valued asset and personal keepsake for Skrow. Deliberate grime and refuse is added to a nest with great care. Rubbish that might appear haphazardly strewn about is always carefully hand-placed only so as to appear random while offering the greatest possible visual impact.

Most members of the species avoid deep or sensitive conversations like the plague. In fact, anything personal other than superficial dialogue tends to make many Skrow uncomfortable and restless.

Proper Names
(examples; females in italics)
Gammick
Celest
Marco
Grekik
Dionous
Greeran

Skrow live for the moment. They appreciate a good thrill and a strong adrenaline rush. In this realm of immediate gratification, Skrow pursue many of the taboos involving greed, lust, and gluttony. Long term goals are generally limited to amassing wealth and power. Due to a lack of principles, morality, and long-term fulfillment, Skrow sometimes become clinically depressed or exhibit temporary periods of manic-depressive behavior. This is especially true of individuals who become pathologically ill. Disturbed Skrow as well as nearly all who contract illnesses ritually begin plucking their own feathers. This is often limited only to the tail feathers, but wings and other plumage can be stripped bare in severe cases.

Most Skrow purposely indulge in filthy hygiene, constantly bathing their feathers in oils, debris, refuse, and grease which prevents them from taking to the air to use their innate ability to fly. The purpose of this is to keep *skrice* away from them. Skrice are a special blood-sucking parasite that threaten only the Skrow and can prove potentially fatal. Oiled and greased feathers keep the otherwise deadly parasite at bay. Still, there are moments when Skrow clean themselves well and this is done whenever a pairing or deliberate mating is desired, for flight is a necessary part of their mating dance ritual.

Starting Experience Point Cost: -45

Physical—
Height: 1.9m (6'3" tall)
Weight: 60kg (130 lbs)
Eyesight: Good
Hearing: Good
Smell Sense: Good

Base Stat Scores—

STR: 4_8 ($4–5_9$)	INT: 2_8 ($2–3_6$)	INU: 4_6 ($4–8_8$)
AGI: 5_6 ($4–7_3$)	KNO: 2_7 ($2–3_8$)	EGO: 5_0 ($4–6_0$)
PRE: 5_5 ($4–8_0$)	WIL: 4_2 ($3–6_1$)	HAR: 2_4 ($1–4_4$)
ALL: 3_8 ($2–4_2$)		
REF: 5_0 ($4–6_8$)	Base Life: 5	

SPD: 1-6-½, fly 15 m/s Min Starting Age: 9 *(Lifespan: 55 years)*

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Appraisal @ 2
Carousing/Gaming @ 2
Language, InterLak @ 4
Pilot, Starfighter OR Small Ship @ 3

Biologically-Easy Skills—
Acting
Pilot, Starfighter & Small Ship

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
Devotion @ -4
Martial Arts @ -2

Recommended Kits—

Cab Driver	Punk	Smuggler
Fighter Pilot	Scout	Thug

Not Recommended Kits—

Arbitrator	Martial Artist	Navy Trooper
Confidence Man	Navy Marine	Reporter
Executive	Navy Officer	

Special Abilities / Rules—

1) **Unusual Brain Structure:** Not only can Skrow never be telepathic because their irregular brain structure interferes with that ability, other telepathic species attempting to scan a Skrow's mind telepathically must do so with a +2 Step Penalty.

2) **Natural Flight:** Skrow possess feathered wings but rarely are able to fly as they must keep their feathers doused in oils and grime to keep a potentially deadly Skrow parasite pest under control that all Skow are infected with. This oil prevents their natural ability to fly. When clean, Skrow can fly with an AirSpeed of 15 which is part of their mating ritual. They may carry a maximum weight equal to ten times their Strength Stat in kilograms, but for every four kilos carried their AirSpeed is slowed by 1. Thus a Skrow with a STR of 4_8 could carry up to 48 kilos (about 110 lbs) at an AirSpeed of 3 meters per turn. Therefore, the strongest of Skrow can just barely make themselves airborne on a 2G gravity world.

3) **Natural Weapons:** In lieu of inflicting the standard 1 point of stun damage (plus Strength bonus), Skrow may elect to use their hand talons and inflict a base of 1 point of wound damage instead. Versus defenseless or immobile victims, Skrow may additionally bite for 1d3 points of wound damage, but this attack cannot normally be used during combat.

4) **Natural Hiding Place:** Skrow possess a pouch-like gullet which can temporarily hold items the being has swallowed. Items can be up to 15 centimeters long by 6 centimeters in diameter, but can be held internally for no more than 20 minutes—after which time the item is either passed on to digestion or coughed up if it is inedible. Coughed-up or new items cannot be re-swallowed until 20 minutes has passed.

5) **Mimic Voices:** A successful Tough Harmony Check is required to accurately mimic another person's voice, but this won't fool a computer voice scan.

6) **Knockout Weakness:** Blows to the head impose a Knockout Check. Also, all smoke and gas attacks are DOUBLY effective.

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 35–39: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_3, INT -0_4, INU/EGO $+0_6$
Age 40–54: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_1, INT -0_5, -No Flight Hereafter
Age 55+ (& every 5 more years): ALL STATS -0_7

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-6/R4[6]

CULTURE

Skrow culture is very close to chaos and anarchy. Bands of Skrow form Principalities, ruled by a Prince.

RELATIONS

Skrow don't always have the best intentions or attitude toward other races. Many believe that using others to get ahead is an acceptable practice. Also, Skrow are always very competitive with other pilots, whether they are other Skrow or altogether different species. For these reasons, and their known careers of piracy, most species are cautious and defensive around Skrow.

BIOLOGY

Plumage varies from russet to dirty brown being most common. The entire body is covered by very short feathers except for the head, lower legs and feet, forearms, and hands. These unfeathered areas are bald and reveal the creature's wrinkled, dark gray or obsidian skin. Skrow are three toed and three fingered, all of which end in sharp talons. The hands additionally have two opposing thumbs. Beaks are typically dark colored, but may be fiery red. The Skrow beak is hooked, serrated, and can inflict serious wounds. Skrow eyes are white with red pupils and appear very bloodshot. Male and female Skrow can only be distinguished by the male's longer and more brightly colored tail feathers.

Skrow have relatively small brains for their reported intellect, and these are under some pressure within the cranial cavity. Additionally, very little fluid surrounds the organ, and so sharp blows to the head can result in stun, dazing, unconsciousness, or even severe hematoma. The Skrow haploid genome contains $7.65x10_8$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

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Sordrid

Pronounced: sore+drid
Political Affiliation: Mainly Independent, Alliance
Galactic Prevalence— RARE
Imperium Interior: Exceptionally Rare
Imperium Frontier: Very Rare
Southern Alliance—
Sordrid Dominion: Everywhere
Endori Sovereignty: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Very Rare
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Very Rare
Uncharted Territories: Very Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: These tentacled monstrosities are often renown generals and military tacticians. They're intelligent and cunning, but rarely seem to work well with others. Many species find their form revolting—especially the Vagar whom they are blood enemies of. However, as with many things, there is more to the Sordrid than meets the eye.

DEMEANOR

Sordrid are well known for their cruelty and malice, their unprovoked attacks against civilians throughout Allied shipping lanes, and their efforts to support Imperial domination by undermining the Alliance—or so Vagar propaganda would have one believe. In truth, the Sordrid are very misunderstood. They are a compassionate race with a very alien culture. Sordrid are, in short, difficult for most species to comprehend. They are without honor, as defined by the Vagar, because they will so easily disregard a promise or treaty in unpredictable acts of compassion or logic to satisfy changing conditions.

Even Sordrid body language is so often misinterpreted. Leering and lunges, regurgitation of food at the feet of another, and forthright physical contact are all classic examples of Sordrid expressing admiration and respect. They are, of course, acts of disrespect and great insult to the majority of other races according to most known customs—and therein lies the confusion for the ignorant.

CULTURE

Sordrid culture is based largely around fluidity of action—the ability to bend and change in adaptation to one's environment for the betterment of all. There is no distinction between family and friends, and such bonds are as fluid as warranted. As individuals grow and change, so do who they call their beloved and cherished family. Careers are also centered this way, so outgoing individuals would concentrate on their ability to socialize—not any single end skill—and thus continually change their employment among jobs diverse and unrelated as sales to counseling.

RELATIONS

Though Sordrid are inherently among the more kind and compassionate of species, there are limits to what a people can endure before eventually living up to their namesake—no different than how a loving animal would become vicious with continual abuse. Some of the unspeakable acts of terror and torture wrought upon Allied citizens by Sordrid are in fact true—spurred by one of the longest, bloodiest, and cruelest of all galactic conflicts which finally culminated in the SorGar (Sordrid-Vagar) war. Because Sordrid are long-lived, many still living today fought in that war and watched the bulk of their people die at the hands of the Vagar and their human allies.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in italics)

G'Sok-mek
Nak'geuk
Hak'seuk-mek
G'gak-veuk-muk
Fek'mek-seuk

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -45

PHYSICAL—
Height: 2.2m (7' tall)
Weight: 405kg (890 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Poor
Smell Sense: Bad

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 5_1 ($4–6_8$) INT: 5_5 ($4–9_0$) INU: 8_5 ($7–10_7$)
AGI: 3_8 ($3–4_4$) KNO: 4_0 ($3–7_5$) EGO: 5_5 ($4–8_6$)
PRE: 4_4 ($4–7_0$) WIL: 6_6 ($5–8_0$) HAR: 4_1 ($2–5_8$)
ALL: 1_3 ($0–1_8$)
REF: 8_2 ($6–9_4$) Base Life: 12
SPD: ½-2-$2_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 15 *(Lifespan: 330 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Awareness @ 2
Botany @ 3
Strategy/Tactics (Choose any 1) @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Acting @ -2
Animal Handling/Training @ -2
Carousing/Gaming @ -2
Charm @ -4
Martial Arts @ -3
Pickpocket @ -2
Streetwise @ -3
Xenosociology @ -2

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Fighter Pilot
Navy Officer

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Confidence Man
Entertainer
Kid
Punk
Reporter
Thug

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Special Diet:** Sordrid can only dine upon one specific food; a special fungus cultivated on the Sordrid homeworld, called Sarmel. A few successful botanists have been able to grow the fungus in a controlled environment, but otherwise it must be imported. Either way, it's an expensive fact of life for Sordrid.
Sordrid must consume 2 kilos of Sarmel each day. Failure to meet this need results in starvation at a pace similar to what humans and other species endure from lack of sustenance.
2) **Special Environmental Requirements:** As natives to lush and very humid marsh-infested rain forests, Sordrid cannot survive without 100% atmospheric humidity. Conditions aboard Sordrid starships are kept this way, but Sordrid outside the confines of the Dominion must use artificial moisture means. The Sordrid have developed a special spray (1 kilo spray cans good for 1 week of applications for 25 credits) designed to lock in moisture for 4 hours at a time while still permitting the skin to 'breathe'. Unfortunately, the spray produces an odor that is offensive to most species, including humans.
3) **Species Enmity:** Vagar are the blood enemies of all Sordrid and have been for many centuries. Even Sordrid who might be considered 'adjusted' to life outside the Dominion sometimes have trouble holding back their aggressions should a Vagar venture into sight. Luckily for the peace in open and Imperial space, Sordrid are a rare find compared to their leonine counterparts. In truth, Sordrid are more reserved and rational than the Vagar.
4) **Uncontrolled Excretions:** Because Sordrid excrete waste from a single orifice as a foul runny paste and have no 'bladder' to pool such waste, Sordrid continuously deposit their excrement as they sit or move about—much to the chagrin of other species. In Sordrid societies, floors saturated in excrement is common and expected, but it is not well tolerated by other societies. Public laws in some areas require that Sordrid be 'bagged'.
5) **Large Target:** Sordrid are considered to be Large creatures and so warrant the -2 Modifier to Evasion (see Chapter 14).
6) **Unusual Size/Shape:** Because of their unusual tentacled shape and mass, Sordrid cannot don armor of any kind. They may employ screens, however.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 200–259: ALL PHYSICAL & REF (except Allure) -1_0, KNO/INU $+1_0$
Age 260–309: ALL PHYSICAL & REF (except Allure) -0_7, KNO/INU $+0_4$
Age 310+ (& every 30 more years): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[f]/T5-6/P2-7/G0-6/R6[8]

Still, the vast majority of Sordrid remain compassionate and kind despite being such a beaten and abused people.

The fact that Sordrid are so classically revolting in form to most species, both visually and by their scent, combined with such alien and regularly-opposite customs, already makes them the victims of contempt and disgust. Add to that skillful and never-ending propaganda, compliments of the Vagar, and the Sordrid end up living with blight and a less than bleak future.

Sordrid have thus come to expect in others the expressions of disgust, unprovoked attacks, and the worst kind of contempt whenever Sordrid leave the sanctity of their space to seek dealings with the other races. Most also do their utmost not to reaffirm this behavior in others, but a very few respond in kind to their aggressors and thus perpetuate the stereotype for all Sordrid.

The Endori through their expertise in negotiation and also the Kelgari to some extent have had reasonably good dealings with Sordrid. In fact, there seems to be more to the relationship between Sordrid and the Endori (and perhaps even the Niveans) than is publicly apparent or known.

As for the Vagar, they hate the Sordrid with every fiber of their being and will not hesitate to initiate any conflict. Terrans are also prone to such violence since so many humans died helping the Vagar fight back Sordrid expansion during the SorGar war. Humans of other races, such as Rians, Draaz, or Venwon, are likely to dislike Sordrid based on appearance and demeanor as well—but not to the level seen in Terrans or Vagar.

BIOLOGY

UEN scientists have classified Sordrid of the phylum Mollusca, specifically of the nudibranch order, because of their soft bodies, internal shelled lower region, mantle, muscular foot, and tentacles. The classification is accurate, though not entirely applicable to this evolved alien being. The Sordrid nervous system is extraordinarily evolved with very fast reflexes being one benefit offered by it. Although locomotion upon land is not impressive insofar as pace, they are deft swimmers and can dodge and whip about with striking speed.

Similar to how humans possess a primary and secondary hand, the three-tentacled Sordrid possess a primary tentacle used for most of their manipulation, as well as a secondary one for support. Their third is tertiary and rarely used, possessing less dexterity than even the secondary tentacle, and thus usable only for rudimentary grasping. Sordrid are also amphibious, able to breathe in water or airy environments.

Male and female Sordrid are indistinguishable biologically (with the exception of internal mating organs), upon visual inspection, and insofar as demeanor and cultural variances are concerned. DNA structure consists of 900 million nucleotide pairs, broken into 88,420 distinct genes.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Spino

Pronounced: SPY+know
Political Affiliation: Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— Uncommon
Imperium Interior: Rare
Imperium Frontier: Uncommon
Southern Alliance: Uncommon
All Other Areas: Very Rare

GENERAL INFORMATION: These little pranksters are stronger than they look and quite fast, too. Their small size, agility, and affinity for knowledge and mechanics make them good tech specialists and ship engineers, but they're rarely taken seriously. Being one of the most energetic species known, they consume a great deal and revel in practical jokes of all kinds. Spino are also known to bond with a single individual of another species, forming a close friendship. When away from this bonded individual, Spino suffer from a form of separation anxiety which all Spino vehemently deny.

DEMEANOR

Spino are highly social creatures who are very inquisitive and prone to mischief. New types of food (especially sweets) are sure to get a Spino's attention—not that they spend that much time tasting or enjoying their food. The goal for Spino when it comes to social interaction is to get a laugh usually for oneself, though a room full of laughing people is even better. Most Spino like to play practical jokes on other species (whether or not they know the individual 'victim' personally) and whether these jokes are done at the expense of the subject or all in good fun depends on the individual Spino. Typically, it is the less experienced pranksters whose jokes tend to genuinely humiliate or even injure recipients. More comedic Spino are able to get more laughs without really hurting anyone.

When it comes to self-preservation, Spino are sometimes too busy having fun to pay close attention to danger. They're certainly not stupid, but they do get distracted easily (especially by food). Also, they tend to harass races that don't take kindly to jokes (for example, Xom and Bangor). As a result, they sometimes get hurt. A generally good-hearted species, Spino are not without compassion. In more serious situations, they will care for injured comrades and help those in need though keeping spirits up through comedy.

Proper Names
(examples; females in italics)
Mojo
Tiggit
Dingus
Beeper
Doopu
Kibil

When it comes to observing other racial customs, that's where Spino get a bit clueless. For example, even a Spino guest at a traditional Earth wedding would have to be watched closely, for if people were to turn their backs for more than a moment they might find the Spino upside down in the wedding cake.

CULTURE

Aside from pranks and gags, Spino do have a sort of taboo shared by nearly all members of the species. That taboo concerns individuals that carry a specific parasite known as the Tykesian flea. Flea infestations are a matter of extreme cultural ridicule, so eradication is always a top priority once discovered. The Tykesian flea (about the size of an Earth flea) is a more insidious parasite in that it has the ability to feed without spurring much inflammation. The flea can lay several eggs within a single day—eggs hatching in another day. Only after the Spino is infested with hundreds or thousands of fleas does their feeding begin to cause noticeable itching. If allowed to continue, the itching will become unbearable. Luckily for other species, the Tykesian flea strongly prefers the Spino's high body temperature and rarely jumps to other species with lower temperatures (though it can happen).

Starting Experience Point Cost: -35

Physical—
Height: 0.6m (2' tall)
Weight: 15kg (35 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Excellent

Base Stat Scores—
STR: 3_0 ($2–3_8$) INT: 4_5 ($4–5_9$) INU: 5_1 ($4–7_2$)
AGI: 4_0 ($3–7_0$) KNO: 6_1 ($3–9_0$) EGO: 4_0 ($3–6_0$)
PRE: 3_6 ($3–5_2$) WIL: 3_6 ($3–6_2$) HAR: 7_2 ($3–8_5$)
ALL: 4_7 ($2–6_2$)
REF: 10_0 ($8–11_1$) Base Life: 4
SPD: 1-2-¼, roll 5 $_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 10 *(Lifespan: 80 years)*

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Acrobatics/Tumbling @ 3
Carousing/Gaming @ 1
Computer Operation @ 1
Electronics @ 1
Language, InterLak @ 3
Mechanics @ 3
Streetwise @ 2
Survival @ 1

Biologically-Easy Skills—
Acrobatics/Tumbling
Craft Maintenance/Repair
Starship Ops, Engineering

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
Business/Administration @ -4
Concentration @ -3
Etiquette @ -6
Interstellar Law @ -3
Intimidation @ -2
Martial Arts @ -4
Running @ -4
Speech @ -5
Xenobiology @ -1
Xenosociology @ -2

Recommended Kits—
Jack-Of-All-Trades
Kid
Scout
Smuggler
Spy
Tech

Not Recommended Kits—
Arbitrator
Bodyguard
Confidence Man
Executive
Fighter Pilot
Navy Marine
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper
Reporter
Thug

Special Abilities / Rules—
1) **Jumping Ability:** Spino have a special leaping ability which enables them to jump up to 2 meters or more in height (Spino with Strength over 3_5 can leap up to 3 meters).
2) **Natural Resistance:** Spino are unusually resistant to drugs, disease, and poison. Because of this, they may re-roll any failed drug, disease, or poison roll once, or halve the damage/effects as appropriate. They are additionally virtually immune to food poisoning from bacteria (spoiled or contaminated foods).
3) **Natural Weapons:** A bite for 1d2 points of wound damage.
4) **Special Locomotion:** When rolling (curled up) the Spino has a Speed of 5 meters per turn (second).
5) **Unusual Size:** Spino don't have much of a reach and although they can leap well they can't always reach things or access devices or systems built for humanoids. For example, a Spino would be unable to fly most starfighters because the controls and instrumentation are too widely distributed for their size.
6) **Small Target:** Spino are small-sized and so add 2 to their Evasion trait when calculating it (see Chapter 14).

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 40–69: REF -2_0, KNO $+1_2$
Age 70–79: REF -3_5, ALL OTHER STATS (except KNO) -0_7
Age 80+ (& every 6 more years): ALL STATS -1_5

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-6/P4-6/G0-7/R6[8]

RELATIONS

Aside from the fact that Spino who move quickly by instinctively rolling are occasionally prone to tripping those around them, no real enmity exists with other spacefaring species. Clearly, the human envirosuit manufacturers who first developed the Spinoball (a larger version of an Earth hamster ball, only equipped with environmental

atmospheric control systems) were certainly unaware of this tripping hazard tendency.

BIOLOGY

Spino are a recalcitrant species. They employ a good anatomic and inflammatory response, but their immune response is responsible for most of their resilience. A naturally high number of leukocytes does the trick, with the neutrophils being unusually effective.

Karyokinesis propagates somatic cells with typical meiosis in germ cells. The Spino karyotype includes $9.64x10_8$ DNA nucleotide pairs, divided among 24 pairs of autosomes and one pair of sex chromosomes, for a total of 50 chromosomes. Standard Imperial genetic mapping has identified a total of 53,596 genes over the 964 million base pairs, including approximately 100 memo groups (coded instinctive instructions).

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Vagar

Pronounced: VAY+garr
Political Affiliation: Mainly Alliance, Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— Common
Imperium Interior: Essentially None
Imperium Frontier: Very Rare
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Uncommon
Vagar Delegation: Everywhere
Wrekiri Consortium: Rare
Kelgari Federation: Exceptionally Rare
Triangle: Common
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Very Rare
Uncharted Territories: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: This honorable race is strong and tough, yet peaceful and balanced. They bear no great love for the Imperium, being a staunch member of the Alliance. Vagar make great bounty hunters, privateers, and investigators. Their natural weapons and strength also make them quite effective in combat. Vagar are respected for their rigid code of honor but often not welcome in Imperial space.

Proper Names
(examples; females in *italics*)
Rajvlek
Rajwarran
Rajharlvan
Rajnekvan
Rajquaran
Rajboral

DEMEANOR

Vagar are one of the most honorable and respected races in the galaxy. They have earned this reputation by way of fair treatment of others, humanitarian aid, and (where the Imperium isn't concerned) political neutrality. Vagar value honor and life. They practice politics when necessary to reach their goals, but some individuals are aggressive or even combative. Even in extreme cases, Vagar uphold a personal honor that they will not break. This means that if an individual pledges his or her word, then that word must be upheld to the very letter.

Proper grooming and hygiene is practiced by this species. Most all also don clothing or uniforms, but few embellish that which is gaudy.

Out of strong honor, Vagar are sharply opposed to individuals or even entire species which practice covert treachery, lies, and any disregard for life. This, however, in no way limits a Vagar from killing in self-defense.

CULTURE

Vagar culture is advanced, civil, and passionate. In relative terms it is also a young culture, but the Vagar have made remarkable progress. The name individual Vagar can make for themselves is limited to renowned acts of benevolence and upholding honor even at extreme personal risk or suffering. Older Vagar (those over 100 years) are often viewed with additional respect out of perceived wisdom. Maturing cubs are thought of as impetuous, and so society allows more leeway there. Vagar commonly form families consisting of paired adults and sometimes offspring. Most such pairings are heterosexual in nature, though some 5% are not. Approximately 62% of all pairs elect to support a single cub, while 23% will have two or more offspring.

Feasting is often a family activity and out of tradition requires more meat be served than is expected to be consumed. Funeral rites are as elaborate as they are for humans, whereas gift-giving is not so commonly practiced—at least not in terms of physical gifts. Vagar are not all good and so give in to wild parties and nights free from sobriety. They never forget their duty and honor, but an impulsive night out is almost a weekly event.

Vagarian is a language not appreciably different than InterLak, but a single naming convention is used by individuals. The prefix *Raj*, meaning *honorable*, forms the first part of every Vagar proper name. For example, *Rajharlvan* would translate to *The Honorable Caretaker,* whereas *Rajvlek* means *The Honorable Sun Warrior*. These are examples of individual names bestowed to cubs by their parents. Proper names assigned to places or things use the prefix *Rajo* which means *Place-* or *Thing of the Honored*.

RELATIONS

Some races describe the Vagar as a temperamental species prone to aggression. While this is largely true, such aggression is only toward minor, unimportant things. Individual Vagar never hold a grudge to the point of revenge, and cooler heads always seem to prevail before significant regrettable actions are pursued—though these principles never made it as far as Imperial negotiations.

Starting Experience Point Cost: -45

Physical—
Height: 2.1m (7' tall)
Weight: 190kg (415 lbs)
Eyesight: Average
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Excellent

Base Stat Scores—

STR: 6_5 ($5–8_4$)	INT: 5_0 ($3–8_2$)	INU: 4_4 ($3–6_2$)
AGI: 5_0 ($4–8_5$)	KNO: 3_8 ($2–6_1$)	EGO: 6_0 ($5–7_0$)
PRE: 3_1 ($2–4_3$)	WIL: 5_8 ($4–7_8$)	HAR: 5_5 ($4–7_5$)
ALL: 5_4 ($4–7_0$)		
REF: 4_7 ($3–7_4$)	Base Life: 9	
SPD: I-7-$1_{m/s}$	Min Starting Age: 12 *(Lifespan: 80 years)*	

Culturally-Inherent Skills—
Language, InterLak @ 3
Language, Vagarian @ 4
Stealth @ 2

Biologically-Easy Skills—
Stealth
Tracking

Biologically-Difficult Skills—
Bot Tech/Repair @ -3
Lockpicking @ -4
Medicine (any) @ -3

Recommended Kits—
Bounty Hunter
Front Man
Private Investigator
Privateer
{ Honor Drawback }

Not Recommended Kits—
Doctor
Punk

Special Abilities / Rules—
1) **Natural Weapons:** Retractable claws may be used in lieu of 1 point stun damage brawling, instead inflicting 1d3 points of wound damage—treat as BDR. Versus defenseless, held, or immobile opponents, Vagar may also bite opponents for 1d3 points of wound damage, but bite attacks cannot normally be used in combat.
2) **Gender Differences:** Male and female Vagar are markedly different. The Stats listed above are for male Vagar. Females must make the following adjustments to their base Stats and their species minimums and maximums:
-STR: 5_2 ($4–7_1$) +PRE: 4_3 ($4–5_2$) -EGO: 4_2 ($4–5_0$) +HAR: 6_5 ($5–8_5$)
3) **Species Enmity:** Sordrid are the blood enemies of all Vagar and have been for many centuries. Even Vagar who might be considered 'adjusted' to life outside the Delegation have trouble holding back their aggressions should a Sordrid venture into sight. Luckily for the peace in open and Imperial space, Sordrid are a rare find.

Stat Age Modifiers—
Age 40–59: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, INT/WIL -0_8, KNO/HAR +0_5
Age 60–69: ALL PHYSICAL & REF -1_0, INT/WIL -1_0, KNO/HAR +0_3
Age 70+ (& every 10 more years): ALL STATS -1_0

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T5-6/P4-6/G0-6/R5[7]

Vagar are generally respectful of other species' customs, and also maintain standards for themselves that include a certain degree of civility. Only when a Vagar is driven to roaring are they deemed to be of improper behavior.

Great enmity exists between Vagar and Sordrid. Desguk is the derogatory epithet the Vagar use to refer to the Sordrid.

BIOLOGY

Aside from a more developed nervomuscular system, Vagar neurological development closely parallels that of a human including brain physiology. The Vagar haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Wrekiri

Pronounced: rih+CURE+ee
Political Affiliation: Mainly Neutral, Alliance
Galactic Prevalence— UNCOMMON
Imperium Interior: Very Rare
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance—
United Earth Nations: Uncommon
Vagar Delegation: Uncommon
Wrekiri Consortium: Everywhere
Triangle: Uncommon
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Uncommon
Uncharted Territories: Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: These trophy seekers scour the galaxy for their prey, living solely for the hunt. They are the most renowned of bounty hunters, never giving up their pursuits. Obviously, this is a race well-suited for combat, but they are intuitive as well, cunning in the extreme.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; all are unisex)
Ur'glok-Tok
Yoko'hok-Vok
Rag'tok'lar-Duja
Vaka'hok-Arm
Ba'vak-Tok
Gurk'glok-Vok

DEMEANOR

Wrekiri are not as coarse or brazen as they lead outsiders to believe. Many develop very meaningful relationships, but the nature of the hunt pushes for a virile image. All Wrekiri are trophy seekers. Trophies are not awarded, but rather earned with the skulls, teeth, claws, stingers, or other dangerous parts taken from their prey and strung about the Wrekiri on chains, ties, and necklaces, or mounted in an abode. Both the trophy and the hunting act itself are highly revered—the more dangerous the opponent (sentient or otherwise) the greater the thrill and prestige. Important is each Wrekiri's weapon of choice. Should this weapon be lost or stolen, its owner will not rest until the item is recovered and the thief dead.

CULTURE

Wrekiri culture lags in terms of sophistication. Many of the ancient traditions of hunting, honor, and warfare endure even today. Status is determined solely by the number of accomplished hunts and the risk involved with each. Losing a bounty to a hunter of another species is especially damaging to one's reputation.

Words of the Kiri language are guttural, but pronounceable by humans, and most possess at least one glottal stop. All personal names embody a title suffix: *-Duja* (the un-honored); *-Tok* (honored hunter); *-Vok* (great hunter); and *-Arm* (master hunter). A suffix is granted as part of a legal ceremony to commemorate past hunts and achievements and cannot be self-bestowed. *-Arm* is a great honor, and earned by fewer than a dozen Wrekiri each year. For example, *Ur'glok-Tok* translates to *Ur'glok-Tok, The Honored Hunter*.

RELATIONS

Wrekiri are careful not to injure the innocent of any species, but beware those who get in the way of a hunt. This caution tends to force the hunt away from highly populated arenas, but if a prey lingers too long in such an area then the hunt will continue regardless of bystander safety. Imperial and Allied law grant Wrekiri additional leeway (beyond most other bounty hunters) out of their reputation for success while protecting bystanders. Still, an impetuous hunter with more than a couple of accidental deaths will be prosecuted (immediately if the death is of an important person).

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -50

PHYSICAL—
Height: 2.0m (6'7" tall)
Weight: 205kg (450 lbs)
Eyesight: Excellent
Hearing: Average
Smell Sense: Superb

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 7_0 ($6–8_8$) INT: 4_3 ($2–6_9$) INU: 6_3 ($4–8_8$)
AGI: 4_1 ($3–6_5$) KNO: 3_7 ($2–5_1$) EGO: 5_1 ($4–7_2$)
PRE: 4_5 ($3–7_0$) WIL: 4_1 ($3–7_2$) HAR: 3_6 ($2–4_7$)
ALL: 2_2 ($1–3_2$)
REF: 6_8 ($4–7_9$) Base Life: 10
SPD: 1-4-$2_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 9 *(Lifespan: 70 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Concentration @ 3
Dodge @ 2
Language, InterLak OR Kiri @ 3
Martial Arts @ 2
Survival @ 2
Tracking @ 3

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Tracking

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
Charm @ -3
Disguise @ -4
Seduction @ -6

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Bounty Hunter
Mercenary
Navy Marine
Thug

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Arbitrator
Confidence Man
Entertainer
Executive
Kid
Reporter

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Superb Olfactory Sense:** Wrekiri have noses better than a bloodhound. They can recognize a person's identity by scent alone up to 6 meters away. They can sense odor-exuding lifeforms up to 10 meters distant and non-odoriferous life up to 3 meters away. They automatically detect chemical compounds and food by scent (if close) and can often detect even those chemicals which have been sealed or wrapped (an Intuition or Tough Intuition Check is required). Wrekiri can also quickly and immediately track prey (without the use of the Tracking skill) via scent by making either an Intuition or Tough Intuition Check (depending on whether the prey is odoriferous or not, respectively) so long as the scent trail is no more than two days old. Tracking skill adds to this chance.
2) **Equipment Option:** As a cornerstone of every Wrekiri's hunting ability, all player character Wrekiri may begin play with a Plasma SmartGun for a cost of 10 additional Starting XP Points. SoniSwords may be added for 5 Starting XP.
3) **Natural Weapons:** Wrekiri have massive jaws and can use them to bite opponents just as easily as a human throws a punch. A standard Melee AIM roll is required; success delivering 1d6 BDR wound damage (before STR bonus). Additionally, Wrekiri may choose to deliver either the normal stun damage from punch attacks or use taloned swipes (based on normal stun brawling damage and strength) thereby turning that damage to wound.
4) **Large Target:** Wrekiri are considered to be Large creatures and so warrant the -2 Modifier to Evasion (see Chapter 14).
5) **Unusual Size/Shape:** Because of their unusual shape and mass, Wrekiri cannot use standard armor. Specially-fitted armor is more expensive (double).
6) **Frequent Incapacitation:** Wrekiri shed their entire scaly hide once every six days, a process requiring a full 4 hours during which time the Wrekiri is largely immobilized and vulnerable. Temporary blindness precedes the shedding process by 1d6 hours and persists until the shedding has at least parted from the face. Luckily, the shedding begins at the top of the head. Wrekiri cannot move their arms or legs for a 1 hour period each during the 4-hour shed as these limbs are pulled out of the old skin. Most Wrekiri seek shelter in a secure area when it is their time. The 'time' of shedding varies by up to several hours, but always occurs on every sixth day.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 40–59: STR/REF +0_6, ALL MENTAL -0_5
Age 60–69: ALL MENTAL -1_7
Age 70+ (& every 3 more years): AGI/PRE -1_2, ALL MENTAL -2_0
Environmental Tolerances: Ao[f]/T3-6/P4-7/G0-7/R6[7]

BIOLOGY

Wrekiri are a strange and vaguely reptilian race armed with massive jaws, an imposing visage, superior intuition (including a nose that

beats a bloodhound's), precise manual dexterity, high endurance, and good physical strength. The eyes are bright yellow to dull red. Hearing and speech are handled by the same organ—a pair of gill-like openings set on either side of the neck at the skull base. Wrekiri are said to radiate a very slight acrid odor detectable up to two meters away.

Prior to the onset of adolescence at age nine, Wrekiri young are sexless. With adolescence, however, all young develop the sexual identity of the mother thereby quickly permitting another generation. All Wrekiri are of the mother sex for five to six years, after which there is an equal chance of becoming a male or female. Conversion to either the male or female sex is permanent and thus establishes the being's sexual identity that will endure until death. Before conversion, mothers will generally accept as many birth responsibilities as possible, one at a time and immediately following each birth.

Blood cells make use of hemocyanin as the oxygen transport substance, in lieu of hemoglobin. This constituent gives the blood a bluish-black appearance, and is similar to that found in many crustaceans and some insects of Earth. The Wrekiri haploid genome contains $1.0x10_9$ DNA nucleotide pairs.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Xom

Pronounced: zawm
Political Affiliation: Mainly Imperial and Neutral
Galactic Prevalence— RARE
Imperium Interior: Rare
Imperium Frontier: Rare
Southern Alliance—
Triangle: Rare
Other Allied Areas: Essentially None
Coalition States: Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Xom are quite simply the physically strongest sentient species in the galaxy. They were actually genetically engineered by the Za'aan for use as elite heavy marines, though have since gained their freedom. Xom are aggressive and tough, able to ignore many of the debilitating effects of pain and injury. The species name 'Xom' was originally a military acronym for *eXperimental Operations Marine*.

DEMEANOR

Xom are driven by adventure, power, and bloodlust. Honor and strength are of paramount importance. They are not particularly materialistic, but they do covet weapons. Many Xom have adapted their value system to fit society. Some have even pursued intellectual or artistic careers, though this is exceedingly rare.

Xom have a genetic predisposition on the value of life; tending to give it less value than most species. Races that are deemed as having no honor are treated poorly and become targets for aggression. Xom have no qualms regarding the slaying of dishonorable individuals or those that challenge their honor or insult them. Over the years, Xom have adapted reasonably well to Imperial society, but their propensity for aggressive outbursts remains high and most other species therefore won't provoke them. Even Imperial authorities undergo special training during their psych course to diffuse deadly situations without triggering Xom anger.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; all Xom are male)
Durn
Varban
Martok
Karn
Mault
Lokus

As for the Xom themselves, challenges for status and power are quite common and frequently end in death for the losing party. Certain Imperial laws treat these matches of death as legal when between Xom, but all Xom are well aware of the penalty for murdering outside their own species. Still, Imperial courts do allow a certain degree of leeway for provoked Xom—sometimes allowing them to go free with little more than a warning—but such leeway is never permitted unless warranted by serious provocation.

CULTURE

Xom have an almost tribal superstition when it comes to Telepaths and the mysterious power of it. And, in spite of a Telepath fitting the dishonorable prototype in light of Xom honor, their powers are genuinely feared by the Xom people. Few warriors would admit to this fear, but Xom do tend to give Telepaths a wide berth and will not speak out against them. Surprisingly, even Telepaths that directly insult a Xom are usually left alone.

All Xom deeply respect and revere Za'aan Lords, either for cultural reasons or perhaps as a direct result of instinctive conditioning in place by genetic manipulation. No Xom at anytime throughout history has ever attacked a Za'aan Lord nor any Za'aan for that matter.

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -90

PHYSICAL—
Height: 2.5m (8' tall)
Weight: 730kg (1,600 lbs)
Eyesight: Average/Good
Hearing: Average/Good
Smell Sense: Poor

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 12_1 ($12–13_1$) INT: 4_0 ($3–5_4$) INU: 5_0 ($4–5_7$)
AGI: 3_8 ($4–5_0$) KNO: 3_4 ($3–4_0$) EGO: 5_0 ($4–7_0$)
PRE: 5_0 ($4–6_1$) WIL: 5_6 ($5–6_2$) HAR: 2_2 ($1–3_5$)
ALL: 4_1 ($4–5_2$)
REF: 6_2 ($5–7_3$) Base Life: 32
SPD: $1\text{-}6\text{-}2_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 14 *(Lifespan: 60 years)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Concentration @ 1
Intimidation @ 3
Language, InterLak @ 4
Martial Arts @ 3
Streetwise @ 2
Survival @ 1
Swimming @ 2
Wrestling @ 2

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
Intimidation

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
ALL Allure and ALL Harmony-associated skills @ -3

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Bodyguard
Bounty Hunter
Gladiator
Mercenary
Navy Marine
Thug

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Arbitrator
Confidence Man
Executive
Front Man
Martial Artist
Navy Officer
Navy Trooper
Reporter

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Pain/Wound Resistance:** Xom do not suffer a Step Penalty for being Moderately Wounded and further suffer only a +2 Step Penalty for being Severely Wounded (as opposed to a +3).
2) **Increased Damage:** Xom inflict 2 points of stun damage each turn instead of the normal 1 when brawling opponents—this is of course before any Strength bonuses.
3) **Crushing Blow:** Brawling or melee weapon attacks made by Xom carry so much force that they require any defenders of equal or lesser size to make a Knockdown Check regardless of actual damage figures delivered by the blow.
4) **Natural Resistance:** All Xom have a strong resistance versus poisons, drugs, and toxins. As a result, Xom who failed drug, poison, and toxin rolls may re-roll once or damage is halved as applicable.
5) **Unusual Size:** Because of their unusually huge humanoid size, Xom cannot use any armor that's not specifically designed for Xom. Specially-fitted armor is more expensive (at least triple).
6) **Large Target:** Xom warrant a -2 modifier to their Evasion (Chapter 14).

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 45–54: STR/REF -1_0
Age 55–59: ALL STATS -0_5
Age 60+: Immediate cell death by DNA-encoded instruction; no exceptions.

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T4-7/P4-8/G0-8/R6[8]

RELATIONS

Xom are generally quite aggressive and short-tempered. Because of this demeanor most other races give these beings a wide berth and fear them at least to some degree. Xom respect the Raklar and Bangor for their strength and ferocity, the Za'aan for their presence, Median warriors for their combat ability, and generally get along with Skrow. They don't care for Niveans and are frustrated by the Calamorane. And, although they are sometimes amused by the Joplyd and Spino, they despise Nooma with extreme hatred—especially when Nooma flutter about at speeds too fast to hit.

Xom are well known for their carousing, and particularly love bars, games, sports, and intoxication. Due to frequent alcohol abuse, honor demands that a sober Xom cannot challenge an intoxicated one. Honor is a cornerstone and requires that all acts of dislike or hate be expressed and/or acted upon loudly. That is, covert assassi-

nation, poisoning, sniping, and other forms of indirect attack are strictly taboo. Though lying can be a bit of a gray area, any Xom that breaks this code of honor incites rage among many Xom; Xom that will hunt the coward down and slay him outright without a fair duel. Other species that violate their honor are generally threatened but typically won't be harmed unless insult is added or the act of cowardice is extreme. Should this be the case, a brawl is necessary at the very least.

Xom still bare some resentment toward the Imperium for the manner of forced slavery their ancestors endured, but get along well with humanity overall and many voluntarily enlist in the Imperial Heavy Marines Corps regularly.

BIOLOGY

Xom were engineered from Rian DNA and so retain many of the same physical attributes and features. The only characteristics that set them apart are size, bulk, skin color (reddish brown with red or brown tones dominating), and their facial structure. Hair color is always dark. Also, all Xom are born male and sterile, though are fully capable of coition. Xom must therefore reproduce through genetic cloning and ectogenesis. Although it is possible to implant a fetus inside the womb of a human female once embryonic development has commenced, most are grown in vitro.

This area of the page to contain various angled views, closeups, and full-body artwork of the species.

Za'aan

Pronounced: ZAW++AWN
Political Affiliation: Imperial Only, with very few exceptions
Galactic Prevalence— VERY RARE
Imperium Interior: Very Rare
Imperium Frontier: Exceptionally Rare
All Other Areas: Essentially None

GENERAL INFORMATION: Za'aan are tall ominous beings with massive presence and remarkably complex minds capable of multi-threaded cognitive processes, including high-level telepathy in all individuals. Their species is one that is hundreds of millions of years old, enhanced genetically over eons of scientific progress, and they're the masters of the mighty Za'aan Imperium. All Za'aan have reputations of power, leadership, and tactical genius by race alone which precedes them. Their nearly timeless existence coupled with their incredible mental prowess makes them unspeakable masters of any subject they learn. Their voices are deep and commanding, impossible to ignore, and they carry themselves with a majestic countenance.

DEMEANOR

Za'aan are a people obsessed with power, leadership, and control. Not only are they physically imperious, Za'aan have enjoyed power for so long that natural selection and later genetic enhancements have provided the species with a predisposition for strong and imposing personalities.

Za'aan are supremacists, seeing all other species vastly inferior to themselves. Za'aan see no shame in ego nor the expression of this arrogance.

Money and wealth are often secondary to a Za'aan, for they prefer greater numbers of subjects through a military chain of command. A very rare few are corrupt, operating outside the Imperium hierarchy, and seek power via ruthless crime organizations. Nearly all, however, believe strongly and patriotically in the ZAON Imperium and adhere to its military hierarchies for the power and benefit of all Za'aan. Along with the satisfaction they gain from ruling over others, most also enjoy great personal power as well through Tau'Za'aan—the ancient personal-enhancement technology of their people—wielded by most *Za'aan Lords* as opposed to 'mere' *Za'aan*.

PROPER NAMES
(examples; females in *italics*)
Lord Abraxas
Lord Andrealphus
Lord Marchosias
Lord Lilith

Despite a rather ominous appearance and perhaps selfish values, typical non-lord Za'aan are no more 'evil' than humans are in terms of morality. That is, most Za'aan wish to rise to high-up positions in in their Imperium through deeds, honor, respect, and proper qualifications, but all covet power. A few, just like corrupt humans, use under-handed tactics to get what they want, and nearly all Za'aan employ fear and intimidation as a defining quality of being Za'aan. The Za'aan people are diverse in this respect, however, there seems to be an almost pervasive loyalty to the Imperium in all Za'aan—possibly having been bred into the species' genes either deliberately or via natural selection.

Za'aan tend to avoid direct hand-to-hand combat because, although they are physically impressive as well, their true power is in the sheer complexity and power of their minds. Za'aan use their masterful wit to shame and breakdown opponents or, if necessary, will attempt to telepathically control them. Nevertheless, Za'aan

STARTING EXPERIENCE POINT COST: -200†
†Players must purchase drawbacks and/or lower their stats to afford this cost, and even then the cost might be unaffordable depending on the GMs campaign-set Starting XP.

PHYSICAL—
Height: 2.5m (8' tall)
Weight: 300kg (660 lbs)
Eyesight: Excellent
Hearing: Excellent
Smell Sense: Good

BASE STAT SCORES—
STR: 9_0 ($8–9_6$) INT: 10_2 ($9–12_9$) INU: 10_4 ($8–12_6$)
AGI: 6_2 ($5–6_9$) KNO: 10_1 ($10–14_5$) EGO: 10_6 ($9–12_0$)
PRE: 5_2 ($5–6_5$) WIL: 10_2 ($7–11_6$) HAR: 4_3 ($3–5_8$)
ALL: 6_1 ($5–7_0$)
REF: 7_6 ($7–9_2$) Base Life: 18
SPD: 2-4-$1_{m/s}$ Min Starting Age: 15 *(Life: 1,000 **or** 9,000 yrs)*

CULTURALLY-INHERENT SKILLS—
Intimidation @ 3
Language, InterLak @ 5

BIOLOGICALLY-EASY SKILLS—
None

BIOLOGICALLY-DIFFICULT SKILLS—
None

RECOMMENDED KITS—
Executive
Front Man
Navy Officer
Imperial Politician
Privateer
{Telepath (see Ch.21)}

NOT RECOMMENDED KITS—
Confidence Man
Gladiator
Kid
Navy Marine
Navy Trooper

SPECIAL ABILITIES / RULES—
1) **Natural Telepathy/Empathy:** All Za'aan are telepathic. See Chapter 21.
2) **Female Limited Glide/Flight Ability:** Although the wings of the male sex is are too vestigial for even gliding, females can leap up to 4 meters in height with the assistance of their wings and a running start. Females can also usually glide to safety during a fall. Females with a STR of 7 or more can actually fly to maintain or gain altitude for a period of about 20 seconds.
3) **Large Target:** Because of their large size, Za'aan are always considered to be Large creatures and therefore warrant the -2 modifier to their Evasion trait.
4) **Special Equipment Options:** Possession of one or more Tau'Za'aan items is what generally defines a Za'aan Lord over a mere Za'aan, and **each** of these items (described in the Weapons Chapter) may be added for a cost of 40 additional Starting XP Points (and are not available to other species) with the exception of the lomaar and Eemaar devices which cannot be selected by PCs.
5) **Regenerative Biology and Immunities:** Za'aan DNA-encoded cellular regeneration and organ screening of toxins is nothing short of astounding. So long as their body is still functioning (1 or more Critical Life remaining), Za'aan regenerate 1 point of Stun damage per turn, or 1 point of Wound damage (including damage from radiation) every 5 turns, or 1 point of Critical damage every half-hour. Wounds thus visibly close in seconds, and lost appendages and organs begin to regrow within minutes. Brain damage, though regenerable, can result in loss of knowledge and memory. Furthermore, all known gasses, toxins, poisons, and pharmaceuticals are screened so quickly they have no real effect. Za'aan can also endure the vacuum of space for 20 times the normal duration.
6) **Za'aan Lords (those having undergone Tau'Diekloruk):** The ancient Za'aan ritual of Tau'Diekloruk involves the 'awakening' of several dormant Za'aan gene sequences using a secret method known only to Za'aan OverLords. This results in the growth of Diekloruk tissue layer beneath the epidermis (see Biology) which sharply reduces all physical and energy weapon damage impacts—the first twenty (20) points of Stun or Wound damage (that manage to get through any other defenses, such as Tau'Za'aan-Forlaar) are ignored from **each hit**. For example, the SK-9 Blaster Rifle is therefore incapable of wounding a naked Za'aan Lord, since the weapon's maximum damage is 18. For an additional 100 Starting XP Points and a minimum age of 500 years, PCs may undergo Tau'Diekloruk to officially rise to Za'aan Lord status, addressable as 'Lord' thereafter by law, and gain the above-described ability.
7) **Gender Differences:** Male and female Za'aan are markedly different. The Stats listed above are for male Za'aan. Females, who are only 2m (6'6") tall and 100kg (220 lbs), must make the following adjustments to their base Stats and their species minimums and maximums:
-STR: 5_4 ($5–7_3$) +AGI: 7_6 ($6–8_8$) +PRE: 6_4 ($6–7_2$) +ALL: 6_6 ($6–8_2$)
-KNO: 8_3 ($7–9_4$) -EGO: 6_2 ($6–8_0$) +HAR: 8_8 ($6–10_2$)
Note that females are almost never encountered off of Titan or Starbase Titanus.

STAT AGE MODIFIERS—
Age 8800–8999: STR/REF -1_2, INT/INU/EGO +0_6
Age 9000+ (& every 100 more yrs): ALL STATS (except EGO) -1_0, EGO +0_5

Environmental Tolerances: Ao[cf]/T2-8/P2-8/G0-8/R8[9]

Lords who wield Tau'Za'aan devices and have undergone Tau'Diekloruk (see below) will not hesitate to flaunt their enhanced personal abilities.

CULTURE

Za'aan culture is based on hierarchy. Za'aan are accorded certain respect by birthright, but most Za'aan are little more than minions in the greater Za'aan Imperium. Once any Za'aan has attained a minimum of 500 years of age and earned sufficient respect through deed, honor, and accomplishment in bettering the Imperium for the good of all Za'aan, he or she may apply to the ruling Overlords for permission to undergo Tau'Diekloruk—a ritual that gains the Za'aan great respect, personal power via the awakening of dormant gene sequences (see Biology) in his or her body, increased lifespan, and the legal right to bear Tau'Za'aan devices should he or she be able to secure one. Not all applications are granted—there must be sufficient accomplishments. And, no Za'aan may undergo or benefit from Tau'Diekloruk without permission, for the secrets of the ritual are known only to the Za'aan Overlords.

The upper echelons of the ZAON Imperium are steeped in mystery. No outside race (Rians included) fully understands the true intentions of the Za'aan Lords. Indeed, not even the average Za'aan is privy to the machinations of their highest Lords. Much hearsay, rumor, and fear surrounds the clandestine Za'aan Lord-wrought missions and projects underway throughout the galaxy.

One fact proven yet with no explanation is the dwindling Za'aan population. The infant mortality rate is greater than 70% and seems to actually rise during years where there are greater than typical numbers of births, and falls in years with below-average numbers of births, rendering increased pregnancy or in vitro methods futile. Medical research in this area has been declared illegal by the Emperor, which suggests that the reason is known at least among the highest ranking Za'aan Lords and something the Lords wish to keep secret. Enemies of the Za'aan people have stepped up research in this area as a result in hopes of uncovering a weakness in the race.

When it comes to the arts, Za'aan are, well, oblivious for the most part. It is said that while any Za'aan may command the life and death of billions or just a few individuals, no Za'aan can truly appreciate art or expression thereof, nor see its perceived or monetary value. This is quite surprising to many, given the rather impressive Za'aan intuition and brilliant social tactics they are capable of.

By Imperial law, all Za'aan are to be verbally addressed by cultural rank title, including female members of the species. All non-Lord Za'aan are to be addressed as "Sire", while true Za'aan Lords must be addressed as "Lord", whereas Za'aan Overlords must be addressed as "Highness". Many Za'aan will forgive the omission of title, but actual Za'aan Lords are prone to rage when it is forgotten or intentionally disregarded.

RELATIONS

Many races are easily intimidated by Za'aan Lords, and with good reason. Bossk particularly dislike Za'aan because an intimidating demeanor is not only unsettling for Bossk but also counterproductive to Bossk diplomacy methods. Most other species similarly experience discomfort, nervousness, and outright fear when in the presence of these masters. Luckily for most, Za'aan Lords are almost never encountered except in the roles of warship captains (as ship's lord), military brass, and some Senate positions in government. More typical are the non-lord Za'aan, many of which can be found in careers of science and technology, military strategy, as Royal Guards in service of Za'aan Lords and Overlords, and in positions of lower government. Most Za'aan operate outside of the law, though there must always be order by an internal chain of command—which is enforced by Za'aan Lords.

Za'aan, because of their mighty Imperium, have many enemies who hate them with every fiber of their being and pour enormous resources and effort into combatting them via any means possible.

Za'aan somewhat fear any strong intellect combined with physical prowess, such as that found in their blood-enemies, the Malons. Za'aan are uncomfortable in the presence of Darcanan because of the telepathic dampening effect which deprives Za'aan of their natural sixth sense—many Za'aan feel 'blinded' by this'—and typically lash out in anger against Darcanan when they see or 'feel' their presence. Nevertheless, Za'aan still view themselves as superior to all other life; they are merely more 'on-guard' around powerful intelligent beings.

BIOLOGY

Skin color varies as widely as it does in humans, ranging from pale to jet black, though a few specimens have russet hides. All colors, however, have a grayish wash or tint to them. Darker colors are most common. The skin of both sexes is soft, smooth, and pleasant to touch. Males do not have hair atop their heads, but females generally do, and body hair for both sexes is similar to that seen in Rians. Any hair present is always dark in color, though fine and sparse. Eyes are white with red or black slitted pupils (like a cat's).

Za'aan have incredibly powerful immune systems and thus a natural resistance to fungi infections and bacteria, so neither member exudes any odor. So remarkable are their immune and cellular regeneration systems that wounds visibly close and heal within minutes or even seconds, and entire appendages can be regrown in mere hours. Poisons, toxins, pharmaceuticals, and gases have no effect on these beings. Za'aan can also endure complete vacuum for at least twenty times the duration a human of similar strength can survive. Their nearly perfected cellular biology is also to thank for their nine-thousand-year lifespan and natural immunity to all forms of cancer.

Because Za'aan were once natural fliers, their pulmonary organs are quite efficient and powerful. Even the physically smaller female has an average cardiac output of over 40 liters per minute when at maximum activity. And both sexes have remarkable cellular waste elimination and nutrient-delivery mechanisms such that, aside from need for sufficient nourishment, any Za'aan can maintain physical activity at 90%+ their maximum ability (for example, a full-out sprint) ***indefinitely.***

The Za'aan nervous system is equally remarkable, right down to the prevalence of intramuscular neurotransmitters. The brain is clearly the most advanced known in any of the species on record and capable of multithreaded cognitive processes, including high-level telepathy in all individuals. The haploid genome contains $1.7x10_{10}$ DNA nucleotide pairs—seventeen times the DNA sophistication and density of a human.

Dormant genes present in all Za'aan can be awakened using a secret method based in energy (known only to the Za'aan Overlords) during the Tau'Diekloruk ritual. Once activated, the Za'aan body will quickly (within minutes) grow a special thin tissue layer beneath the epidermis that is highly resilient to impacts and energy. The closest approximation would be a kind of organic 'weblar' armor, which is also regenerative and greatly increases the Za'aan Lord's ability to tolerate attack and punishment. Note that because this layer is beneath the skin, projectile and hot energy attacks will still damage the thin outside skin and cause some bleeding as a result even if the protective layer remains intact; though skin breaks of this nature are among the first and fastest to regenerate (usually within seconds). Additional benefits include the ability to

consciously ignore any pain, and an increase in longevity from a typical 1,000 year lifespan for non-lord Za'aan to a modest 9,000 years for all Za'aan Lords and Overlords.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Optional Background Kit

Introduction

Background Kits are packaged guidelines and thus entirely optional. Kits are not professions or occupations, but rather help to explain who characters are, where they have been, and what they've learned up till now by providing a framework useful to players during the character creation process. And although Background Kits may represent a character's career path up till this point, the character is not restricted to a path commensurate with the chosen profession. That is, the player can later develop the character's skills in any other area or manner desired—even if they are totally unrelated to the character's starting 'career'. In fact, since these are only guidelines, the player can ignore any or all of the individual suggestions in the first place. The whole purpose of Kits is simply to help players develop ideas for a good character.

For example, a character who begins the game as an Navy Trooper would have undergone a variety of military training programs that would leave him or her skilled in a number of specialized areas. The Navy Trooper kit therefore helps players design a character of this type by listing skills such a character would likely have. During the character creation process, players may either heed these suggestions and pick skills that include those on the list or they may choose entirely different skills—the choice is up to you. Even if the player does follow these suggestions, his or her character needn't be a trooper anymore, and could instead begin learning botanical sciences or begin life as a criminal pilot for smuggling or anything else imagined.

The reason Kits are introduced at this point in the character creation process is because in the following steps special benefits, drawbacks, and the 'purchase' of skills and stat improvements are added to the character, and it is beneficial to have a solid idea as to the character's direction and archetype before moving ahead.

Also, because certain careers place varying demands on an individual, characters should possess higher-than-average stat scores in stats associated with a kit's primary skills in order to have qualified for a particular career in the first place.

For example, someone with poor motor skills and bad vision would hardly qualify as a Fighter Pilot. Similarly, a character with below average Intellect would be an alarming choice for a surgeon. Knowing this in advance will help you decide on which skills and stats need improvement during the later steps of character creation, and it may also become apparent that your character's particular species may not be well fitted to some careers while excelling at oethers.

Finally, although it might be unwise to have a character who doesn't possess good stats in areas of important skill, it isn't necessarily required. Indeed, some species may not be capable of reaching high stats in the appropriate areas anyway—and that's okay.

The Background Kits presented demonstrate a variety of possible careers and backgrounds, but are by no means fully comprehensive. Some kits are geared toward survival and combat, which is fine for getting through the rough and dirty city streets, but is less than helpful when trying to program navigational coordinates into a freighter's flight computer—a ship destined to get the characters home. Thus, a good mix of career types between different characters usually offers the best results for a group of characters in a campaign. Characters who wish be currently employed (have jobs) must choose the Job benefit in Chapter 12.

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Optionally choose a Background Kit to serve as guidelines and skill suggestions useful for later steps in the character creation process. Ensure that your kit is appropriate for the species you selected and makes sense for your character archetype. Not Recommended kits can be chosen if it makes sense for a particular or unique character, but clear any choices with your gamemaster so that the story makes sense and contributes to your GM's campaign.

➤Add the kit's Minimum Training Time to your species' Minimum Starting Age—this is your character's minimum age in which to begin the game.

➤Make note of suggested starting Skills to help you later in the character creation process.

➤Remember that Background Kits do not include 'jobs' and so players must select the Job benefit in Chapter 12 if they wish a regular monthly income for their character.

➤Discuss your kit's flavor text with your gamemaster in order to work-out a viable story for your character's career.

The Rules

➤Optionally choose a Background Kit, if you wish. Players are encouraged to read through all of the Background Kits available in order to better choose one that fits their character.

➤Ensure that the Background Kit chosen is appropriate for your character's species. To aid in this matter, a cross-reference table in this section shows all of the species and Background Kits. A light checkmark '✓'denotes a viable combination, while a dark checkmark '✔'notes a recommendation. A dark '✘' indicates that the kit is not recommended.

Some species denote Not Recommended Kits. These are kit types that do not make sense for certain races because of physiological, psychological, and sometimes cultural reasons. In instances where physiological limitations exist (for example, a Bangor simply can't possess enough Harmony to qualify for the Arbitrator), it becomes nearly impossible to justify a kit for such a race. In the case of psychological or cultural aversions, players are free to propose a rules exception to their gamemaster in order to be allowed a normally not recommended kit. After all, these are merely guidelines and players have total control in their character's career choice even if it isn't necessarily a wise one.

Conceivably, races normally opposed to certain professions could have grown-up outside of their normal environment or culture, or certain exceptions may have been made by an authority. For example, normally only a few species may serve in the Imperial Navy and thus qualify for kits such as the Navy Officer—but an exception might have been made out of honor for an alien that had saved the life of a high-ranking officer or Imperial Senator. Or, the character served in a Southern Alliance or Coalition military. The gamemaster is, of course, the final arbiter in all such cases as exceptions should be rare if they are even allowed at all, but a good story and explanation is what allows for exception.

➤Add the Minimum Training Time noted under each kit to the character's Minimum Starting Age which you recorded earlier in the space provided on the Character Worksheet. Added together, this becomes your character's minimum age. You can, of course, make your character older. If you do, pay attention to Stat Age Modifiers for your species which affect your character's stats. These are detailed in each species' full description in Chapter 10.

➤Make note of skill suggestions for use in later chapters.

➤Review the flavor text which follows each Background Kit's suggested skills. This text is designed to offer a few ideas as to how the character might have gotten involved in a particular career in the first place. This information is for you and your gamemaster to help flesh-out your character. You may select one of the scenarios presented or create one of your own—the choice is up to you—just be sure to discuss it with your gamemaster.

➤Go to Chapter 12

THE ARBITRATOR

Minimum Training Time—

10 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Charm, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Languages (at least three)*, Speech,* and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

The arbitrator is a character trained to resolve disputes. Schooled in the finer points of interstellar law, these professionals seek to make a name for themselves by fairly and honorably resolving conflicts between individuals, corporations, governments or even entire species. Such conflicts often cross legal and jurisdictional boundaries, and resolution requires logic, judgment, and common sense. The arbitrator's power extends only as far as a client's trust, so reputation is important. The arbitrator's goals of professionalism and fairness often leave both sides of a dispute unhappy, and even a good arbitrator has enemies. Characters who select this background kit will have only recently finished their training and internship, with no significant contacts, friends, or enemies unless purchased as normal background options.

THE ASSASSIN

Minimum Training Time—

4 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Concentration, Demolitions, Disguise, Marksmanship (one or more)*, Streetwise, Stealth, Tracking,* and *Weapons Technology.*

Background Ideas—

The Assassin is a specialized character type proficient at only one thing: assassination. The character may have been employed by a government or crime lord, or may have operated under contract. No matter what the scenario, the character is not currently employed unless he or she selects the Job benefit in Chapter 12.

THE BODYGUARD

Minimum Training Time—

4 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Acrobatics/Tumbling, Disguise, Dodge, Etiquette, Intimidation, Marksmanship Ranged, Martial Arts, Medicine, Security Procedures, Streetwise, and *Weapons Technology.*

Background Ideas—

The Bodyguard is an expert combatant skilled in both hand-to-hand and ranged fighting styles. Such a character is determined, intuitive, and quick in order to well defend his or her employer. Bodyguards do not have much in the way of hobbies as they must spend 100% of their time on watch for possible threats. They are very loyal, for a price, as those that turn on their employers quickly lose their employability—reputation is everything to this profession.

Player character bodyguards usually begin the game either unemployed or in service of another player character.

THE BOUNTY HUNTER

Minimum Training Time—

4 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Carousing/Gaming, Computer Operations, Dodge, Interstellar law, Marksmanship Ranged, Medicine, Running, Security Procedures, Survival, Streetwise, Stealth, Tracking, Weapons Technology, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The bounty hunter possesses a variety of skills to aid in different manners of tracking and capture. Such a character may have come from nearly any background, including previous military experience, piracy, or law enforcement. Bounty hunters with a good track record and notoriety are frequently sought for assignments while those who have yet to make a name for themselves are usually forced to find other employment on the side. Most of a bounty hunter's actions are not within the law but, when a bounty is being offered by Imperial officials, local and Imperial law enforcement tend to give these hunters a wide latitude. Unfortunately, such bounties are rare and so most hunters must constantly watch over their shoulders and act with great discretion as those that don't wind up dead, in prison, or the target of a bounty themselves.

THE CAB DRIVER

Minimum Training Time—

2 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Concentration, Craft Maintenance/Repair, Marksmanship Ranged, Martial Arts, Pilot SkyCar & Small Ship, Stealth, and *Streetwise.*

Background Ideas—

Accustomed to a fast-paced lifestyle bundled with a love for interaction with new people, the Cab Driver makes one of the finest non-spacefaring pilots available.

THE CONFIDENCE MAN

Minimum Training Time—

4 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Appraisal, Business/Admin, Interstellar Law, and *Pilot SkyCar.*

Background Ideas—

This rather unusual Background Kit represents a sort of con-artist that specializes in seducing and then marrying wealthy mates for purposes of money. This character typically divorces such a mate when financially advantageous to do so—and a few actually slay their mates (usually with poison or by arranging an 'accident'). On the down side, characters of this nature are generally inept when it comes to taking care of themselves, as they rely on servants and other benefits of a wealthy lifestyle in order to survive. Also, characters with this background might also be of past of late interest to various police or Imperial law enforcement agencies.

	Arbitrator	Assassin	Bodyguard	Bounty Hunter	Cab Driver	Confidence Man	Doctor	Entertainer	Executive	Fighter Pilot	Front Man	Gladiator	Jack-Of-All-Trades	Kid	Martial Artist	Mercenary	Navy Marine	Navy Officer	Navy Trooper	Private Investigator	Privateer	Professional Criminal	Punk	Reporter	Scientist	Scout	Smuggler	Spy	Tech	Thug
Argelian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✔	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘
Bangor	✘	✓	✔	✓	✓	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✔	✓	✓	✘	✔	✓	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✘	✔
Bossk	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calamorane	✔	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘
Darcanan	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Draeg	✘	✓	✔	✔	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Endori	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✔	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘
Human (any)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Joplyd	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓	✔	✔	✔	✘	✓	✔	✓	✔	✔	✓
Kelgari	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘
Kraf'kan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✔	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓
Morg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nivean	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✘	✔	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘
Nooma	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✔	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✓	✔	✓	✘
Skrow	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘	✓	✓	✘	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✘	✓	✔	✔	✓	✓	✔
Sordrid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘
Spino	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✘	✘	✓	✓	✔	✔	✓	✓	✘	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✔	✔	✔	✘
Vagar	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔	✔	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wrekiri	✘	✓	✓	✔	✓	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✔	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔
Xom	✘	✓	✔	✔	✓	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓	✘	✔	✓	✓	✘	✔	✔	✘	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✔
Za'aan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓	✔	✓	✔	✘	✓	✘	✓	✓	✘	✔	✘	✓	✔	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

THE DOCTOR

Minimum Training Time—

12 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Botany, Business/Admin, Chemistry, Computer Operation, Concentration, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Language, Medicine, Xenobiology, and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

A character with this kit is an actual medical doctor (so long as they possess the Medicine skill at level 5). The character might be currently licensed to practice medicine or may have had his or her medical license revoked by the Imperium for any number of reasons. Possibilities for a revoked license include: an important patient died under care (the character may or may not have been at fault), because of political reasons, the character became addicted to a controlled substance, the character performed an unethical or unauthorized procedure, the character was a scapegoat for another's crime or error, and so on. Most medical professionals sincerely believe in the preservation of life and the use of their knowledge to help others. Remember, unless the character has the Job benefit from Chapter 12, he or she is currently unemployed and so does not receive a regular monthly salary.

THE ENTERTAINER

Minimum Training Time—

6 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Acrobatics/Tumbling, Acting, Appraisal, Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Charm, Disguise, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Music Composition, Seduction, Singign, and *Speech.*

Background Ideas—

The Entertainer was possibly (and may still be) a great actor or other type of performer. If the character is an actor, musician, or famous comedian, the character is also likely a celebrity (assuming the Celebrity benefit is 'purchased' as recommended). Either for personal reasons or because of a scandal, most characters with this background have given up their career in pursuit of other adventure. Still, some travel about in search of employment, while others lack skill and therefore cannot find employment. Characters of this background who are still employed must have purchased the Job benefit and are usually considered small-time celebrities or struggling actors.

THE EXECUTIVE

Minimum Training Time—

4 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Appraisal, Business/Admin, Charm, Computer Operation, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Intimidation, Language, Manipulation, Seduction, Speech, and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

The executive may be a character who previously worked (for around 8 years; minimum 4) for a major corporation, either public or private, or might currently be employed by such a company. Such characters may have worked their way into the upper echelons of the corporation only to then be fired by a jealous or worried senior executive (the character's reputation has since been ruined). Conversely, the character might still be an active member of some corporation—perhaps even traveling the galaxy on cold-call assignments. No matter what the scenario, the character is largely cut-off from contacts, resources, and influence within the company, unless the appropriate Job and Status benefits are purchased in Chapter 12.

THE FIGHTER PILOT

Minimum Training Time–

5 years; depending on where training received, character may have had to have been of legal age (16 for humans) prior to beginning training.

Suggested Starting Skills—

Concentration, Communications, Craft Maintenance/Repair, Gunnery, Pilot Fighter or Small Ship, Pressure Suit Ops, Strategy Starfighter, Survival, and *Zero-G Operations.*

Background Ideas—

This character may have grown up on or around a military base or starport, having expressed a strong interest in piloting at an early age. This character might have attended a civilian flight school and possibly later have been employed by a public escort or local air patrol for a while. Alternatively, the character may have pursued a military career in the Imperial Navy (or another empire) thereby leading to training as a fighter pilot. This character may have then been the victim of a discharge or might have grown increasingly intolerant of the Imperium only to later end military service in order to pursue other destinies. Alternatively, the character grew up among and was a fighter pilot for a piracy league until such time conscience drove the character from the hapless slaughter of innocents. In any event, the character does not begin play with a starfighter unless the player selects the Starship benefit, and is similarly unemployed unless the Job benefit is chosen.

THE FRONT MAN

Minimum Training Time—

4 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Acting, Appraisal, Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Concentration, Computer Operation, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Intimidation, Manipulation, Pilot SkyCar, Speech, and *Streetwise.*

Background Ideas—

The front man is someone who can play face for a faction or client, negotiating by way of charm, manipulation, and cunning. They are silver-tongued masters of persuasion.

THE GLADIATOR

Minimum Training Time—

3½ years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Carousing/Gaming, Dodge, Martial Arts, Running, Streetwise, Survival, Swimming, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The gladiator (or streetfighter) is an expert at unarmed and/or armed hand-to-hand combat. Fighters might have participated in contests of combat (legal or otherwise) for money. Characters may have retired from this line of work or found that it was not their calling and so are now setting out in search of other adventure. Alternatively, the prizefighter might now be seeking transport to other worlds in order to participate in alien duels.

THE JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

Minimum Training Time—

4 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Alien Technology, Appraisal, Bot Technology/Repair, Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Chemistry, Communications, Computer Operation, Craft Maintenance/Repair, Electronics, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Language, Lockpicking, Mechanics, Medicine, Pilot, Ground & Small Ship, Streetwise, Survival, Swimming, and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

The Jack-of-all-Trades is a character who is very worldly and would likely be a great gameshow contestant. Such a character hasn't any real specialized knowledge, but knows a little bit about almost everything. This character may have picked up this knowledge through a lot of reading and/or by performing various odd jobs since childhood. The character can easily hold intelligent conversations with professionals from nearly every walk of life.

THE KID

Minimum Training Time—

0 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Appraisal, Carousing/Gaming, Charm, Climbing, Computer Operation, Dodge, Running, Streetwise, and *Swimming.*

Background Ideas—

The kid is a runaway who has left home or was kicked out for any possible reason and is now forced to survive on the streets. By human standards, characters of this type are typically 10 to 14 years old and are full of curiosity and adventure. They don't start play with much in the way of equipment, skills, or money, but they learn very quickly and can adapt to a variety of situations. This kit works best as a sidekick (see Character Connections in Chapter 16).

THE MARTIAL ARTIST

Minimum Training Time—

5 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Acrobatics/Tumbling, Botany, Concentration, Devotion, Dodge, Etiquette, Martial Arts, Medicine, Stealth, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The Martial Artist is similar to the gladiator, though more time and energy is spent out of the ring—pursuing studies of meditation, grace, and physical fitness. The Martial Artist is not typically concerned with the glory of battle, but instead values honor, tradition, and mental fortitude. Characters of this kit might be searching for further enlightenment or they might be on a quest to cleanse their soul or to help others.

THE MERCENARY

Minimum Training Time—

2 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Carousing/Gaming, Demolitions, Dodge, Intimidation, Lockpicking, Marksmanship Any, Martial Arts, Security Procedures, Streetwise, Survival, Weapons Technology, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The mercenary is an independent and freelance soldier. A character of this type could have been part of a private army, a hired-hand for pirates, or part of a remote world's law enforcement. These characters rarely would have been ex-soldiers for the Imperium, but they could have dropped out of Imperial basic training. Needless to say, most of a mercenary's actions are not exactly within the law and so most such characters are advised to act with discretion.

THE NAVY MARINE

Minimum Training Time—

4 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Climbing, Dodge, Marksmanship Ranged & Thrown, Martial Arts, Medicine, Security Procedures, Survival, Strategy Ground, Swimming, Weapons Technology, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The Imperial Marine is a character generally from the Imperial Marines Corps. These marines will have served the ZAON Imperium for a minimum of four years and received slightly more training than the average Imperial Guard. Marine training focuses more on ground-based exercises and ship-boarding actions. Conversely, their knowledge of security protocol and procedures aboard a starship is rather limited in comparison. Past marines experience is more neutral in the eyes of active Naval officers when compared to past Naval service, and therefore less prestigious. If the gamemaster's scenario permits, it might be possible for a character of this type to still be in active service. These are normally campaigns where the entire party consists of military personnel who are often sent on missions to accomplish goals for the ZAON Imperium. Such a character may or may not be required to select the Job benefit from Chapter 12. Finally, characters could have received their training from other stellar nations or affiliations rather than the ZAON Imperium.

THE NAVY OFFICER

Minimum Training Time—

6 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Communications, Computer Operation, Concentration, Interrogation, Interstellar Law, Intimidation, Marksmanship Ranged, Medicine, Resist Interrogation, Security Procedures, Speech, Starship Ops (various), *Strategy Ground/Starfighter/Capital,* and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

A character of this type is a Naval officer who may have retired after only six to ten years of service. A character who retired after six years (completed 2-year officer training and four years of service) exits the military as a lieutenant (1 stripe). A character who served for ten years (completed 3-year officer training and seven years of service) exits the Navy as a commander (2 stripes). Officers are allowed to keep both their uniform and sidearm upon retirement. Service of this type looks especially good on one's IdentiCard. Officers are sometimes (rarely) reactivated. If the gamemaster's scenario permits, it might be possible for a character of this type to still be in active service. These are normally campaigns where the entire party consists of military personnel who are often sent on missions to accomplish goals for the ZAON Imperium. Such a character may or may not be required to select the Job benefit from Chapter 12, but must always select the Status benefit in order to justify the authority gained from active duty (if active). Finally, characters could have received their training from other stellar nations or affiliations rather than the ZAON Imperium.

THE NAVY TROOPER

Minimum Training Time—

4 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Dodge, Interstellar Law, Interrogation, Marksmanship Ranged, Martial Arts, Medicine, Security Procedures, Starship Ops Strategy, Strategy Ground, Swimming, Weapons Technology, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The trooper is a character just out of the Imperial Navy. Such a character was of enlisted rank and served as a standard Imperial Trooper for a minimum of four years. Troopers that complete a minimum four-year service are allowed to keep their uniforms and are sometimes allowed to keep their sidearm (though they are required to return their rifle). Past Naval service generally looks good on one's IdentiCard—especially when being questioned by Imperial police or military officers. If the gamemaster's scenario

permits, it might be possible for a character of this type to still be in active service. These are normally campaigns where the entire party consists of military personnel who are often sent on missions to accomplish goals for the ZAON Imperium. Such a character may or may not be required to select the Job benefit from Chapter 12. Finally, characters could have received their training from other stellar nations or affiliations rather than the ZAON Imperium.

THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

Minimum Training Time—

6 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Chemistry, Communications, Computer Operation, Forensics, Interrogation, Interstellar Law, Marksmanship Any, Lockpicking, Physics, Search, Security Procedures, and *Tracking.*

Background Ideas—

A Private Investigator could have been previously employed by a law firm or insurance company. This character might also have been a detective on the local police force. Characters of this type may still practice as active PIs or may have had their PI license revoked either due to political reasons or through some fault of their own. Remember, the character is not currently employed unless the Job benefit from Chapter 12 is purchased.

THE PRIVATEER

Minimum Training Time—

4½ years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Communications, Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Demolitions, Disguise, Dodge, Interstellar Law, Lockpicking, Marksmanship Ranged, Martial Arts, Pilot Any, Security Procedures, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Swimming, and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

The Privateer is a character who thrives on danger and excitement. This is a profession where the character might contract with various governments and corporations (both legitimate and corrupt) for purposes of doing their 'dirty work'. Past employment roles were most likely diverse, including assignments of spying, bounty hunting, smuggling, and even assassination or escort duties. Player characters of this kit may have had their reputations soured for one or more reasons or may have simply grown bored with working for others. Of course, characters of this type might also be seeking active employment. If the gamemaster's scenario permits, it might be possible for a privateer to still be in service of a government or corporation. These are normally campaigns where the entire party consists of special team members who are often sent on missions. Such a character may or may not be required to select the Job benefit from Chapter 12.

THE PROFESSIONAL CRIMINAL

Minimum Training Time—

8 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Appraisal, Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Demolitions, Electronics, Forgery, Lockpicking, Pickpocket, Search, Security Procedures, and *Streetwise.*

Background Ideas—

The professional criminal was never any good at saving money, but was a genius when it came to stealing and spending it. A character of this background may still be an active criminal, may have given it all up after a close call with the authorities, or might even have served hard time for a crime. Active or not, when it comes to security systems or protocols, this character knows how to break them. Having practiced first-hand most of the tricks in the book, the professional criminal may have even devised a few new ones. Nevertheless, characters of this nature are constantly looking over their shoulder for the one who is bent on revenge or the dedicated police investigator.

THE PUNK

Minimum Training Time—

1 year

Suggested Starting Skills—

Appraisal, Gaming/Carousing, Dodge, Intimidation, Martial Arts, Running, Survival, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

The street punk is a deadbeat tag-along interested in a free lunch. They're used to fighting for their lives, and meager accommodations and a rough trade are expected.

THE REPORTER

Minimum Training Time—

8 years; 4 years of which must have been completed after the character reached legal age (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Charm, Communications, Computer Operation, Etiquette, Interrogation, Interstellar Law, Pilot Ground, Seduction, Speech, and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

The Reporter might be on a long-term assignment to gather newsworthy information about a scandal, a secret agency's doings, or simply to explore the frontier. The Reporter may also be an ex-journalist who was quite likely a celebrity of sorts, too. An ex-journalist has either elected to pursue some of the actual adventure he or she used to report on, or has been ruined because of scandal or intrigue. The choice is up to the player, but few characters of this background are still actively employed as a news reporter (and if they are, they receive salaries commensurate with the level of Job benefit they purchase in Chapter 12, and must work a great deal).

THE SCIENTIST

Minimum Training Time—

8 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Alien Technology, Astrophysics, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Operation, Concentration, Cryptography, Electronics, Mechanics, Physics, Specialized Science, Weapons Technology, and *Xenobiology.*

Background Ideas—

The Scientist might be a character that was employed by an advanced research firm until something went wrong (not necessarily the character's fault) and the lead scientists had to place blame—the character was the scapegoat. Since then, the character might be unemployable because of reputation and/or references, but is regardless a skilled professional in his or her field. A character of this type was never charged with any crime and so wouldn't have a rapsheet. Alternatively, the character could still be employed as a field scientist who must spend most of the time researching far away places and things. A xenoarcheologist would be a perfect example of a scientist always on the move, exploring the dangerous frontier or outer rim areas. If this is the case, then the Job benefit (see Chapter 12) must also be purchased if a salary is desired.

THE SCOUT

Minimum Training Time—

3 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Climbing, Communications, Concetration, Jumping, Pilot SkyCar, Riding, Running, Stealth, Survival, and *Tracking.*

Background Ideas—

The scout is a character who can survive in wild, extreme and hostile environments. The scout is primarily hired as a guide for others less skilled than themselves. Scouts are hired as trackers by government agencies and corporations looking for local expertise, or as guides for hunting expeditions. Some scouts get assigned to scientific expeditions, and some even freelance as tour guides. In a galaxy filled with technical experts of every conceivable variety, few governments, corporations, or universities can keep on hand experts in survival and outdoor environments. Scouts tend to stay near wilderness, or move from place to place in search of a new challenge, a new unknown. Most feel uncomfortable in urban or heavily industrialized areas.

THE SMUGGLER

Minimum Training Time—

3 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Business/Admin, Carousing/Gaming, Computer Operation, Disguise, Interstellar Law, Marksmanship Ranged, Security Pilot Starfighter & Small Ship, Procedures, Seduction, Streetwise, and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

The smuggler probably worked for pirates or a corrupt official in the past, and may or may not be currently employed. Current or previous employment consisted of smuggling black market items and other unlawful goods into territories or worlds where such items are forbidden, at a good profit. If the character lost his or her employment, it might have been for any number of reasons, including: the employer went out of business, the smuggler was captured and then released in return for revealing the employer to authorities, the means for smuggling [that is, his or her tradeship] was lost or destroyed, the character failed too many times or betrayed an employer and gained a bad reputation, and so on. In any event, no regular salary is ensured unless the Job benefit is purchased in Chapter 12.

THE SPY

Minimum Training Time—

6 years; training starts after legal age is reached (16 for humans)

Suggested Starting Skills—

Carousing/Gaming, Charm, Communications, Computer Operation, Concentration, Cryptography, Demolitions, Disguise, Dodge, Etiquette, Interstellar Law, Language (at least two)*, Marksmanship Ranged, Martial Arts, Pilot Any, Resist Interrogation, Search, Security Procedures, Stealth, Swimming,* and *Xenosociology.*

Background Ideas—

This character is highly skilled in a number of different areas in order to pass for differing roles. Examples include a character that was once employed as a low-level government intelligence agent responsible for infiltrating enemy corporations or governments in order to divulge trade or military secrets. Other possibilities include a retired agent now out of touch with modern technologies and techniques, or a character that never finished intelligence training. Characters of this type are never ISA agents.

THE TECH

Minimum Training Time—

3 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Alien Technology, Bot Tech/Repair, Communications, Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Concentration, Craft Maintenance/Repair, Electronics, Mechanics, Pressure Suit Ops, and *Starship Ops Engineering.*

Background Ideas—

The technician character is someone who's always been a good jack-of-all-trades (at least in the computer and technology industry) and who has worked in a number of different technical jobs. The character might currently be unemployed and may be looking for a little adventure on the side. Any number of possible backgrounds are possible here and players are encouraged to work-out one to their advantage. Current employment requires the Job benefit.

THE THUG

Minimum Training Time—

2 years

Suggested Starting Skills—

Carousing/Gaming, Concentration, Interrogation, Intimidation, Marksmanship Ranged, Martial Arts, Pickpocket, Pilot SkyCar, Streetwise, and *Wrestling.*

Background Ideas—

Thugs are criminal enforcers, providing muscle and intimidation for a price. Some thugs work freelance, while others are retained full-time by criminal bosses. The thug collects late payments, protection money, and punishes rule-breakers. Independent thugs often work for tax-paying citizens, hassling a business rival or leaning on a difficult supplier. Some are hired as cheap assassins, or "body-workers" who break bones for pay. A thug's life is difficult, dirty, dangerous, and illegal. Most thug jobs are low-paying and few have medical benefits. A character could have reformed and chosen to leave the thug's life behind, or been forced out by a rival crime boss. The character could be running from mistakes in the past, leaning on the wrong business or hassling the wrong person. Lastly, the character could just be bored and looking for a change in scenery.

CREATING A NEW KIT

Players and gamemasters alike are free to create new Background Kits in order to suit rare or mundane professions (for example, The DockWorker, The Farmer, The Acrobat, etc.) common to a campaign. These kits use the Kit Template (see below) as a guideline for building the new one.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Benefits and Drawbacks

Introduction

The fourth step of character creation, benefits and drawbacks, is also completely optional. Players not wishing to use these optional rules may proceed immediately to Chapter 13.

Character benefits and drawbacks are chosen as part of the character creation process and cannot be taken later. Benefits bestow certain advantages upon a character. Examples of these are animal companions, additional wealth, celebrity status, government contacts, and many others. Drawbacks are disadvantages such as debts, allergies, a criminal record, infamy, and so on.

Obviously, choosing a benefit (advantage) for a character costs some of the character's Starting Experience Points. Likewise, selecting a drawback (disadvantage) bestows additional Starting Experience Points that may be spent here or elsewhere in the character creation process.

The Rules

Listed below are descriptions of each benefit and drawback along with the corresponding Starting Experience Point cost (or bonus gained for drawbacks). Players and gamemasters alike are reminded to include any chosen drawbacks in the character's adventure and during roleplaying—otherwise they simply unbalance the game by allotting the player additional free Experience Points. For this reason and for playability, players should not be allowed to choose more than 3 drawbacks (at most) and cannot choose the same drawback more than once. Also, players should always attempt to accurately roleplay upon these weaknesses and expect the gamemaster to do so as well!

➤Select any number of benefits. Note the cost listed next to each benefit, and then subtract it from your remaining Starting Experience Point total in the 'Experience Points' box on the worksheet.

➤Select up to three drawbacks. Note the bonus number listed next to each drawback, and then add that number of points to your remaining Starting Experience Point total.

➤**Important: If the drawback doesn't hinder the character then it isn't worth any Experience Points.** Common sense must apply.

➤Record the benefit and drawback types in the spaces provided on your Character Worksheet. Also, record any special advantages or disabilities (especially those which impact game mechanics) along with the benefit/drawback name.

➤Go to Chapter 13.

Benefits

Choosing a benefit costs some of the player's Starting Experience Points. These points must therefore be 'spent' in order to acquire any of the following boons:

AMBIDEXTERITY
-20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Characters who are ambidextrous are able to write with either hand and are also unaffected by the standard penalties applied to the character's left (or non-preferred) hand.

Note: Some alien species are naturally ambidextrous and so needn't choose this benefit—humans and many others, however, are not. Note also that although this boon alleviates the Wrong-handedness penalty, it does **not** also eliminate the Two-handed Fighting penalty for using two weapons at once.

ANIMAL COMPANION
-15/-25 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

With the gamemaster's approval, the player may choose any reasonable animal (for example, an Earth dog or Gomarian Raptor) which serves the player's character as a trusted and loyal companion or pet. Animals of this nature cost 15 Starting Experience Points.

Sometimes, certain other (more potent) companions can be selected from the bestiary (see Chapter 21 of this game). Attack animals and other capable beasts cost 25 Starting Experience Points.

In any event, a very special bond exists between this animal companion and the character.

BOT BODYGUARD
-35 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character owns and is the master of a bot. With the gamemaster's approval, the player may design the bot using the Bot Creation rules (see _____) but receives only half the normal number of Bot Points in which to do so. Such a player cannot make use of Bot drawbacks in order to gain more Bot Points for this companion bot. Also, this bot can't be sentient.

Note that there are also other ways for player characters to acquire bots—namely through retail purchases if they have enough money. Choosing this option, however, allows the player to play the bot as a sort of second character whereas a purchased one is run by the gamemaster.

CELEBRITY
-45 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

[Note: This benefit is not normally available to characters unless they select the Entertainer or Reporter Background Kit.] The character is a famous entertainer, actor, or reporter. Such a character would easily be recognized on any number of worlds throughout the Imperium where the character's entertainment or movies could be understood or appreciated (assume a base 3-in-10 chance for recognition in an affluent setting). This benefit can prove to be of great value to characters when they are in need of special accommodations or assistance with some matter—generally, fans will go out of their way to help the character out, if the request seems reasonable and doesn't put the fan in harm's way.

Conversely, this benefit may prove to hinder the character to some degree as well should he or she be on a clandestine mission of some kind, as many persons (naval and civilian) might immediately recognize the character unless effectively disguised!

Be aware that this benefit does not confer any wealth or guarantee of employability in the entertainment industry—the character could be a struggling actor. Other benefits must be chosen for those boons.

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Purchase any number of benefits and/or up to 3 drawbacks.

➤Subtract the cost of benefits from your Starting Experience Point total. Add Experience Points for any drawbacks.

➤**Important: If the drawback doesn't hinder the character then it isn't worth any Experience Points.** Common sense must apply.

CONTACT, GOVERNMENT
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character knows (and may be friends with) a political officer, who may occasionally be willing to apply some 'pressure' here or there when needed. This type of contact generally holds a mid-level position within the government and so doesn't possess much power or authority. What influence is possessed can usually be applied in the form of politics and bureaucracy nearly anywhere within that government territory, however.

CONTACT, NAVAL
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has connections with (or may be friends with) a naval officer such as a garrison commander, a warship captain, or the like. Naturally, should such a contact be nearby when the character is experiencing problems with pirates or raiders, the character will find the aid of the Imperial (or other) war machine quite beneficial. Such a captain would never place himself, his crew, or more than a handful of civilians in danger by helping the character. Additionally, such an officer can't go running off to the character's aid if his superior is nearby or has given orders to the contrary.

CONTACT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT
-10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has a friend or business associate who currently occupies a local government position. The lord of a small alien city or the chief of a small supply outpost are examples of such contacts. These contacts can sometimes help with customs problems or alleviate local police pressure. They can also be a source of information about the local area, but aren't good for much else in any area other than their local sphere of influence.

DANGER SENSE
-25 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This benefit cannot really be explained scientifically, and so might operate on a telepathic or metaphysical level. Essentially, characters with this ability stand a 3-in-6 chance of some kind of precognition whenever they are in immediate and major danger.

A successful danger sense roll may alert the character in the form of a tingling on the back of their neck, a sudden shiver, momentary flash, or even a cryptic glimpse into the future. The benefit never bestows any details of what is to come, but simply warns of impending danger. The gamemaster makes this roll secretly anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes before the danger 'arrives'.

DIRECTION SENSE
-10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character may as well have an internal compass, because this benefit allows characters to retain their bearings even underground, in buildings, and underwater. In addition, characters may have a slightly improved memory when it comes to finding their way back through a maze. They know which way the bow of a ship is when onboard a vessel (unless aboard a stationary vessel where sophisti-

cated trickery is used to confuse the direction sense ability), and they can tell when a ship they're aboard is moving and in which direction it's moving. This 'sense' operates more through a sensitivity to motion combined with an ability to recall turns and the sense to detect minor changes in grade or arcs.

FAITH
-30 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This character has a profound devotion for a religious or spiritual faith. As a result of this fanaticism, the character is treated as having the following benefits: Fearlessness, Iron Will, and Light Sleeper.

FAST REFLEXES
-20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character is naturally quick-on-the-draw and has an extraordinary reaction time in combat situations. As a result, the character's Initiative is one class better.

FEARLESSNESS
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Fearless characters need never make Fear Checks when called for by the gamemaster. This doesn't mean that fearless characters are foolhardy, simply that they are in control of their own fear.

INHERITANCE
-20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Through a family or business inheritance, the character begins play with an additional €20,000 credits. This is a one-shot deal, and so the character does not gain any other special sources of income.

INHERITANCE, LARGE
-35 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Through a family or business inheritance, the character begins play with an additional €50,000 credits. This is a one-shot deal, and so the character does not gain any other special sources of income.

INHERITANCE, MAJOR
-50 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Through a family or business inheritance, the character begins play with an additional €500,000 credits. This is a one-shot deal, and so the character does not gain any other special sources of income.

INDEBTED COMPATRIOT
-30 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Players cannot choose this benefit without the explicit permission of their gamemaster. Many gamemasters choose to disallow this benefit with good reason.

This is a non-player character designed by the gamemaster or by the player and gamemaster in cooperation (using the character rules and receiving up to half the number of Starting Experience Points to do so). The compatriot gains experience at only half the normal rate, but may be of any race and kit of the gamemaster's choosing. An indebted compatriot is a trusted ally and, perhaps, friend of the character. The trust is generally honor-based where the character saved the compatriot's life or family in some heroic deed.

As a result, the compatriot has dedicated a portion of their life to the character as payment and thanks. Such a compatriot cannot be treated poorly or without respect (for doing so will drive the compatriot off in a short while), but the NPC will honor and respect the character, often shielding the character from harm or death with his or her own life.

IRON WILL
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

A character with this benefit has either been trained and mentally conditioned to withstand temptations and the fears of the mind, or may just naturally be resistant to influence. As a general rule, the character may apply a +2 Step Penalty to an opponent's Action Check involving Interrogation, Intimidation, Seduction, and other influential skills.

JOB
-10/-20/-30 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character is employed. Luckily, whatever the job is, the character needn't work more than 20 to 30 hours a week and receives lots of vacation time (to allow time for adventuring). The character may even be able to telecommute. The character must work, however, as this benefit is not free money.

There are three levels to this benefit, corresponding with increasing pay. Remember, if a character has a job then an apartment or other place of dwelling should be had and be in close proximity to work—this and other costs of living may quickly dwindle away your character's paycheck.

For 10 points, the character is in a basic or low-paying job and receives 2,000 credits per month in exchange for duties.

For 20 points, the character occupies a professional position and receives 5,000 credits per month.

For 30 points, the character holds a high-paying job such as a high-level scientist, engineer, upper management position, or the like in exchange for 10,000 credits per month. Generally, some degree of exceptional skill must be present for this level of employment to make sense.

Note that characters cannot abuse their positions or use their office for personal gain outside of what is paid to them in salary, else they will soon find themselves in the unemployment line. Also, characters do not begin the game with their first month's salary.

LANGUAGE AFFINITY
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Some people are simply more adept at learning and retaining new languages than others. This benefit allows players to purchase additional languages (or raise their existing language skill levels) for half the normal cost. That is, treat the character as having a Biologically-Easy Language skill.

LESS SLEEP
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Nearly all species require sleep, and those that do profit from this benefit by requiring only one-half the average amount of sleep for their race. When these characters have fulfilled their sleep requirement, they awake just as rested as other members of their species do after a sleep period twice as long (the average).

LIGHT SLEEPER
-15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Characters with this benefit are easily woken by the slightest noise or disturbance. Even the shadows created by an approaching person or the footsteps in a nearby corridor can cause the character to awake. Generally, this sort of awareness functions only when the character is in immediate danger of a noticeable type or is approached, and so doesn't prevent the character from getting a good night's rest because of outside or background noise. Note that this benefit doesn't bestow enhanced hearing, so only sounds that characters could normally hear while awake will alert them.

POWERFUL ALLY
-30 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

A powerful ally is someone in a position of high power (such as an Imperial Senator, fleet admiral, Naval Governor, or alien ambassador) who believes in what the character is doing or stands for. Because of this, the ally will periodically go out of their way to extend a helping hand to the character in the form of political or military support where within the ally's means and when appropriate. Obviously, the ally would not like to see the character hurt or killed, but there are limits to what this benefactor can do or may wish to do without endangering their own position. Also, just because this ally may have the power to help the character doesn't mean that he or she will—especially if characters commit acts which violate the ally's beliefs or ethics.

REPUTATION, GOOD
-10/-25/-50 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This character has a good reputation in standing up for the rights of others and defending and protecting the innocent or weak. The character is a do-gooder and so there are plenty of others out there willing to offer a helping hand when needed. This kind of help almost never includes combat assistance, though nursing a wound, providing shelter for the night, harboring the character from Imperial officials, and the like is possible.

There are three levels of Reputation that can be purchased by players. Higher levels of this benefit represent truly renowned individuals.

For 10 points, the character has a local reputation. That is, one that applies to a limited area such as a neighborhood in a metropolis, a medium city on a typical world, or even a whole planet out on the frontier. Granted, the character's reputation may be questioned by some, will probably not be recognized or believed by many, and may be completely unknown to most (assume a 3-in-10 chance of recognition by each NPC met in the local area, no chance outside of it).

For 25 points, the character's reputation precedes him or her throughout an empire (for example, the Southern Alliance, a region of the ZAON Imperium, or the like, but not both). There is a 3-in-10 chance for recognition by each NPC met in the character's hometown or area/neighborhood of residence, but only a 1-in-10 chance outside of it but within the region of space chosen.

For 50 points, the character is renowned throughout the galaxy. This kind of recognition is similar to a celebrity's status, but generally applies to more people. Assume a base 1-in-10 for the character to be recognized by sight anywhere, and up to a 3-in-10 chance to be known by name.

Gamemasters and players are cautioned to remember that a character's reputation is subjective and not always known—and so this benefit may prove useful only now and then.

REPUTATION, POWERFUL
-5/-15/-35 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This benefit is identical to Reputation, Good as described above, except that the character is instead viewed as a powerful or dangerous person, not to be reckoned with. This may elicit fear and/or respect in others, but those people are much less likely to help the character should they recognize him or her. People might, however, be more susceptible to intimidation, interrogation, or action out of fear. Authorities are not likely to respond favorably if those authorities are in posistions of greater perceived power.

RUGGED
-20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Rugged characters are naturally hardy and tough. As a result, the character gets a permanent increase in Life as follows: Characters with 1 to 9 Life get 1 additional Life point; those with 10 to 19 Life get 2 more Life Points; while those with 20 or more Life receive 3 additional Life.

SAVINGS
-10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

A character with savings is someone that has managed to stash a little away for a very long time. Younger characters may have had a trust fund or legally received some money through other means. In any event, the character has an additional amount of wealth that can be spent as desired. Characters choosing this benefit gain €5,000 credits once.

STARSHIP
-40 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has use of a small warp-capable ship. Examples include a small freighter, civilian transport, blockade runner, or pirate ship. A chosen ship must meet with the gamemaster's approval and must have a purchase cost less than 1 million credits.

This ship **is not** owned by the character, and so cannot be sold. Possible reasons for the character having possession could be work-related as the character is underpaid and not keep particularly busy with work and the employer allows personal use of the ship when off-duty. Or, perhaps the adventures designed by the GM revolve around freight runs for a corporation who owns the ships and has hired the characters to man it. Another solution is that the character does 'own' the ship, but only €20,000 credits were put down on the purchase of this ship (a friend approved the bank loan with so little down) and now must make regular payments of around €1,000 per month per 100,000 in the ship's cost. Even this 'mortgaged' ship option becomes unworkable if the characters are outlaws and can easily avoid the bank's attempts to repossess. Finally, this benefit might not even be needed if the gamemaster intends to provide a group-owned ship for the campaign adventure anyway .

STARSHIP, SCOW
-20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has use of an old warp-capable ship of small size that is plagued with malfunctions and worn parts. The chosen ship must meet with the gamemaster's approval and must have a purchase cost less than 400,000 credits. In addition, the vessel's systems are largely unstable and are prone to malfunctions or break-downs (use the vehicle rules governing used ships; assume a 50% markdown).

See 'Starship' above for details on why the character has possession of this ship.

STARSHIP, INFESTED
-20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has use of a small warp-capable ship. This can be a fast freighter, blockade runner, or pirate ship. It could also be a smuggling vessel or patrol ship, but the chosen ship type must meet with the gamemaster's approval and must have a purchase cost less than 1 million credits. Unfortunately, the vessel has been infested with a number of parasites (biological). Worse yet, one of the infestations includes the dreaded Space Roaches (see Bestiary, Chapter 21), a small animal parasite that is impossible to completely eradicate through any means short of destroying the entire ship.

Obviously, this ship would be nearly impossible to sell even if owned. Player characters are forewarned.

See 'Starship' above for details on why the character has possession of or owns this ship.

STATUS

-15/-25/-50 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Synonymous with power, this kind of status refers to political office or naval rank and has nothing to do with the social status gained from wealth, demeanor, or associates.

For 15 points, the character has local influence. This could be in the form of a small-city councilperson, a local policeman, the mayor of a very small town or village, or even a lieutenant in the Imperial Navy.

For 25 points, the character has limited galactic influence. Examples include an ambassador, a large city councilperson, a local police chief, or a commander in the Imperial Navy.

For 50 points, the character has considerable influence. Such a character might hold a prominent ambassadorial position, be the CEO of a large corporation, or possess the rank of captain in the Imperial Navy.

Remember, because of the nature of politics and military organizations, the character must always report to a higher authority (such as a superior officer, the Board of Directors for a corporation, a senate or congress, or the like) and so doesn't have free reign all the time. In fact, the character's actions might be carefully monitored by jealous rivals looking to foil the character's plans, or worse!

Finally, before selecting this benefit, check with your gamemaster first to see if it is allowable and fits within his or her campaign.

TELEPATHIC SENSITIVITY

-35 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This extremely rare trait is one where the character is able to detect any nearby telepathic activity. The range of this detection is typically only a few dozen meters, though extremely powerful displays of telepathy might be sensed slightly farther than that. In any event, the character may experience a slight dizziness, a tingling, a headache, or even momentary pain every time a telepathic ability is used or invoked within range. The gamemaster may allow the character an Intuition check in order to accurately discern the general direction or location of the event.

Drawbacks

Choosing a drawback grants the player additional Starting Experience Points that may then be spent later in the character creation process. Drawbacks must also be approved by the gamemaster. Remember, choose no more than three drawbacks.

Important: If the drawback doesn't hinder the character then it isn't worth any Experience Points. Common sense must apply.

Also note that with the gamemaster's permission these drawbacks can be removed later by spending Experience Points (see Chapter 20).

ALLERGIES

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

These are not common allergies resulting in sniffles and watery eyes, but rather debilitating and chronic allergies that have real and significant impact on the character's ability to perform. Chronic acute asthma is one example of this drawback. Whatever the allergy, the character is assumed to suffer from it at least 50% of the time, regardless of conditions, during which time periodic and momentary significant ill effects are in place. The impact to the character includes constant wheezing, coughing, and general sickness. These result in a +3 Step Penalty to all dice rolls to actions attempted during episodes that occur during that 50% time frame.

BAD RAPSHEET

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

A character with a bad rapsheet may not be a troublemaker, but will have had a number of legal 'entanglements' in the past. As a result, the character's record will look less than good when reviewed by law enforcement officials. Obviously, any time the character is asked to submit his or her IdentiCard for identification (or has a DNA check performed) the officials performing the check will likely be less than impressed—so poor treatment or harassment of the character at that time is a distinct likelihood.

CLUMSY

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This drawback lowers the character's Agility stat by 3 points and requires that the character succeed at an Average Agility Check whenever the gamemaster deems appropriate else fumble their current action. Note that this drawback cannot be selected if the -3 to Agility would cause that stat to be lowered to less than 1.

DEBT

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

A significant past financial debt (€50,000-100,000 credits) is owed by the character to a corrupt corporation or crime lord. The debt has aged considerably and the character hasn't long to pay it off. Ignoring it much longer may force its collector to hire bounty hunters in order to 'retrieve' or even assassinate the character (thereby converting this drawback to Target [see below]). The creditor may be appeased, however, so long as the character continues to make reasonable payments (at least €1,000 a month). Note though, that when making payments only half of the payment is actually applied to the debt while the other half is lost to interest and late fees.

HEAVY SLEEPER

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This night owl has a need for sleep and is very difficult to wake. As a result, the character automatically fails any normal chance to awake from alarming noises or a disturbance that could lead to the character's harm. Basically, anything short of very heavy shaking (or wounding) of the character will leave the character asleep until such time the Heavy Sleeper is well rested and wakes up naturally.

HONOR

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Honor is a drawback because these characters must adhere to a rigid code of honor which restricts their actions during play. Players must choose at least three of the following 7 restrictions:

1) Cannot attack an unarmed foe.

2) Will not permit self, companions, or others to bring harm upon an innocent, possibly using force if necessary.

3) Will always stop to help an injured bystander or innocent where possible; will assume responsibility for medical costs and other fees incurred if harm was brought by self or companions.

4) Cannot lie, even in dire circumstances; disapproves of deceptions but may occasionally elect to not tell the whole truth so long as doing so doesn't blatantly mislead or bring harm.

5) Must report all crimes (even those committed by companions) to the proper authorities with due haste.

6) Any sworn oath or given word must be adhered-to to the death. Twisting the words to a new intent is nearly always prohibited.

7) Cannot attack a foe who has fled, surrendered, or whose back is turned.

Gamemasters must enforce this code of honor so that it is not broken or discarded.

IDIOT TAG-ALONG

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This rather unique drawback means that the character has been entrusted with the care and safety of an idiot brother, friend of the family (or mob family), or similar moron who must be looked after carefully. This character is usually created by the gamemaster, however, under certain circumstances the player may design such a character. In any case, the character must be a fool at best and cannot possess any real or useful skills. Furthermore, the character should be annoying at the very least, and part of the 'care' agreement includes that the annoying tag-along be allowed to 'learn' from the player's character (and so must tag-along all [or nearly all] the time) and cannot be ditched or ignored.

A note of caution, though, is that if this tag-along should be seriously hurt (or killed), then a serious penalty is to be had. Examples of penalties include the character becoming a Target (see below) as the entrusting person is a short-tempered crime lord out for revenge, or the player character enters a deep psychological depression resulting in multiple Obsessions (see below).

ILLITERACY

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This drawback can only be taken if the character would normally be literate because of their race or Background Kit (this includes most characters but may exclude Bangor, gladiators, etc.). Also, it is unusual and may not be possible for a bilingual or multilingual character to select this drawback.

Illiterate characters can't read or write, but they can speak their native language. This means that street signs, instructions, warnings, and computer screens cannot be interpreted whatsoever. Try to imagine yourself in an environment where everything printed is in a foreign language.

INFAMY

+20 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character is a bad, bad guy. The character's reputation often precedes him or her as can be attested to by law enforcement officials. Though not currently wanted, the infamous character is widely known through pictures and a description which at one time flashed across every telecom viewer in the galaxy (so-to-speak). Many law enforcement officials and Imperial officers (about 1 in 6 or so) will immediately recognize the character on sight and by name. Once recognized, the character is bound to be harassed and bullied by troopers looking to make an arrest.

Civilians may also recognize the character and shout insults, spit, or otherwise confront the character. Naturally, characters will find their lives in constant turmoil due to this recognition.

OBSESSION

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has a powerful psychological addiction or obsession with something or some behavior. Examples include unhealthy obsessions or phobias regarding personal hygiene or clutter. Other possibilities include: a strong phobia of a particular (and common) race to the point of absolute fear; massive guilt about a certain type of weapon or common ship that haunts the character (something that may have been involved with the death of a dear friend or loved one); or even extreme irrational hatred of a particular and possibly prevalent species.

An obsession must be played-out with great enthusiasm by players. Moreover, anytime the character is faced with a situation contrary to this obsession, then all the character's d12 dice rolls are halved or the character must act/react immediately without regard of the consequences.

PACIFISM

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Although the pacifist would probably consider this drawback a benefit, it is not in terms of game play. This true pacifist cannot kill or harm another living being, even in self-defense. This means that pacifists certainly value their own lives, but they would rather die than resort to harming or killing someone else, if forced into a predicament where they cannot flee. Furthermore, they will not knowingly condone violence wrought by others, so carrying weapons or assisting another character in combat (other than to heal) is prohibited.

Gamemasters are reminded to enforce this drawback to the letter. Only in rare instances are players allowed to rescind this drawback by expending Experience Points as governed in Chapter 20. A convincing reason for the change of such a powerful belief is certainly necessary.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character has a slight disability as a result of a major war wound or for other reasons. This character may have a decided limp (Speed reduced by half), or may have a crippled and perhaps useless arm or hand (the gamemaster to assign appropriate Step Penalties), or may be missing an eye. This drawback cannot be a simple 'scar' or other superficial wound, but must instead hamper the character's ability to perform in some manner, usually resulting in penalties to movement, speed, or actions.

Optionally, characters may take a Birth Defect with similar penalties.

POWERFUL ENEMY

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

[Note: This drawback cannot be chosen if the Target drawback has also been chosen—and vice versa.] The character is a hated enemy of a powerful and thus protected government official or Imperial Naval officer. This enemy, though not constantly obsessed with such a character, is always looking for ways to make the character's life miserable (or may even wish to end it).

SKITTISH

+15 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

These scaredy-cats are naturally jumpy and easily frightened. All Fear Checks are made at half the normal roll. Moreover, skittish characters must make normal Fear Checks during any combat situation (even ones where such a check normally isn't required by heroes).

SLOW REFLEXES

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This drawback cannot be selected if the character's Initiative Class is already Slow. The character is naturally slow moving in reaction time during combat situations. As a result, the character's Initiative is worsened by one class.

TARGET

+25 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

The character is the target of a deadly assassin bot or renowned bounty hunter. Although the character may not be the constant target of such a stalker, he or she will almost certainly be hunted on a regular basis (until either the stalker or the character is dead). Gamemasters are encouraged to roleplay these situations frequently and not to allow characters an easy way out of this scenario. Skilled bounty hunters and deadly assassin bots are highly proficient at their work and cannot be easily killed or destroyed. In most situations the character should be on the run, but the gamemaster should elect to send another assassin bot or bounty hunter should the first one fail—after all, whoever is behind the assassination may not be willing to give up easily.

TEMPER

+5 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

This drawback cannot be selected by species who do not exhibit emotions (or strong emotions). A character with this drawback has a very short temper indeed. As a general rule, characters with a temper stand up to a 50% (up to 3-in-6) chance of becoming infuriated anytime they are distressed or upset—including anytime something doesn't seem to go their way!

No Willpower check is allowed, and so the character rolling equal to or below the number set by the gamemaster (as the situation warrants) must immediately become hostile and highly aggressive, regardless of the consequences.

WEAKLING

+10 STARTING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Weaklings are naturally wimpy and fragile. As a result, the character permanently loses some of their Life, as follows: Characters with 1 to 10 Life lose 1 Life point; those with 11 to 19 Life lose 2 Life; whereas those with 20 to 29 Life would lose 3 Life; and characters with 30 or more Life lose 6 points.

Creating New Benefits/Drawbacks

Gamemasters may occasionally wish to create new benefits and drawbacks as they pertain to a specific campaign or character personage. This is certainly permitted but not encouraged for the novice gamemaster.

First, make sure that another way for the character to gain the same advantage doesn't already exist. For example, a Great Looks benefit designed to make a character beautiful may seem plausible, but wouldn't work as this advantage is already governed by the character's Allure stat.

Gamemasters that do create new benefits and drawbacks are advised to compare their creations to existing choices very carefully in order to ensure game balance. If in doubt, raise the Starting Experience Point cost of a new benefit or lower the Experience Point gain for a new drawback. Also, make sure that new benefits won't grossly unbalance the campaign by granting a character too much power in a given area. Similarly, make sure that the new drawback doesn't provide an easy way for the afflicted character to ignore or discard it.

Under very rare circumstances, players may sometimes propose new benefits and drawbacks for their characters. Normally, this is done only when the player has a particular idea that is integral to the character's personality or description. In such an event, the player may propose the new benefit or drawback to the gamemaster for review. The gamemaster will then compare the new option with existing ones and assign a Starting Experience Point cost or gain for the new option. Some negotiation is possible, however, gamemasters should not allow themselves to be easily bullied into providing an unfair advantage to any one player.

Other Forms of Benefits

So long as it has been approved by the gamemaster (for it to make sense in the campaign he or she has in mind), players may skip ahead to Chapter ?: *Cybernetics* in order to purchase one or more cybergear items to further enhance player characters according to the rules described therein.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Improve Skills & Stats

Introduction

In the Zaon roleplaying game, skills represent a character's training or knowledge in a specialized area. When combined with certain mental and physical aspects of a character (Stats), they yield a chance for successfully completing an action. **Both stats and skills are therefore important to character performance, and in this step of the character creation process players are given the opportunity to spend their remaining starting Experience Points (XP) on skills and stats of their choice.**

Skills are sometimes initially bestowed to characters as part of their species choice as Culturally-Inherent skills. Additional skills may be added and existing skills and stats may be raised. Spending Starting XP on these requires the rules outlined in this chapter.

The Rules

The rules in this chapter describe how to spend your remaining Starting Experience Points on new or existing skills for your character, and how to improve actual stat scores as well. What stat scores are and how they're read is described in Chapter 9. For skills, the name of each skill listed in this book and on your Character Sheets should give you a pretty good idea as to what each skill does. If you have the time and would like to get more in-depth information on perspective skills, skip ahead to Part 4, Chapter 22, of this book where skills are thoroughly explained. If you do, don't worry too much about the rules text in that section right now—those rules will make more sense to you once you've read through Part 3: *Playing the Game*. One thing worth checking for, however, is that a few skills have prerequisites. For example, your character can't learn the Computer Hacking skill without first knowing Computer Operation at 3 or better. If in doubt, check the skill in Chapter 22.

Rules for buying new skills or improving existing ones are described first, followed by rules for improving actual stat scores Read all steps before proceeding:

RULES FOR SKILLS:

➤Skills have special Experience Point costs depending on their rating (see below) when raising them to the next skill level. You may spend your Starting Experience Points on any existing or new skills. These can be skills already awarded as part of the character's species or altogether new skills. Feel free to distribute these remaining points as you see fit, but be sure to adhere to the cost-increase rules for improving skills, as follows:

➤A new skill costs you 1 Experience Point and ALWAYS begins with a rating of 1.

When raising existing skills (including a skill you just bought for 1 Experience Point as described above) there are increasing costs associated with the level of experience in that skill. ***You may NOT skip skill levels when raising skill ratings, but you may raise a skill several levels by raising it one level at a time several times all at once:***

➤Raising an existing skill from 1 to 2 costs 2 Experience Points,

➤To raise an existing skill from 2 to 3 costs you 3 Points,

➤To raise an existing skill from 3 to 4 costs you 4 Points,

➤And so on. The cost to raise a skill to the next level is the level rating (going to level 4 costs 4 because 4 is the next level).

➤Important: Since a skill must be raised through each level, raising a skill from a level 1 rating to a level 4 rating would cost

a total of 9 Experience Points (10 if that skill had to be purchased in the first place), thereby making those costs cumulative.

➤This compounding cost progression is a step program designed to make it difficult to reach high levels of mastery in a skill—and are the same rules followed later in the game for spending Experience Points earned from play, on skills (see Chapter 20 of this game, Character Improvement).

For example, a player wishes to add one new skill to a character and have that skill begin with a rating of 2. Additionally, the player also wishes to increase one existing skill which is already at 2 up to 4. This would cost a total of 10 Skill Points (1 to get the new skill, 2 more to raise the new skill to 2, 3 to raise the other level 2 skill to a level 3 rating, and 4 more to raise it again from rating 3 to a rating of 4).

➤There is one restriction that must be adhered to: **players may not raise any skill to a master or grand master rating (6 or 7+, respectively)** during this step. This means the only way a starting character can have a rating of 6 or higher is if that character's species already leaves a skill that high. There are no exceptions. Later, through adventure Experience, these skills can indeed be raised that high and higher. **For now, a rating of 5 (expert) is as high a rating as a character may buy** unless specifically ordered otherwise by your gamemaster.

➤Skills that are Biologically-**Difficult** are skills that begin with a negative value. Since this value diminishes dice roll totals, it needs to be raised 1 point at a time (**for a cost equal to the negative value in Experience Points**) until zeroed-out at which time it may be increased normally using the rules above. **For example, raising a (negative) -3 skill to zero would cost 6 Experience Points: 3 XP to raise it from -3 to -2; 2 more to raise it from -2 to -1; and 1 more to raise it from -1 to 0.**

➤Also, certain races have what is noted as 'Biologically-Easy Skills' which reduce the costs required to buy new skills or raise existing ones. If a particular skill is listed as Biologically-Easy for your species, then that skill's costs are halved, rounded up. For example, a new Biologically-Easy skill with a rating of 1 would cost you 1 Starting Experience Points (half the normal 1, rounded back up to 1). Furthermore, raising a Biologically-Easy skill from 2 to 4 would cost you 4 XP (half the normal 3 for level 3 is 2 XP, plus half the normal 4 for level 4 is 2 more XP).

Note that some species' Biologically-Easy skills notations read ALL MENTAL, ALL PHYSICAL, or ALL KNO, etc., which simply means that every skill associated with any noted stat or stat scores in that category all gain the same bonus. For example, ALL PHYSICAL would affect all Strength, all Agility, all Precision, and all Allure-based skill ratings. ALL KNO would mean any Knowledge-based skill.

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Your remaining Starting Experience Points should now be spent on skills and stats.

➤**ADDING/RAISING SKILLS:** The cost of gaining new skills or raising existing skills is governed as follows:

➥*New skill @ 1 costs 1 Experience Point (XP),*

➥*Raise existing skill from 1 to 2 costs 2 XP,*

➥*Raise existing skill from 2 to 3 costs 3 XP,*

➥*Raise existing skill from 3 to 4 costs 4 XP, & so on.*

➥***Note that even though you may raise a skill several rating levels at once, each step MUST be paid for separately. Therefore, costs are cumulative, so raising an existing skill from 2 to 4 would cost 7 XP.***

➤The highest a Skill Rating may be raised to at this time is 5 (expert). Skill Ratings higher than this aren't allowed during character creation and can only be raised beyond 5 through Character Improvement (see Chapter 20). There are no exceptions—unless, of course, your character's species grants a higher starting skill rating (or if your gamemaster is an easy pushover).

➤Biologically-Difficult skills begin with a negative value. This value can be raised 1 point at a time for a cost equal to the negative value in XP each level until the value reaches zero. For example, a difficult skill might begin at -4, which means it would cost 9 XP for that character to possess a skill rating of -1 instead; an additional 7 XP could raise that -1 skill all the way to a 3.

➤Do not forget to apply species modifiers for Biologically-Easy skills. These skills cost only half the normal amount (half what is listed above, rounded UP). For example, where a skill rating of 2 would normally cost 3 points to raise to 30 it would cost only 2 such points (half rounded up) if that skill was listed as a Biologically-Easy skill. New skills still cost 1 XP because half of 1 rounded up is still 1.

➤**RAISING STATS: It costs 1 XP per Stat TENTH added. Thus going from 4_5 to 4_7 costs 2 XP. Going from a 5_8 to a 7_2 costs 14 XP. You may not exceed species maximums, but you may attain them. Lowering** Stats works the same way, but yields only HALF as much. **Thus going from 4_7 to 4_5 yields 1 XP to spend elsewhere**. Stats are more thoroughly explained in Chapter 9.

➤**Any leftover Starting Experience Points at the completion of this step are LOST.**

RULES FOR STATS:

➤Stats are described in Chapter 9 and initially set by Species in Chapter 10. From this point forward, Stats can be further increased using Experience Points (either Starting Experience now or later with Experience gained from play) in the same way. Stats are raised using their tenths place number as opposed to their whole numbers:

➤**It costs 1 Experience Point for each Stat TENTH added.**

For example, going from a Stat score of 4_5 to 4_7 would cost 2 Experience Points. Similarly, going from a score of 5_8 to 7_2 would cost 14 Experience Points.

➤**Stats may also be lowered in the same way to gain Experience Points, but the amount gained is only HALF as much.**

For example, going from 4_7 to 4_5 would yield 1 Experience Point.

This makes the cost of raising stats very expensive, as it should be, but also bear in mind that stat scores impact the dice rolls of all skills associated with that stat.

➤**No stat may be increased beyond the Species' maximum or minimum score listed for each stat.** Stats may, however, be increased up until they are equal with the maximum.

➤The remaining chapters in the character creation process will not require any Starting Experience Points. Therefore, **any Starting Experience Points not spent in this chapter are lost.** Consequently, it is best to spend as many or all of these remaining points that the rules permit you to.

➤If you need additional help, review the example of character creation which provides a sample filled-out worksheet. This example is explained in Chapter 16.

➤Go to Chapter 14.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Calculating Traits

Introduction

Traits are similar to stats because they measure facets of the character's being. They are different because they are based upon other existing data—primarily stats, skills, and the character species. Therefore, all traits are derived from other data and need to be calculated.

The Rules

By reviewing each of the following traits, players will gain an understanding of what traits measure and how to calculate them. As you calculate each trait, record its rating or score in the place provided on your Character Worksheet. Also, once a trait is calculated, it never gets recalculated except when there are permanent increases or decreases in the character's stats or skills.

SPEED: (SPD) A character's Speed score represents the number of meters a character can move in one game turn (essentially equal [just under] one second of time) while traversing the specified terrain. Three types of terrain (occasionally four types) are denoted by the Speed trait. These are: walking on land, running on land, and swimming in water—in that order. Therefore, when you see a notation such as Speed 1-5-½ you know that this character travels 1 meter per turn while walking, 5 meters a turn while running at full speed, and one-half meter a turn while swimming.

If a fourth type of terrain is warranted for a particular character or species, its type is spelled out followed by the speed rate. For example, *Speed 1-4-x, fly 10* indicates a creature that cannot swim but can fly with an airspeed of 10 meters per game turn. Other possible forms of specified locomotion include bur (burrowing), roll (rolling), hop (hopping), and crawl (crawling) to name a few.

The character's Speed trait is primarily determined by his or her species. The non-walking portion is further adjusted by certain skills, such as the Running or Swimming skill (See Chapter 22). A human's base speed is 1-5-1, but a sprinter athlete triathlon swimmer with a Running skill of 4 and a swimming skill of 3 would instead have a Speed of 1-7-2 (over 7m/s top running speed!). Individual skill descriptions note how each skill impacts this trait.

So, as long as the character doesn't have the Running or Swimming skill, the player need only copy this score from what is listed under the species selected.

LIFE: The amount of damage a character can sustain before being rendered unconscious or dying is the Life score. Life is based primarily on a character's species, but also incorporates differences in Strength (muscle mass). **Life is equal to Strength (tenths fractions are discarded) plus the species' Base Life score.**

Life = {STR + Base Life}

For example, the average human has 10 Life as 4 (the average human's Strength) is added to human Base Life of 6, which yields a total of 10.

Furthermore, a character's Life can sometimes increase slowly over time as the character increases Strength through conditioning. For rules on how experience affects a character's growth in this area, see Chapter 20 of this book. Other special rules, such as the Rugged Benefit from Chapter 12 can also affect Life.

WOUND THRESHOLDS: As the character becomes wounded and loses Life points, his or her performance is subject to penalties dependent on wound severity. For simplicity, Wound Thresholds have been classified into three levels: Lightly Wounded, Moderately Wounded, and Severely Wounded. The penalties associated with these are covered in Part 3 of this game.

To determine Wound Thresholds, Life must be divided into 3 equal blocks. Each block is recorded separately on the Character Record Sheet and is equal to one-third the character's Life score. When Life can't be divided evenly by 3, the largest blocks are always the Severely Wounded block followed by the Moderately Wounded block, as shown below.

To calculate these thresholds, use the following chart to divide Life into three equal blocks:

LIFE	Light	Medium	Severe
1	–	–	1
2	–	1	1
3	1	1	1
4	1	1	2
5	1	2	2
6	2	2	2
7	2	2	3
8	2	3	3
9	3	3	3
10	3	3	4
11	3	4	4
12	4	4	4
13	4	4	5
14	4	5	5
15	5	5	5
16	5	5	6
17	5	6	6
18	6	6	6
19	6	6	7
20	6	7	7
21	7	7	7
22	7	7	8
23	7	8	8
24	8	8	8
25	8	8	9
26	8	9	9
27	9	9	9
28	9	9	10
29	9	10	10
30	10	10	10
31	10	10	11
32	10	11	11
33	11	11	11
34	11	11	12
35	11	12	12
36	12	12	12
37	12	12	13
38	12	13	13
39	13	13	13
40	13	13	14
41	13	14	14
42	14	14	14
43	14	14	15
44	14	15	15
45	15	15	15

For example, if a character had 10 Life, then he or she would be considered Lightly Wounded after sustaining 1-3 points of stun or wound damage; Moderately Wounded after taking a total of 4-6 points of

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(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Calculate your character traits by following the formulas in the steps below:

➤Speed has three categories (sometimes four) and is equal to what is noted by species. The first number is walking speed, the second is running speed, whereas the third is swimming speed. A fourth notation is sometimes designated and used for flying, rolling, burrowing, etc. All speeds are in meters per second (game turn). Note that the Running or Swimming skill, if possessed, add to the corresponding speed trait values (one-half point per level of mastery in Running, less for Swimming).

➤Life equals {STR + Base Life} and stat fractions are discarded; the average human therefore has 10 Life {4 + human's Base Life of 6}. Note: Each species has a different Base Life score which is part of this equation.

➤Wound Thresholds take Life and divide it into thirds (3 equal blocks). See the Life chart in the main text for a quick reference on Life splits. To calculate manually, split into thirds and ensure any uneven amounts are applied from last to first: 10 Life is therefore divided as 3/3/4 Life. 11 Life = 3/4/4.

➤Critical Life is equal to average of the character's Strength and Willpower scores {[STR+WIL]÷2}. Round down and discard fractions afterward. The average human therefore has 4 Critical Life.

➤Knockdown is equal to {Life ÷2} rounded down. The average human therefore has 5.

➤Initiative is determined by a chart. Double Reflex and normal Intuition {[REF x2] + INU}, then discard any stat fractions, and compare: *Slow* @ 11 or less; *Average* @ 12-16; *Fast* @ 17-20, *Very Fast* @ 21-24; and *Ultra Fast* @ 25 or higher.

➤Evasion equals {REF + Dodge Skill Rating + large/small modifiers}. That is, add Reflex stat score to the Dodge skill. If Dodge skill has no rating then Evasion is simply equal to the Reflex score. Some armor lowers Evasion further (see Chapter 25). Then, large/small characters get modifiers too (see chart, and noted in each species' template in Chapter 9).

➤Ranged AIM equals {PRE + Marksmanship Ranged Skill Rating}. If no skill, then just equals Precision. Retain fractions.

➤Melee AIM equals {AGI + Martial Arts Skill Rating}. If no skill, then just Agility. Retain fractions.

➤Throwing AIM equals {AGI + Marksmanship Thrown Skill Rating}. If no skill, then just Agility. Retain fractions.

➤Wrestling Rating = {½STR + ½AGI + Wrestling Skill Rating}. If no skill, then just half of Strength + half of Agility. Retain fractions, but round down to nearest tenth.

➤Total Concentration is 0 unless the character has the Concentration skill (see skill description).

➤Attitude has two labels separated by a slash. The first is **Initial Attitude** which is based on Allure: *Hostile* @ less than 3_0; *Cold* @ 3_0-4_4; *Neutral* @ 4_5-5_9; *Friendly* @ 6_0-6_9; *Charmed* @ 7_0-8_4; and *Infatuated* @ 8_5 or higher. The second is **Extended Attitude** which starts equal to *Initial Attitude* but is worsened or bettered by one or more classes based on Harmony (worst is Hostile, best is Infatuated): -2 @ less than 2_5; -1 @ 2_5-4_5; ±0 @ 46-70; +1 @ 7_1-8_5; +2 @ 8_6-10_0; +3 @ 10_1or more.

➤Experience is 0 for all three types of Unspent Experience.

➤Heroism begins at and is limited to 1 (except humans which have and are limited to 2 Heroism).

➤Age is chosen by you. Just be sure that it is at least the same or higher than your character's Minimum Age (Species Minimum + Background Kit Training Time). Note that as characters age, they receive stat modifiers (see Chapter 9).

damage; and Severely Wounded once at 7-10 points—the tenth damage point renders the character unconscious.

Record these values on the Character Worksheet.

CRITICAL LIFE: Similar to regular Life, Critical Life tracks the range between unconsciousness and death. This number is **equal to the *average* of the character's Strength and Willpower stats. Round down (ignore the stat's tenths place) *after* adding the total and dividing by 2 to get the average.** *The average human therefore has 4 Critical Life because a 4.0 Strength plus a 4.1 Willpower totaled to 8.1 and then divided by 2 to achieve an average of 4.05 is then rounded down to 4. A human with a Strength of 4.9 and a Willpower of 5.3 would instead have 5 Critical Life because the total of 10.2 is divided by 2 to get the average of 5.1 which is then rounded down to 5.* This number is kept separate from Life.

KNOCKDOWN: A character's Knockdown is that character's damage threshold before being knocked down. In other words, when characters take more damage points from a single blow or series of blows in one game turn than they possess in Knockdown, then they're knocked down. So long as they're still conscious, they can however certainly get back up again. The reason they were knocked down was due to either the physical impact of so much damage at once and/or the system shock their bodies suffered from such a sudden and debilitating injury. This is why people who are shot seriously or clobbered hard wind up on the floor—even if they can subsequently muster the strength to stand up again.

The character's Knockdown is simply equal to half his or her Life score. *An average human therefore has a Knockdown of 5.*

Knockdown = [Life ÷ 2]

Therefore, a human who suffered 5 or more points of damage (out of a possible 10 Life) would be temporarily forced down or thrown back.

INITIATIVE: Initiative is a means for grouping different ranges of Reflex and Intuition scores into ordered steps in a game turn. It allows the high intensity game turn (such as combat) to progress via several basic speed classes, so that faster characters get to act before slower ones. By simplifying the turn into a few basic "sub-turns", it also makes it easy to apply the effects of a character's option to do something in that turn.

To calculate the character's Initiative, simply add the character's Intuition stat to double their Reflex stat (any stat tenths fractions are dropped *after* being totaled):

(Reflex X2) + Intuition	Initiative Class
11 or less	*Slow*
12 to 16	*Average*
17 to 20	*Fast*
21 to 24	*Very Fast*
25 or more	*Ultra Fast*

An average human has a Reflex score of 4.5 and an Intuition of 4.5. Taking the first 4.5 and doubling it plus the other 4.5 Intuition yields 13.5, rounded down to 13. Thirteen on the above chart shows an average Initiative class.

EVASION: A character's Evasion score is very important as it determines how able and skilled a character is at avoiding being hit (either by weapons or objects). Evasion is based on both Reflex and certain combat training skills, as well as physical size.

To calculate Evasion, simply **take the character's Reflex stat and add their Dodge skill rating to it, followed by any applicable size modifiers** (see below). Obviously, a normal-sized character without any Dodge training would have an Evasion trait equal to their Reflex stat because nothing would be added to it.

Retain your character's Reflex stat's tenth place fraction, if any, when calculating Evasion.

Unusually large or small characters receive penalties or bonuses, respectively, to their Evasion trait. Species that warrant these modifiers state such in the special rules section of the species template in Chapter 9. Only after applying these modifiers can the character's final Evasion trait be complete:

+3 Character is Tiny (30 centimeters or less)
+2 Character is Small (about 1 meter in height)
+0 Character is roughly human-sized
-2 Character is Large (about 2½ to 4 m [7½+ feet])
-3 Character is Huge (4+ meters in height)

Note that a character's Evasion trait cannot be less than zero.

Evasion = Reflex + Dodge skill ± Size modifier

An average human with no combat training would therefore have an Evasion trait of 4_5.

Evasion can sometimes have a temporarily decreased value due to armor—see arms and equipment for information on individual armor.

AIM: The chance a character stands at successfully hitting an intended target is the character's AIM trait. There are *three types of AIM:* Ranged AIM for shooting weapons (such as blasters and projectile weapons), Melee AIM for hand weapons (such as fists, swords, and club weapons), and Throwing AIM for thrown objects (such as grenades). Each type of AIM is recorded separately on the character sheet. For all types of AIM calculation, retain any stat tenths place fractions, if present, when making calculations.

Ranged AIM is always equal to the character's Precision stat score plus his or her Marksmanship Ranged skill rating, if possessed.

Ranged AIM = PRE + Marksmanship Ranged skill

Melee AIM is always equal to the character's Agility stat plus his or her Martial Arts skill rating, if possessed.

Melee AIM = AGI + Martial Arts skill rating

Throwing AIM is calculated by combining a character's Agility plus his or her Marksmanship Thrown skill rating, if possessed.

Thrown AIM = AGI + Marksmanship Thrown

Anytime a character does not have the skill in question, only the first half of the equation is used. That is, Ranged AIM would be equal to the character's Precision score only, while Melee AIM would equal Agility only.

Character Strength scores can affect melee and thrown weapon damage (explained more thoroughly in Chapter ?: *Combat*, including whether the modifier should be applied as Stun or Wound damage):

Strength Stat	Damage Modifier
less than 2_0	-4
2_0 to 2_4	-2
2_5 to 3_4	-1
3_5 to 4_9	±0
5_0 to 5_9	+1
6_0 to 6_9	+2
7_0 to 8_4	+4
8_5 to 9_9	+6
10_0 to 11_9	+8
12_0 to 14_9	+10
15_0 to 17_9	+12
18_0 to 22_9	+16

For more information on using AIM in combat, see Part 3: *Playing the Game.*

WRESTLING RATING: The character's wrestling rating determines how easy it is for your character to pin others in an overbearing fight, or escape another wrestler's hold. Wrestling Rating is equal to half your character's Strength stat score plus half the character's Agility stat, plus your character's Wrestling skill rating, if possessed. Any stat tenths fractions are retained, but rounded down when halved (see below):

Wrestling Rating = ½STR + ½AGI + Wrestle skill

An average human with no wrestling training therefore has a Wrestling Rating of 4_0.

TOTAL CONCENTRATION: (TC) This represents the number of Step Penalties a character can regularly ignore during play. It is normally zero (0) unless the Concentration skill rating is possessed. The way it is figured is by multiplying characters' Concentration skill ratings by their Willpower stat scores (with fractions), and then comparing to a chart (see below). This is why when the Concentration skill is not possessed that the result is zero (because zero times anything is still zero):

Willpower **X** Concentration	TC
less than 7	0
8 to 19	1
20 to 29	2
30 to 44	3
45 to 69	4
70 or more	5

ATTITUDE: This represents the stance or attitude other characters in the Zaon universe will have toward your character. **There are two Attitudes.** The first is **Initial Attitude** and represents how others initially react to your character. The second is **Extended Attitude** and is a modifier to *Initial Attitude* by bettering it or worsening it a number of classes equal to the modifier:

PC's **Allure Stat**	**NPC's Initial Attitude**
less than 3_0	*Hostile*
3_0 to 4_4	*Cold*
4_5 to 5_9	*Neutral*
6_0 to 6_9	*Friendly*
7_0 to 8_4	*Charmed*
8_5 or more	*Infatuated*

PC's **Harmony Stat**	**NPC Extended Attitude**
less than 2_5	-2
2_5 to 4_5	-1
4_6 to 7_0	±0
7_1 to 8_5	+1
8_6 to 10_0	+2
10_1 or more	+3

For example, a character with an Allure of 4_8 and a Harmony of 8_9 would be initially treated indifferently (Neutral) by NPCs ... but as soon as those NPCs spent some time with the character (anywhere from a few hours to several days depending on the situation), their attitude would move to Friendly and then to Charmed. This is because the character's overwhelmingly charming personality would add to the relationship given time. On the other hand, a character with a 7_4 Allure and a 3_6 Harmony would find NPCs to be initially charmed by the character's good looks only to move to a mere friendly stance once the character's not-so-great personality began spoiling the effect.

EXPERIENCE: A character's Unspent Experience traits increase as the character gains experience during play. Experience points are awarded by the gamemaster after each adventure for a job well done. The more experience characters gain, the better their skills become.

Unspent Experience is actually three different numbers, one for both types of experience plus bonus points. For more information on how experience is awarded as well as how to 'spend' it, see Chapter 20: *Character Improvement* in Part 3 of this book.

At the start of the game, every character has zero (0) in each of these three Unspent Experience traits. Remember, any leftover Starting Experience Points are lost and not transferred here.

HEROISM: This trait can also be thought of as the 'Main Character Factor', as it is a way for heroic characters to evade certain-death situations one or more times throughout their lives.

Characters initially begin the game with one Heroism point (though humans start with two), and they can never have more than that one point (2 for humans). Should Heroism be used during play then that point is lost forever. The only way a replacement point can be reacquired is as a 'gift' from the gamemaster. Rules for this are discussed in Chapter 20.

AGE: A character's age is determined by the player and can be any viable age beyond the minimum age requirement for their character. The minimum character age might already calculated as based first on the character's species (race) and second on the character's Background Kit. The notation listed by species indicates the age when that lifeform has reached a significant level of maturity where real technical or academic learning can begin and is called 'Minimum Starting Age'. For humans, this age level is 12.

If a Background Kit was chosen, it denotes a 'Minimum Training Time' which is the least amount of years a character could have devoted to a career and still have received the full benefits of the Background Kit in question. Obviously, some Kits require more extensive schooling or training than do others. This Training Time was added to the character's minimum starting age determined by species.

Once the character's racial starting age and Kit training times were added together, the result became the minimum age that character can begin play at. Players may opt for an age equal to this or older (by any viable amount) that they wish. The choice is up to them.

For players who did not choose a Backround Kit, a standard 4 years is applied instead. If involved skills were chosen in the previous chapter, such as Medicine and many of the advanced sciences, then adding 8 years is more appropriate. The gamemaster is the final authority on the correct number of years to add to characters, but if the gamemaster's decision is too high players are free to go back to the previous chapter and select less involved skills for less aging.

Finally, as characters age during the game, their stat scores are affected (lowered and raised depending on the stat). Aging adjustments, specific to each species, are detailed in Chapter 10 of this book in each species' full description. Rules on applying these adjustments is covered in Chapter 20.

TELEPATHY: A few characters have telepathic potential or are natural telepaths. For more information on telepathy and how to calculate a telepath's psion pool and telepathic abilities, refer to Chapter 21.

➤Go to Chapter 15.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Buying Character Equipment

Introduction

In addition to a character's personal prowess and repertoire of skill knowledge, he or she must usually also rely on the aid of technology in order to survive in such a hostile and unforgiving universe. Equipping a character can include weapons and armor, but also covers supplies, rations, and gear specific to the character's career or mission.

Buying equipment in the Zaon universe isn't that much different than here on Earth, today. There are merchants and large-chain retailers. Products are manufactured by small family-owned companies as well as by enormous corporations. The level of technology, however, is quite different.

The universal galactic currency is known as 'credits' (abbreviated €, similar to the Euro), and is accepted everywhere. Credits can be carried around in one's pocket like many of the currencies today or they can more easily be electronically 'stored' at banking institutions (both public and private) and spent using highly-encrypted ATM data cards which double as personal identification. In fact, some merchants are hesitant to accept actual hard currency and even those who do readily accept it wouldn't base a large transaction on non-electronic monies. The main reason for chips being unaccepted by some merchants is not through fear of counterfeiting (which is possible but extraordinarily difficult), but rather because chips can be stolen and so require a safe place in which to store (most merchants are opposed to keeping credit chip registers in their stores). Electronic monies, however, are safe from theft, computer hackers, and errors.

What can one credit buy? Assume one credit to have roughly the same buying power as one US dollar in today's world. Note that unlike the US dollar which has sub-units (for example, quarters and dimes), credits have no smaller increments but are instead spent in decimal point fashion. That is, a bowl of good soup could cost you 4.9 at a local restaurant. These decimal fractions can be managed accurately and effortlessly when using electronic monies, but characters that insist on spending actual credit chips will have to round up to the next whole credit. Indeed, a few merchants readily accept actual hard currency while similarly pricing all of their goods at various decimal costs.

For information on banking, financial transactions, and currencies, see the Part 5 Overview.

The Rules

Characters begin the game with a certain amount of money and equipment (both granted as part of the character's Background Kit). Most gamemasters will also allow a player to spend some or all of the character's starting monies on additional equipment during the character creation process—especially when it enhances the character concept.

➤Most characters should start the game with at least one weapon—this is not uncommon in the dangerous universe of Zaon—and many citizens of the ZAON Imperium openly display holstered sidearms. Armor can be of use, too, but is less common than personal sidearms. Military-grade weapons, though, are not allowed in most areas except among military personnel and so will most likely draw unwanted attention or immediate arrest. The

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closer to the heart of civilization a character ventures, the harsher the weapons restrictions. Indeed, on the Imperial homeworld, Titan, even basic sidearm pistols are usually illegal to carry.

➤Spend credits on additional arms, armor, equipment, and supplies. If you're not familiar with the equipment used in this game, ask your gamemaster for help. A list of all equipment, arms, and armor (along with descriptions of each) can be found in Part 5 of this game.

➤Have your gamemaster approve your purchases. It's possible that certain items aren't available to your character or any of the merchants in your area. This is especially true if your character (and perhaps the entire party) begins play on a backwater world of some kind.

➤Be sure to deduct your purchases from your pool of available credits.

➤Record your purchases in the 'Step Seven' area on your worksheet. You needn't copy all of the information that pertains to each piece of equipment you bought, largely because you'll be transferring all of this information onto your permanent Character Record Sheet at the end of the next chapter. For now, simply record the name of each item.

➤Go to Chapter 16.

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(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Spend Credits on equipment, arms, and armor.

➤Have all of your purchases approved by your gamemaster—some items might not be available in your area!

➤Read the first 4 paragraphs (Introduction) to this chapter, as this explains the monetary system used in the Zaon universe. You may also find the Part 5: Overview interesting also, as it discusses alien currencies, banking and exchange, and other financial transactions.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Finishing Touches

Introduction

The last step in completing a character is developing character connections, understanding the character's drive or motivation, coming up with a description, and then writing it all down.

The Rules

Most of the following rules involve more imagination than actual game mechanics. This is your chance to really think about your character's past and future goals.

DRIVE/MOTIVATION: Players may find it helpful to assign some kind of drive or motivation to their character concept if they haven't already done so. Motivating factors can help make the character seem more real as they establish wants and goals that players may be able to identify with.

Examples of motivation include:

ADVENTURE: Someone out for the fun and excitement that accompanies a campaign.

DISCOVERY: A character bent on developing a new device or cure for a disease, finding a lost alien artifact, or even proving the existence of either a long deceased or reclusive race of aliens.

LOVE: The character is searching for a long-lost lover, is trying to rescue a captured lover, or is even out to find the perfect mate.

POWER: The character may want to gather wealth or followers for personal or religious reasons, might wish to climb the ranks of a crime family, or may even want to build an empire from the ground up.

REVENGE: Someone or an organization wronged the character or the character's family and so either personal revenge or revenge as a 'service to all' becomes necessary.

HELPING OTHERS: The character is a do-gooder—or Good Samaritan—out to right any wrongs and to protect and defend the innocent, possibly a medical professional trying to stop a plague, or maybe even a pacifist out to bring peace to the galaxy.

Any other possibilities that the player or gamemaster can devise will add real depth and believability to the character.

DESCRIPTION: A description is simply assigning an outward appearance complete with garb, demeanor, and personality. This can be envisioned by the player alone or with the aid of the gamemaster. Some players may wish to write a detailed description and include it with their character sheet while others may choose to note only a few highlights.

REALITY CHECK: Players should also bear in mind the stat scores of their character when developing a description. That is, a human character with a Strength of 4 is not going to be ripped with muscles, though a score of 6+ would indeed indicate a bodybuilder. Similarly, a character with an Allure of 5 is not going to be anything more than average in looks, though this doesn't mean that the character can't have an unusual look. An Allure score of 8 or better indicates a model or possibly a supermodel. Even non-physical stats can affect the overall demeanor of the character. For example, a character with a low Influence couldn't normally be described as having a 'powerful' or imposing presence.

➤Don't forget to note certain other distinguishing traits such as hair, eye, and skin color. Often, a character's species and/or race will limit your choices here. Other descriptive traits to consider include the character's voice—is it normal, dry and raspy, or even sultry? Does the character's species have different ethnic backgrounds in which to choose from? What about religion, personal beliefs, or even sexual orientation? Try to note as many traits and quirks as you can for your character as it may help to make him or her more unique and certainly more believable—not to mention easier to roleplay.

CHOOSING A NAME: Names in the Zaon universe include all of the names seen here on Earth, today, plus many more—and that's not even considering the alien ones. Coming up with a name can be tougher than one might expect, and whatever you decide on should sound good to you because your character is bound to be called by it quite a bit.

➤If you're making a human character, you're probably better off choosing a name that you're familiar with in today's world. Baby name books can be of great help and, if you're looking for a last name, try the phone book. If you think today's names are too plain, try some of the more exotic ones such as Aluris, Jayce, Ares, Trinity, Jafar, Eloria, or Zara. Be creative! Names like G'Krik or Slith sound more alien and probably don't make much sense for a human character, but would be great for a non-human character.

➤If your character is an alien one (or even a sub-race of humanity such as Rians or Draaz), try reading the complete species description in Chapter 9 of this book. Not only might you be inspired by the culture, sociology, and customs for your race, your species might use specific naming conventions. If you choose a name outside of this convention, you might have to produce a story as to why your character grew-up with such a strange name—maybe the character was raised by parents of another species?

➤Whatever you decide to do, the choice is up to you. Just be sure to run your name by your gamemaster. Even though naming your character is your prerogative, your gamemaster might object under certain circumstances (for example, if your character is part of a royal or Senatorial family, a specific name or naming convention might be in order).

CHARACTER CONNECTIONS: Character connections are very important to the character creation process as they enable players and the gamemaster to establish realistic and feasible connections between all of the characters in a campaign. For example, one player's character might be the sibling of another player's character. Characters could be employees of another, they may have grown up in the same hometown, or they may have served in the Imperium together. It's conceivable that two characters could be lovers or old rivals. The possibilities are endless, but the establishment of some kind of loyalty, respect, friendship, or love is of paramount importance to laying a playable foundation in the gamemaster's campaign.

➤Developing these sorts of connections also waves the need for 'introductory' campaigns where players must have their characters meet by chance (and ultimately get along) at some location set by the gamemaster. Obviously, players and gamemasters wishing to roleplay this gathering are encouraged to do so instead of using this option, but the establishment of Character Connections may prove more powerful as the characters will have had some amount of presumed history together—more than what can be accomplished in a short introductory campaign.

MAKING IT REAL: Once a name, motivation, and complete description has been developed, serious roleplayers will usually write a short history or prologue for their characters. This short account should tell the story of that character up till the point where the game is to begin. It needn't be perfect nor long, but putting something down on paper can really help to make the character seem real.

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(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Finish by coming up with goals and motivations for your character, followed by a thorough description and some believable connections (history) between your character and one or more other characters in your group.

➤Read the paragraphs on 'Description' and 'Choosing a Name' in this chapter; even experienced players might be surprised by what they find.

➤Make sure that your Character Record Sheet is filled-out properly and completely. Be very sure that you BLACK-OUT any Life boxes beyond what your character has in Life and Critical Life (don't 'X' them out, as this is one means for recording damage to your character).

➤Note that certain weapons have AIM modifiers to various modes, such as Single, Burst, or Spray. These penalties affect your AIM to-hit rolls.

➤You're Done !

— Proceed to Part 3: *Playing the Game* —

Writing It All Down

Once this process is complete, players should copy the final statistics and other information they've recorded on both pages of their Character Worksheet to their permanent Character Record sheet. It is still a good idea to use a pencil for this, as the character will undoubtedly improve in certain areas as experience is gained during play. Don't worry, the Character Record Sheet isn't nearly as complicated as it looks—it's quite simple, actually. It only appears complex because everything is conveniently listed on a single one-sided page.

➤The top left section on your permanent Character Record Sheet should include your character's name, character species, and the name of the Background Kit you chose. Next, write-down your character's age, plus any of the descriptive data you came up with as part of your character's description such as height and weight. Don't forget to record your name, too. If you have a more in-depth description and/or picture of your character, you may wish to include this on the back of the sheet. If you've also got a lot of equipment and weapons to record, there is a supplemental character sheet that has space reserved for this.

➤Below this area is a space to note your character's Heroism and Experience. Note that 'Experience' actually refers to 'Unspent Experience' and is divided into three spaces; each space corresponds to a certain type of experience awarded by the gamemaster (see Chapter 20 of this game). Be sure to note your character's current Heroism total (either 1 or 2 points).

➤Your Life score should be written in the triangle at the center of the Life wheel. Surrounding this triangle are three sets of Life boxes. Each set refers to a block of Life that was calculated according to the Wound Thresholds system. Start with the upper-left set. Count-out a number of these Life Boxes equal to your first Wound

Threshold score (about 1/3 of your character's Life). All of the other boxes beyond what you counted in this first set only should be BLACKED-OUT (completely shaded-in—don't 'X' them out because that is one way of recording damage to your character). Do the same for the second set (the upper-right block) using your Moderately Wounded Threshold total. Then, do the same for the lower set using your Severely Wounded Threshold total.

➤To the bottom of your Life wheel is a single row of Critical Life boxes. Find out what this is, and reserve that many boxes for your Critical Life—all other boxes should be BLACKED-OUT.

➤To the right of the Life wheel is an area to record armor. Simply list the name of the armor worn in the top space, followed by the armor's ratings (there are 5 of them) in the boxes below the name. Since wearing heavy armor types can slow characters down and interfere with their ability to evade quickly, an Evasion Penalty might apply. If your armor has an Evasion Penalty, you'll subtract that before recording your Evasion (see below). If you've managed to purchase screens, you record them below where you do your armor.

➤In the upper-right area of your sheet is a place to record Traits. Simply copy your character's three AIM scores, followed by your character's Evasion. Below that is where you record your Wrestling Rating, Knockdown, Speed traits, and Initiative.

➤Next, the large middle portion of the sheet is used to record stats and skills. Transfer your character's final stat scores from the worksheet to the permanent Character Record Sheet in the circular stat wheel. Be sure that these are your final stats including any adjustments you made in Step 2, and are listed in the fifth column on page one of the Worksheet.

➤Now you'll be transferring skill data over. First, take a look at how skills are arranged. You'll note that since skills are associated with a particular stat, that they've been placed in groups which physically branch off of the stat they are associated with. Once you know this, it'll be easier to compute your final Action Check for each skill during the game.

➤Transfer your skill ratings for the skills you possess by simply recording them on the lines following each skill's name. Make sure that you use the final values printed in the Sub-Total or New Rating after Spending columns of Page 2 of the Worksheet.

➤You may note on the permanent Character Record sheet that most skills have a '+' before the line where you record the skill's rating. This is a reminder to you that that skill's rating is added to the stat the skill is associated with in order to figure the total Action Check number used during play. Thus, if your character has an Agility of 5.3 and a Ground Pilot skill rating of +3, then your character has an Action Check of 8 which is combined with a d12 and compared to a target Action Difficulty number—a number which must be met or exceeded. More information is available in Part 3.

➤Note a few of your skill ratings might actually be negative scores if you chose a species which had Biologically-Difficult skills. During play, you would simply add the negative number to your stat: for example, a Strength of 4.3 and a Climbing skill of -3 would leave that character's Action Check at 1.

➤Skills that don't have a '+' before the blank line but instead have a shaded area where you record the rating are called Proxy Skills. Proxy skills are those that affect other game mechanics rather than being used to compute an Action Check. For example, the Running skill is a proxy skill because it modifies your character's Speed trait rather than requiring a dice roll to implement. Again, see Part 3 of this book for more details on how these skills are applied during play.

➤Incidentally, an Action Check can also be figured when no skill rating is present (you simply add zero to your stat). Thus, if your gamemaster ever asks you to make a Climbing skill roll and you don't possess that skill, then your Action Check will be equal to your Strength stat only because there's nothing to add to it.

➤Italicized skills, however, are those that cannot be used unless the skill is possessed. For these items, you can't make a roll unless you have at least one step in that skill (rating of 1 or better) because otherwise the character would have no idea where to begin.

➤If your character's species denotes any Biologically-Easy skills, it's usually a good idea to note an 'E' on the dotted line following the skill name and before where you record the skill's rating, as a reminder that that skill is easier to improve in the future.

➤Finally, you may have noted that not all skills described in this book are listed on the Character Record Sheet. This is true partially due to space constraints and also because certain skills are not commonly chosen. Should your character possess one of these skills, simply write in the skill's name on one of the available blank lines titled 'Other:_____'.

➤Below the skills area and toward the bottom of your Character Record Sheet is an area called 'Weapons'. Any weapons your character possesses should be listed in this area. Packrats and weapons freaks may want to also use the supplemental Extra Weapons/Equipment Sheet as this second page allows for more room and detailed information. Simply copy data from what is listed for each weapon in the Equipment section into the appropriate spaces. Single and Auto refer to varying AIM scores and rules which apply if shooting a weapon in a particular mode. Rate-of-fire, damage, type, and range are self explanatory. And the tiny negative numbers attributable to each range category refer to the Step Penalty incurred for shooting at longer ranges. To the right, 'shots' and 'clips' refers to how much ammo you have. Again, don't worry about what all of this means right now—it's covered in Parts 3 and 5.

➤To the right of weapons is a quick place to note any benefits and drawbacks you may have chosen. Record these here in order to serve as a reminder to you.

➤The last two areas at the bottom are for any equipment other than arms and armor that your character purchased, and your remaining money (credits). Also, you'll need to tally up the weight for your weapons, armor, and equipment that your character carries on his or her person. Record the total in the Encumbrance area. Note this weight in kilograms (to figure the pounds equivalent, multiply kilograms by 2.2 [roughly double]). Carrying too much can slow you down, so avoid the packrat syndrome...

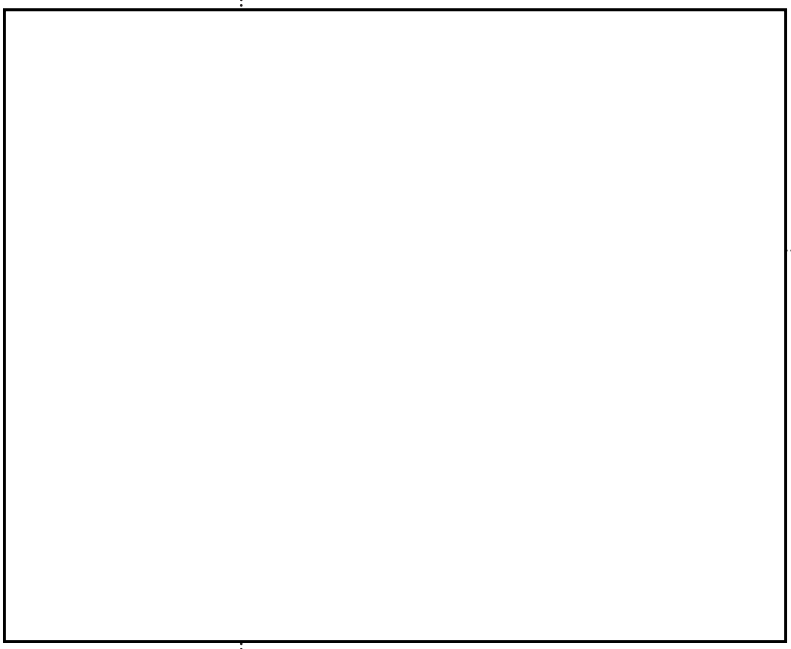
➤You're DONE ! Read the Character Creation Example below if you'd like further insight (or some ideas) on how to go about the complete process of character generation. Otherwise, go on to Part 3 of this book, starting with Chapter 17, in order to learn how to play this game.

Example of Character Creation

To further clarify the Character Creation process, we will design a sample character from the ground up, using Steps 1 through 8:

Part Three

Playing The Game



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Chapter Seventeen

How to Play

Introduction

Anytime a character performs a dramatic action or one where the success of carrying-out that action isn't certain, rules must be used to determine the outcome. This chapter covers those rules. That is, how to assign a chance for success to any action a character might perform during the game—not to mention the results of that success. Combat, however, though definitely an action, involves a few additional rules that build on these and so is covered in the next chapter.

In the Zaon roleplaying game, the chance for the success of any action carried out by a character begins with that character's genetic makeup—defined by **stats** in this game. That is, the chance begins with how smart, strong, personable, and so on, the character is—this defines the base. Skill knowledge then increases this base chance, as the more schooling and practice someone has had the better the odds. Finally, outside forces can also have an effect—usually a negative one.

Zaon uses four dice during play: a d12, a d10, a d8, and several d6. **The twelve and eight-sided dice singles are thrown together as a pair for any roll made.** The ten-sided die is used periodically for the resolution of close call actions. The six-sided dice are exclusively used for damage in combat.

The d12 is called the Action Die. This die contributes to your character's success, and so rolling as high as possible on this die is always good.

The d8 is called the Penalty Die and is used to check for failure due to outside intervening forces. These outside forces are assigned as **Step Penalties** and have less to do with the basic difficulty of the action itself and more to do with outside conditions that make the action more difficult.

*For example, a character attempting to climb a mountain will have a certain chance of success based on both the character's climbing skills and how tough the mountain is (the **Action Check**), but that chance will become less should the character be climbing it while wounded or wearing heavy armor (one or more **Step Penalties**).*

You also want to roll high on this die, because you need to roll higher than any Step Penalties that may have been assigned to your character, else your character's action will fail. If you're already questioning the principle of the Step Penalty system and why it's better than simple rules modifiers, see a full explanation at the end of this chapter: "Understanding the Mathematical Probability of the Step Penalty". More information on dice types follow in this chapter.

After you've read through the main rules below, go back and read over the QuickPlay rules in this chapter. This will help to give you a quick summary of what you've just read and how things work. Be sure to read all of the rules in the main text first, as the QuickPlay rules do not give full explanations or examples.

Action Checks

Most of the time when a character performs an action in Zaon it is a standard Action Check. There are three numbers that go into an Action Check, and these get totaled and compared to the difficulty of the action (called the **Action Difficulty**) being attempted. The first of these three numbers is the character's appropriate stat score. The second is the character's skill rating (if any). The third is the result rolled on a d12.

{Stat score} + {Skill Rating} + d12

STATS AND SKILL RATINGS: The first two parts of this equation are determined by the player who adds the appropriate skill rating to the stat score that skill is associated with. When adding the stat score, be sure to add only the whole number and not the tenths place fraction. (Any fractions do play a role in Action Checks, but not at this time.)

For example, a character who was attempting to pick a mechanical security lock would use the ***Lockpicking skill*** *for this action, which is called a* ***Lockpicking Check.*** *Since Lockpicking is a Precision skill,* ***you would simply add the Lockpicking skill rating to the Precision stat to arrive at a base number.*** *If the character had a Lockpicking skill rating of 1 and a Precision stat of 4.5, then the player would add 5 (the total since fractions are ignored at this time) to the result on a d12. If the player rolled, say, a 6 on that die, then the grand total would amount to 11.* ***This last total is the key and is what must exceed the difficulty of the lock (which is the Action Difficulty—discussed later).***

The Character Record Sheet lists skills with a '+' sign immediately to the left of where you record a skill's rating. This '+' is there to remind you to add the skill's rating number to the stat in order to arrive at a base number (before the d12 roll). Always add the skill rating to the associated stat. **This is true even if the character has no rating in the skill—you simply add zero to the stat, which is the same as using the stat alone. Note that Biologically-Difficult skills may have a negative number which means you actually subtract from the stat score before making your roll!**

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Dice Types: d12, d8, d10, and d6. A single twelve-sided die is used for skill checks. A single eight-sided die is rolled along with **every** skill roll as the Step Penalty die (see below). A ten-sided die is used periodically for Close Call rolls. Six-sided dice are for damage.

➤Most rolls are standard Action Checks using your character's appropriate stat score (ignore any stat tenths at this time) combined with skill rating (if any) plus a d12—all of which must equal or exceed a target number set by the GM. This target number is called an Action Difficulty, which is how difficult the task is. These difficulties are: *Average* @ 10; *Tough* @ 14; *Very Difficult* @ 18; *Absurd* @ 22; and *Impossible* @ 26. Examples of what is average, tough, and so on for various skills is noted in each skill's description.

For example, during play the GM might instruct you to make a Tough Mechanics check to see if your character can fix a broken hydraulic pump for an airlock door. Because the Mechanics skill is a Knowledge-based skill, your character's Knowledge stat plus Mechanics skill rating (if any) plus the result of a d12 must now meet or exceed 14 or your character fails.

➥Close Call rolls are made using a d10 whenever the Action Check total exactly equals the target Action Difficulty number. That is, when your total (roll plus stat and skill) altogether exactly equals your target number, then the character's Stat tenth fraction is used to determine the outcome. Simply, if the Stat fraction equals or beats the result on a d10, then the entire Action Check succeeds; otherwise it fails.

For example, a PC with a KNO of 5_4 and a Mechanics rating of 3 who rolls a 6 on the d12 in an attempt to make a Tough Mechanics check would have to make a Close Call roll because 5+3+6 equals the Tough difficulty of 14. Throwing a d10, if the result is a 1 through 4, then the total Action Check succeeds. On a 5 or higher the whole attempt fails.

Note that characters with a skill rating (1 or higher) can perform Routine/Easy actions without need for an Action Check. Unskilled characters attempting to use a skill through raw stat ability alone must make a roll because they lack proper training—an unskilled roll makes the Routine/Easy task an Average one in terms of Action Difficulty.

➤Sometimes a character's action is actively fought by another character—such as how a prisoner might resist the efforts of an interrogator. This situation calls for a Contested Action in which both characters tally up their appropriate stat combined with skill rating (if any) plus a d12. Instead of pitting this total score versus an Action Difficulty target number, you simply compare the two totals—whoever has the highest total wins the contest.

➥In the case of a tie, then a Close Call determination is made by directly comparing the appropriate stat tenths fraction (if any) of both characters. The character with the higher fraction wins. If tied, the offensive character wins because the target number was met.

➤Step Penalties represent outside forces that can hinder both your Action Check and your Contested Action rolls. Being severely wounded and working in zero-G carry a +3 and a +2 Step Penalty, respectively. These penalties are cumulative, so if you were wounded while attempting a skill in a zero-G environment then you would do so at a total +5 Step Penalty. The Step Penalty die (a d8) is always rolled alongside your Action Check or Contested Action roll (even if you have no Step Penalties, as the pair of dice are used for special results—see below). You must roll above the number of any Step Penalties you have assigned to you at the time, else the action fails regardless of whether the Action Check or Contested Action roll itself succeeds. Thus, if you had a +2 Step Penalty to your roll and you rolled a 1 or a 2 on the penalty die (d8) then your skill attempt fails even though your Action Check may have succeeded with flying colors. If you're interested in why this game mechanic is better for you than simple modifiers to dice rolls, please see "Understanding the Mathematical Probability of the Step Penalty" at the end of this chapter. Note there is a maximum of 7 Step Penalties—any more are treated as 7 total, but TC (see main text) is calculated to lower Step Penalties first before reducing to 7.

➤Skills on the Character Sheet without the '+' before the skill rating are called Proxy Skills and affect game mechanics in other ways rather than requiring an Action Check or a Contested Action roll. For example, you wouldn't make any rolls for the Running skill because that skill simply increases your character's Speed trait.

➤Professional Skills are those listed on the character sheet with a '†'. These can't be used untrained—you must have a 1+ skill rating.

➤Awesome Successes occur whenever you roll a 12 on the action die and an 8 on the penalty die. This means that the action exceeded better than expected. Skill descriptions often detail examples of awesome successes. See text for more details.

➤Blunders occur whenever you roll a 1 on both the action and penalty dice (you roll 'snake eyes'). No matter what, this means that the action not only failed, but it failed in a miserable fashion. Skill descriptions often detail examples of blunders. See text for more details.

➤Special rules for Absurd/Impossible tasks, unnecessary rolls, and more are in the full text.

➤You're Done ! Proceed to the Combat Chapter...

If no skill exists for the action being attempted (a rare thing indeed), then the gamemaster will declare which stat is best suited to the action in question. And, like any action for which a character possesses no skill rating, only the stat score is used as the base chance (before the d12 and difficulty).

ACTION DIFFICULTIES: The player character's Action Check total is now pitted against the difficulty of the action being attempted. **The Action Difficulty is determined by the gamemaster. All Action Checks receive an Action Difficulty.** These difficulties represent how challenging the attempted action is and are explained below. **The corresponding number is thus the target number—the score the character's Action Check total must equal or beat.**

Determining the Action Difficulty is often a judgment call on the part of the gamemaster, but examples of what is Average, Tough, Very Difficult, and so on for various skills is part of each skill's description (see Chapter 22). The following chart is also printed at the bottom of the skill section on the Character Record Sheet and represents the varying degrees of Action Difficulty:

DIFFICULTY	TARGET NUMBER
Routine/Easy	**No Roll/10***
Average	**10**
Tough	**14**
Very Difficult	**18**
Absurd	**22**
Impossible	**26**

***Unless character is unskilled (no skill rating), in which case treat as an Average difficulty.**

For example, if a character was attempting to use the Lockpicking skill on a high-security combination lock (noted under the Lockpicking skill description as a tough task), then the combination of the character's Precision stat, Lockpicking skill rating, and what was rolled on a d12 (the Action Check) must meet or exceed 14.

The name of a particular 'Check' is a good hint for what you need to roll. In the previous example, a **Tough Lockpicking Check** tells you that you need to roll against your character's Lockpicking skill rating (combined with his or her Precision stat score plus a random d12) and beat 14. A **Very Difficult Computer Operation Check** is likewise computed using that skill's rating plus the Knowledge stat and d12 roll—all of which must beat 18. A **Tough Willpower Check** tells you that the action being attempted is one of pure will and so you would use only your character's Willpower stat plus a d12 and no skill rating at all to equal or beat 14.

Routine/Easy difficulties are actions considered to be so regular that characters with any skill in that area (anyone possessing the skill with a rating of 1 or higher) needn't bother making a roll to accomplish the task. **Persons unskilled in those areas (those who have no skill rating) must make a roll because they lack fundamental skill knowledge necessary to ensure success—these rolls are treated as if of Average Difficulty (target number to equal or beat is 10).**

CLOSE CALLS: (WHEN THE ACTION CHECK EXACTLY EQUALS THE ACTION DIFFICULTY) Whenever the Action Check (stat + skill + d12) exactly equals the target number (Action Difficulty), the roll is said to be a 'Close Call'. A Close Call roll is one that is dependent on any extra stat fractions the character might have, in order to succeed, and requires that a special additional roll be made: **Make a Close Call roll using a d10. The character's stat fraction must equal or beat the number rolled on the d10. If it does, then the total Action Check succeeds; otherwise it fails.**

For example, a character with a stat score of 4.3, a skill rating of 2, and a d12 result of 8 (total Action Check of 14) who's making a Tough Action Check (Difficulty of 14) must make a Close Call roll because the Action Check of 14 exactly equals the Action Difficulty of 14. Rolling a d10, if the result is a 1, 2, or 3 then the total Action Check succeeds because the stat fraction would equal or beat the die roll. If 4 or higher is rolled on the Close Call d10, then the total Action Check fails.

Similarly, if the stat score was 4.0, then the Close Call roll automatically fails because there is no stat fraction present to beat a die roll result. Contrarily, if the stat score was 4.9, then anything but a 10 on the d10 would indicate success.

This is what allows characters with one-tenth point differences in their stat scores do better or worse than other characters when attempting actions. In other words, dealing with the extra precision of the tenths place in stat scores doesn't complicate play until that precision matters.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS: Though many skill-based actions can be attempted even when the character doesn't possess a rating in that skill, **skills listed with a '†' following the skill name on the Character Sheet (also noted at the start of a skill's description) are *professional skills* and cannot be attempted untrained. That is, until the character becomes at least skilled (rating of 1 or better), that particular skill cannot be attempted**—usually because the character simply has no idea how to attempt the feat or where to begin. For example, someone without at least a basic understanding of medicine would have no idea (couldn't even guess) of how to begin an appendectomy surgical procedure. Someone with at least a little knowledge would know where to start, but might easily fail without more surgical knowledge.

Other skills (those not listed as professional skills) can still be attempted without a skill rating but the chance will of course be less than a skilled character because there is no skill rating to add to the base stat score. Still, someone who was genetically gifted (high stat score) might perform as well as a moderately-skilled character would.

PROXY SKILLS: Certain skills depicted on the Character Record Sheet that don't have a '+' immediately preceding a shaded line where you record the skill's rating are called *Proxy Skills*. **Proxy Skills don't require Action Checks like regular skills do.** This is because Proxy Skills affect game mechanics in other ways, such as how the Running skill raises a character's Speed trait. It should also be apparent that there won't be a chance to use the Running skill—it simply reflects conditioning that lets a character run faster and farther than an untrained character.

Proxy skills are used in Chapter 14 to calculate character traits and are also explained in Chapter 22 of the game.

Contested Actions

Sometimes a character's action is actively fought by another character—such as how a prisoner might resist the efforts of an interrogator. **In these instances, the Action Difficulty for the task in question becomes the effort or success of the resisting character.**

The way this is played requires **each character in the contest to total an Action Check** (using the rules above). This means that each side totals up their stat+skill+d12 and then compares the two

totals. **Whoever has the higher total wins the contest.** Note that characters on different sides of the contest may employ different skills (such as offensive versus defensive skills)—depending on the role they're in. **In the event of a tie, a Close Call declares the winner by directly comparing the stat fraction from both sides—the higher fraction wins the entire Contested Action. If the stat fractions are also tied, the offensive side wins because the target number was met.**

For example, in the scenario where an interrogator is attempting to break a prisoner, the prisoner character would total his or her Willpower plus Resist Interrogation skill rating (if any) plus a d12. Likewise, the interrogator would total Ego plus Interrogation (if any) plus a d12. Whichever character had the higher total would win. If this was the interrogator, then the prisoner is broken and reveals guarded information. If the prisoner were to have the higher total, then the interrogator fails to break the prisoner's will.

If instead this was a tie, then compare the stat fractions (if any) of the offensive character's Ego versus the defensive character's Willpower. Whoever had the higher stat fraction would win. But if the stat fractions were also tied, then the interrogator would win the entire Action.

Combat, though certainly a Contested Action, is dealt with in the next chapter because it incorporates a few additional rules that build off of these rules.

Step Penalties

Throughout the game a few situations and conditions warrant blanket penalties to dice rolls. These penalties usually affect all dice rolls, though the gamemaster's common sense should take precedence of course. Regardless of what a character's action is, Step Penalties can make success more difficult.

Step Penalty rules apply to the *Penalty Die* (the eight-sided die) which **is always thrown alongside the Action Die** (the twelve-sided die), and should not be confused with the occasional Close Call roll of a d10 (see Action Check, above).

Step Penalties are noted throughout the rules by name; examples being 'apply a +1 Step Penalty' or 'apply a +3 Step Penalty'.

Tally up all of your Step Penalties—they're cumulative. If you roll that number or lower on your eight-sided penalty die then your action fails regardless of whether or not the Action Check indicates success. If you roll above that number on the penalty die then the normal Action Check determines the final outcome. *Note: If you're already curious or in doubt as to why this Step Penalty system is better for you than modifiers to your core dice roll, see "Understanding the Mathematical Probability of the Step Penalty" at the end of this chapter.*

Obviously, if you have zero (0) Step Penalties currently assigned to your character, then rolling anything on the penalty die is okay. **Still, this die must be rolled along with the action die because the pair of these dice is used to check for blundered rolls and awesome successes (see rules below).**

For example, a character acting in a zero-G environment who had no zero-G training would receive a +2 Step Penalty. Since this is a basic Step Penalty, it applies to pretty much everything that character might do in that environment. Let's assume the character is trying to pick a high-security combination lock and has an Action Check roll to make. Along with this d12 roll, the player would toss an eight-sided penalty die. ***If the penalty die came up a 1 or a 2 then the lock pick attempt would fail even if the total Action Check was well above the Action Difficulty assigned by the gamemaster. If the penalty die came up 3 or higher, then the Action Check total determines the final outcome as usual.***

Characters can't have more than 7 Step Penalties assigned to them for any given roll. If situations warrant 8 or more Step Penalties, then treat that total as 7 instead. This always leaves a slight chance for success on an action a player could normally succeed at. Note that TC (Total Concentration, see below) is subtracted **before** checking to see if 8 or more penalties needs to be reduced to 7.

GENERAL STEP PENALTIES: The following chart lists several of the prevalent actions, conditions, and situations that warrant general Step Penalties.

Required Penalties Situation	*Penalty to ALL Rolls*
Abnormal Distractions	+1 to +3 Step Penalty
Wearing a Vacsuit or Envirosuit or Bombsuit	+1 Step Penalty
Zero-G Environment, in a	+2 Step Penalty
Wounded, Lightly	None
Wounded, Moderately	+1 Step Penalty
Wounded, Severely	+3 Step Penalty

Note that Abnormal Distractions refers to distractions that aren't normal for when a skill is typically used. For example, combat would be an abnormal distraction for attempting a lockpicking or computer programming skill, but combat would **not** be a distraction for using combat skills because combat skills are normally used in combat. Conversely, a hurricane would be an abnormal distraction for most any skill attempt. These, if warranted, are up to the gamemaster.

Also note these penalties are cumulative, so if a character were Moderately Wounded and working in a zero-G environment, then there would be a total +3 Step Penalty. The player's dice roll would have to be 4 or higher on the penalty die in order for the action to stand any chance at all.

The following chart is OPTIONAL and so if your gamemaster elects to include additional realism, these modifiers can be applied:

Optional Penalties Situation	*+/- to SPECIFIC Rolls*
Darkness/Low-Light, where important	+3/+1 Step Penalty
Gravity Extreme, each level above code	+1 Step Penalty
Pressure Extreme, each level beyond code	+1 Step Penalty
Rush Job (completed in 50% normal time)	+1 Step Penalty
Sleep Deprivation	+1 or +2 Step Penalty
Temperature Extreme, each level beyond code	+1 Step Penalty

This list is by no means exhaustive, and so gamemasters are free to impose other modifiers where they make sense.

TOTAL CONCENTRATION: Through use of the Concentration proxy skill and a strong Willpower stat, characters can sometimes ignore some or all of the Step Penalties assigned to them. Total Concentration, or TC, is calculated during character creation. **A character's TC is normally zero,** but could be 1, 2, 3, 4, or even in rare cases as high as 5. The TC trait indicates the number of Step Penalties that can, subject to the gamemaster's approval, be regularly ignored.

For example, a character with a TC of 2 who was Severely Wounded (which carries a +3 Step Penalty) would only suffer a +1 Step Penalty during play. If that same character was also working in zero-G in addition to being wounded, the total applied Step Penalty would be 3 instead of the normal 5.

Incredible Rolls

When players make an Action Check or Contested Action roll, sometimes the dice will indicate a really good or really bad result, which is more than just success or failure. **This happens whenever**

the player rolls double ones (1 on the d12 and 1 on the d8) and when the player rolls a 12 on the d12 and an 8 on the d8:

AWESOME SUCCESSES: One of the exciting facets to the Zaon roleplaying game is the chance for heroes to obtain an awesome success in their actions. This game uses a simple linear chance system to determine an awesome success. If you roll maximum on both dice (a 12 on the d12 action die and an 8 on the d8 penalty die), then the character not only succeeded but also obtained an Awesome Success!

The effects of an awesome success are left up to the gamemaster but should include results that are unexpected and beneficial. **This means that the action worked out better than expected.** Some skill descriptions include examples of awesome successes.

Note: Even if a 12 and 8 are rolled on the dice, if the Action Check isn't high enough to equal or beat the Action Difficulty, then no awesome success occurs, however the action is treated as a normal success instead unless the assigned Action Difficulty was Absurd or Impossible, in which case only failure results.

BLUNDERS: There will always be a slight chance for blunders anytime a dice roll is made, just as there is a chance for an Awesome Success. Anytime the player rolls double ones (a 1 on the d12 and a 1 on the d8) then the character not only fails but also blunders!

If the character's Action Check is high enough, it is sometimes possible for double ones to still indicate a success on the action die. In these instances, the action does fail (even if the total Action Check still exceeds the target Action Difficulty number), **but it merely fails instead of being a disastrous blunder.**

Examples of blunders include things such as: a character that blundered a roll to disable a security system wouldn't just fail to bypass it but would also set off the alarm; a Bot Repair attempt wouldn't just fail to fix a problem but would also make it worse; a blundered surgery check would indicate a failed operation and unexpected complications that worsen the patient's health; and so forth. Specific examples of these are sometimes included in a skill's description.

Rolls That Can't Succeed

There are a few instances where rolls will always fail, no matter what happens. These are actions where the GM has assigned an *Absurd* or *Impossible* Action Difficulty to the task being attempted, and where the character's combined stat and skill total plus 12 (the maximum on a d12) fall short by one or more points of the target number. This means that even if the player rolls a 12, the Action Check still isn't high enough to succeed. In circumstances such as these, the tasks (absurd or impossible) are simply out of the character's reach.

Even an awesome success won't help the character succeed at an absurd or impossible task, though awesome successes do result in success for Very Difficult tasks (or easier) regardless of the Action Check ability.

Rolls That Are Always Successful

As a general rule, anytime a character's base Action Check (their stat + skill rating +1 [the minimum on a d12]) already meets or exceeds the assigned Action Difficulty target number, then obviously there is no need to roll—the action automatically succeeds because no matter what is rolled on the d12 the character still succeeds.

Of course, **if there are any Step Penalties in effect, then the dice must be rolled because the penalty die may fail the character.** Similarly, if the outcome of the skill action is important, then players may wish to roll anyway in order to check for an awesome success (while simultaneously risking a blunder—in this case treated as a normal failure).

Repeating Previously Failed Actions

When characters fail at an Action Check they can sometimes try that action again by tackling the problem from a new angle. Whether or not your character can attempt a skill roll again is up to the gamemaster. Many skills denote in their descriptions whether or not that skill can usually be re-attempted or when it most certainly can't.

In many cases, re-attempting an action is only a matter of time. Thus, failing to fix the pressure seal of an airlock door after a standard length of time (based on the task, say, 10 minutes) might mean the character will have to spend another like amount of time (another 10 minutes) to make another roll. Each roll thereafter will take another like interval of time—possibly adding up to many hours for the inept mechanic before the seal is working properly. This might not impact the character's lives much if they're in no hurry. But, some task attempts (like building a new engine from scratch) might take years for each attempt!

Common sense must apply. The harder the Action Difficulty, the less likely repeated attempts will be possible or allowed.

Understanding the Mathematical Probability of the Step Penalty

The following paragraphs discuss some of the math theory behind the dice mechanics used in this game. The following paragraphs are not rules—**just discussion for those interested learning why the Step Penalty is better than applying modifiers to dice rolls.**

The reason Step Penalties use an eight-sided die along with the ordinary Action Check roll is to always permit a chance for success (no matter how slim) for actions that had the opportunity for success in the first place. The Step Penalty mechanic leaves a chance for success no matter how severe those outside forces may be that cause Step Penalties.

As a case example, let's assume your character had a normal base Action Check (stat + skill) of 6 to accomplish a certain task, and that task was a Tough one, then you would have to normally roll an 8 or higher on the d12 in order to meet or beat the Tough Action Difficulty of 14. Mathematically, you have a 42% chance of rolling high enough and thus succeeding.

However, now let's consider the need for modifiers due to outside forces such as wounds. If your character was both wounded and trying to work in a zero-G environment while attempting this feat, then the gamemaster would have to assign penalties or modifiers to reduce your character's chances. **IF** the rules did this by using modifiers that subtract from your total, say, 3 for being wounded and 2 more for being in zero-G, then there would no longer be any chance of succeeding. This is because even if you roll a 12 on the action die, 12 plus 6 (Action Check) minus 5 (the modifiers) can't ever meet or exceed the difficulty of 14.

The same is true **if** the rules instead increased the target Action Difficulty number by an alike amount—this is also a modifier.

In both cases where these modifiers were applied, the chance of success dropped from 42% immediately to 0%, which is unrealistic even given the severity of the conditions (bad wounds plus zero-G environment).

Alternatively, the answer might seem to be that the modifiers should be made smaller, but then they unrealistically have very little impact.

The Step Penalty die solves this predicament. The beauty of the penalty die is that it effectively lowers the mathematical probability of your existing chances by an applied percentage—not a fixed amount. That is, around 12% of your original chance for each Step Penalty—**NOT** one number subtracted off your base number, **but 12 *percent*** of your original normal chances (whatever those are) before Step Penalties were applied. By 12% of your original chances, we mean that if your original chance was 42%, then 5% is effectively subtracted from your probability with 1 Step Penalty making it 37% overall instead. If your original chance was 67%, then 8% would be effectively removed. Luckily, you don't have to do any of this math because the penalty die does the math for you. Simply, you only need to keep track of whether or not you succeed on both of the dice you threw.

In the original example, you had to roll an 8 or higher on your d12 to beat the target difficulty of 14. In probability terms, you mathematically had a 42% chance of doing this (rolling 8 or higher on a 12-sided die). If we apply a +3 Step Penalty for being wounded plus another +1 Step Penalty for working in a high temperature atmosphere, we now have a 50% chance of rolling 5 or higher on our penalty die to escape these outside forces. Mathematically, the probability of the penalty die is applied (multiplied) against the existing probability of rolling high enough on the action die. Thus, 50% of 42% (or 42% of 50%) leaves roughly a 21% chance of succeeding at the entire combined roll. You needn't worry about these percent chances; they just represent the mathematical odds of rolling high enough on both dice.

As the penalties increase, the chance decreases but still remains viable, which is the key. For example, even if we had a total of a +7 Step Penalty (the highest possible degree in this game of outside forces working against us) we'd still have a 12% chance to make the Penalty die roll, which, when combined with our regular 42% chance of succeeding at the Action Check, would leave a final 5% mathematical probability of success. Despite 5% not being good odds at all, it's satisfying in game play to know that there is at least some chance even when a lot of severe outside modifiers have entered play.

As already mentioned, if conventional subtraction modifiers were applied, your character's chances would lower and then suddenly drop to 'impossible' rather than becoming increasingly slim.

Finally, note that this topic has nothing to do with the difficulty of the actual task at hand, as that increases the Action Difficulty. It is vital to understand the distinction. Being wounded, for instance, doesn't change the difficulty of actually cracking a security system, it just makes the wounded character less able to focus on that task. Wounds, like strong wind or rain, are outside forces that divide your original chances. Still, some tasks are very difficult in and to themselves. Indeed, there may be plenty of tasks that your character has no chance at succeeding at—especially tasks classified as Absurd or Impossible which have very high Action Difficulties you may have zero chance of meeting or exceeding.

Step Penalties just represent a reduced chance of succeeding at something your character normally could succeed at if not for wounds, zero-G, or other forms of interference which have nothing to do with how hard the base task is.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Combat

Introduction

Though often best avoided, combat is sometimes necessary. Combat can involve weapons fire, thrown objects, hand-to-hand duels, or just about anything else imaginable where one character attacks another.

Combat is resolved as a Contested Action (see previous chapter). However, the methods for resolving these rolls additionally follow a few special rules as well—each of which is detailed in this chapter.

Looking at the big picture, combat involves three steps. The first is called **Initiative** and is used to see who acts first, second, third, and so on. The second step uses special AIM/Evasion-based **Contested Action** rolls to see if the character's attack hits or misses the intended target, while the third step deals with damage and armor protection.

Initiative

Before any contested rolls can be made, it is necessary to see who acts first, second, or later in the turn. To simplify this order, turns are divided into five stages or *Phases* in which characters may act. The faster characters will act in the earlier phases of combat, while average ones will act in the Average phase, and where slower characters will usually perform only in the Slow phase of the turn.

Characters that are performing in the same phase are said to be acting simultaneously, and so could even injure or kill one another at the same time. Contrarily, a character who manages to incapacitate or kill another character before that character can act no longer has to deal with that character's action—since the character won't be able to act later in the turn.

To determine who goes first, each character's Initiative trait is used. The character's Initiative trait is the name of the phase the character normally acts in—assuming they're performing a fast or at least reasonably fast action that turn. But, depending on what the character is doing, it is possible for the character's initiative to be slowed somewhat (see below).

The gamemaster then calls each phase, starting with Ultra Fast and ending with Slow, until every character has acted.

COMPOUND ACTIONS: The above system assumes that characters are shooting or wielding weapons that have already been drawn, or are performing an equally fast action such as dropping an item or looking in a direction. If the character needs to perform a compound action, such as drawing and firing a weapon instead of simply firing or wielding it, then the character's effective Initiative is slowed by one step (a Fast character becomes an Average one, whereas an Average one becomes Slow, and so on) and the character continues to act in the slower phase for the remainder of combat as described in 'Looping & Slowed Initiative' described below.

Other examples of compound actions include unslinging and then firing a rifle, dropping prone, retrieving a grenade from a belt pouch and then throwing it, opening a door and stepping through the doorway, and so on. Reloading a weapon might constitute a compound action or it may be treated as a complex action (complex actions are described below) depending on the weapon.

COMPLEX ACTIONS: Complex actions are more time-consuming than Compound actions (see above). Remember, a turn is around 1 second of time so it is generally not possible to use most skills or complete complex actions during that time. When an action requires more than a second or two but less than a few minutes (dozens of turns), then the gamemaster must decide how long the specific situation will take to complete.

For example, a character trying to jimmy or quickly pick a mechanical lock (lockpicking skill) might be able to complete that task with only a -2 phase to initiative or might require a few turns—both of which are within the scope of combat. The gamemaster will decide how far initiative is slowed if it can be completed within one turn, or how many turns it will require if it can't.

On the other hand, a character using Bot Tech/Repair to mend a bot wouldn't be able to accomplish such an involved task during the scope of combat unless the problem was very simple.

DEFERRING INITIATIVE: Characters will sometimes want to wait and see what others are doing before they themselves act in a turn. In such instances, players may announce that they 'defer' when the gamemaster calls for their action. Deferring automatically delays the character's action by one phase (as if the character had a slower base initiative phase in the first place).

Deciding to defer is a strategic move that could cost characters the battle if they're not careful. There is no limit to how many times a player can defer, but **deferring on the Slow Phase means that the character will not get to act that turn** (as there are no more phases in the turn). **In such a case, a character's Initiative returns to normal at the start of the next turn—they cannot automatically defer or hold their action until the immediate beginning of the next turn (Ultra Fast) unless their normal base Initiative is Ultra Fast. Details on 'looping' initiative are described in 'Looping & Slowed Initiative', next.**

LOOPING & SLOWED INITIATIVE: The phases of initiative that compose a turn are continuous uninterrupted cycles. There is no space between turns. This means that **for any reason a character's Initiative Phase is slowed or delayed, that character continues to act during the slower phase for the remainder of combat** unless again slowed or delayed.

Also, if a compound or complex action (or voluntary defer) would push a character past the Slow phase in a turn, then they are effectively looped or 'wrapped' around into their normal initiative phase on the following turn—meaning they miss a turn. Furthermore, they do not 'wrap' around into the Ultra Fast phase of initiative; only to their normal phase. This is because slower characters sometimes miss rounds when extenuating circumstances cause a delay or slowing of initiative.

For example, a Fast character draws and fires a weapon (the extra time needed to draw the weapon delays the character 1 phase) in the Average phase. Next turn the character fires again during the Average phase. The following turn, the character voluntarily hesitates and thus defers initiative from Average to Slow. Next turn, the character fires in Slow. On the turn after that the character decides to draw a different weapon and fire it (a 1 phase delay) but since the character is already in the Slow phase, our character will be wrapped back around to the Fast phase, causing

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Begin with Initiative. A character's Initiative is already calculated and on the character sheet—which determines which of the 5 Initiative phases a character will act. Next, players declare actions for their characters, and then slow their initiatives zero or more steps depending on the action. Normal (quick) actions such as shooting, dropping something, jumping, and so on, do not affect the base Initiative phase. Compound actions such as drawing & firing (instead of just firing) or opening a door and stepping through reduce Initiative speed by one step (a Fast character becomes Average, an Average one becomes Slow). Complex actions such as picking a lock may require more than one turn to complete, though some actions are fast enough to simply reduce Initiative by two or more steps instead.

➥Deferring initiative slows a character for the remainder of that battle! (See 'Looping & Slowed Initiative' in the main text.)

➥Running characters can complete 1/5 of their SPD in meters over a full Phase. (See text for details.)

➥Vary it: d6; 1-2 slows 1 phase; 3-4 no change; 5-6 accelerate one.

➥Characters who are totally surprised, surprised, or simply startled may lose phases or even entire turns before being able to act. (See Surprise text and QuickLook chart for details.)

➤AIM (to-hit) rolls are a special type of Contested Action that use prefigured stat+skill scores such as AIM and Evasion. The rules are the same for melee and ranged combat. The attacker must use the appropriate AIM score + d12 whereas defenders use their Evasion + d12. If the attacker's total is higher then the attack hits. If the defender's total is higher then the attack misses. If tied, then compare the stat fractions from AIM versus Evasion; the higher wins. If those fractions are tied, the attack hits because the target number was met.

➥Before making your AIM roll, assess any Step Penalties (such as those incurred from being wounded or attacking in zero-gravity, plus combat-specific Step Penalties such as range or cover).

➥Shooting at a target that is behind soft or hard cover is done normally, except that a +2 or +4 Step Penalty is imposed, respectively.

➥If the target (defender) is unaware of an attack or chooses not to evade, then defender only rolls a d12 & doesn't add Evasion score.

➤Characters may give up their action in order to spend the entire turn 'running like hell'. These characters can't do anything else but evade, but impose a +3 Step Penalty on anyone else attempting to attack them.

➤Awesome Successes in combat are called Awesome Hits and always score maximum damage. Blunders are up to the GM, and are situation-appropriate such as accidentally hitting a comrade, dropping the weapon, hitting self, weapon jams, etc.

➤Determine Damage. Roll damage and apply to Life (after armor, see below). For each point of stun damage, mark one diagonal line in the first available (empty) Life box. For each point of wound damage, mark an 'X' (two crossing diagonal lines) in an empty box OR convert Stun to wound if any stun are present when the wound is received. If all Life boxes are marked but not all contain an 'X', then begin converting single-line boxes into 'X' boxes for each stun or wound point. See the damage example graphics later in this chapter.

➥If all Life boxes contain a mark (either stun or wound), then the character is unconscious.

➥Once all Life boxes are 'X'ed out, then begin applying damage in the Critical Life area. If all the regular Life and all of the Critical Life boxes are completely 'X'ed out, then the character is dead.

➥Check Armor. All damage points below the appropriate armor rating (PDR, EDR, etc.) are absorbed. All damage points above the rating (from a single slug or bolt) penetrate to the character's Life. Screens are different (see).

➤You're Done ! Proceed to Special Rules Chapter

no action at all this turn. On the following turn, then the character fires during the Fast phase (and will continue firing during the Fast phase unless delayed again).

DICE ROLLS AND VARIED INITIATIVE:

Because combat situations always involve some chaos, a random dice element that affects character initiative class can be used to simulate this unless the gamemaster decides not to use this rule. Simply, each player rolls a d6 for their character, with a 1–2 indicating slowed initiative by one class; 3–4 meaning no change; and 5–6 giving the character a faster boost of one class. This is done at the start of each turn, and can move the character's initiative up or down one step.

Initiative that is slowed (moved down one step) acts as if the character is delayed in a manner described in 'Looping & Slowed Initiative' above.

Initiative that is sped-up one step does the reverse. A Fast character becomes UltraFast, and so on, and remains so unless the character's initiative is slowed by one step for any reason (or even sped up again). If a character's initiative is already UltraFast and is sped up by this dice roll, then that character 'wraps around' to Slow Initiative in the same turn while getting a free turn before the current turn starts. In other words, the character gets a 'free turn' before anyone else can act, and then acts again in the Slow phase of the current turn—and remains at Slow initiative unless slowed or sped up again.

QUICKLOOK | SURPRISE

➤TOTAL SURPRISE:

➥*Ultra Fast:* act at turn end | normal next turn

➥*Very Fast:* lose first turn | normal next turn

➥*Fast:* lose first turn | act at end of next | normal on 3rd

➥*Average:* lose 2 turns | normal on 3rd turn

➥*Slow:* lose 3 turns | normal on 4th turn

➤SURPRISED:

➥*Ultra Fast:* one phase slower than enemy | normal next

➥*Very Fast:* act at turn end | normal next turn

➥*Fast:* lose first turn | normal next turn

➥*Average:* lose first turn | normal next turn

➥*Slow:* lose 2 turns | normal on 3rd turn

➤STARTLED:

➥*Ultra Fast:* act simultaneous with enemy | normal next

➥*Very Fast:* one phase slower than enemy | normal next

➥*Fast:* act at turn end | normal next turn

➥*Average:* lose first turn | normal next turn

➥*Slow:* lose first turn | normal next turn

SURPRISE: Sometimes characters will be taken off guard by a sudden attack or action. This can be true, to a lesser extent, even if they're expecting trouble. In any event, surprise simply allows a certain number of turns to pass before the surprised characters can begin participating. There are three types, or classes, of surprise each with different turn delays. The effects of surprise are based on the character's Reflex and Intuition, and so use the character's Initiative Class to determine the delay time.

Note that it is very possible for two opposing groups to both be surprised by each other if neither knows exactly where the other is when the surprise occurs and has not also prepared their surprise attack.

➤TOTAL SURPRISE: This type of surprise is warranted whenever characters are completely surprised such as by a sudden attack or door being blasted open while the characters were preparing for bed, having dinner, or relaxing on a sofa.

➥*Ultra Fast* characters act at the end of the first surprise turn, after the enemy has acted, but then return to their normal Ultra Fast initiative class on the next turn.

➥*Very Fast* characters lose the first surprise turn, but may act normally beginning with the next turn, acting in the Very Fast phase as usual.

➥*Fast* characters lose the first surprise turn, and act at the end of the next turn after the enemy has acted. That is, the enemy gets two turns to act first. But, the Fast character returns to the Fast initiative phase on the third turn and may proceed normally.

➥*Average* characters lose two full turns and then begin normally on the third turn at their normal Average initiative phase.

➥*Slow* characters lose three full turns and then begin normally on the fourth turn at their normal Slow initiative phase.

➤SURPRISED: When characters already have their wits about them, such as when walking through a dangerous neighborhood, visiting a busy spaceport or town center, or when accessing a computer terminal where the characters shouldn't be, they will be surprised if suddenly attacked.

➥*Ultra Fast* characters act one Initiative phase slower than the first enemy who surprises them (minimum of Slow phase), and then return to their normal Ultra Fast initiative phase on the next turn.

➥*Very Fast* characters act at the end of the first surprise turn, and then return to their normal Very Fast initiative phase on the following turn.

➥*Fast* characters lose the first surprise turn, and then return to their normal Fast initiative phase on the following turn.

➥*Average* characters lose the first surprise turn, and then return to their normal Average initiative phase on the following turn.

➥*Slow* characters lose two full turns and then begin normally on the third turn at their normal Slow initiative phase.

➤STARTLED: If characters know that an attack is coming any moment, such as when walking the corridors of a dangerous enemy facility or starship where guards are on patrol, characters will be startled if they don't know exactly when and where an attack is coming. Even if they do know exactly when the attack will come, they still might be startled if it happens quickly.

➥*Ultra Fast* characters act simultaneously with the first enemy who startles them.

➥*Very Fast* characters act one Initiative phase slower than the first enemy who startles them (minimum of Slow phase), and then return to their normal Very Fast initiative phase on the next turn.

➥*Fast* characters act at the end of the first startle turn, and then return to their normal Fast initiative phase on the following turn.

➥*Average* characters lose the first startle turn, and then return to their normal Average initiative phase on the following turn.

➥*Slow* characters lose the first startle turn, and then return to their normal Slow initiative phase on the following turn.

For example, security guards at a corrupt weapons facility are watching a group of characters on a security monitor. The guards are instructed to ambush the characters in a corridor those characters are headed for. The characters know that guards could show up anytime, so are fully ready for a fight because their guns are drawn and ready. The guards wait quietly around a corner until they receive the ambush signal via an earpiece from the guard watching the security monitor. The signal is given and the guards lean around the corner and open fire (a compound action). However, the group of characters has an Ultra Fast character among them who acts simultaneously with the first guard. For

the guard's compound action, he leans around the corner on the Fast phase planning to fire on the next phase. The Ultra Fast character simply open fires on the Fast phase (simultaneous with the enemy if merely startled) for his action before the guard can even fire, hitting that guard and preventing him from firing back. The second guard gets a shot off, however. And, since the rest of the character party have Average initiative classes, none of them get to act during that first startle turn at all (they lose the first turn). On the next turn, everyone acts on the normal initiative phase for their character.

COMBAT MOVEMENT: Another situation that often arises when determining initiative is whether or not one character has time to jump behind a barricade or run around a corner before another character can attack. To determine this, **characters can complete 1/5 of their Running Speed trait in movement (meters) in one full Phase (by the end of it).**

Note that if characters begin on Average then they only get to move 2/5 of their movement that turn. Similarly, if they don't act until Slow then they will end up moving only 1/5 their total Speed—there just happens to be a delay before the character can begin running. **The situation is quite different if the character is already running at the start of the turn (see Sustained Actions below).** Also, when dividing Running Speed into fifths, use the Movement chart described next.

Also, unless the character's Initiative is Ultra Fast to begin with, then running as a 'sustained action' (described below) is the only manner in which most characters can travel their entire Speed in meters over a given **turn in which they begin running.**

To divide Speed by Phase, always hold the largest uneven portions to the end of the turn, as demonstrated in the Movement Chart:

SPEED	UltraFast	VeryFast	Fast	Average	Slow
1	–	–	–	–	1
2	–	–	–	1	1
3	–	–	1	1	1
4	–	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1	2
7	1	1	1	2	2
8	1	1	2	2	2
9	1	2	2	2	2
10	2	2	2	2	2
11	2	2	2	2	3
12	2	2	2	3	3
13	2	2	3	3	3
14	2	3	3	3	3
15	3	3	3	3	3
16	3	3	3	3	4
17	3	3	3	4	4
18	3	3	4	4	4
19	3	4	4	4	4
20	4	4	4	4	4
21	4	4	4	4	5
22	4	4	4	5	5
23	4	4	5	5	5
24	4	5	5	5	5
25	5	5	5	5	5
26	5	5	5	5	6
27	5	5	5	6	6
28	5	5	6	6	6
29	5	6	6	6	6
30	6	6	6	6	6

For an example, let's assume a character with a SPD of 6 is running from another character who's about to fire a weapon. Let's also say that our yellow-bellied chicken is Fast (Phase 3). Our shooter acts in Average (Phase 4). As long as there is cover within 1 meter (1/5 SPD) of our character, then it can be reached before the shooter fires. Should the cover be 2 meters away, then our character makes it 1 meter over the course of the Fast Phase, and then needs all of the Average Phase to complete the additional distance (up to 1 more meter), which we don't have. Our shooter will get a clear shot.

If, however, the shooter was going in the Slow Phase, then our character could reach cover up to 2 meters away before the weapon is shot.

SUSTAINED ACTIONS: A sustained action is one that is continuous (not continual), **began in a preceding turn, and is being continued into the current turn without interruption.**

Thus, a character who began running in the previous turn and continues to run through the current turn is performing a sustained action. Similarly, a character firing an automatic weapon in Spray (full auto) mode who began firing the last turn (or any previous one) and continues to fire through the current turn without letting up on the trigger is also performing a sustained action—unless a new area is aimed at, in which case it **isn't** a sustained action.

Sustaining an action allows characters to forgo initiative for that turn. Instead, characters begin their actions on Ultra Fast because they are already in motion when the turn starts. Remember, though, that only actions that are truly continuous (not intermittent) are considered to be sustained actions. Therefore, **pulling the trigger repeatedly on a pistol (even at the same target) is NOT considered a sustained action. In truth, very few actions are sustained ones.**

For example, characters might begin running on one turn (running starts on the appropriate phase) and then continue running into the next turn where they'd be able to move their full running Speed one-fifth of which over the course of every phase in that turn.

FREE ACTIONS: Even though player characters are allowed only one action per turn, certain conduct can be performed along with a normal action and/or after it in the same turn. Typically this kind of conduct is limited to three things:

1) Dropping an item held (but not using a grenade);
2) Speaking a few words or uttering a short phrase; and
3) Glance at something to get a momentary look at it.

The gamemaster will sometimes allow other free actions, but these should be limited to things that can be done either alongside a standard action or faster than aiming a pistol and firing it.

Free actions cannot be performed before the character's initiative, but they can be performed on the initiative phase the character gets to act in.

AIM Checks (To-Hit Rolls)

The next step in the combat process is to see who hits or misses who. AIM Checks resolve this and follow the same philosophy of any other Contested Action (see previous chapter) but instead use special time-saving traits such as AIM and Evasion, and also involve a few other considerations as well—for example, Step Penalties having only to do with combat. Incidentally, these rules also apply to characters who are using melee weapons or brawling their opponents. Special rules for wrestling and overbearing, though, are covered in the advanced rules discussed in the next chapter.

Each character acting in the current phase of the turn (determined by Initiative) declares a target. Both the attacker and the target defender make rolls, but what goes into these rolls is different for the attacker than the

defender. Attackers use their appropriate AIM trait (plus a d12) whereas defenders use their Evasion trait (plus a d12).

If the attacker's total is higher, then the attack hits. If the defender's total is higher, then the attack misses. If the roll is a tie, a Close Call declares the winner by directly comparing the attacker's AIM fraction versus the defender's Evasion fraction—the higher fraction wins so if the attacker's is higher the attack hits and if the defender's is higher the attack misses. In the case of both fractions also being tied, the attacker wins because the target number was met.

Also, it is important to know that a successful to-hit roll indicates a hit but not how successful or significant that hit was. In other words, barely making your roll versus rolling much higher than necessary are both the same: a hit. Damage dice (discussed later) determine the severity of the hit.

TYPES OF AIM: For simplicity, three types of AIM have already been pre-calculated and are listed prominently on the Character Record Sheet: ***Ranged AIM, Melee AIM,*** and ***Throwing AIM*. Simply take this value and add a d12 to it to determine the AIM Check total—there is no stat and skill to add together because the AIM trait has already done this for convenience.** Note that **many weapons have modifiers that affect the character's AIMing of that weapon.** Listed in the data row for each weapon on the character sheet is a column denoting the AIM the character must use when attacking with that weapon—**already adjusted for that weapon's accuracy or lack thereof.**

EVASION OR NOT: Normally, defending characters begin with their Evasion trait and then add a d12 to it in order to contest an attack. However, sometimes the defender will be unaware of the attacker or may actually choose not to evade. In either of these two cases, **then the contested AIM Check proceeds normally except the defender only rolls a d12—they don't add their Evasion to it because they're not evading.**

Non-Evading Target: d12 only.

Evading Target: d12 + Evasion score.

Again, assume that most persons involved in combat or who are aware of their surroundings **will automatically apply any Evasion trait they have against the attacker, even if they don't know where the attacker is or what the attacker is doing.** Even surprised characters who have not yet had the opportunity to begin their fight back may still apply their Evasion. But versus the assassin sniper perched high atop a building ledge (who probably wouldn't tip off the target) there is no Evasion to apply **unless the target was already in combat with someone else.**

STEP PENALTIES IN COMBAT: In addition to the normal combat rolls, it is of course necessary to roll an eight-sided penalty die along with the combat d12 roll in order to check for incredible rolls and any General Step Penalties that were assigned. Furthermore, a few additional Step Penalties specific only to combat rolls must also be tallied up with and added to any ordinary Step Penalties.

Combat Step Penalties cover specific difficulties having to do with target range, cover, and the like, and so affect only AIM (to-hit) Check rolls. These combat-specific Step Penalties are described in the table below.

Combat AIM Step Penalties are cumulative.

Required Modifiers Action	***AIM Penalty or Bonus***
General Step Penalties (wounds, zero-g, etc.)	See List in Ch 17
Ranged Target is at Short Range	None
Ranged Target is at Medium Range	+2 Step Penalty
Ranged Target is at Long Range	+4 Step Penalty
Ranged Target is at Extreme Range	+7 Step Penalty
Attacker using Wrong Hand†	+2 Step Penalty
Attacker using two weapons† (2-handed fighting)	+2 Step Penalty
Shooter is using Rapid Fire (Burst)	See Weapon Desc.
Attacker blind or firing in total darkness w/o aid	See List in Ch 17
Target behind soft cover	+2 Step Penalty
Target behind hard cover	+4 Step Penalty
Target running like hell	+3 Step Penalty

† Note that the penalties for using two hands apply to both hands IN ADDITION TO the penalty assigned to the wrong hand. That is, firing two weapons results in a +2 Step Penalty to the primary hand and a +4 Step Penalty to the other hand. Wielding two rifles may not be possible, however, due to weight considerations. If the GM allows two rifles to be used this way, an additional +1 Step Penalty is often warranted.

COVER: When characters hide behind cover they greatly reduce their chance of being hit. **This assumes that the defender is using cover but also exposing some of his or her body in order to shoot back. If not, then as long as the cover can't also be penetrated then the character is of course safe.**

Soft cover includes shrubs, smoked glass, or other materials that could be easily penetrated by weapons fire but obscure target acquisition somewhat. Rock, barricades, blast doors, a building corner, and so forth are considered to be ***hard cover*.** In effect, anything solid that conceals 50 or more percent of the defender's body (half or more hidden), but leaves enough out to return fire (for no matter how brief) requires use of these Cover rules. **Note that soft and hard cover are not cumulative. The most protection someone can receive while behind the best possible cover is a +4 Step Penalty (hard cover) to the shooter's chances.**

Note that depending on the cover material and the type of weapon being used, what might ordinarily constitute hard cover may in fact be reduced to soft cover. Examples include firing a standard projectile weapon at someone using a primitive wooden or plaster wall as cover, or use of a Nova SuperGun versus anyone behind anything other than a blast door or similar heavy metal—these ordinarily hard cover objects would then be treated as soft cover. This is because unlike a blaster, projectile weapons have more penetration and can easily pass through a wall of sheetrock and wood. Of course, firing through a ship's wall (bulkhead or standard ship wall) is still hard cover because the wall is thick metal.

RUNNING LIKE HELL: Characters whose only concern is simply not to get hit in combat are considered to be **'running like hell'.** This doesn't necessarily mean that characters are actually running, just that they are doing everything within their ability to avoid being hit.

Characters using this ability can't do anything else for the entire turn except evade. This means that they can't shoot back, can't perform any skills, can't grab objects, or even talk except maybe to call for help (if the GM is feeling generous). The upside is that a +3 Step Penalty is imposed on the attacker, thereby strengthening normal Evasion.

The desire to 'run like hell' **must be declared during Initiative, but works for the remainder of that turn. Therefore, an attacker with a higher initiative class may get a clean shot on any turn the character chooses to begin running like hell. However, 'running like hell' can be continued into the next turn as a sustained action to protect against faster attackers!**

AWESOME HITS: As described in Chapter 17, it is possible to obtain Awesome Successes when making an Action Check.

When this happens in combat, it's called an **Awesome Hit.** Unlike Awesome Successes (the results of which are left up to the gamemaster), **Awesome Hits always indicate that the attack causes maximum damage!** Damage is described later in this chapter.

Brawling characters (hand-to-hand fists) that receive an Awesome Hit still inflict the standard 1-point stun damage to their opponent (see Damage, below), but also force opponents of the same size or smaller to be knocked down (as per the Knockdown rules, see Advanced Rules).

Characters wielding melee weapons that receive an Awesome Hit do maximum damage, as normal for an Awesome Success. If, however, the attack was made with a bludgeoning weapon (a club or bat, for example), then the opponent also receives a Knockdown!

BLUNDERS: It is possible that a to-hit roll will result in more than just a miss—it may wind up a blunder. When this happens in combat the results can be amusing or even deadly. The results of blundered combat roles are left up to the gamemaster. Examples of blunders include, but are not limited to, the following situation-dependent events:

1) The character's grasp on the gun or melee weapon slips a little; optionally, a gun might have an unusually bad recoil. Regardless, the character loses an Initiative step beginning with the next turn.

2) The weapon's energy or bullet clip ejects. Characters must spend 2 full turns (about 2 seconds) retrieving the clip and reloading their weapon, or reloading with a new clip.

3) A bad grip, recoil, or balance results in the weapon being dropped 1-2 meters away. Retrieving this dropped weapon will require 2 full turn (about 2 seconds).

4) The character's weapon is either flung far out of reach or jams (if possible). In either event, the character must spend 4 turns fixing or retrieving the item. Alternatively, this character is free to begin using a different weapon next turn.

5) The character's gun backfires and is damaged beyond repair; or a character's melee weapon breaks and is now useless.

6) A companion is hit. For ranged weapons, whichever party member is closest to the line of fire is hit. For melee weapons, the closest party member is struck.

7) Hit self. For ranged weapons, a gun might double fire, recoiling the weapon downward where the second shot hits the shooter, or explode. For melee weapons, the attack swing might be too strong and so comes back to hit the wielder.

8) The character's gun explodes and becomes useless, causing the normal dice of damage to the shooter. For melee weapons, the attacker hits him or herself AND breaks their weapon.

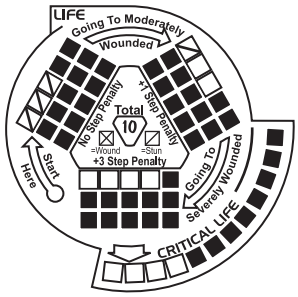
Damage

When an attack succeeds, there is the potential for damage. How much damage is applied is based on the attack form used and is noted under each weapon type in dice (number of six-sided dice with or without additional points of damage).

Roll damage. For example, a slug from a projectile weapon might inflict 2d6 points of damage. Damage must be rolled separately for each such slug or bolt that hit, and then be applied to the target's Life trait (barring any protective armor which may lower the damage applied).

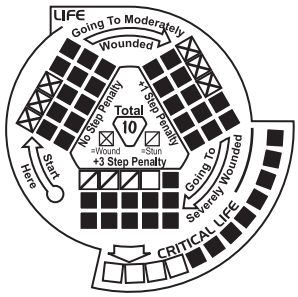
On the Character Record Sheet, the Life track uses a series of boxes that get 'checked-off' when damage occurs. Because there is a big difference between stun damage inflicted from brawling, clubs, and electrostun weapons, and the wound damage incurred from bullets, blaster bolts, and the like, **stun damage (temporary damage) is tracked differently than wound damage.**

For each point of stun damage, place a single diagonal line in the first available (empty) Life box. For each point of wound damage, place an 'X' in the first Life box that doesn't already have an 'X' in it—this might be a stun box with a



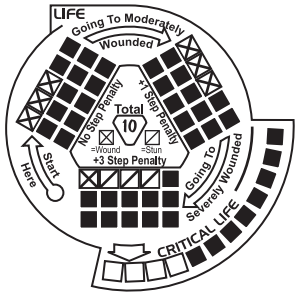
EXAMPLE 1:

Character was punched several times for a total of 4 points of Stun damage. The damage has spilled into Block 2, so the character is considered to be *Moderately Wounded*—with a +1 Step Penalty.



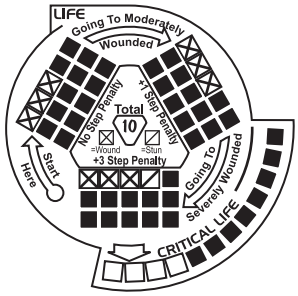
EXAMPLE 2:

Character with damage from Example #1 (above), gets shot for 6 Wound damage, then punched again for 3 more Stun. Note stun converts to wound. Character is *Severely Wounded,* but still conscious at a +3 Step Penalty.



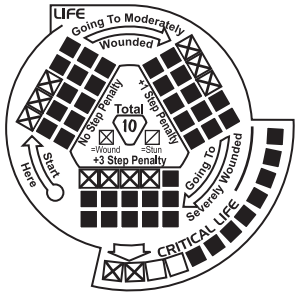
EXAMPLE 3:

Character with damage from Example #2 (above), is struck again for 2 more points of Stun damage. The character is now unconscious and still *Severely Wounded* with a +3 Step Penalty.



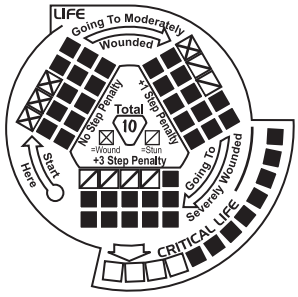
EXAMPLE 4:

Character with damage from Example #3 (above), once again gets shot—this time for only 2 Wound damage. The character is, of course, both still unconscious and *Severely Wounded.* Note that the Stun boxes are converted to Wound.



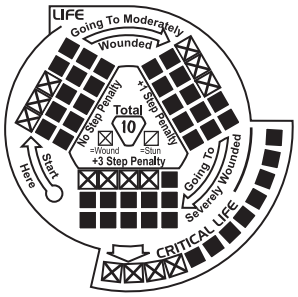
EXAMPLE 5:

Character with damage from Example #4 (above), is unlucky enough to get shot yet again. The shot inflicts 3 more points of Wound damage. The character is now considered to be *Critically Wounded* and will soon die without medical attention.



EXAMPLE 6:

A **new and different character** that was beaten for a total of 14 points of Stun damage. The character was reduced to unconsciousness at 10, and would have to be beaten for 14 more Stun points before death occurred.



EXAMPLE 7:

A dead character.

single slash or an empty box, whichever is closest to the beginning of the Life track. This means that stun damage that occurred before wound damage will get converted into wound damage. Stun damage that occurs after wound damage simply gets marked in boxes after it.

Once all of the character's Life boxes have either a single or double ('X') line through them, then that character is reduced to unconsciousness.

Any further damage to an unconscious character is tracked as follows: **For each additional point of stun damage, add a second single line to a single-marked 'Stun' Life box (thereby turning it into a wound box). For each additional point of wound damage, begin converting single Stun boxes into wound boxes. If all Life boxes are 'X'ed out, then begin recording damage in the Critical Life area.**

As character Life is divided into three roughly equal blocks, **the moment the character marks a single Life box in the first block, then that character has become Lightly Wounded. When all of these are filled the character is still only Lightly Wounded until the first box in the second block gets a mark—at which point the character is Moderately Wounded. As soon as the character is Moderately Wounded, then Step Penalties apply as detailed in Chapter 17. The same applies for the Severely Wounded block.**

Characters are between unconsciousness and death once all their Life boxes are 'X'ed out until they fill all of their Critical Life boxes with an 'X'—at which point, they are irretrievably dead.

The diagrams to the left and above are a series of examples demonstrating how to record character damage on a character with 10 Life and 4 Critical Life.

BRAWLING: Characters that **punch** their opponents use all of the standard rules for attacks, though **only inflict 1 point of stun damage per hit.** Higher Strength scores can further increase this damage (see below). Also, certain races may score 2 or more base points of damage (before Strength is considered) due to size or other factors. A few species even inflict wound damage. These cases are noted in the species' description.

When characters who are wearing heavy armor brawl each other they must often make called shots (see Special Rules, next chapter) to the head in order to score any damage because armor usually absorbs small damage like punches—assuming the armor doesn't also protect the head. Sucker Punches are those where the target's Evasion is usually ignored out of surprise.

STRENGTH BONUS TO DAMAGE: During melee and hand-to-hand combat, an attacker's Strength can affect the damage inflicted. Regardless of whether the attack is made with a fist or melee weapon, characters apply the following modifiers.

Strength Stat	Damage Modifier
less than 2_0	-4
2_0 to 2_4	-2
2_5 to 3_4	-1
3_5 to 4_9	±0
5_0 to 5_9	+1
6_0 to 6_9	+2
7_0 to 8_4	+4
8_5 to 9_9	+6
10_0 to 11_9	+8
12_0 to 14_9	+10
15_0 to 17_9	+12
18_0 to 22_9	+16

If the strike is with a sharp melee weapon (knife, sword, or the like), then the extra damage from Strength is *wound damage*. If the strike is made by a bludgeoning weapon (club) or the character's fists, then the extra damage is *stun*.

Species able to deliver a bite apply their Strength Bonus to that damage as well.

Obviously, strength bonuses do not apply to ranged weapons—including arrows, but excluding thrown items.

AWESOME HIT DAMAGE: As noted earlier, awesome hits always score Maximum Damage against the target. For example, instead of rolling a projectile pistol's 2d6 damage against a hit target, the bullet would instead inflict an automatic 12 points of damage. Awesome Hit melee attacks still get their Strength bonus (if any), score maximum damage, and may force a Knockdown, too, if they're from bludgeoning (non-sharp) weapons. Gamemasters are free to impose Knockdowns from awesome hand-to-hand melee strikes, too.

DAMAGE TO BOTS: Bot characters record damage the same way as regular characters do, except that the term is *Superstructure* in lieu of Life. There is but one exception: **Bots may ignore any stun damage**—that is, only real 'wound'-type damage will hurt a bot. For more information on bots, see _____.

Armor

Characters often wear armor and sometimes energy screens (personal force fields) to protect themselves from damage that might ordinarily kill them outright.

Various types of Armor reduce a character's Speed (through Encumbrance) and may lower the Character's Evasion trait because of their weight and bulk (see Chapter 25 of this book).

Armor and screens have several ratings that describe how effective they are against various forms of attack. A description of these follows, but they all operate the same way: **Any additional damage rolled above the Defense Rating from a single shot penetrates the armor and is applied to the character's Life points. Any damage that doesn't penetrate the armor is instead entirely absorbed by it and doesn't damage the character.**

Thus, a projectile weapon that inflicts 2d6 points of damage is fired against and hits a character wearing armor with a PDR (Projectile Defense Rating, see below) of 5. Damage is rolled for a total of 11 points of damage. The armor automatically absorbs the first 5 points (which are dissipated), and the remaining 6 points are applied as direct Life point damage to the character hit. If this character had 9 Life

points, then Life would be reduced to 3 until medical attention could be administered. However, if this armor was not worn, then the character would have sustained all 11 points of damage which would leave Life at -2 (2 points of Critical Life damage) where the character would be rendered unconscious and would soon die without medical aid.

In another example, lets assume the shot only scored 3 damage. As 3 is equal to or less than the armor's PDR, all 3 points are absorbed harmlessly without damage to the character.

BLADE DEFENSE RATING (BDR): Represents the armor's effectiveness versus swords, knives, spears, and other cutting or lancing melee weapons.

CONCUSSION DEFENSE RATING (CDR): Represents the armor's effectiveness versus fire, explosions, and other high-concussion forces, blasts, or crushing blows. Being struck by a vehicle (a crushing blow) would be covered by this armor rating, as are fists, grenades, and clubs.

PROJECTILE DEFENSE RATING (PDR): A rating indicating the amount of damage first absorbed by armor versus projectile weapons (bullets, arrows, and other small high-velocity physical objects).

ENERGY DEFENSE RATING (EDR): EDR represents the armor's effectiveness versus all energy weapons (except high-penetration cutting or laser-like weapons). Energy weapons include blasters, plasma guns, and the like.

LASER DEFENSE RATING (LDR): Represents the armor's effectiveness versus laser weapons and other special high-penetration (cutting) particle beams. All other energy weapons are covered by EDR.

Screens

Screens, on the other hand, are very expensive and rare. They behave similarly to armor in how they protect their wearer (see above), **but are typically good for only a couple of hits.** That is, they often have very high defense ratings and so can 100% protect against even some military-grade weaponry, **but act like an old fuse—once discharged they're useless.**

Any hit that scores more damage than determined by the screen's *DT* (Damage Threshold) causes the shield to energize and become effective for the full turn (1 second)—applying its defense ratings against all attacks that strike that turn. Damage from a single shot that exceeds the screen's usually high defense ratings does penetrate to the wearer. The screen's *Uses* rating determines how many times (how many 'fuses') the screen can activate. Note that the mechanism technology employed by screen devices is very delicate and operates off a basic physics principle making it **impossible to switch the unit on or off—screens will always activate if their DT is exceeded by an attack. Wearing or even carrying multiple screens has no additional effect—both energize if the attack exceeds either screen's DT and only the highest defense ratings are used. Screens cannot be recharged (but do use power) because the shield generator itself is designed to overload in order to protect the wearer, leaving the circuitry useless.**

Thus, if a 7-point blaster bolt struck a screen with a DT of 3 and an EDR of 10, then the screen would energize because 7 damage is enough to activate it. Luckily, the 7 damage is also not enough to penetrate to the wearer because the first 10 points (in this case all the damage) is absorbed by the shield energy. If the blaster bolt instead hit for 12 points of damage, then 2 would go through. In either event, the screen would lose one Use from its total lifetime allotment.

Wearing Multiple Armors

Occasionally, characters will want to don multiple armors for better protection. Here's how this works: **Screens augment armor, but 2 armors use the best armor score from each of the two armors worn plus increases that figure by 1 point;** as explained below. Remember, wearing multiple armors can increase the character's weight and other penalties significantly. Moreover, many armors state that they cannot be worn over other armor types.

For screens, any points that manage to exceed the screen's rating are then treated normally against the armor as if the attack had simply rolled lower damage.

For example, a 14-point blaster bolt strikes a screen with an EDR of 10, so 10 points are absorbed by the shield's power while 4 pass through to the character. These 4 points then strike physical armor which has an EDR of 6, and so all are absorbed by the armor. If the armor's EDR was only 2, then the last 2 points would get through to the character.

When a character wears 2 physical armors, compare the appropriate Defense Ratings (PDR, EDR, etc.) of each armor and use the highest but add 1 additional point for each additional layer of armor worn. Any damage over the new armor rating is applied to the character.

For example, a 12-point blaster bolt strikes a character whose two armors have an EDR of 6 and 8, respectively. The higher value, 8, is used as a base with 1 more being added to its effectiveness resulting in a total EDR of 9, and so 3 points penetrate to cause 3 points of damage to the character. Even so, this character might be a sitting duck with the extra encumbrance and restrictions to range of movement caused by wearing two heavy armors.

As previously stated, wearing multiple screens causes all screens worn or even carried to discharge in response to any damage against the character and only the screen with the highest defense rating is used for damage calculation—even though all screens lose a Use/charge.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Advanced Combat Rules

Introduction

Sometimes things will happen to characters that require special rules. Examples of circumstances requiring special rules include falling, being knocked out or down, wrestling, and even the aftermath of combat. The following paragraphs address some of these topics.

Wounds and Healing

Almost without question, characters will get hurt or injured during their careers. When they do, certain rules must be observed—specifically, the effects wounds and pain have on character performance.

THE EFFECTS OF DAMAGE: Characters that receive damage are said to be hurt or injured. The more injuries a character has sustained, the more difficult it becomes for that character to participate in combat or successfully complete other tasks.

Rather than address specific anatomical injuries and incapacitation, degrees of injury have been classified by the Wound Thresholds system. During character creation, Wound Thresholds were calculated based on a chart and essentially divided Life into three equal blocks. These were *Lightly Wounded, Moderately Wounded,* and *Severely Wounded.* The two latter of these categories carries a Step Penalty (+1 or +3, respectively).

Lightly Wounded = No Penalty
Moderately Wounded = +1 Step Penalty
Severely Wounded = +3 Step Penalty

These Penalties normally apply to any roll the character needs to make (including Stat Checks) while injured. Such penalties even apply for academic skills, as pain and other debilitating effects of damage can impair a character's judgment and thus interfere with the successful implementation of those skills just as a physically weakened character will have difficulty steadying a blaster.

Note that bot characters use a system similar to this, though it is different and is described in _____: *Bots.*

BLEEDING: Characters that have wound damage (either from deadly weapons or repeated beating) are subject to additional damage (a deteriorating condition) until they receive medical attention. This continuing damage isn't necessarily visible bleeding, but might also include hemorrhaging, contusions, long-term infection from minor wounds, and even deteriorating organ functions. If left untreated, this sort of damage could result in the character's unconsciousness and later death. As a general rule, this kind of damage doesn't begin until after combat is over.

In order to determine the severity of the bleeding, you'll need to evaluate the amount of wound damage (not stun) sustained. To do this, simply look to see where the last 'X'ed out box is (ignoring the stun boxes). **If the character has wound damage in the Moderately Wounded or Severely Wounded thresholds then the character is bleeding.**

Characters with wounds in the Moderately Wounded threshold will suffer 1 additional point of wound damage *each day* from minor bleeding or infections. Those who have suffered wounds in their Severely Wounded threshold will sustain 1 additional point of wound damage *each hour*.

Anyone unconscious that has also suffered any Critical Life will continue to lose 1 additional Life point *every minute*.

This damage continues until the character's Critical Life is affected and used up—at which point the victim dies. Therefore, characters who suffer enough combat damage that they lose some Critical Life will die within just a few minutes without medical aid. Characters with less severe injuries could go for days or even weeks before infection resulted in death.

HEALING: Characters that become injured will eventually heal, though the rate of healing depends on what actions (if any) are taken to expedite the healing process.

If allowed to heal naturally, most characters will recover 1 Life point worth of wound damage every week. To determine the exact amount, divide total Life by 10 using standard rounding. Thus, a body with 14 Life or less would recover 1 point per week, 15 to 24 Life could recover 2 points per week, and so on.

With proper medical aid and attention (see Surgery, below), characters **will recover this amount of Life each day (instead of week)** following an immediate restoration of some Life points.

Stun damage is recovered much more quickly and is typically assumed to remain for either the current day only or until the combat situation is over (whether or not medical attention has been applied).

Special rules are used for 'healing' bots.

FIRST AID: Persons with the Medicine (rating of 1 or higher) skill may apply first aid to an injured victim. Doing this requires at least 5 turns (usually more) and will only benefit a victim who hasn't lost any Critical Life. Though Medicine itself is a professional skill, the first aid portion of it may be attempted untrained.

First aid stabilizes the victim and prevents further Life loss from bleeding, but **doesn't restore any loss of Life.** Performing first aid is normally a Routine/Easy action and so does not require a dice roll—stabilization of the patient is automatic (unless attempted untrained, in which case treat as an Average task as usual).

If, however, first aid is applied to a Severely Wounded patient, then the task is considered an Average one in terms of difficulty. Remember, Critically Wounded patients can't benefit from First Aid.

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Remember to keep an eye on your character's Wound Thresholds—the Moderately Wounded and Severely Wounded thresholds apply +1 and +3 Step Penalties to all the character's actions, respectively.

➤**Bleeding:** If wound damage is present in the Moderately Wounded block then suffer 1 additional point of wound damage each day. If wounds are in the Severely Wounded block then suffer 1 more point each hour. Any loss of Critical Life results in 1 additional damage point every minute.

➤**Healing Stun:** Recover stun damage at end of combat.

➤**Healing Wound:** Divide normal healthy Life total by 10, round normally; the result is how much is recovered each week. Surgery can accelerate this, see below.

➤**First Aid:** Requires Medicine rating of at least 1. Cannot be used on Critically Wounded patients. Success is automatic (Routine/Easy task) and prevents further loss of Life from bleeding but doesn't restore any lost Life. Severely Wounded patients require an Average difficulty roll, and slows bleeding to 1/day. Can be attempted untrained.

➤**Surgery:** Requires Medicine rating of at least 3.

➥Lightly Wounded patients require no roll and are fully healed automatically.

➥Moderately Wounded patients require Average rolls and are upgraded to Lightly Wounded if successful (erase all Moderate Life boxes, but leave all Lightly Wounded boxes marked).

➥Severely Wounded patients require Tough rolls and are upgraded to Moderately Wounded.

➥ Critically Wounded patients require Very Difficult rolls and are upgraded to Severely Wounded.

➥Failed rolls result in no change to the patient but a second surgery attempt is not allowed by the same doctor (other doctors operate with a cumulative +1 Step Penalty). Blundered rolls worsen the condition by one Wound Threshold (Critically Wounded patients die).

➤**Knockdowns:** Major weapons hits and powerful attacks may cause Knockdowns. Quite simply, whenever the character takes damage from a single source that exceeds the character's Knockdown, then he or she is knocked down, back, or as appropriate.

➤**Wrestling:** Overbearing is a common action and is used to restrain or tackle an opponent. The wrestling rules are compact, so please find them in this chapter.

➤Other Special Rules, including: Parrying, Automatic weapons in Spray mode, Hit Locations, Called Shots, Movement, and many more, are also described.

➤You're Done ! Go to Character Advancement...

SURGERY: Persons adept in Medicine (rating of 3 or higher) may attempt surgery, but normally this should only be performed by Physician's Assistants (rating of 4) or true Medical Doctors (rating of 5). It is not possible for a character with a rating of zero, 1, or 2 to attempt surgery.

Operations are required in order to accelerate healing of a wounded individual and/or prevent the death of a Critically Wounded patient. As a general rule, **a successful operation improves the wounded patient by one Wound Threshold.** The type and difficulty of operation depends on the state of the victim, as detailed below:

Note: All forms of surgery require one use of a MedKit. ***Surgery attempted without a MedKit is done with a +3 Step Penalty.***

LIGHTLY WOUNDED— Lightly Wounded characters are a Routine/Easy task, and so the outcome is automatic. That is, any wound points are removed and the patient is thus fully healed.

MODERATELY WOUNDED— Treating a Moderately Wounded patient requires a roll, but is considered to be of Average difficulty. If successful, the patient is immediately upgraded to Lightly Wounded and so any wound or stun points in the Moderately Wounded Life block are removed, **leaving the Lightly Wounded Life block full.**

Additional surgery will **not** restore additional Life immediately, but the natural healing process is accelerated to a **per day** (instead of per week) rate.

SEVERELY WOUNDED— Severely Wounded patients require Tough rolls and the presence of a medical scanner. If successful, the patient is immediately upgraded to Moderately Wounded and so any wound or stun points in the Severely Wounded Life block are removed, **leaving the Lightly Wounded and Moderately Wounded Life blocks full.**

Additional surgery will **not** restore additional Life immediately, but the natural healing process is accelerated to a **per day** (instead of per week) rate.

CRITICALLY WOUNDED— Critically Wounded patients are those which have lost some of their Critical Life. This is a Very

Difficult roll also requiring use of a medical scanner. If successful, however, the patient is immediately upgraded to serious condition, and so any wound or stun points in the Critical Life area are immediately removed, leaving all other regular Life boxes marked.

Additional surgery will **not** restore additional Life immediately, but the natural healing process is accelerated to a **per day** (instead of per week) rate.

FAILED AND BLUNDERED ROLLS— Only one attempt may be made by the same medical professional on a particular patient. This means that if the attempt is failed, it cannot be tried again by that doctor. Another doctor, however, may make a standard attempt, but each subsequent surgeon makes his or her roll with a cumulative +1 Step Penalty.

Any surgery roll that is failed results in no effect on the patient. If the roll is a blunder, however, then the medical professional actually inflicts additional wound damage on the victim, thereby worsening the patient's condition by one Wound Threshold! This means that a Moderately Wounded character would become Severely Wounded (marking the same number of boxes in this threshold that were marked in the previous one), while a Severely Wounded character becomes Critically Wounded. A blunder on a Critically Wounded patient results in the patient's immediate death. Obviously, rolls such as these shouldn't be attempted unless the chances are good or the situation desperate.

TRAUMAPACKS: Following regular surgery, qualified medical doctors may use special high-technology ***TraumaPacks*** to further upgrade healing patients **another** Wound Threshold. There are a couple of rules, though:

1) TraumaPacks require a Medicine skill rating of 5 (expert) to use and cannot be applied successfully by individuals with a lower skill rating.

2) TraumaPacks can only be used **after** a **successful** Surgery attempt. This is because the patient needs to be properly stabilized and on the road to healing before the pack's regrowth stimulators can be implemented correctly.

3) TraumaPacks are expensive and are used up **whether or not they are successfully employed.** Luckily, failure to use one correctly can't further injure or hurt a patient.

4) If successful (requiring a Tough Medicine dice roll), the patient is upgraded one Wound Threshold in the same manner that surgery upgrades the patient.

For other details on this technology, see Chapter 19.

Knockdowns

Occasionally, characters will suffer extreme damage or a powerful blow that causes a Knockdown. Normal weapons hits and brawls usually do not cause a Knockdown unless the victim is very small or weak, but should a plasma grenade detonate nearby or the character be struck by lightning or punched by a Xom, a Knockdown becomes very likely.

Quite simply, **anytime a character is struck for an amount of damage from a single source/hit that exceeds the character's Knockdown rating, then the character is knocked down.** For example, a character with a Knockdown of 5 is hit by a 6-point blaster bolt; this character is knocked down because 6 exceeds the 5 point threshold. Whether or not armor attenuates a Knockdown is up to the Gamemaster. For example, the above blaster-bolt example wouldn't knock down a character wearing EDR strong enough to absorb the entire bolt. On the other hand, a character who is struck by a moving vehicle will be knocked down regardless of whether or not they're wearing sufficient CDR armor to prevent injuries, due to sheer differences in mass alone.

Characters who are knocked down are momentarily stunned, forced backwards, and knocked off their feet. If the knocked-down character had not yet acted that turn before being knocked down (because of slower initiative), then that character loses any action that turn. Additionally, knocked-down characters are temporarily stunned and must spend all of the following turn re-orienting themselves (and so lose any action in that turn, too). Luckily, 're-orienting' oneself can also include getting back up, if the character so desires.

Note that 'knockdowns' are adjudicated by the gamemaster and adjusted to fit the situation. Thus, some knockdowns from attacks may warrant being thrown back several meters whereas others (like a powerful drug or shock) may cause your character to simply collapse.

Wrestling

Wrestling is actually a series of 'attacks' and so requires a few extra rules beyond a normal brawling attack.

Wrestling rules are used whenever a character attempts to restrain or tackle another character.

Before wrestling can begin, a character must grab hold of an opponent by means of a standard Melee AIM roll. If this roll is successful, then the wrestler has grabbed hold. This assumes, of course, that the opponent doesn't wish to wrestle. **Should that character wish to embrace a wrestle, then this step is skipped and the wrestling begins immediately on the first turn.**

Once the characters are embraced, then on the following turn both characters make a Wrestling Rating roll. This is similar to any other Contested Action or AIM roll, except that both parties make the same roll (wrestling plus a d12). For convenience, the character's Wrestling Rating trait is listed in the traits area on the Character Record Sheet.

Whichever character has the higher total wins that turn. The same character must win three turns in a row in order to pin the opponent. If only two wins are made and then the opponent wins, then the wrestle is back to 'square one.' Once three wins in a row are made, the opponent is pinned and cannot do anything except try to break free.

Pinned characters automatically suffer 1 point of stun damage for each turn they remain pinned.

At the start of any turn in which a character is pinned, both characters continue to make Wrestling rolls. This time, nothing happens (except continued stun damage to the pinned target) until the pinned character is able to win three rolls in a row. The moment the third win is achieved, both wrestling characters are back to 'square one' and begin wrestling all over again (though both are still embraced).

If neither party is pinned, the winner of any wrestle roll may also elect to end the wrestling by jumping clear.

Bonuses for high Strength do apply to the normal 1-point stun damage inflicted each turn on a pinned character.

If anyone gets an Awesome Hit while wrestling, they may score an additional bonus 1-point of damage whether the defender is pinned

or not OR may choose to immediately escape the wrestling embrace OR immediately pin his or her opponent.

GROUP WRESTLING: It is possible for two or more characters to gang up on a single defender. Up to three attackers may wrestle an opponent the same general size as they; double that if the attackers are half the size; only 2 if the attackers are larger.

Each attacker may make a Wrestling roll as normal. The defender, however, makes only one Wrestling roll to contest (compare) against each attacker's roll AND makes this roll with a Step Penalty equal to the number of attackers.

If there is only one attacker but multiple defenders, then each defender gets one roll and the attacker makes a single roll complicated by a Step Penalty equal to the number of defenders.

If there are multiple attackers and multiple defenders, then divide the groups down into singles. For example, four persons versus six persons would be divided into four groups where two such groups would have two-on-one. Resolve using the above rules.

Parrying

Characters involved in melee have the option to parry other melee attacks. This means that characters may use their fighting skills and weapons to intercept and block their opponent's weapon thrusts, swings, or other melee attacks, in addition to using normal Evasion.

When characters parry, they are essentially applying an amount of combative melee skill toward their defense at the expense of their own attack efforts.

The option to parry must be announced aloud during Initiative and cannot be changed later.

Parrying characters use all the normal combat rules, except that **they are allowed to transfer an amount of points from their Melee AIM to their Evasion score for the turn. The most amount of points transferable this way is an amount equal to half the character's Martial Arts skill rating. The parrying character may then launch a normal melee attack with the reduced Melee AIM during a parrying turn at the appropriate Initiative attack time. The character may NOT employ other attack forms, such as Ranged AIM, on any turn they use parrying.**

For example, a character with an Evasion of 4 and a Melee AIM of 7 could move 1, 2, or 3 points off of Melee AIM and add them to Evasion for the turn, so long as Martial Arts skill rating was left at no less than 4 (half, rounded up). Moving 2 points, for example, would leave our character with a temporary Melee AIM of 5 and a temporary Evasion of 6. If Martial Arts was only 3, then a maximum of 1 point could be moved. Got it?

Moving points with this parry ability can only be done in defense of melee attacks.

If the character in the above example was parrying a melee attack but also being shot at by a second attacker, then our character would use normal Evasion of 4 against the shooter but the temporarily enhanced score of 6 against the melee attacker.

Also, in addition to declaring one's intention to parry during Initiative, characters must also declare how many points they are moving to Evasion during Initiative. Normally, the gamemaster privately notes this amount for any NPCs who are parrying and then asks the players how many points they're moving. Should two players be in combat against one another, it is best that both players pass a note to the gamemaster, declaring how many points are moved—though the intention to parry itself must be announced aloud so that others may respond by parrying also.

Finally, if both fighters happen to be using melee weapons (swords, clubs, and the like) then combat parrying proceeds as described above—weapons clash against one another. If one fighter is armed and the other is not, then the situation changes:

Unarmed characters cannot choose to parry an armed character unless their Martial Arts skill rating is 4 or higher (advanced). An armed character, however, can still parry an unarmed one. Since armed characters will not only be using their Evasion but will also be using their weapons to block the unarmed character's attacks, there is a chance that the unarmed character will be injured. This is because legs, arms, and hands don't work very well against swords, clubs, and knives. As a general rule, **unarmed characters whose attacks miss against an armed character who is parrying with real weapons suffer full damage from the weapon used to parry their attack.**

Reloading in Combat

Reloading weapons during combat usually requires two full turns to do so in which the weapon **cannot also be fired** (a few fast pistols only require one turn). Characters who reload cannot also make other combat actions.

Throwing Things

Characters may throw grenades and other objects during combat. Doing so requires a Throwing AIM to-hit check. Most grenade weapons carry a +1 Step Penalty. A perfect sphere (or even a baseball) would have no Step Penalties. Jagged rocks and other irregular shaped objects may impose up to a +3 Step Penalty.

To determine the maximum distance an object can be thrown, review the maximum weight characters can lift with their particular Strength score. The maximum weight listed (in kilograms) **HALVED** is the distance in meters that a 1-kilogram object can be thrown (most grenades).

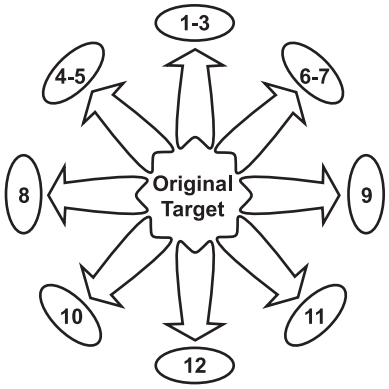
For example, a character with a Strength of 4 can lift a maximum of 45 kilograms, so this character could throw a 1-kilogram grenade up to 22 meters.

To determine distance for heavier objects, a rough estimate can be computed by knowing that characters can throw their maximum lift weight 1 meter. Every time this weight is halved, the distance is doubled. *For example, characters with a Strength of 5 could throw 120 kilograms (their maximum lift) 1 meter, 60 kilograms 2 meters, 30kg 4 meters, 15kg 8 meters, 7kg 16 meters, 3kg 32 meters, and 1kg 64 meters—as a rough guide.*

When a grenade (or any other object) is thrown at a target location, the item may scatter (bounce) upon impact or be affected in the air before impact. Scattering occurs whenever the AIM roll action die is an odd die result (for example, 5, 7, etc., on the d12). This is true whether or not the grenade hit or missed.

A grenade that hits its target (successful AIM roll) either lands within 1 meter of the target if no scattering occurs or lands 1d6 meters away from the target. This assumes a basic 50 meter throw. For double the throw, double the bounce, and so on. To determine

the direction scatter occurs, roll on the following diagram using a special d12 roll:



A grenade that misses its target (failed AIM roll) instead lands a number of meters equal to one-third the throw distance (two-thirds on a blundered roll) in a direction also rolled on the above chart with a special d12 roll.

Automatic Weapons Fire

A weapon set to auto mode is one which is fully automatic and where the shooter depresses and holds the trigger down while aiming at an area, a target, or group of targets. The faster the automatic weapon can fire, the greater the chances it will hit one or more potential targets because more rounds are being shot.

Weapons that are capable of automatic fire have a value listed in their descriptions. This value is expressed as a special bonus number that acts as an AIM modifier. For example, "Auto: +6" indicates a weapon that receives a +6 bonus to the shooter's AIM roll.

The accuracy is reduced depending on how wide of an area is being sprayed with automatic weapons fire. Automatic weapons fire assumes that only a single target is being shot at. For wider areas, the accuracy falls off. For every 2 meters wide (at the target's location) or portion thereof, apply a cumulative -1 to the shooter's AIM total.

Normal combat rules, using AIM versus Evasion, determine hits and misses. However, automatic weapons fire requires that the *difference* be obtained to indicate the *number of shots* that impact that successfully hit target. Do this by subtracting the hit target's total Evasion check from the successful AIM total and HALVING the result—in other words, how many AIM points over the target Evasion total, divided by 2, is the number of shots which hit that target.

Furthermore, the maximum number of shots which can hit all targets is the ROF of the given weapon. For a weapon with a ROF of 10, for example, that successfully hit 4 targets with great accuracy, no more than 2 rounds could hit each of those targets save the first two which could be hit by no more than 3 rounds each.

For example, an Auto:+6 weapon (ROF20) is fired in auto mode at 4 targets loitering about a busy starport. Assuming a great dice roll, a maximum of 5 rounds can hit each target, and likely this will be less. The targets occupy an area 7 meters wide (about 22 feet) at about 10 to 15 meters distant from the shooter. At only 10 to 15 meters distant, the targets are definitely considered short-range, and so no range modifiers will apply. The targets, however, occupy a 7 meter area, meaning that a -4 is applied to the weapon, making this weapon a +2 for purposes of this attack (possibly even a negative AIM modifier if instead the shooter aimed at a much wider area). The shooter's AIM is 6, and so it is treated as 8 for this particular attack (plus a d12) versus EACH target's individual Evasion score (plus a d12). Resolving hits and misses normally, the shooter rolls a 10 on his d12, giving the shooter a 18 AIM check against the first target which has an Evasion of 4 and rolls a 5 on the d12, resulting in a 9. The difference is 9, and so 4 individual rounds from the automatic weapon strike that target. To determine damage, roll the weapon's normal damage dice separately for each round that impacted the target. For a 3d6 weapon, the shooter rolls 8, 9, 13, and 16 damage. Each of those is pitted against the target's armor individually (as if they originated from different shooters). The target has PDR 10 armor, so the first and second shot are absorbed, 3 damage penetrates with the third round, and then 6 more damage penetrates with the fourth shot.

This process is now repeated for additional targets (and hapless bystanders) within the target spread area.

Target size can also affect an Auto value roll, either adding to or taking away from the AIM bonus:

-3	**Target is Tiny (30 centimeters or less)**
-1	**Target is Small (about 1 meter)**
none	**Target is roughly human-sized**
+1	**Target is Large (about 2½ to 4 meters)**
+3	**Target is Huge (4+ meters)**

For additional targets or hapless bystanders that are further away than the target area but still 'behind it' and thus subject to hits, add an additional -1 modifier for every 10 meters or so farther back those bystanders happen to be.

Finally, as noted in the weapons section, an auto weapon's ROF trait is the amount of ammo (rounds) used up in 1 second of firing (1 turn) when the weapon is fired in auto-mode. Be sure to deduct ammunition used.

Damage to Objects and Structures

Characters will inevitably want to break-down doors, shatter windows, crack a briefcase, or blow-up a computer. These objects have Superstructure points similar to bots, though are less complex. W**hen half of an object's Superstructure points have been lost, the object is said to be damaged. Once all of the Superstructure points have been lost, then the item has been destroyed.** The effects of a 'damaged' or 'destroyed' object can vary, and require common sense.

For instance, a damaged briefcase that was locked could now be opened (if it was destroyed it would be in many pieces); a damaged pressure or blast door would be stuck or jammed though still impenetrable—the door needing to be destroyed in order to get through; a damaged computer console is one that has been rendered inoperative but repairable, whereas a destroyed one would be in pieces.

For simplicity, any type of real damage (that is, not stun damage) is subtracted from an object's Superstructure total. However, common sense, of course, must prevail. Obviously fire damage, for example, though certainly classified as real

wound damage won't cause any damage to a pressure or blast door.

Also, many objects are outfitted with armor or are naturally tough. For these objects, a uniform armor rating is used and is noted as A# (for example, A4, A9, etc.). The numeral in the A# is the BDR, CDR, PDR, and EDR armor rating of the material. Lasers are treated differently, as described below:

Lasers ignore armor ratings, but only inflict 1 point of damage for each die normally rolled (for example, a 1d6+1 laser pistol would inflict only 1 point of damage, whereas a 3d6 laser weapon would inflict 3 points of damage). This is because lasers create only tiny holes in the objects rather than bringing down the superstructure at large. If it is important to know if the laser penetrated through the object (as in an airlock), assume it does unless the A# is equal to or higher than the maximum damage the weapon is normally capable of (e.g., a 3d6 laser weapon **wouldn't** penetrate A19 or better, while a 1d6+1 laser weapon **wouldn't** penetrate A8 or better).

Like character armor, damage rolled below the armor's rating dissipates (except for lasers), while any damage that exceeds the rating penetrates and causes actual Superstructure damage.

Listed below are some examples of objects and their corresponding Superstructure and armor values.

Object and Armor Type	*Superstructure Rating*
Briefcase (A3)	8
Briefcase, armored (A8)	10
Comlink (n/a)	1
Computer Console, Commercial, typical (A3)	15
Computer Console, Shipboard (A5)	20+
Datachip (A1)	2
Door, Primitive, wood or plastic (A2)	10
Door, Sliding, typical home (A5)	15
Door, Commercial (A9)	20
Door, Security or Shipboard (A12)	30
Door, Cell (A15)	50
Door, Pressure or Airlock (A16)	50
Door, Pressure or Airlock Military ship (A20)	50
Door, Blast [generally shipboard] (A20)	80
Door, Vault, modern bank or research (A24+)	200
Handcuffs, typical (A5)	4
IdentiCard (A1)	4
Scanner, hand-held (A2)	8
Vehicle, Civilian, typical (A5)	50–80
Vehicle, Armored (A8–A15)	100+
Weapon, Pistol or Rifle (A3)	8
Weapon, Heavy (A5)	15
Window, Primitive, glass (n/a)	1
Window, Commercial, duraglass (A5)	4
Window, Security (A9)	12
Window, Armored (A14)	16
Window, Shipboard, Exterior (A19)	50

Note that Superstructure is mostly dependent on object mass and only somewhat affected by materials—materials (or hardness) instead determining the armor rating.

Body Hit Locations

Weapons hit locations on a character's body are determined easily by layering a simple additional rule over the existing combat rules system. For best consistency, **it's important to ensure that dice coloration be used to distinctly determine the lead damage d6: only one of the d6 damage dice should be a red color, while all other d6 dice should be white.** For example, a weapon that inflicts d6-2 damage would require just the red d6 to be thrown, whereas a 3d6+1 weapon would require the red d6 plus two more white d6 dice be thrown. The only difference is that one of the damage dice must always be the red 'lead' d6.

The lead d6 (the red one) determines hit location based on the result (which of course also contributes to the damage total):

RED D6 RESULT	BODY LOCATION HIT
1	Arms or Light Wings
2	Legs or Heavy Wings
3	Hips/Shoulders
4	Lower Torso (Abdomen)
5	Upper Torso (Chest Center)
6	Head/Neck

As you can see, rolling a 4, 5, or 6 not only causes a lot of damage (because the red die also determines damage) but causes a lot of damage **because** a vital area was struck and thus is more life-threatening.

For example, a SK-9 blaster pistol strikes a character. Rolling 3d6 dice, we get a 1 on the first d6 (the Red dice) and a 3 and a 5 on the second and third white dice. A total of 9 damage is inflicted, which is a lot. Consulting the chart, we see that the character's arm was struck. Because 9 damage was inflicted, we can assume that the damage to the character's arm is very significant (probably completely mangled if a typical human, or just torn up a bit if a Xom).

In another example, the same SK-9 blaster hits another character. Rolling 3d6 dice, we get a 6 on the first Red d6 and a 1 and a 2 on the remaining dice. A 6 indicates the head or neck of the character was struck, and a total of 9 damage was inflicted. Although 9 damage is a lot, it is also close to as little damage as can be inflicted from a hit to the head and this is because even peripheral or grazing shots to a character's head or neck by such a powerful weapon are going to be very serious. On a more typical role, the damage would likely be much more—thereby indicating a more direct hit to the head or neck's center.

Although this hit location system is far from a perfect simulation of actual combat damage effects, it is a very close approximation within the combat and damage system allowed by this RPG without sacrificing speed or playability.

Called Shots

Though characters normally simply aim for the center of mass when shooting at a target, it is possible to make a called shot—one that is deliberately directed at a specific body location. **Called shots are made at HALF the shooter's normal AIM (plus a full d12 as usual), but if successful automatically hit the body location desired. When a called shot succeeds and hits the desired body location, the first d6 (the Red d6) is not thrown for damage because its outcome has already been determined by the Called Shot rule.**

For example, a character with a Ranged AIM of 6_7 would normally roll d12 and add 6 in order to compare against the target's Evasion plus d12, but in the case of a called shot to the Chest, the shooter would roll d12 and then add 3 (half the norma AIM) to it instead, versus the defender's full Evasion plus a d12. If the attack hit and the shooter was firing an SK-9 blaster pistol, then 5 damage plus the result of two more d6 would be inflicted by this 3d6 weapon. If, instead, the attacker made

a successful called shot to the chest using a small sword weapon (a 1d6+3 dmg weapon), then the attacker would roll no dice and the damage would simply be 8.

Therefore, it is also possible to use this rule to inflict as little damage as possible by aiming for an extremity (such as a hand/arm being used to wield a weapon).

If the GM so wishes, special side effects for these kinds of called shot hits can result. Examples might be a hand being rendered useless, a target losing the ability to walk, blindness, muteness, and other trauma. For targets like the eyes of a human, damage might be close to maximum (because the head/neck is a base 6 damage) and carry the side effect of blindness in the eye hit. Note that armor is only counted if the specific area hit is protected, otherwise it is ignored.

REALITY CHECKING— The penalty for a called shot should not be reduced when firing at a large target because that target's Evasion has already been adjusted for the size of the creature. Also, living targets should **never** be declared dead simply because of a successful called shot to the head, neck, heart, or other vital area; the target's Life and Critical Life scores must be reduced zero. This may not seem realistic, but realize, however, that even a basic small caliber projectile weapon inflicts 12 points of wound damage (most do more)—enough damage to kill most humans outright with one shot. This is one reason why damage varies: different areas of the body are more or less vital just as different weapons are more or less destructive. **Similarly, this is why an elephant gun is needed for very large animals—small arms fire may not do the trick even if a vital organ is hit!**

VERSUS OBJECTS— Against objects, the called shot is assumed to simply hit the area aimed at (for example, a specific button on a control panel, the tire of an escaping vehicle, the blaster on the table, etc.). The results of these kinds of called shots are left up to the gamemaster.

The exact AIM Penalty should range from being **either half normal AIM or one-quarter normal AIM,** based on the gamemaster's judgment because some targets are very small. Several examples of called shots to objects include: hitting the optics cam on a big bot or trying to shoot out a window in a moving vehicle might warrant the standard half-AIM penalty; while trying to shoot a camera out of someone's hand who is speeding away in a vehicle might warrant AIM being reduced to one-quarter normal.

Consequential Damage

Characters will sometimes sustain damage outside of combat situations. This damage can be the result of accidents or even being spaced. Brief descriptions of several different types of consequential damage follow:

FALLING: Though some species are able to withstand falls to a certain degree, most will sustain damage based solely on the distance fallen. As a general rule, **this damage is equal to 1d6 Life points for every two meters above the first two in which the character falls, to a maximum of 10d6 at terminal velocity.** This damage is for human-sized victims. **Large or Huge targets receive double or triple this amount of damage, respectively because of their weight.** The d6 used in this formula helps to match real life situations, as it likely results in death from any reasonable height yet leaves the sleight possibility for a 'miracle' survival (even from a skydiving fall).

For example, falling from a distance of 2 meters (about 6 feet) would score no damage; while a 4-meter fall would inflict 1-6 points of damage; 6 meters would score 2-12 points of damage; 8 meters (roughly 30 feet) would be 3-18 points of damage; while a 10 meter drop would be 4-24 damage; and so on, until terminal velocity is reached (about 10-60 damage).

VACUUM: Characters in the vacuum of space that are biologically unable to cope with that environment (this includes nearly all species) will suffer extreme trauma. Characters will remain conscious for only 2 turns for every 1 point of Willpower they possess, and they begin taking 1 wound damage every five turns (total of about 5 seconds) of exposure!

Characters are thus **unable** to hold their breath for any length of time due to the relatively immense lung pressure compared to the vacuum of space; as much as one-half metric ton of pressure inside a human's lungs (more in a bigger species)—not something most ribcage or throat muscles can hold back. That is, their breath will literally be sucked out of them, no matter how strong they are. Also, characters will begin sustaining damage right away as most surface capillaries will burst and the body will literally begin tearing itself apart from the inside expansion. Additionally, ear drums will rupture leaving the person deaf pending reconstructive surgery, and blindness occurs nearly immediately due to ruptured capillaries in the retina. If a person is somehow saved before death occurs, they'll be severely debilitated nonetheless.

DROWNING: Most species can drown if they remain underwater for too long or are thrust into a non-breathable atmosphere. Characters can hold their breath for a short while (see StunGas and Anesthezine below for how long). After this time, characters must either breathe or they will lapse into unconsciousness. Typically, most species (including humans) will not die immediately, but will begin sustaining real damage and brain damage after three minutes or so. Damage, once it begins, is equal to 1 Life point plus a permanent -0.5 drop in most mental stats (Intellect, Willpower, Knowledge, and Intuition stats) each minute, or 60 turns, the character remains unable to breathe. Should a character's Intellect or Willpower fall to zero or less OR should the character's Life drop below zero, the character dies. Note that extremely cold water can slow the detrimental effects of damage somewhat—including loss of stat points.

FIRE: A character who is on fire will suffer from extraordinary pain and debilitation. Actual damage and penalties to a burning character depend on a couple of factors. First, if the character is fully or mostly protected from the fire by an envirosuit or full protective body armor, then little or no damage or effects are warranted. If the character is actually on fire (the character's clothes, hair, and the like are burning and so the body's skin is exposed to the flame) then the damage will vary based on the temperature of the flame. The temperature can vary from ordinary flame on up to chemical (napalm) fires.

A burning character sustains 1 point of wound damage either every turn or every other turn. Normal fire takes two turns to inflict damage, whereas napalm chemical fires score damage every turn. Additionally, the burning character suffers a +1 Step Penalty for every full point of damage sustained thus far. For example, a character sprayed with napalm would have suffered 5 points of wound damage and be at a +5 Step Penalty after only 5 turns (5 seconds) of burning. Finally, the gamemaster may decrease the effects of fire if only a small or localized area of the character's body is on fire.

Note that the penalties are higher than (but not cumulative with) those suffered from normal wounds because of the extreme trauma fire inflicts.

INTOXICATION: These rules provide only a general guideline for handling alcohol intoxication. Individuals can vary significantly in their resistance, and a character's species and size can play an even greater role.

As a general rule, assume that for **every *two* drinks** a human-sized character imbibes, a cumulative +1 Step Penalty to the character's actions applies. This means that human-sized characters can consume one drink without ill effect.

Most rolls are affected by this penalty, but Willpower checks versus a StunGas canister, for example, would not be affected because it doesn't make sense to do so (but the Intuition Check to notice the gas would be affected). Picking a lock, firing a weapon, climbing a wall and so forth are all actions that would of course be affected.

Some humans may be more tolerant of alcohol and so may only warrant a +1 Step Penalty for every three or four drinks, but this is rare. Other species, notably larger ones, may have to imbibe five or six drinks for each Step Penalty, whereas a Xom alcoholic might get away with as many as twenty drinks per penalty. Joplyd, despite their size, can drink fifteen drinks per Step Penalty because of their amazing resistance to toxins. Conversely, a Nooma or Spino would suffer a +1 Step Penalty for each and every drink consumed!

Recovery of Step Penalties takes time; specifically, a single penalty is lifted for each hour which elapses.

Finally, if the gamemaster wishes, characters who drink many drinks might get sick. Once the cumulative Step Penalty reaches +6 (differing number of drinks for different characters) the character must make an Willpower check with each drink thereafter or get sick. **Characters whose penalty increases to +8 (7) usually fall unconscious.**

DISEASE AND POISON: The effects of disease and poison, including any Life damage or permanent reductions in stat scores, are explained for individual compounds where they are described. Otherwise, they are left entirely to the gamemaster. Though there are some virulent agents that may act very quickly (especially poisons), the medical knowledge of this universe is quite advanced, and so it is unlikely that characters will suffer from these effects for long.

Note also, that poisons are highly illegal—the penalty for possessing with the intent to use or sell in the Imperium is death without appeal. Simple possession results in ISA investigation and certain imprisonment if found guilty. Actual poisons are nearly nonexistent within the Imperium and many other stellar nations, but certain legitimate medical compounds that could be used for poison are very strictly regulated. All persons dealing with such compounds are usually watched closely by the ISA.

FATIGUE: At the gamemaster's discretion, characters may suffer from fatigue. Actions such as running, marching, heavy lifting, struggling, swimming, and the like will cause the character to fatigue when sustained over time. As there are so many strenuous activities, and because some activities are easier for certain races than they are for others, no specific or hard-fast rules exist for determining when fatigue should apply. On the average, however, characters can perform highly strenuous activities for ten minutes per point in their Strength stat score. Casual jogging or light swimming might be up to twenty or thirty minutes per Strength point.

For example, a character with a Strength of 5 could maintain a brisk jog for up to 50 minutes. Other actions may tire a character before or after this, depending on how strenuous they are—a judgment call on the part of the gamemaster.

Characters performing heavy exertion will also suffer actual stun damage. Assume 1 point of stun damage for every ten minutes the character's strenuous action is continued beyond the maximum.

For example, a character with 4 Strength could sprint for up to 40 minutes without suffering real stun damage, but would then start receiving 1 point of stun damage every 10 minutes after that—on the average allowing another 40 minutes of strenuous activity prior to the character actually collapsing into unconsciousness if pushed that far, though characters with high Strength and Willpower could go a bit beyond that (because of a higher Life score).

STUNGAS AND ANESTHEZINE: Certain grenades and other dangers (including an anti-personnel defense measure aboard some starships) may produce a cloud of sedative (or even poisonous in the case of Vreen vessels) gas. When characters are within the area of effect of such gases, they can either breath the gas and suffer the consequences, or they can attempt to hold their breath.

Though it is technically possible for most humans to hold their breath for about three full minutes if they are at complete rest and hyperventilate excessively for a full minute before holding their deep breath, combat scenarios never allow for this. First, characters may not necessarily be aware of the fact that they are being affected by gasses, and second, characters haven't the time to prepare for gas grenades. More significant yet, characters involved in a combat situation will be under the effect of adrenaline and will be consuming a great deal of oxygen. For these reasons, the following rules apply during combat:

Characters may only elect to hold their breath if they are aware of a gas assault. **For StunGas grenades, characters must succeed at an Average Awareness check in order to notice in time. For the anesthezine gas used aboard some ships and installations, a Tough Awareness Check is required as the gas is invisible and odorless.**

Because of the speed in which these gasses work, **aware characters cannot shout warnings and can only choose to hold their current breath—a deep breath cannot be inhaled without inhaling the gas. Since the character is also very active in a combat situation (combined with possible desperation), this breath will last only 3 turns for every 1 point (or portion thereof) of Willpower.** *For example, characters with a Willpower of 4.1 could hold their breaths for 15 turns.* **If not in a confined area, this is might be enough time to escape the area of effect.**

MURDER: Though far from honorable, characters may sometimes wish to end another character's life even after that character has been reduced to unconsciousness or was encountered asleep.

Any helpless character who is the subject of an attack aimed to kill is quite vulnerable. First, AIM to-hit rolls are not typically necessary unless ranged weapons are being used at a distance. Second, **any hit always scores maximum damage unless shot from a distance.** Third, armor can sometimes be ignored so long as the attacker is aware of it and opts to attack an unarmored area (if present).

These bonuses may not seem like much, but considering the amount of damage that can be inflicted by even a knife (1d6), one can see that as little as two hits (in only two turns—a couple seconds) would end most character's lives. Most sidearms would do so in a single shot. Still, certain large or tough species may survive several such attacks.

For example, a medium caliber firearm inflicts 2d6 damage, or an automatic 12 points against a helpless target. If that target were human with only 10 Life, that human would be executed with a single shot despite the gun being smaller than many. However, if the target were an elephant-sized sleeping beast, that same gun would score 12 damage which probably would not be sufficient to kill it outright no matter where the gun was aimed—hence the existence of the elephant gun and other larger weapons.

Movement

Movement rates are determined by the character's Speed trait. This trait is based on the species of the character, and so all humans without the Running skill, for example, run at the same speed. Although this is not entirely accurate, the differences between species is more significant (compare a lion, snake, and human, for example).

Speed is actually three base numbers and sometimes contains additional modes of locomotion. The first number is walking speed, the second is running speed, whereas the third is swimming speed. Some species list additional modes, such as fly, bur (burrowing), roll (rolling), hop (hopping), and crawl (crawling) speeds. All speed ratings are in meters per turn and thus meters per second.

Some skills increase these rates. The Running skill is designed to represent those individuals with track training, and thus allows for a variance between members of the same species. Swimming does the same for the third Speed trait.

Sprint (Running Speed Trait = meters per turn or second)
Jog (Running Speed Trait x2 = kilometers per hour)
Forced March (Walking Speed Trait x10 = km/day [16 hrs])
Trek (Walking Speed Trait x8 = kilometers per day [12 hrs])
Jump Forward (1/2 Running Speed Trait = meters forward)
Jump Up (1/4 Running Speed Trait = meters high)

SPRINT: In combat characters can move a number of meters in one turn equal to their Running Speed trait. They complete one-fifth of their Running SPD in meters distance in one Phase (5 Phases in a turn). Phases are part of initiative and merely determine when a character acts or moves. See Chapter 18 for details on how to apply movement during combat (how far a character can get and by when).

A sprint cannot be maintained for more than a few minutes.

JOG: Distance runners don't travel at the same speed as a sprinter. Therefore, the rate is slowed somewhat to a brisk jog and allows a number of kilometers equal to twice the character's Running Speed Trait to be traversed each hour.

A jog cannot be maintained for more than an hour or two at most (See Fatigue rules above).

FORCED MARCH: These characters are moving at a brisk walk for about 16 hours a day (an endurance-challenging task). As a general rule, forced marchers can travel their Running Speed trait times ten in kilometers each day.

TREK: Trekking characters are moving at a walking speed for a full day (about 12 hours). They can cover a distance equal to their Running Speed Trait times eight in kilometers.

JUMPING: Normally characters can jump one-half their Running Speed Trait forward (rounded to the nearest whole meter) with a running start (half that amount if no running start). Thus, a typical human could leap across a 2-meter chasm while running or a 1-meter fissure from a standstill.

For vertical jumps, most characters can leap about half as high as they can forward. These jumping distances are very general but should be used for any character whose species description does not specifically state otherwise.

SWIMMING: For unspecialized species, those who are biologically able to swim may do so assuming they are at least a novice at the task (rating of 1 or better) in the Swimming skill. These characters can swim 1 meter per second or turn. Very strong and highly skilled swimmers can move twice that fast, but this is rare. Distance swimming is limited to a maximum of 100 meters per minute, or 1 kilometer in 10 minutes—again these rates are for Olympic swimmers, so most move about half this fast. Aliens suited to aquatic environments may far exceed this rate, as noted by their Swimming Speed trait. See the Swimming skill for more information on increasing the Swimming Speed trait.

FLYING: Unspecialized species cannot fly. Those that can travel in meters per second equal to what is indicated for their Fly Speed trait.

BURROWING/DIGGING: Assuming tools are available, or at least very large claws, unspecialized characters can excavate one cubic meter of soil in a single hour. This rate is doubled for very lose topsoil or sand, but is halved for clays and densely-packed earth (one-quarter the rate if chiseling through soft rock such as limestone). Aliens suited to burrowing can often far exceed these rates, noted with a Bur Speed trait.

Encumbrance

Though common sense can usually suffice here, gamemasters usually require that their players track the weight of any objects, armor, and weapons characters are outfitted with. This is especially true of characters who are packrats and munchkin weapons freaks. Weight is almost always part of an item's description, and so it is easy to tally a character's total encumbrance. If weight isn't listed, an estimation can be made by comparing the item to a similar object (or size) from today's world.

Characters shouldn't be carrying around with them more than one-quarter their maximum lift in weight (see Strength stat, Chapter 10: Stat Variances). More than one-quarter weight cuts Speed in half, while more than one-half weight cuts Speed down to one-quarter normal. Weight over three-quarters cuts Speed to only a few steps (Speed = <1).

Normal Speed = Carrying less than 1/4 max weight
Half Speed = Carrying 1/4 to 1/2 max weight
One-Quarter Speed = Carrying 1/2 to 3/4 max weight
Speed of <1 = Carrying over 3/4 max weight
Moving Heavy Objects: The maximum lift weight listed under the Strength stat assumes that a character is using both hands. If only one hand is used, the maximum lift is reduced to about one-third normal.

Characters wishing to tip over something heavy are generally able to affect up to double their normal maximum lift, but this is a rough guide only. For instance, a heavy flat object couldn't weigh much more than maximum lift and still get toppled whereas a precarious column might weight ten times as much and still be toppled.

Dragging heavy objects is limited to the character's maximum lift in weight and can only be moved according to the Encumbrance move rates, above.

Using Heroism

Far from logical, Heroism is that element of fantasy that makes for epic adventure by allowing characters to escape death by the skin of their teeth. Using a Heroism point should be done very sparingly, for once such a point has been used it is lost forever. Careless characters who engage in combat too frequently may have to use these points to save themselves from stupid or hot-headed mistakes. Those characters will quickly run out of Heroism and consequently die the next time they take on more than they can handle. Remember, the purpose of Heroism is to correct an honest mistake, so players are encouraged to roleplay their characters with discretion (and to avoid combat whenever possible as this is a very deadly universe).

Sometimes, however, it will even be the gamemaster who 'forces' a player into using a Heroism point as it is impossible for the gamemaster to predict the outcome of every scenario—one where he or she may have pitted too many adversaries against the player characters.

Bad luck with the dice and honest mistakes are what these points are designed for—to give the player character a second chance. Choose wisely.

Pretty much anytime a player decides to use a Heroism point, the gamemaster should let the character survive and be saved. That is, Heroism points are like miracle points that allow the character to narrowly avoid death. Doing this doesn't generally place game balance in any jeopardy because characters have so few of these points in which to spend. This is not to say, however, that the gamemaster should let the character walk away with the 'key to the city'. Remember, **using one of these points allows the character to narrowly avoid death—not walk all over it!** One exception is that the GM may deem the Heroism point to be insufficient in rare cases where the GM feels the character's actions warrant death no matter what.

Examples of using Heroism include: a death-dealing blow from a weapon might instead leave the hero with only one Life point; a character being executed might simply be rendered unconscious and near death and thus awake later (possibly in the morgue); a bound and gagged character on a shuttlecraft about to crashland on a planet might suddenly break free and steer the shuttle in for a soft landing; a character in a collapsing building might be lucky enough to survive by being caught between two braced walls; a hero in a room when a bomb goes off might be thrown clear of the explosion or behind a protective barrier; and so on. Still, the outcome of these points is up to the gamemaster and there may be times when even a Heroism point can't save a character from certain doom.

Fear Checks

In rare instances characters may become so frightened by something or someone that they are compelled to run away or cower. In reality, most people would run or cower in a firefight against Imperial troops or pirates, but characters in this game are considered to be of heroic proportions and so are affected only by the most frightening of alien or otherworldy events. Therefore, these Fear Checks normally apply only to horror, a large menace, and the unknown.

This means that certain horrific alien monsters, an alien vivisection laboratory, and certain insidious parasites do warrant such a check. Those that do are noted in the text or called for by the gamemaster when appropriate. To make a Fear Check, players must roll Average or even Tough Willpower or Ego stat checks (whichever is higher).

The results of failing a Fear Check is left up to the gamemaster, but usually the character just flees the area. Some other possible examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) The character runs away screaming for 3 turns.

2) The character runs away screaming for 5 turns.

3) The character fails Initiative (moves in Slow) and then runs away screaming for 5 turns, dropping items held 50% of the time.

4) The character freezes in place for one full turn and then runs away screaming for 6 turns, dropping any items held.

5) The character cowers, shutting eyes, and flinches, unable to move or perform actions for 1d3 turns. After this period, the character runs away screaming for 6 turns, dropping any items held.

6) The character freezes in place and cannot move for 1d6 turns. After this, the character runs away screaming for 6 turns, dropping any items held.

7) The character collapses in a paralytic trance (rigid with fear) and is thus unable to move for 2d6 turns. After this, the character will run away screaming for 6 turns, dropping any items held.

8) The character is completely paralyzed (rigid with fear) and suffers a heart fibrillation: Survive a Strength or Willpower (whichever is higher) Check or die; survival means paralysis lasts 1d10 turns followed by panicked flight for 10 turns, dropping any items held.

Natural Telepathy & Empathy

Some species have the ability to communicate telepathically. Using telepathy is based on many details of the character, as well as learned disciplines. To learn more about empathy and telepathy, please refer to Chapter 21 which discusses these Advanced Character Options.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Character Improvement

Introduction

One of the joys of roleplaying a character throughout a series of adventures is to watch that character gain experience and heroism—and thus improve over time. All characters (even bot characters) can earn experience.

Experience

Experience Points are awarded to player characters when they participate in a gaming session. The number and type of points depend on what characters do during the game and how well they do it. A balanced character might receive an average of around 2 to 8 Experience Points per game session total. Players then use these points to improve their characters (see Spending Experience, below).

Achievements that warrant Experience Points have been classified into three different categories: 1) Physical achievements; 2) Mental achievements; and 3) Bonus achievements. The reason experience is divided this way is so that a character who gains experience solely through physical achievements such as combat will be able to improve physical skills and stats, but not mental ones—because those stats haven't been exercised. Examples of how various kinds of achievements are classified, follow:

PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS: Defeating opponents with force by driving them away, forcing their surrender, or killing them. Performing daring feats of acrobatics, climbing, swimming, wrestling, piloting, or a tricky spacewalk also warrant physical experience. Use of other Strength, Agility, Precision, or Allure-associated skills can earn physical experience as well.

MENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS: Outsmarting or outwitting an opponent with clever strategies or plans. Deciphering clues and other plot points in an adventure. Building or repairing devices or bots. Healing or operating on a wounded patient. Tracking an enemy. Dealing in business or bureaucratic endeavors. Work aboard a capital starship. Obtaining information or reaching agreements through carousing, charm, seduction, manipulation, intimidation, or interrogation. Socializing and interaction where precise etiquette is required. Use of other Intellect, Willpower, Knowledge, Intuition, Ego, and Harmony-associated skills.

BONUS ACHIEVEMENTS: Roleplaying a character well by use of an accent, change in voice, and adherence to the character's personality type even when not convenient is grounds for earning bonus experience.

Spending Experience

Player's should think of Experience Points as very similar to the Starting Experience Points they used to create their character, except regular experience points have limitations as to when they may be spent and where each type (physical, mental, or bonus) can be spent.

Players may only spend points as detailed below, depending on what type of Experience Points they are spending.

Second, once points have been spent, they are permanently deducted from the appropriate Unspent Experience box on the character sheet and cannot be changed or moved again later.

Because this game system does not tally the total amount of experience earned over a character's lifetime (nor uses any level-of-experience system), there is no need to track how many points have been spent thus far. It is only necessary to know how many unspent points there are. Obviously once the gamemaster awards points, these points are recorded in the appropriate Unspent Experience boxes.

Spending Experience Points may be done at any time the gamemaster allows, but **normally only between game sessions.** Sometimes the gamemaster requires that additional research or instruction be required along with the experience in order to increase a given skill—in which case points may only be spent between adventures. **Players are never allowed to spend points in the middle of a game session in order to gain or raise a skill needed for the task at hand.**

SPENDING PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE: Physical experience can be used to add any new or raise any existing Strength, Agility, Precision, or Allure-associated skill using the Raising Skills and Stats rules, below. Players may also elect to make permanent increases to their Strength, Agility, Precision, Allure, and **Reflex** stats (also following the Raising Skills and Stats rules).

SPENDING MENTAL EXPERIENCE: Mental experience can be used to add any new or raise any existing Intellect, Knowledge, Willpower, Intuition, Ego, or Harmony-associated skill using the Raising Skills and Stats rules, below. Players may also elect to make permanent increases to their Mental stats (also following the Raising Skills and Stats rules).

SPENDING BONUS EXPERIENCE: Bonus experience can be used as if it were either type of experience. Thus, these points could be used for physical skills or stats, or mental ones.

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Gamemasters typically award about 2 to 8 Experience Points per game session (less or more depending on the character's performance).

➤There are three types of experience that can be earned: Physical, Mental, and Bonus.

➥Physical XP is earned from physically defeating opponents by driving them off, forcing a surrender, or killing them, or performing daring physical feats or using STR, AGI, PRE, ALL, or REF skills.

➥Mental XP is earned by outsmarting opponents, deciphering plot clues, building or repairing things, healing others, dealing in business and bureaucracy, carousing, manipulation, interrogation, intimidation, or any INT, KNO, WIL, INU, EGO, or HAR skills.

➥Bonus XP is gained when the player roleplays their character well by use of an accent, change in voice, and adherence to the character's personality type even when not convenient.

➤Players may spend these Experience Points between game sessions (sometimes only between adventures) in order to raise skills. Points can only be spent on skills that are associated with stats in the Experience category (e.g., Physical XP only works with STR, AGI, PRE, ALL, and REF-associated skills).

➤Remember, buying new skills cost 1 point and the skill begins with a rating of 1. Raising existing skills must be done in steps (increments of 1) and has a cost equal to the skill's new rating (e.g., going from 1 to 2 costs 2 Experience Points because 2 is the new rating; likewise, going from 2 to 3 costs 3 points; and, since step increments can't be skipped, going from 1 to 3 costs 5 Experience Points!). Also, skills that currently have negative ratings (due to starting species) can be raised at a cost in XP equal to the negative rating for each negative point removed. For example, giong from -3 to -1 costs 5 XP.

➤Any stat can be increased by spending XP. You must spend XP on stats in the same category; i.e., physical XP on physical stats. Bonus can go to any stat. It effectively costs 10 points to raise any stat a single full point, but stats are actually raised in one-tenth fractions at a time, for 1 XP per tenth point and **any stat may be increased a single tenth point this way at the end of each adventure—no more.** This means you can spend 3 points to raise three different stat fractions a tenth each, but the same stat can't be raised by more than one tenth without completing additional adventures. Thus, going from 4_5 to 4_6 costs 1 XP and is the maximum for one session.

➤As characters age, they apply mandatory permanent modifiers listed for their species in Chapter 10 of this book. These figures can go beyond species min/max scores. Dropping to zero can result in death (see text on how to avoid).

➤Heroism cannot be bought using any type of experience, and is only gained as a gift from the gamemaster. Characters can never possess more than 1 Heroism at a time (2 for humans).

➤You're Done ! Happy Adventuring...

Raising Skills and Stats

Experience points can be used to raise existing skill ratings or buy new skills. Remember, only skills associated with the particular type of experience can be increased using these rules (see Spending Experience, above).

INCREASING SKILL RATINGS: New skills always cost 1 point and begin with a rating of 1. Raising an existing skill must be done one step at a time (in increments of 1) and always has a cost equal to the new rating. Thus, going from 1 to 2 costs 2 points because 2 is the new rating; going from 2 to 3 costs 3 points because 3 is the new rating, and so on without limit. Since these 1-point step increments can't be skipped, it would thus cost 5 points to raise a skill from 1 to 3, or 6 points to add a new skill with a rating of 3.

Also, skills that are Biologically-Difficult for your species may currently have a negative skill rating. This rating can be increased until it is zero by spending experience points equal to the negative rating to raise (decrease the negative) by one level at a atime, which may need to be done several times. For example, going from a skill rating of -3 to a rating of -1 would cost 5 XP. 1 more XP would take the rating to zero. Once the skill rating is zero, then use the rules above, so 1 more point yet would raise the skill rating to level 1.

For skills that are Biologically-Easy, all costs to increase the designated skills are halved (rounded up). This means that where it would normally cost 3 points to raise a skill rating from 2 to 3 would now cost only 2 experience points. It would cost 2 more to go from a rating of 3 to 4. New skills still cost 1 XP because half of 1 XP rounded up is still 1. Note that these are the same rules as were used during character creation to raise skills.

INCREASING STATS SCORES: Any stat score can be increased with experience. **The cost is 1 Experience Point for every one-tenth stat point raised. But, you can only do this once in the same stat after each adventure or game session or as dictated by the GM. That is, you could not choose to spend 2 experience points to raise one stat 2 tenths of a point, but you could choose to raise two different stats a single tenth fraction each after a given adventure. Then, after the next adventure, you may do this again.**

For example, raising a stat from 5_7 to 5_8 would cost 1 Experience Point. After the next game session, that 5_8 stat could be increased to 5_9 if the character had another experience point to spend. Over time (after yet another game session), that 5_9 could be raised to a 6_0. Later to a 6_1, and so on.

At no time may a character's stat score be raised above the stat maximum for the character's species, except in rare cases where cybernetics or other biotech further enhances a stat. Maximums are listed as the second number in parentheses following the species stat listing in Chapter 10.

Note that sometimes there are other ways to increase stats. These can include cybernetics and genetic engineering to enhance Strength, Agility, and Precision, while plastic surgery could enhance Allure. These are covered in Parts 5 and 6 of this book, as well as in some supplemental guides.

Why this cost? Simply, if a character wishes to spend time working out with weights in order to increase the Strength Stat, that character must dedicate a lot of time to that activity just as someone who wanted to improve their knowledge of mechanical engineering would need to spend similar time studying various tech manuals in order to improve that skill. Similarly, a character who practices mental disciplines and meditation might increase their Willpower given enough time. Therefore, raising stats or skills is more of a measure of how a character spends his or her time and effort working toward improvement.

Stats and Aging

As characters age, their stats change. Some mental stats such as Knowledge improve naturally with time and experience, but the majority of stats continue dropping as the character ages. These changes are tied directly to the character's species or race. Some characters expect a reduction in their Strength, as an example, with age, but others fight those changes by putting effort into bodybuilding (spending Experience Points to raise Strength).

Players should be made familiar with their character's species' Stat Age Modifiers, which are detailed in the respective full species description for each race in Chapter 10 of this book. **As characters reach the ages listed, players must apply the adjustments to their character's stats.** Most of these adjustments are negative, but some are positive. For example, a -1 modifier to a character's Strength stat of 4_5 would change that score to 3_5. Also, unless otherwise noted for a particular species, the last Stat Age Modifier category is normally reapplied every 10 years after the last application.

Stat Age Modifiers can exceed the character's minimum or maximum stat scores for the species. Furthermore, if either of the life-giving stats (STR or WIL) is reduced to zero or less by these modifiers, then the character dies from old age at that time. Other stats may carry nearly as devastating a result as death. For example, if AGI, PRE, or REF drops to zero, the character will be bed-ridden an unable to move. If INT or INU is reduced to zero or less, the character is also bed-ridden as a vegetable. Therefore, characters in danger of death from aging may wish to fight for their life by attributing some of their Experience Points to areas where their bodies are failing.

Getting More Heroism

Characters begin with only one Heroism point (2 for humans) when they are created, and can only replenish spent Heroism points by receiving those points as gifts from the Gamemaster.

Gamemasters will periodically hand out a Heroism point to characters when those characters might be faced with a situation too dangerous or unpredictable for the campaign. They might also receive them after they've used up their existing point wisely. Gamemasters are not required to use or issue these points. They are a gift. Spend them carefully.

Buying Off Drawbacks

During character creation some players may have selected drawbacks for their characters in order to gain additional Starting Experience Points. Experience points can be used to 'buy-off' these drawbacks, though the cost is doubled. This means that if a player selected a drawback that bestowed 2 Starting Experience Points during character creation, that 4 Unspent Experience Points would have to be spent between game sessions to do away with that drawback.

Once drawbacks are removed in this fashion, they no longer plague the character but will always be a part of that character's history.

You're Done ! Happy Adventuring...

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Chapter Twenty-Unknown

Telepath Characters

Introduction

Beings with high Intellect of 7_0 or higher are telepathic. A high Intuition and high Ego increase telepathic power as well.

Empathy, essentially the reverse of telepathy, is the vague and unreliable ability to experience strong emotions exuded by others nearby. It is separate from telepathy, and gained from an exceptionally high Harmony stat (9+) and dealt with later in this chapter.

TELEPATHY IN SOCIETY: The basis of the ZAON Imperium under Za'aan control makes other telepathic beings a threat in many ways to the Za'aan. With this principle in mind, telepaths capable of anything more than MindSpeech are watched carefully and those determined to be the enemy or harmful to the Imperium are sometimes silenced. Telepaths are, however, sought and employed in legitimate corporate or government positions.

Under Imperial law, it remains illegal to use telepathy to scan another's mind or invade another's privacy unless employed and directed by law enforcement officials (Za'aan are exempt from this law, naturally).

It is important to point out that the Imperial bias toward telepaths is among the more lenient and open of policies when compared to many other stellar nations. Attitudes like these are generally a result of Za'aan abuse of telepathic powers, and so telepaths often remind mundanes of the Za'aan and how such talents can be misused.

NOTE: Anyone of political or Intellectual Property importance is generally assigned a Darcanan advisor (see below) for obvious reasons.

Telepathy

Sometimes gifted individuals stemming from many different races are born with a natural telepathic ability. Likewise, there are entire species who communicate exclusively via telepathy. Characters that possess Intellect scores of 7_0 or higher are considered telepathic. Any being with an Intellect score of 6_9 or lower can never realize, learn, or use telepathic abilities. Anyone who meets the Intellect prerequisite of 7_0 for telepathy is then further classified as either a natural telepath or a latent telepath, which is determined by species. There is no difference in power or ability other than natural telepaths are born with their first ability (MindSpeech) active whereas latent telepaths must be trained to use their potential. Latent telepaths may or may not become learned telepaths. Becoming a learned telepath requires a telepath master instructor.

All characters that meet the prerequisite for telepathy are considered latent telepaths by default unless their species description specifically notes their race as being natural telepaths—meaning that every member of the species is an active telepath.

Niveans, for example, are all natural telepaths. Humans, on the other hand, usually aren't telepathic but some have potential to become telepaths and begin as latent telepaths until they learn from a master telepath how to unlock the secrets of their minds.

In addition to either being born with or learning the concepts of telepathy which permit telepathic communication, there exist a number of advanced telepathic abilities. These advanced abilities represent everything beyond MindSpeech and must be learned regardless of whether a character is a natural telepath or latent one, though a few rare individuals are said to be born with their advanced

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤The following is a summary of this chapter, but any player interested in playing a telepathic character should read the main text in this chapter in its entirety. QuickStart rules here are meant only as a guide, even for experienced players.

➤Realize that telepaths are persecuted throughout many places in the galaxy—read *Telepathy in Society* for more information.

➤Anyone with an INT of 7_0+ has telepathic potential of one or more types of telepathy as specifically qualified for.

➤Characters are latent telepaths by default, though some species cause a character to be a natural telepath instead. The only difference is the natural telepath is born with their telepathy active and can begin using MindSpeech right away. Latent telepaths must be trained in how to unlock the secrets of their mind and thus become learned telepaths. If training isn't received, characters retain potential but can't use telepathy.

➤All types of telepaths can acquire various advanced telepathic abilities so long as they meet the specific prerequisites noted. Only select Za'aan and a very few rare humans ever spontaneously gain advanced talent abilities without training. Unless otherwise noted, characters must be trained in each of the advanced talents for which they qualify before these talents can be used. Za'aan masters are usually sought for this instruction. Advanced talents are treated as Mental 'skills' and follow similar rules for skills insofar as spending XP to increase them. Talents begin with ratings of 1 and can be increased like a skill.

➤Bots cannot use or be affected by telepathy.

➤Use of advanced telepathic talents drains psion until there is no psion left, at which point use of the ability instead applies stun damage to the character's Life. A character's psion pool is the amount of psion available to that character and is determined by chart (see text).

➤Darcanan exude telepathic dampening auras that extend radially from their persons to a range equal to their WIL stat x10 in meters! No telepathy (MindSpeech nor advanced talents) function within this spherical area surrounding the Darcanan. Darcanan can sometimes detect the type and location of any attempted abilities within their aura. However, telepaths who are within the radial field are aware of the dampening effect. Telepaths outside the field sense nothing, but any attempt to use a directed talent (such as scanning the mind of an individual who is within a Darcanan aura) will inexplicably fail—thereby suggesting a Darcanan nearby.

abilities active. Further, many who possess the latent ability never realize their potential and so never learn any telepathic abilities.

Bots, incidentally, can never be scanned, detected, telepathically communicated with, or affected in any way by telepathy, advanced or otherwise; nor can bots ever learn or use telepathy themselves.

How Telepathy Works

Assuming the prerequisite is met and an instructor available to teach the talent, any telepath may learn any talent within his or her mind's ability. For example, no telepath could ever learn *Program Mind* unless his or her INT score was at least 10_0 or more.

PSION: Use of most telepathic abilities drains the telepath mentally and sometimes physically. This drain is noted in points of psion. Once a character's psion pool (described below) is emptied, telepathic abilities can no longer be used safely. If pressed, telepaths can continue to use their abilities, but any psion costs are instead paid directly as stun damage to the character's Life total. Some powers have drains significant enough to risk unconsciousness or even death if used by a drained character.

A character's psion pool is based on the character's combined Intellect, Intuition, and Ego, referenced on the chart below:

INT+INU+EGO	PSION Pool
less than 13_0	2
13_0 to 13_9	4
14_0 to 14_9	6
15_0 to 15_9	8
16_0 to 16_9	10
17_0 to 17_9	13
18_0 to 18_9	16
19_0 to 19_9	19
20_0 to 20_9	22
21_0 to 21_9	25
22_0 to 22_9	28
23_0 to 23_9	31
24_0 to 24_9	34
25_0 to 25_9	38
26_0 to 26_9	42
27_0 to 27_9	46
28_0 to 28_9	50
29_0 to 29_9	55
30_0 to 30_9	60
31_0 to 31_9	65
32_0 to 32_9	70
33_0 to 33_9	76
34_0 to 34_9	82
35_0 to 35_9	88
36_0 to 36_9	94
37_0 to 37_9	101
38_0 to 38_9	108
39_0 to 39_9	115

For example, the best Za'aan (with maximum scores in every stat) would have a psion pool of 101 points (because all three stats totaled 37.5), whereas an average Za'aan with base stats would have 65 points (stats totaled 31.2).

Lost psion replenishes naturally with sleep (enough sleep to meet the appropriate species' 'nightly' requirement). Telepaths awaken to find their psion pools fully restored. If sleep is not an option, a few points can occasionally be regained with periods of complete rest at the GM's discretion.

ADVANCED TELEPATHY: When advanced telepathic abilities are learned, the character gains a rating in that ability equal to 1. Each particular ability can then be improved like any other skill through expenditure of experience points. Telepathic abilities are considered mental 'skills' and follow the rules for skills, except as noted herein.

LEARNING FROM ZA'AAN LORDS: Historically, it has been the Za'aan species who have mastered all of the known advanced telepathic abilities. It is they who are most often sought for instruction by latent and natural telepaths wishing to fully explore their potential. Telepaths of other species can also teach young telepaths, but it is well known that the Za'aan methods for instruction have been perfected over millions of years and provide students with the best mentoring available.

Za'aan are also widely believed to be the only species able to spontaneously master their telepathic talents without need for instruction, and are certainly the only known species able to fully master all of the highest and most powerful talents. Still, less than a quarter of Za'aan masters progress without instruction, and a very few humans have recently been said to unlock such secrets without Za'aan training but this may be only rumor.

Though Za'aan are perhaps the greatest of all telepaths, the average member of the species only dabbles in talents beyond MindSpeech. Indeed, despite their affinity for the art, most accept their natural telepathy and never fully embrace their inherent potential nor qualify for higher telepathic prowess. However, nearly all Za'aan Lords are unspeakable masters of advanced telepathy.

Za'aan masters will sometimes train only those they believe to adhere to certain alike beliefs, but a few will do so for a fee. Nevertheless, it is said that the grand master telepaths will rarely share the highest of the psion disciplines even to those who qualify. In a way, the greatest of the talents remain coveted prizes held by only those who spontaneously master such talents.

DARCANAN DISRUPTION AURAS: The natural aura generated by all Darcanan interferes with all forms of telepathic ability—blocking it completely. The means by which this telepathic dampening is achieved is no better understood than the psion energies behind telepathy itself.

All telepathic abilities (including MindSpeech and every advanced talent including all forms of manifested telepathy) are entirely rendered silent and unusable within a Darcanan's presence. Telepaths within the aura are automatically aware of the dampening effect, but those outside of it who attempt to direct psion energies (such as a mind scan) at a target within a Darcanan aura will find those talents similiarly non-functional or dissipating at the aura's boundary. Darcanan are further able to sense any failed attempts to use telepathy within their auras and can sometimes even discern the type of telepathic talent attempted and by whom.

The size of a Darcanan's dampening aura is measured radially (spherically) to a range of 10 meters for every point of the Darcanan's individual Willpower stat. For example, a Darcanan with a 8_4 WIL generates a null-field 84 meters in all directions of the Darcanan.

Some Darcanan have learned to temporarily suppress their dampening field aura. See the Darcanan Special Abilities in Chapter 9 for more information.

For centuries, Darcanan have been highly sought for their telepathic dampening abilities—coveted by politicians and high-ranking officials interested in keeping their secrets to themselves. Because of the potential advantages gained from scanning one's rivals and enemies, virtually every high-ranking official in every known stellar nation employs Darcanan advisors at all times to render nearby telepaths mundane. This and Darcanan affinity for knowledge and history make them excellent advisors. A few have questioned the wisdom of these practices upon noticing the placement of Darcanan in every branch of government of nearly every known stellar nation.

Basic Telepathy: MindSpeech

Natural telepaths, and those latent telepaths who receive instruction in how to initially open their minds, may employ MindSpeech—a form of mind-to-mind communication. In order for this to work, the recipient of the telepathic contact must be within a direct line-of-sight. The recipient does not need to possess telepathy too, as the telepath can establish a mental link that both parties can communicate in both directions over (see below). The recipient cannot later re-establish contact with the telepath—only telepaths can initiate contact. Occasionally, close friends and other intimate contacts of a telepath can be contacted by that telepath over distances greater than line-of-sight—reportedly able to send and receive rudimentary feelings over planet to orbital distances.

When MindSpeech is initiated by a telepath, the recipient can always hear the telepath in his or her mind, though can never be distracted by such contact if it is purposefully ignored. If both parties don't speak the same language, limited communication is still possible through the conveyance of ideas, notions, and imagery.

MindSpeech allows the equivalent of up to a conversation between the two parties, except that either party may also send images or 'pictures' of things they have seen and remember clearly. Only desired speech and images are sent via this means—neither party can learn anything from the other that is not volunteered and intentionally sent. This form of MindSpeech is approximately ten times as fast as a verbal exchange and can always be heard no matter how noisy or busy a situation is (unless ignored).

MindSpeech does not place a drain on the telepath's strength or will—it can be kept up indefinitely, save for sleep.

MindSpeech can be used for conversation while either party is simultaneously engaged in other activities to the same extent that characters could talk aloud while performing other actions.

Advanced Telepathy: Scanning

Telepathic scanning involves the ability to listen to or probe other sentient being's minds. Scanning abilities are Intellect-based talents, meaning the more complex and advanced one's mind is the more sophisticated and powerful the scanning abilities become (once learned).

PRINCIPLES OF SCANNING AND BLOCKING: The following rules apply to most scanning talents in this section and demonstrate how standard Contested Action checks are used for resolution.

Telepaths trained to do so gain the ability to conduct scans of other person's minds. Scans can only be conducted within a clear line-of-sight to the target. The effects of a scan are dependent on the talent used (see below).

Non telepaths are unaware of scan attempts and can do nothing to stop them. Other telepaths, however, are always aware the instant another telepath attempts to read any of their own thoughts, and so automatically attempt to block such scans. Blocking can be performed without the blocking talent, without using an action or any concentration, and is autonomic though can be willfully dropped. Blocking is not always successful—especially if the scanning telepath is a stronger telepath with a more advanced and disciplined mind. The blocking talent, if possessed, will further aid the blocking character.

For those able to block, the outcome of a scan against a blocked mind is determined by a standard contested die roll. The scanning character rolls a d12 and adds his or her Intellect stat and appropriate Scanning talent rating (the same as any other skill). The blocking character rolls a d12 and adds his or her Intellect stat and Blocking talent rating (if possessed). If the scanning character's total is higher, then the scan is successful and reveals information appropriate to

the type of scan used. If the defender's total is higher, then the scan is completely blocked.

Scan/block contested actions (whether successful or thwarted) require one turn to complete.

BLOCKING: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 7 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

Blocking is the trained ability to reorganize and protect the mind with mental barriers designed to thwart hostile mind scans. The effects of this talent enhance the natural blocking methods known by all telepaths. Characters with this talent may add this talent's rating to any Contested Action rolls when defending against scans. Also, telepaths with Affinity (see below) who become aware of other telepath's attempts to scan others may choose to block on behalf of non-telepaths or other weaker telepaths.

Each block attempt (whether successful or not) drains 1 psion per use/turn, but requires no special concentration and can be performed simultaneously with other actions, including telepathic ones.

SURFACE SCANS: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 7 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

Surface scans are capable of only reading surface thoughts. That is, things that the target is currently thinking about, seeing, or mulling over can be read as though the target was speaking his or her thoughts aloud. Victims without some degree of telepathy are clueless to the fact that these scans are being conducted (as described above in Principles), and have no defense against them other than choosing to think about something else.

All surface scans drain 2 psion per use/turn regardless of whether they are blocked or not (note that a single turn is typically enough to gather all that is needed). Surface scans do require a minor amount of concentration, and so characters simultaneously engaged in other physical or academic actions receive a +2 Step Penalty to those actions. Characters conducting surface scans cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

IMPLANT SUGGESTION: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 8 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

These telepaths can actually implant suggestions into a target mind. Suggestions (whether successful or not) are not detectable by non-telepathic victims, though other telepaths are immediately aware of them and may choose to block (see Principles above) on behalf of the target. A successful suggestion becomes an idea or opinion in the target's mind exactly as if the idea or opinion had originated by the victim. That is, the victim has no way of knowing which idea is the implanted suggestion even if they are somehow made aware of the telepath's efforts—this is true even for other telepaths. Ideas and opinions are not always successful, but those that are can sway thinking.

For telepaths, a failed block attempt means the suggestion was successful. For non-telepaths, the suggestion is a contested die roll using a d12 plus the non-telepath's Intellect score. In both cases, however, there is a special Step Penalty assigned to the roll. This penalty die is rolled by the suggesting telepath along with the contested action roll or by itself if versus a non-telepath. The degree of Step Penalty is based on how foreign the suggestion is to the subject:

If the suggestion is favorable or neutral to the victim, then the telepath suffers a +1 Step Penalty. If the suggestion is contrary to the victim's own opinions, then the telepath suffers a +3 Step Penalty. If the victim is averse to the idea, then the telepath suffers a +5 Step Penalty. Any suggestion diametrically opposite of the victim's own opinions suffers a +7 Step Penalty. Suggestions include things like getting a guard to unlock a cell door (averse); getting a merchant to haggle a bit (neutral); getting a local police officer to overlook a minor infraction (contrary); getting a guard to allow unauthorized access to a sensitive compound where no one is allowed (opposite). Suggestions can never include things like self injury, allowing direct harm to friends or family, or anything else totally unreasonable.

Each suggestion attempt (whether successful or not) drains 4 psion. Implanting suggestions do require a minor amount of concentration, and so characters simultaneously engaged in other physical or academic actions receive a +2 Step Penalty to those actions. Characters implanting suggestions cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

SLEEP: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 8 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

This power allows the telepath to induce sleep in any conscious being. In order for this sleep to be effected, the telepath must be face-to-face with the subject and not more than one meter distant at the extreme. Furthermore, the telepath must use his or her hand by overtly waving it once in a circular or downward motion in front of the subject's face. The word 'sleep' is pronounced during this motion. These processes are accomplished as a single action during the turn.

This power automatically fails if the subject is extremely agitated, on powerful stimulants, or combative. In all other instances, non-telepath subjects of this power are allowed a standard Willpower+d12 contested check versus the telepath's Intellect+Sleep+d12 in order to remain conscious. Characters may use a Heroism point to avoid the effect and remain immune to further sleep for the duration of combat.

Other telepaths may block use of this talent as if it were a scan attempt.

Successfully resisting Sleep indicates a momentary dazing that results in a +1 Step Penalty to any action the subject has yet to perform that same turn, but otherwise has no effect.

If Sleep is successful, then the subject immediately collapses into unconsciousness for 1 hour plus 1d100 minutes. Unconscious characters cannot be awakened except through injury or vigorous shaking that causes at least 2 points of stun damage.

Each Sleep attempt (whether successful or not) drains 6 psion. Use of this talent does require a minor amount of concentration, and so characters simultaneously engaged in other physical or academic actions receive a +3 Step Penalty to those actions. Characters using Sleep cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

DEEP SCANS: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 9 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

A telepath's Deep Scan talent rating cannot exceed his or her Surface Scan talent rating, and so must possess the Surface Scan talent before learning this one.

Deep scans allow the telepath to probe around in the victim's mind in order to find information and discover secrets. This requires one turn to begin the search, and one additional turn for each piece

of information read. A piece of information is considered to be an address, a com ID, a code, a name, an image, or even an abstract feeling or notion about a past conversation or situation, including a few words from a conversation.

Unlike surface scans, non-telepaths become aware of deep scans—because they are somewhat painful and disturbing—and may choose to resist the effect. Resisting characters may 'block' as if they were telepaths (d12+INT, but no blocking talent). Remember, a character may attempt to resist each turn a scan is continued.

> *"Oh, he's good all right... maybe even dangerous. But he's no Za'aan."*
> —Seasoned Telepath Bounty Hunter

Other telepaths block deep scans exactly like a surface scan. Remember, a telepath may attempt to block each turn a scan is continued just as the scanning telepath may re-attempt failed scans each turn.

Each deep scan attempt (whether successful or not) drains 3 psion. Deep scans do require some concentration, and so characters simultaneously engaged in other physical or academic actions receive a +3 Step Penalty to those actions. Characters performing deep scans cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

PAIN: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 9 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

By means of this power, the telepath stimulates certain nerves in a target body for the sole purpose of causing pain while keeping the victim conscious. This can range from aches and jabs on up to unimaginable torture depending on the talent rating of the telepath. Each level of pain carries increasing penalties to the subject's actions.

Other telepaths may attempt to block this ability the same way they block scan attempts. Non-telepaths may also attempt to block this pain, but do so as a d12+Willpower contested roll.

Each turn pain is attempted or maintained (whether successful or not) drains 4 psion. Use of this talent does require concentration, and so telepaths simultaneously engaged in other physical or academic actions receive a +4 Step Penalty to those actions. Characters using this talent cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

Novices and skilled characters may cause significant aches and jabbing pain, but none of this affects the victim's dice rolls.

Adepts may induce spasms and sharp internal pains that results in a +1 Step Penalty to all of the victim's actions.

Advanced characters can create pain similar to severe wounds and minor internal hemorrhaging, resulting in a +2 Step Penalty to all of the victim's dice rolls.

Expert telepaths may generate pain reminiscent of severe trauma and major internal hemorrhaging. This results in a +3 Step Penalty to all rolls.

Masters can literally torture their victims with severely disabling pain that results in a +4 Step Penalty to all of the victim's rolls.

Grand Masters are reportedly able to simulate unimaginable torture beyond what could normally be experienced without causing unconsciousness. This results in a +6 Step Penalty to any action the victim attempts.

PROGRAM MIND: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 10 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

A telepath's Program Mind talent rating cannot exceed his or her Deep Scan talent rating, and so must possess the Deep Scan and thus Surface Scan talents before learning this one.

There are three parts to this talent:

REPRESS/CREATE MEMORY: These telepaths have the amazing ability to get into a target mind and repress recent memories, implant detailed instructions or messages, and cover their tracks in doing so. Like always, other telepaths may attempt to block this telepathic ability, but only the first turn in which it begins. Non-telepaths may also resist as if they were telepaths (d12+INT, but no blocking talent), but again only for the first turn.

Memory repression cannot be attempted by a telepath until that telepath has successfully conducted a deep scan (see above) as a separate action in order to specifically locate where the desired memories have been stored. Repressing a memory requires one turn plus one additional turn per minute of past memories affected. Thus, repressing the last 10 minutes of a target's memories would require 11 turns. Even non-telepaths are immediately aware of this kind of mental probing (as it can be quite uncomfortable), but if the target fails to resist on the first turn, then the target will be subject to the entire length of this ability and remembers nothing of the time 'removed'. Repressed memories are actually still present in the target's mind, though the target cannot recall them nor is the target even aware they exist. Memories need not be a target's most recent, and may include any period of time within the last several days (up to 1 day for every full point the telepath possesses in his or her Intellect score).

IMPLANT MESSAGE: Alternatively, implanting a message can actually turn a target into a form of courier. Essentially, a message (even detailed) is implanted in the target's mind like a memory and then repressed from the target's own conscious mind. This form of implanting is resisted the same way as repressed memory work (part one of this ability, above) and also requires a successful deep scan in order to 'arrange' for a location to store the message.

Detailed instruction implantation is a more advanced version of suggestion. Rather than instilling a simple notion or opinion, this method allows for rather detailed instruction. Instructions of this nature are implanted along with a 'trigger' so that they will manifest at a given point in time. For example, an engineer could be 'instructed' to lower an outpost's defense shield when and only when a specific condition became true (or at a specified time).

INSTALL BLOCKS: In addition to the above abilities, telepaths with this talent may install 'blocks' of their own which are designed to protect their memory repression or implantation 'work'. These blocks are permanent until removed, and may be bypassed by the individual which installed them. To other telepaths, getting at anything protected by a block (for example, a repressed memory in order to restore that memory) is conducted by a reversing scan. Reversing scans can only be initiated by telepaths with this talent ability and are pitted against the installed block. The block functions as if the telepath which installed it is present defending the target's mind.

Repressing/creating a memory (whether successful or not) drains 4 psion on the first turn plus 1 psion for each turn the work continues. Message implantation drains a flat 8 psion. Installing a block in a target mind drains a flat 10 psion. All three forms of this talent require considerable concentration, and so characters cannot simultaneously engage in other physical or academic activities. These telepaths cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

REPROGRAM MIND: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 11 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

A telepath's Reprogram Mind talent rating cannot exceed his or her Program Mind talent rating, and so must possess the Program Mind and thus Deep Scan and Surface Scan talents before learning this one.

There are two parts to this talent. These telepaths possess the power to literally wipe or reprogram minds. Both of these abilities require considerable concentration and time to perform. Telepaths may attempt to block as normal, and non-telepaths may attempt to resist where so noted.

MIND WIPE: Wiping a mind is much more complicated than it sounds—the telepath must actually go in and permanently delete entire periods of memory. Before this can begin, the telepath must first successfully complete at least three deep scans (see above) in order to identify all relative memories—successes need not be consecutive. Once this has been done, then the telepath may begin the memory deletion process. Memory deletion requires one turn plus one turn for each year of past memories deleted—memories are non-specific, so the victim's entire memory for the year is wiped. Non-telepath's may attempt to resist each turn as if this were a deep scan. Note: the subject only loses memory of details and events, but always retains all skill knowledge and training (though wouldn't know where such knowledge or training was acquired).

Wiping a mind is not always a guarantee that the information will be purged from the victim's mind. At any time in the future when another telepath is attempting to locate some piece of the victim's purged memory, there is a 1 in 6 chance that the memory is actually still there. If this is the case, the victim certainly has no knowledge or access to that memory but a probing telepath might be able to reconstruct it as if it were a repressed memory (Program Mind, above).

ALTER MIND: Reprogramming a mind, on the other hand, is even more difficult and is perhaps the most challenging task of all. This ability allows the telepath to alter the subject's personality type and to implant false memories. It cannot, however, bestow or remove fundamental skills or specialized training (though the subject could be adjusted to falsely 'remember' having gained those skills from a source other than the actual one). Therefore, subjects can be reprogrammed to be more aggressive, passive, pleasant, or rude, and could even be left with entire lifetimes' worth of memories that were not their own, all the while retaining all of the same skills and training knowledge known before.

The first step to reprogramming requires three successful deep scans (see above) in order to properly map the subject's mind—these scans need not be consecutive successes. Personality alterations are limited to exaggerating or minimizing traits the subject already possesses, and this requires one turn plus 1d6 turns for each personality adjustment made. Implanting false memories (which feel entirely genuine to the subject) requires one turn plus 1d6 turns for each year of false memories implanted. Note, however, that this assumes that the telepath has access to memories (anyone's) from which the implanted memories will be made similar to or modeled after. Implanted false memories supplant the subject's real memories, which are then automatically repressed in the subject's mind. Both personality and memory reprogramming automatically include the installation of blocks in order to keep the new programming in place and to protect it.

After the initial deep scans required to begin the reprogramming process, non-telepaths may no longer attempt to resist the reprogramming itself. Telepaths also lose their ability to block reprogramming after 1d6 failed blocks once into the programming process. In both cases, this is because the subject is temporarily or permanently made more compliant.

Either use of this ability (whether successful or not) drains 10 psion on the first turn, plus 1 additional psion per turn thereafter in which the ability is maintained. Both uses of this talent require considerable concentration, and so characters cannot simultaneously engage in other physical or academic activities. These telepaths cannot also use other telepathic abilities during the same turn, but they can simultaneously block.

MIND MASTERY: Characters who possess Intellect stat scores of 12 or better and who've been trained to do so can use this telepathic talent ability.

A telepath's Mind Mastery talent rating cannot exceed his or her Reprogram Mind talent rating, and so must possess the Reprogram Mind and thus Program Mind, Deep Scan, and Surface Scan talents before learning this one.

The abilities of these incredible telepaths reportedly entail even more detailed programming techniques as well as the ability to interfere with certain motor reflexes in order to keep a victim from physically taking action on certain desires. For example, a homicidal subject could actually be prevented from carrying out the deed of murder—though, this kind of manipulation can promote insanity as the subject will still retain desire.

Other reported abilities include being able to alter the subject's perceived reality insofar that the subject may see or experience certain sensations that feel entirely real but are not. Twisted versions of this ability include several forms of insanity and never ending torture.

Rumors persist of telepaths attaining this level of mastery and gaining the ability to interact telepathically with bots and other machines, but no such claims have ever been verified.

Whatever the case, telepaths of this level are very powerful and the details of their abilities are left to the gamemaster. Clearly, instruction of this talent can be taught by only a handful of telepaths in the galaxy, who surely regard that knowledge as secret.

BEYOND ADVANCED TELEPATHY: Rumors abound of telepathic talents able to mimic the abilities of Tau'Za'aan—psion energies that can be expressed physically. Such abilities are thought to build upon the EGO stat similar to how advanced scanning talents build upon INT, however, where INT is also a requirement as well. Since the Za'aan are masters of Ego, it stands to reason that if such powers exist then it is they who harbor those secrets behind the expression of manifested psion energies.

Natural Empathy

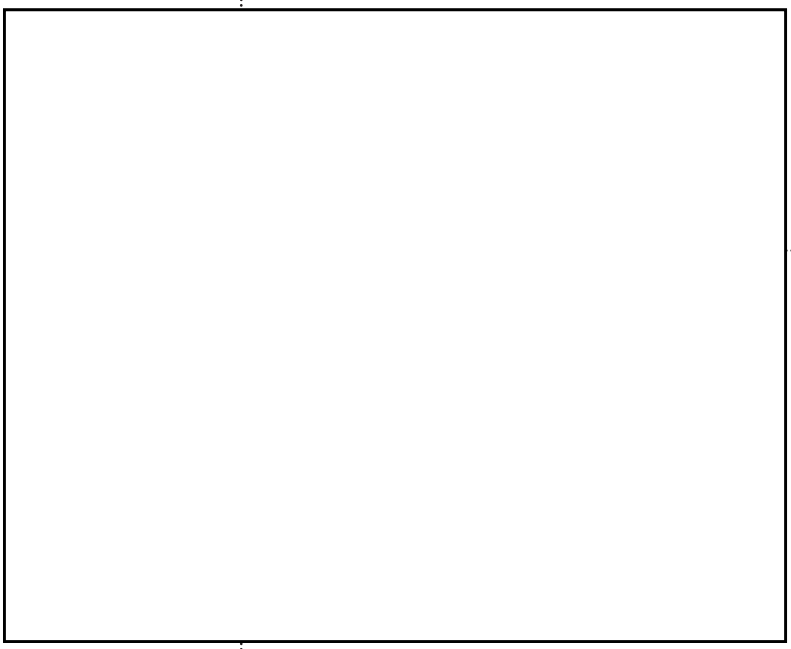
Natural empathy is fairly rare and occurs when any being has a Harmony stat score of 9 or higher. There is no training associated with natural empathy—it either exists or it doesn't.

An empath can determine the overall nature of a highly emotional being within a couple of meters of the empath. A Tough Harmony check is used to see if the reading is accurate or blurred.

Empaths who fail their roll don't pick up false information, but rather receive unrecognizable or mixed emotions that can't be properly interpreted. Moreover, the empath cannot try again with the same being that same day. There is no psion drain to use Empathy.

Part Four

Skills



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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Skill Descriptions

Introduction

Skills represent specialized training and/or knowledge. Additional skills may be acquired by a character at any time the gamemaster believes appropriate, by the player expending experience points in order to 'buy' new skills or to raise existing ones. (For information on Experience Points as well as how to spend them on skills, see Chapter 20 in Part 3 of this book; for information on how skills are acquired during character creation, see Chapter 13 in Part 2.)

How Skills Work

All skills have ratings assigned to them. A rating is simply a number indicating how skilled a character is in a particular area of expertise.

Characters who have not pursued a particular skill are said to be *unskilled* in that area and, hence, have no rating in it. Once characters have studied and learned a particular skill, they are then considered to be a *novice* in that area. Skills that a character has acquired this way always begin with a rating of 1 (while characters unskilled in that area have no rating).

As you may have deduced while reading Part 3: *Playing the Game,* there is a big difference between a character who is an expert in a particular skill and a character who isn't—a 5 point difference, to be precise. That means an expert character has a significant edge for unskilled characters. Furthermore, as described in Chapter 20, characters can raise their skill ratings to values over 5 so that they can become even better at a given task.

SKILL LEVELS: When characters raise their skill ratings over 1 they not only receive a better chance at completing basic and routine tasks, but they also start having the chance of successfully performing very difficult actions. Skill ratings can thus be associated with various degrees of proficiency (skill mastery). Though a skill rating of 1 only means that the character is **a** *novice* in a given area, a rating of 2 indicates a character who is *skilled* in that area. A rating of 3 is considered *adept***,** while a rating of 4 is indicative of an *advanced* **character.** A rating of 5 is a true *expert*. Sometimes, characters will have skill ratings of 6 or 7 or more, and these characters are said to be *masters* and *grand masters***,** respectively.

It can be quite difficult and time-consuming to get a skill rating as high as an expert or master, and that's because skill ratings over 7 or 8 most certainly represent the topmost experts in their fields throughout a galaxy of trillions.

TRAINING [OPTIONAL RULE]: In addition to the experience cost, gamemasters may require that characters receive training in order to actually advance in a particular skill. While some skills can be learned through practice or private study and library viewer lessons, others must be learned through classroom or hands-on study, and some (such as Martial Arts) might require a master instructor with a superior skill level.

COMPUTING THE ACTION CHECK: Each skill is associated with one of the character's stat scores. For example, the skill Carousing/Gaming is associated with Harmony, just as Marksmanship Ranged is with Precision. This is because a character with a great personality will have an edge for making new friends, contacts, and otherwise becoming the 'life of the party' at a social

gathering, just as high Precision bestows an edge when aiming a weapon.

On the Character Record Sheet, skills are arranged by the stat they are associated with and have a space for recording each skill's rating. Most skills also have a '+' before where you record each skill's rating, and this is to remind you that those ratings are added to the stat rating the skill is associated with. Simply put, if a skill's rating was, perhaps, +3 and its associated stat was 2.9, then your base Action Check would be 5 (before the d12 die roll is added). The extra .9 is used only when the total Action Check exactly equals the target difficulty number, as outlined in Part 3: *Playing the Game*.

Action Check = Associated Stat + Skill Rating, plus the result on a d12.

PROXY SKILLS: Some skills don't have a '+' before a shaded blank where the skill's rating is recorded on the Character Record Sheet. These are Proxy Skills and are also noted as such in the following skill descriptions. Proxy skills don't require Action Checks (dice rolls). Instead, these skills enhance certain character traits and affect game mechanics in other ways. For instance, the Running skill is a Proxy skill so you wouldn't make a Running roll like you would for a normal skill—Running simply increases your character's Running Speed trait (SPD).

— QUICKSTART GUIDE —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤Characters without a particular skill are said to be unskilled in that area. Characters with a skill are novice characters, while those with ratings higher than 1 have certain other designations, as follows:

- ➥Unskilled = zero Skill Rating
- ➥Novice = 1 Skill Rating
- ➥Skilled = 2 Skill Rating
- ➥Adept = 3 Skill Rating
- ➥Advanced = 4 Skill Rating
- ➥Expert = 5 Skill Rating
- ➥Master = 6 Skill Rating
- ➥Grand Master = 7+ Skill Rating

➤Skills are listed by which stat they are associated with. Skills are also classified as either one of two types: normal or Proxy skills.

➤Normal skills receive an Action Difficulty from the gamemaster depending on how tough the skilled attempt is (see Part 3). Examples of what various degrees of difficulty are for each skill are listed in the skill descriptions.

➤Proxy skills aren't actively used during play, but rather enhance a character's traits or affect game mechanics in other ways. Because of this, players do not make Action Check rolls for Proxy skills. Proxies are shaded on the Character Sheet.

➤Remember, a skill's Action Check score is the sum of the that skill's rating plus the stat score the skill is associated with plus the result on a d12.

➤Skills listed on the character sheet with a '†' after the skill name can't be attempted untrained.

➤Some gamemasters may also require that skill training must be had in order to acquire or advance in a skill. Check with your gamemaster.

How Skills are Categorized

Skills are categorized in this section alphabetically so that they are easy to find. Skills are also categorized on the Character Record Sheet for game purposes by which stat they're associated with. There are normal skills, Proxy skills, and professional skills. Professional skills are those that cannot be used untrained and are listed on the character sheet with a '†' notation after the skill name.

Remember also, there may not be a skill for every conceivable action. Where this is true, players and gamemasters alike may design new skills by following the rules outlined at the end of this section. Or, if the task is so rudimentary that creating a new skill doesn't make sense, then only the appropriate stat is used in the Action Check.

For more information on how skills affect game play, see Part 3: *Playing the Game*.

Skills (alphabetical listing)—

Acting

(HAR) This skill allows a character to portray different personalities and roles accurately.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Anywhere from one turn to days of work put into a masterful performance.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character didn't portray the role in a believable or convincing manner. Blunders result in severe embarrassment.

EXAMPLES— AVERAGE: Perform stage or play-acts, alter their voice just enough to pass for a 'bad' accent, or even sing. TOUGH: Qualify for and perform minor or limited commercial work. VERY DIFFICULT: Obtain work in the entertainment industry, mostly of a telecom nature. ABSURD: Be selected for cinematic roles.

Alien Technology

(INU) PREREQUISITES— Electronics and Mechanics skills with ratings of 2 or higher in each. The study of technology not normally available to the public or Imperial Navy. The skill includes theory and training in different ways of thinking, so that alien technologists stand a better chance of deciphering alien machines.

JURYRIGGING: If this skill is being used in an emergency to repair alien technology, the gamemaster may allow a juryrig attempt. Juryrigging makes the Action Difficulty one less (better), but the repair is only temporary and may fail quickly if placed under stress.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Only function/use or species typing can be accomplished in one turn. All other uses require two or more turns, and any repair attempts or modifications require upwards of hours or occasionally days.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check generally indicates that the character made an incorrect assumption (unbeknownst to the character, of course), or, in the case of repairs, may have caused additional damage to the subject device. A blunder usually results in damage to something or a gross error in assessment.

EXAMPLES— Average Identification of most non-prevalent alien equipment and starships in terms of which species it belongs to, upon sight. TOUGH: Ascertain the type and basic function of most alien equipment and shipboard systems. VERY DIFFICULT: Perform basic functions or operations using alien equipment or shipboard systems. ABSURD: Perform difficult or advanced functions or opera-

tions (including minor repairs) using alien equipment or shipboard systems.

Animal Handling/Training

(HAR) This skill allows the character to safely approach wild animals, to avoid spooking animals, and (at higher levels of mastery) even train them.

Average Resolution Time— This skill is accomplished in a few turns when befriending an animal, but requires weeks or longer to train an animal.

RESULTS— Failure causes the animal being handled to become spooked or aggressive. Blunders indicate hostile behavior (possibly resulting in an attack). This skill cannot be re-attempted on the same animal until either conditions greatly change or some time has passed (where the animal forgets).

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Approach strange domesticated animals safely. AVERAGE: Approach docile wild animals safely. TOUGH: Approach average wild animals safely; train a docile one well. VERY DIFFICULT: Approach an aggressive animal safely; train average wild animals. ABSURD: Safely approach a malicious or injured animal; train aggressive animal types reasonably well.

Appraisal

(INU) A skilled character is able to assess the general value of common substances normally exchanged for money, and note which others may possess some or no value based on antique or obscure uses.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn. A very thorough examination may require several minutes.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character misjudged the value of the item. Blunders typically indicate that the item's value is grossly under or overestimated. This roll cannot be re-attempted.

EXAMPLES— Normally, Appraisal Action Checks are rolled where the player cannot see the result—this is because the player character will not know if the check was failed and thus a misjudgment of the value of an item being appraised. ROUTINE/EASY: Common trinkets and popular collectibles; amateur fakes. AVERAGE: Antiques, trinkets, artifacts, obscure collectibles, and typical replicas/fakes. TOUGH: Alien artifacts; good forgeries. VERY DIFFICULT: High-end forgeries. ABSURD: Very rare and otherwise unknown substances and perfect forgeries.

Astrophysics

(INT) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] A character with this skill is proficient in analyzing a star's composition, location, and type. The character is able to ascertain planetary or other space body trajectories. Geological expertise is also available concerning a planet's core, crust, and atmosphere composition and type.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in several minutes.

SKILL LIST —

Acting	HAR
Alien Technology	INU
Animal Handling/Training	HAR
Appraisal	INU
Astrophysics †	INT
Awareness	INU
Balance/Acrobatics	AGI
Bot Technology/Repair †	KNO
Botany †	KNO
Business/Administration	KNO
Carousing/Gaming	HAR
Charm	HAR
Chemistry †	KNO
Climbing	STR
Communications †	KNO
Computer Hacking †	INT
Computer Operation	KNO
Computer Programming †	INT
Concentration	[Proxy] WIL
Craft Maintenance/Repair †	KNO
Cryptography	[Proxy] INT
Demolitions	INT
Devotion	[Proxy] WIL
Disguise	INU
Dodge	[Proxy] AGI
Electronics †	KNO
Etiquette †	HAR
Forensics †	INU
Forgery	INU
Gunnery	[Proxy] PRE
Hide Thoughts	[Proxy] WIL
History	KNO
Interrogation	EGO
Interstellar Law	KNO
Intimidation	EGO
Jumping	[Proxy] STR
Language (all) †	[Proxy] KNO
Lockpicking †	PRE
Manipulation	EGO
Marksmanship, Ranged	[Proxy] PRE
Marksmanship, Thrown	[Proxy] AGI
Martial Arts	[Proxy] AGI
Mechanics	KNO
Medicine †	INT
Physics †	INT
Pickpocket	PRE
Pilot, Ground or Small Ship	AGI
Pilot, Starfighter †	AGI
Pressure Suit Ops	[Proxy] AGI
Resist Interrogation	[Proxy] WIL
Riding	AGI
Running	[Proxy] STR
Science, Specialized (all) †	INT
Search	INU
Security Procedures	INU
Seduction	ALL
Sleight of Hand	PRE
Speech	EGO
Starship Operations (all) †	Various
Stealth	AGI
Strategy and Tactics (all)	[Proxy] INU
Streetwise	HAR
Survival	INU
Swimming	[Proxy] STR
Theology †	KNO
Tracking	INU
Two-Handed Fighting	[Proxy] AGI
Weapons Technology †	KNO
Wrestling	[Proxy] STR
Xenobiology †	KNO
Xenolinguistics †	KNO
Xenosociology †	KNO
Zero-G Ops	[Proxy] AGI

† Skill can't be attempted untrained.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the analysis is flawed in some way. Blunders typically indicate that the analysis neglected or overlooked a dangerous or important aspect of the planet or star system—for example, a toxin in the atmosphere might be overlooked. This skill can only be re-attempted should the player somehow discover that his or her analysis is definitely flawed.

EXAMPLES— Players typically make their character's Astrophysics Action Check roll where only the gamemaster can see the result (because the player will not know if the character's analysis is flawed). ROUTINE/EASY: Star-type and planetoid class. AVERAGE: Plotting a multi-axial orbit or spatial trajectory; calculating the planet's code. TOUGH: Obtain a precise planetoid or star analysis (including composition); ascertain general star or planetoid evolutionary history; establish value on planetary resources. VERY DIFFICULT: Precise planetoid evolutionary history and resources allotment.

Awareness

(INU) This skill is very commonly called for by the gamemaster as a check to see if characters notice something important in their surroundings. Successful awareness checks can help prevent disastrous surprises, alert one who is being followed or watched, or detect abnormal body language. It is either real-world experience or textbook training (or a combination of the two) designed to extend the prowess of a person's Intuition through knowledge of species behavior and practiced conditioned perception.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check simply means that the character wasn't aware of whatever threat or unusual aspect was present. This skill can't normally be re-attempted unless additional time passes where the character might again notice what is out of the ordinary.

EXAMPLES— AVERAGE: Spot something unusual that is neither hidden nor very tiny; or detect somewhat obvious nervousness or other strange behavior in a being. TOUGH: Notice someone tailing or stalking, pick up on clues betraying the presence of a menace; detect subtle behavior changes. VERY DIFFICULT: Become aware of being watched from a distance; pick up on subtle or erased clues betraying the presence of a stalker or menace; detect hidden or masked changes in body language. ABSURD: Notice the presence of covert watching or well-concealed surveillance devices; Realize a connection between obscure or unremarkable clues.

Balance/Acrobatics

(AGI) This skill represents one's ability to balance oneself along ledges or wires, as well as to perform somersaults, flips, twirls, dives, and rolls. This skill does not aid a character by dodging attacks of any kind, but may help characters to flip or dive clear of a ramming vehicle, for instance. This skill is the commonly called upon one for any daring feats involving balance or agility—character's without this skill use only their Agility stat, of course.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn, but may endure for several turns or minutes if used to cross a slippery log or long precarious rope bridge.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character either falls or lands wrong (very wrong). Assuming the character survives or is still in a position to re-attempt this skill, he or she may do so.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Perform a basic somersault or roll on a gym mat; walk a 20cm-wide balance beam; handstands. AVERAGE: Perform a forward or back flip; dive into a basic roll; walk a narrow balance beam; traverse a building ledge. TOUGH: Tight-rope walking; combined dives, flips, and rolls; navigate a treacherous path while being bombarded by falling debris, shaking, or attack; leaping the chasm between high-rise buildings; leaping from a ledge only to grasp a high-hanging rope; walking along a thin ledge while attempting to restrain a thrashing animal or attacker. VERY DIFFICULT: Leap from a cliff or high-rise into a moving vehicle close below; run across a tight-rope or along a building ledge with interference. ABSURD: Maintain balance while walking a balance beam or wire during a severe earthquake or powerful windstorm while engaged in combat or restraining a wild animal or hostage—all without falling.

Bot Technology/Repair

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] Skilled characters are able to properly clean and replace parts, and run diagnostics, including general assessment and appraisal. Remember, this skill in no way confers the ability to program a bot (see Computer Programming skill).

Use of this skill requires a TechKit, which includes the necessary parts and supplies to render repairs on a Lightly Damaged or Moderately Damaged bot. Severely Damaged bots generally require that additional parts and supplies be available for an outside cost.

JURYRIGGING: If this skill is being used in an emergency to repair a bot, the gamemaster may allow a juryrig attempt. Juryrigging makes the Action Difficulty one less (better), but the repair is only temporary and may fail quickly if placed under stress. Juryrig attempts can be made following a normal failed roll to make repairs properly.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Though simple repairs or tune-ups might require only a few minutes, many can take hours or even longer.

RESULTS— Failed rolls indicate that the repair attempt did nothing to help the bot. A determination check permitting, this skill may be tried again. A blundered Action Check in this skill results in damage to the bot being operated on; a normal systems check but a high increase in system malfunction chances; loss of bot personality (if operating on the processor), or may have simply no effect (repair failed).

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Clean or replace exterior (aesthetic) parts and casing (excluding exterior armored areas); assess a bot's condition through diagnostic systems. AVERAGE: Perform thorough overhaul; replace damaged components (including weapons, modules, limbs, and armor); perform crude sabotage. TOUGH: Upgrade or replace system processor while preserving bot personality (requires specialized permit to perform this operation at public facilities [similar to a medical license] due to inherit risks in losing the bot's personality—minimum skill rating for license is 5); perform internal repairs on electronic or mechanical systems; sabotage a bot using clever or advanced methodologies. Salvage a bot's processor and/or personality from a mostly (or, perhaps, completely) destroyed bot; perform basic repairs on an alien or unknown design. VERY DIFFICULT: Perform advanced repairs, overhauls, and system replacements on an alien or unknown design type. Perform basic repairs on an advanced alien design type (TL12 or

higher). ABSURD: Perform advanced repairs, overhauls, or system replacements on an advanced alien design (TL12 or higher).

Botany

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] The knowledge of plant life—terrestrial, spaceborne, and alien species are covered. A rating of skilled allows the character to categorize most plant species on sight, generally care for a number of basic types, and identify those which may be safe to eat.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is takes anywhere from several turns to several hours—dependent on the level of analysis.

RESULTS— Failure indicates a botanical item is incorrectly assessed. Blunders result in overlooking something dangerous or even catastrophic.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify general types of plant life; maintain or develop a plant care regimen based on visual and sensor scans of the plant life. AVERAGE: Identify with great accuracy whether a plant is safe to eat or has crude healing properties based on sensor information. TOUGH: Identify edible specimens or those with crude healing properties based on knowledge and visual inspection. VERY DIFFICULT: Identify, classify, and generate a comprehensive analysis based on visual inspection, knowledge, and limited laboratory experiments; Identify specimens that may possess useful biochemical properties and how to extract them. ABSURD: Identify new and unrecorded species, and then assign appropriate taxonomy and discover any useful biochemical properties.

Business/Admin

(KNO) A character with this skill is proficient in modern business procedures and protocols. The character can analyze business information and assess the nature of business transactions and sales. Such a character is also trained in most business computer systems, including standard filing and archival methods plus some basic business law.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in as little as a few minutes on up to hours or even days.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character cannot make heads or tails out of examined business affairs or that the character does not know the best business method in which to use. Blunders indicate a bad business decision or a grossly incorrect assessment. Time and situation permitting, characters may re-attempt any failed business roll if they can somehow be convinced that their decision or assessment was definitely incorrect.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Locate a specific file by title in a database or physical file so long as the filing system is standard and the database or file storage has already been located; knowledge of standard business protocol and attire. AVERAGE: Navigate a standard business system and identify its overall structure and type; properly fill-out standard business forms and manage other rudimentary bureaucracy. TOUGH: Knowledge of rudimentary business law and liabilities; navigate a non-standard business system and identify its overall structure and type; process bureaucratic materials, complex forms, and taxes. VERY DIFFICULT: Assess the state of a company's business, including value, marketability, and competition in a complete and professional manner. Identify real business concerns and standard practices that will pose business problems in the future. ABSURD: Construct new and revolutionary business solutions to meet identified future business needs and handle problems.

Carousing/Gaming

(HAR) This is the acquired knowledge and experience in bar and club etiquette, games, gambling, and the like. A skilled character can fit into such an environment without looking uncomfortable or out of place. An advanced rating notes those who are able to become the 'life of the party.' An expert in this field gives the character a certain notoriety and possibly even fame (word travels fast), as well as marking the character as someone who inherently warrants respect from bar and club goers.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— An entrance can be made in a just a few turns, but real carousing takes hours or more.

RESULTS— Failure means that the character has been spotted as an 'out-of-towner' or maybe even as an investigator, security or police officer, or rival. A character who blunders insults the patrons or party goers of the area or establishment.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Hang-out in a culturally specific area without looking uncomfortable. AVERAGE: Join in the games, dancing, or other activities of a recreational area without insulting others and without looking out-of-place. TOUGH: Impress or acquaint with general patrons of a culturally-obscure establishment or neighborhood. VERY DIFFICULT: Befriend regular patrons of a culturally-obscure or bizarre place. ABSURD: Reset trends, behavior, and etiquette in an eclectic group, gang, or establishment.

Charm

(HAR) Charm represents a character's study of the humanities and social interactions. This skill uses a character's personal magnetism, outgoing personality, pleasant demeanor, and overall friendliness in an enhanced way in order to play off of other's emotions in a favorable manner. Once a subject is charmed, that character will behave in a friendly manner towards the charming character. A 'friendly manner' typically means that the subject will be willing to go slightly out of their way for the charming character, will be open to social get-togethers, and may be more susceptible to Seduction or Manipulation.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Use of this skill may require anywhere from a couple of minutes on up to several hours (or even days) of conversation depending on the circumstance and the depth of 'friendship' desired.

A standard Action Check is made, considering the Action Difficulties outlined below:

AVERAGE— Subject's Intuition is below 5

TOUGH— Subject's Intuition is 5.1 to 6.5 OR Subject is aggressive or unfriendly.

VERY DIFFICULT— Subject's Intuition is 6.6 to 8, OR Subject is angry or bullying, OR the charming character is of a race or group normally viewed with suspicion or contempt by the subject's race or group.

ABSURD— Subject's Intuition is 8.1 to 10 OR Subject is hostile and/or combative.

IMPOSSIBLE— Subject's Intuition is 10.1 or higher.

Chemistry

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] A skilled character in this skill has the knowledge of basic chemical properties and interactions, and can identify many substances on sight or by crude analysis. An expert who also possesses an expert rating in xenobiology or medicine is able to research and manufacture drugs and other biochemical agents.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Casual analyses require only a turn or two, but in-depth study takes days.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the analysis or formulae is flawed in some manner. Blunders typically result in hazardous or grossly unsuitable compounds. Assuming the character is both aware of failure and does not 'lose the experiment' in the process, such a character may re-attempt Action Checks (determination permitting).

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Recall periodic chart and the basic properties of each of those elements; identify basic compound chemical properties by sight or crude analysis. AVERAGE: Perform a thorough analysis using modern sensor devices. TOUGH: Perform basic chemical operations and manufacturing; identify possible uses for such standardized compounds. Perform a thorough analysis with sub-standard equipment or through extended crude experiments. VERY DIFFICULT: Construct basic materials or manufacture complex chemical compounds (including many drugs) with proper lab equipment. Construct standard materials or highly-complex compounds with the proper equipment. ABSURD: Construct advanced materials with the proper equipment. Research and construct new (and possibly useful) materials that might be slightly less expensive or of slightly superior quality than existing materials, assuming cost is not a factor. IMPOSSIBLE: Research advanced theories into materials fully 1 to 2 tech-levels above the current standard.

Climbing

(STR) The art of scaling mountains, trees, walls, and other vertical surfaces without falling. Skilled characters are able to identify and use most forms of basic mountain-climbing and scaling equipment.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill requires however much time is needed to achieve the climbing goal.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character falls. Characters are allowed only one chance to recover from their fall (a second roll; though an easier one as the Action Difficulty is one category better).

EXAMPLES— Exceptionally long climbs may require two or more Action Checks. ROUTINE/EASY: Properly don and use climbing equipment; secure position or recover from an average fall. AVERAGE: Successfully climb a typical rockface, minimum-security fence, or really knarly tree using climbing equipment without falling. TOUGH: Climb a typical rockface or minimum-security fence without climbing equipment (or a security fence with equipment); Climb an inverted surface with assistance and advanced gear; climb a dangerous cliff with minimal equipment; an inverted surface with limited equipment and no assistance; scale a smooth surface with advanced suction or grav equipment; or perform a daring rescue (all without falling). VERY DIFFICULT: Perform a daring rescue in an inverted climb with basic equipment without falling. ABSURD: Perform a daring rescue in an inverted, rocky or rough climb with no equipment. IMPOSSIBLE: Climb a sheer surface without specialized equipment.

Communications

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] This skill covers modern communications operations and general technology as well as some knowledge of archaic and historical means of communication.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in just a few turns when operating equipment, but repairs can take hours.

RESULTS— This skill's Action Check may be re-attempted so long as it makes sense to do so and the character succeeds at a determination check.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify com equipment on sight and be able to classify it (short-range, orbital, subspace, general tech-level, etc.). AVERAGE: Operate military field subspace equipment; make very basic adjustments to frequency in order to clear most forms of interference in radio transmissions; operate most shipboard com systems (capital ships); make common repairs to consumer equipment. TOUGH: Operate complex capital ship com systems; adjust most system's frequencies in order to clear interference; discover, locate, and remove (or plant) basic comtaps and other telecom tampering devices. Identify (but not crack; see Cryptography) standard codes by race or faction; customize capital ship com systems; basic capital ship com system repairs. VERY DIFFICULT: Install high-end comtaps or tampering devices; discover and remove high-end espionage equipment. Major or complete repairs to capital ship com systems.

Computer Hacking

(INT) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] **PREREQUISITE**—Computer Operation and Computer Programming skill ratings of 3 or better in each. This skill includes the training and expertise needed to break through computer security software and network firewalls. It also includes the ability to crack or install program locks, user ID's, and standardized encryption. This skill does not, however, bestow any special knowledge to help the hacker locate the information desired once in a database (see Computer Operation, below), nor does it allow for real programming (see Computer Programming, below).

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in a few turns or minutes when used to identify a system or protection scheme. It can take many minutes, hours, or rarely days or weeks to crack security.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON MODERN COMPUTERS— This skill assume access to a non-terminal access interface. That is, most computers (commercial, military, and shipboard) have a non-terminal interface panel somewhere (one or more) where root systems are directly available (though these are protected by security routines). Terminals, on the other hand, represent the bulk of access panels found in any non-portable computer system and cannot be hacked as a general rule because the terminal doesn't grant system access—it only allows one to log-in with a uersname and password (often a DNA print as well) and then navigate a menu system and input or view data. Without a valid username and pass-

word, there is simply nothing else to 'hack' on a terminal because the terminal only receives information the mainframe sends to it.

Alternatively, creative 'hacking' of a terminal can be performed with the additional aid of the Electronics skill by tapping the terminal's internal circuitry in order to 'capture' a valid username and password input by a legitimate user unaware that the terminal was tapped. Even so, stealing a username and password doesn't permit additional access or rights to the system files other than what that particular user was issued.

RESULTS— Once characters fail an Action Check when using this skill, they may be only temporarily locked-out (and so may try again later), or they may trip any number of specialized alarms, security or trace routines, or may even infect themselves with a security or vengeance virus spike. A determination check is required in order to try again even if the situation permits.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify the general level of security protecting a particular system. AVERAGE: Crack most consumer software; spot basic software alarms; crack rudimentary bots (e.g., cleaning bots). TOUGH: Identify type and class of corporate or government firewall or security subroutines; spot (but not crack) standard corporate or government spike traps or other alarms (anti-hacking software); crack typical bots. VERY DIFFICULT: Crack low-end corporate, governmental, or high-end bot firewalls in order to view proprietary information. ABSURD: Crack high-end research or Imperial networks in order to view database records; modify records in standard corporate or local governmental systems; crack and modify Imperial databases concerning non-sensitive, consumer information; view sensitive military data. IMPOSSIBLE: Crack and modify Imperial military, financial, or police records.

Computer Operation

(KNO) This skill is the ability to operate computer systems and equipment outside the range of everyday, common devices. For example, most persons in today's world are able to operate and program a telephone, microwave oven, VCR, or the like, but some training is required to operate a PC, specialized network terminal, or advanced computer-controlled manufacturing device. A skilled character can operate most computer systems in order to perform basic operations and to store and retrieve unencrypted files.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in just a few turns when searching for available or properly cataloged information, but can take significantly longer in certain situations.

RESULTS— Determination permitting, characters may make repeated attempts with this skill, though the gamemaster may call periodic failures as having erased or damaged program or database information should that character have access to modify or delete. Blunders usually result in either incorrect information, damage to or loss of files the user has access to, or gross misuse of a device.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Activate a consumer or corporate console and run basic software tools. AVERAGE: Run intermediate-level programs; locate typical consumer databases and records; perform diagnostics, install and configure consumer software; locate hidden files on consumer systems (assuming access). TOUGH: Operate and run basic programs using military consoles; install and configure advanced consumer or specialized programs; locate basic military database records (assuming access). VERY DIFFICULT: Use advanced proprietary or military programs; locate sensitive or hidden data in military databases (assuming access). Identify, classify, and operate rudimentary functions using an alien military console. ABSURD: Perform most functions using alien military consoles. Utilize programs to obtain needed information using advanced alien consoles (up to TL13). IMPOSSIBLE: Use entirely alien or foreign-concept systems and those of TL 14 or higher.

Computer Programming

(INT) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] **PREREQUISITE—**Computer Operation skill rating of 3 or higher. This skill represents a character's ability to write proprietary software. Like in today's world, these software programs can be designed to do almost anything, though the more artificial intelligence needed the more difficult and time-consuming the programming endeavor.

Assuming either third-party encryption/protection software is available or characters have and are using their own Cryptography and Computer Programming skills (to write their own encryption), then characters with this skill can assess, install, or upgrade the security protocols of an existing computer system. If characters are using their own skills, then they must write a commercial, industrial, or military-level program and include encryption equal to what they're capable of per the Cryptography skill. Obviously, it is much easier to purchase third-party encryption programs, but doing so carries a risk: Despite the fact that commercially-available encryption programs change or upgrade their cryptographic algorithms regularly, black-market cracks and keys are sold almost as regularly. Any design of a virus or spike program does not include the ability for that virus to infiltrate and view, modify, or delete protected data—only unprotected data can be so attacked. However, combining this skill with Computer Hacking (see above), would permit a programmer to create such a clever AI virus.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in days or weeks, but a few very simple programs can be constructed in only a few minutes.

RESULTS— Failed Action Checks generally mean that the program code is either heavily bugged or that the entire infrastructure fails to perform as desired (or isn't capable of performing as desired). A failed Action Check for installation or upgrade of a security program means that it either failed and must be tried again—or might mean that there is a flaw (back door) left open for hackers unbeknownst to the user of this skill. Blunders to any type of programming imply either major setbacks or the need to scrap the current project and start over. Time permitting, this skill can be re-attempted.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify most programming languages by viewing code. AVERAGE: Write a simple and complete consumer program. TOUGH: Write a complex consumer program or industrial software; setup proprietary or advanced industrial security software; design an amateur virus. VERY DIFFICULT: Write a large and complex industrial program; integrate high-end industrial security systems and firewalls; design a standard or intermediate virus. ABSURD: Write large or complex military proprietary software; encode and protect military computer systems and networks; design a clever virus or spike.

Concentration

(WIL) [PROXY SKILL] Concentration represents training and practice designed to discipline and focus the mind. The result is the ability to ignore a certain amount of outside interference while performing other skills. In game terms, it alleviates some or all Step Penalties assigned to the character. Concentration is a proxy skill used during character creation to calculate a character's Total Concentration (TC).

Willpower **X** Concentration	TC
less than 7	0
8 to 19	1
20 to 29	2
30 to 44	3
45 to 69	4
70 or more	5

See Chapter 17 for more information.

Craft Maintenance/Repair

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] The knowledge and training to keep ground, sky, and very small spacecraft (starfighters, corvettes, and blockade runners) in good working condition. In no way does this skill bestow the ability maintain or repair capital ships.

JURYRIGGING: If this skill is being used in an emergency to repair a craft, the gamemaster may allow a juryrig attempt. Juryrigging makes the Action Difficulty one less (better), but the repair is only temporary and may fail quickly if placed under stress. Juryrig attempts can be made following a normal failed roll to make repairs properly.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Resolution times for this skill vary widely depending on the nature of the task—simple repairs may take only a few minutes while an engine overhaul might require days or even longer.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the craft being maintained isn't adjusted or tuned properly and may fail during use. Blunders usually result in damage to certain components.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify equipment types and discern general maintenance priorities. Easy: Clean and replace aesthetic panels and parts. AVERAGE: Perform repairs on typical system parts and clean or tune components to keep them in good working order. TOUGH: Perform advanced repairs and most parts replacements. VERY DIFFICULT: Perform advanced parts replacements.

Cryptography

(INT) [PROXY SKILL] **PREREQUISITES—**Computer Programming skill rating of 3 or higher, and Communications skill rating of 2 or higher. This skill is used to decipher encrypted communications, including secret military codes and the like, and to encode or decode data. Characters with this skill can also mastermind their own (new) forms of encryption and code for sending and receiving protected communiqué.

This skill is a Proxy skill because it is used to calculate the character's Encryption Level. A character's combined Cryptography and Intellect scores indicate the base level of encryption a character can design or break, given the base time of 25 hours—this level is commonly referred to in the game as Encryption Level #. For example, a computer file might have an Encryption Level of 9. If the Encryption Level is higher than the character's ability, then the time increases. If it is lower, then the time required to design or break it decreases. Supercomputers have Intellect equivalents plus Cryptography skillware ratings that enable them to design or break such encryption.

The table below outlines the times required to either break or design encryption, based on the difference between the designer/hacker's ability and that of the Encryption Level:

Difference	***Time Required***
-7	a few seconds
-6	2 minutes
-5	10 minutes
-4	1 hour
-3	3 hours
-2	9 hours
-1	18 hours
Equal	25 hours
+1	2 days (50 hours)
+2	1 week
+3	1 month
+4	1 year (approximately)
+5	20 years
+6	500 years
+7	10,000 or more years

Demolitions

(INT) Skilled characters can set basic charges and wire explosives. They also understand general construction and superstructure design in order to select targets that would serve as a good charge location. Characters must also have access to explosives components if they plan to construct a bomb.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in just a few turns, though building or setting complex charges may require hours.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check means one of two things: 1) Whatever the character is working on is either a dud or fails to achieve the desired result; or 2) Whatever the character is working on cannot be properly disarmed by that character. Blunders typically result in a device that explodes in the character's face! Characters are unaware if their charge set roll is failed, indicating that the device will not detonate, and so may not re-attempt such a roll. A failed disarm roll can be re-attempted only after a successful Willpower check.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify types of explosives needed for type of duty; classify explosive types by detailed chemical or sensor analysis and outline benefits and drawbacks to each; build or disarm very crude bombs using basic chemical explosives with fuse or simplistic timing devices. AVERAGE: Construct or disarm standard bombs and timing devices—typical criminal or gang devices; identify prime charge-set locations for unusual or large buildings or vessels. TOUGH: Construct or disarm advanced bombs and timing devices—especially sensitive devices that may use motion, temperature, or touch triggers, including high-yield or mass incendiary charges; iden-

tify prime charge-set locations for military installations, armored vessels, and unusual structure designs. VERY DIFFICULT: Construct or disarm highly-specialized or proprietary bombs and trigger mechanisms set with sensitive anti-tamper triggers—possibly including disarm of nuclear warheads; identify prime charge-set locations for alien or unknown structure designs. ABSURD: Build or disable intercontinental, ship-to-ship, or ship-to-surface nuclear proximity detonators and warheads (does not include delivery mechanism and assumes access to certain restricted supplies).

Devotion

(WIL) [PROXY SKILL] This skill is a measure of faith and degree of belief a character holds for a particular religion, thing, principle, or ideal. It can allot the character a certain fanaticism toward either a goal or a resolve. Thus, it can also affect one's determination in substantial matters.

First, this skill may used as a penalty versus acts of Interrogation or Intimidation (as mentioned under those skills). This skill does not, however, provide any additional defense versus Charm or Seduction, though it will work half as well as noted below versus Manipulation and Speech.

Devotion Rating:	***Step Penalty:***
1	None
2	+1 Step Penalty
3	+2 Step Penalty
4	+3 Step Penalty
5	+4 Step Penalty
6	+5 Step Penalty
7+	+6 Step Penalty

Second, characters may remove a number of Step Penalties (use the above chart) from acts of determination where Step Penalties are assigned to represent harder perseverance, but only if such acts apply directly toward the crucial preservation of the faith.

Disguise

(INU) Skilled characters are able to alter their general appearance by using masks, changing hair, eye, and skin color, and by wearing body suits and other gear designed to change one's walk and overall visage.

This skill requires use of a Disguise Kit or that similar supplies be available.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in several hours to several days, though a very quick and somewhat basic disguise could be constructed in as little as a few minutes. Note that applying a previously-designed disguise takes only a few minutes in most instances.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Subtle changes to hair and eye color and the modification or addition of hair that the ordinary public wouldn't notice. AVERAGE: Design and apply disguises tailored to alter appearance enough that an Average Intuition Check would be needed to see through it. TOUGH: Design and implement a great disguise that requires onlookers to succeed at a Tough Intuition Check in order to see through it—but only if they're already familiar with disguised character's true identity (for example a soldier to notice his disguised commander). VERY DIFFICULT: Impersonate another person of the same species with enough precision to require a standard Intuition Check in order for familiar persons to realize the person is not who he or she is portraying; or alter appearance enough that a Very Difficult Intuition Check would be required to see through it. ABSURD: Same as Very Difficult, above, except requires a Tough Intuition Check for a specific impersonation, or an Absurd Intuition Check to see through a generic disguise.

Dodge

(AGI) [PROXY SKILL] Expressive of a character's training to avoid being hit by both ranged and melee weapons, this skill benefits the Evasion score. Where Evasion is normally calculated as the character's Agility score, this skill's entire rating is then added to that result—thereby raising it significantly (as described in the Chapter 14).

In addition to standard game mechanics benefits, characters that reach very high levels of mastery in this skill gain certain other benefits, as described below:

EXPERT (5): Experts may apply a +1 Step Penalty to a single attacker who employs an automatic weapon in Spray mode—but only one such attacker per turn and this penalty cannot be applied to assailants using other modes of attack.

MASTER (6): Masters are good enough at combat evasion that they may choose to perform a power dodge maneuver in order to further avoid being hit. If the master chooses to employ a power dodge, then a +2 Step Penalty is imposed on the attacker's AIM roll, but the master also suffers a +3 Step Penalty to any action he or she attempts that turn. Please note that the option to power dodge is not cumulative with 'running like hell' as described in Chapter 18. If a character decides to Run Like Hell instead of a power dodge, then they still get the +3 Step Penalty against the attacker but also can't perform any actions themselves.

GRAND MASTER (7): Same as Master, above, except that the power dodge ability imposes a +3 Step Penalty on the attacker and only a +2 Step Penalty on the dodger.

GRAND MASTER (8+): Grand Masters of this level are able to perform lightning fast flips, spins, cartwheels, wall-walking, and backflips that appear to momentarily violate the laws of gravity and reality. Moreover, they are able to perform their own actions with only a +1 Step Penalty while still imposing a full +3 Step Penalty on all attackers! Remember, this Step Penalty is not cumulative with the 'running like hell' option described in Chapter 18, nor does it apply to attackers using automatic weapons in Spray mode.

Electronics

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] A character with this skill can make repairs to or hardwire most electronic devices or machines, including computer systems and other programmable equipment and their electronic components. This skill does not, however, impart any knowledge as to the use or operation of such equipment—only an understanding of the technological components within, though some knowledge of the equipment's intended use can be deduced by the electronic constituents. Use of this skill requires a TechKit.

If a machine is damaged and in need of repair, repairs might instead require the Mechanics skill. Some devices, such as a sliding door, make use of both mechanical engineering and electronic control systems. In those instances, both the Electronics and Mechanics skills may become necessary if both parts of the machine are damaged.

JURYRIGGING: If this skill is being used in an emergency to repair an electronic system or device, the gamemaster may allow a juryrig attempt. Juryrigging makes the Action Difficulty one less (better), but the repair is only temporary and may fail quickly if placed under stress. Juryrig attempts can be made following a normal failed roll to make repairs properly.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in anywhere from a minute or so for simple devices on up to hours or even days and weeks on complex devices.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the repair, adjustment, or setup failed. Time permitting, this skill can often be re-attempted. Blunders result in damage to the electronics.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Setup or repair low-end programmable consumer devices and computers. AVERAGE: Setup, adjust, or repair a commercial computer console, door switch, sensor monitor, or the like. TOUGH: Build a simple electronic device; setup, adjust, or repair an industrial computer system or military field equipment; integrate, modify, or repair a corporate network system; operate on professional electronic devices. VERY DIFFICULT: Build a moderately sophisticated electronic device; install, customize, or repair a major or high-end network computer system or portable military system; configure or repair a military network hub or substation. ABSURD: Design a sophisticated or high-end electronic device; install, customize, or repair a supercomputer system; design a commercial computer console; design an industrial console, commercial network system, or commercial hand-held device. IMPOSSIBLE: Design a military console, military network system, or high-end hand-held device.

Etiquette

(HAR) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] This skill helps a character to carry oneself in a prestigious and professional manner. Knowledge of Imperial customs and courtesies is standard.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished during the course of interaction—something which may take only a turn or two on up to hours or even longer.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check indicates that the character made a social faux pas or may have even insulted another. Blunders result in the character severely insulting others and presenting oneself with gross misconduct. This skill can be re-attempted, but the character's actions will not be easily forgotten.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Show an air of professionalism in business or semi-formal social gatherings. AVERAGE: Act with confidence and proper grace within elite or formal gatherings. TOUGH: Conform to all courtesies and observe even trivial considerations within a royal, ambassadorial, or Senatorial gathering or dinner; present a professional demeanor within alien formal gatherings. VERY DIFFICULT: Pass for true royalty; adhere to all etiquette, no matter how trivial, at the highest of gatherings.

Forensics

(INU) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] **PREREQUISITES—** Chemistry and Physics skills with ratings of 1 or higher in each. Forensics is the science of establishing facts in any situation through detailed analyses. Through analytical procedures and knowledge of physical laws, a character can discover clues in a crime scene that may lead to the perpetrator, identify a fire's or explosion's point of origin, or even assign an identity to an unknown robber.

This skill requires use of a Forensics Kit.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished during the course of an investigation, though various stages may require only a few turns on up to days or longer.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check generally indicates that either no evidence was found or that the data was flawed. Blunders indicate that the evidence leads in the wrong direction. Normally this check can not be re-attempted.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Establish crime scene or event boundaries necessary for preserving forensic evidence from contamination; identify obvious clues; collection of necessary samples for analysis; construct a generalization or basic analysis by inspection alone of what and how an event occurred. AVERAGE: Perform basic lab analyses on collected samples using standardized procedures and techniques, and draw conclusions based on this information. TOUGH: Perform advanced DNA analyses; detect and analyze residual microtraces and energy signatures; collect and perform basic lab analyses on evidence skillfully concealed. Locate, collect, and analyze advanced clues (such as energy and microtraces) with great accuracy which leads to a complete reconstruction of the occurrence in theory; microtrace, and energy collection and analyses on evidence skillfully concealed or covered. VERY DIFFICULT: Collect and properly analyze alien and unknown clues; perform awkward analyses after such evidence was skillfully covered-up or removed. ABSURD: Collect, analyze, and build a reconstruction from advanced alien clues (TL12 or higher).

Forgery

(INU) By way of this skill, characters can forge security keys, IdentiCards, and passes. Forgeries are replicas of the real thing, often function the same way, but in no way alter the reality of databases. That is, forging an IdentiCard that displays a new identity and which could fool law enforcement is possible, but getting the card to verify through a Capital Credit scanner, ATM, or mobile police precinct is simply not possible without using other skills to break into those systems and modify them (an extremely unlikely event).

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in a few hours on up to a few days, assuming materials and supplies are available.

RESULTS— Standard failure means that the forged item is flawed in some manner so as to be obvious to others—though not necessarily the forger! A blundered Action Check results in a forgery that appears perfect in every way (especially to the forger) except for one tiny flaw that immediately alerts someone of significance when the forged item is used for the first time in a critical situation.

EXAMPLES— AVERAGE: Duplicate printed passes or plastic ID cards used by companies or public events of low security. TOUGH:

Duplicate a typical commercial security key that functions correctly and appears genuine. VERY DIFFICULT: Duplicate a military ID, make an IdentiCard that appears to work, or forge a high-security corporate pass. ABSURD: Duplicate high-end ID, such as that carried by certain ambassadors, senators, high-ranking naval officers, or protected lead research scientists.

Gunnery

(PRE) [PROXY SKILL] The gunnery skill is used for operating and firing military artillery. Examples of this include vehicle or tank-mounted cannons, turret weapons, shipboard point defense weaponry, and other heavy weapons. Like any of the marksmanship proxy skills, gunnery is added to Precision in order to derive a Gunnery AIM trait. And although there isn't a place for this trait on the Character Record Sheet, its value can be recorded wherever convenient.

Hide Thoughts

(WIL) [PROXY SKILL] This skill is the non-telepath's conditioning to resist ESP and other telepathic scans or programming—based on many of the same principles genuine telepaths use to block such scans but not requiring a telepathic mind. In other words, this skill offers training in how to distract and chaotically disorganize the mind in an effort to thwart a scan.

If a character is using this skill during the time that a telepathic scan is attempted, then the character benefits by applying a particular Step Penalty to the scanning telepath's roll, as outlined below:

Hide Thoughts Rating:	***Step Penalty:***
1	None
2	+1 Step Penalty
3 or 4	+2 Step Penalty
6 or 6	+3 Step Penalty
7+	+4 Step Penalty

History

(KNO) A measure of historical galactic knowledge, including the history of the Imperium and other alien races.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character confuses a historic event of one world or nation for another, or makes other incorrect assumptions. A blunder means that the facts get grossly screwed up.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Recall a major historical event such as a great war. AVERAGE: Identify a series of historical milestones relevant to a culture's maturation. TOUGH: Interpret specific events of significance and their corresponding effects on said culture. VERY DIFFICULT: Recall trivial or insignificant historical events. ABSURD: Map entire history insofar as cultural and technological development.

Interrogation

(EGO) This skill represents the basic art of retrieving wanted information from another by fear or force. It ranges from basic question and answer sessions to advanced psychoterrorism and torture.

Note that Interrogation takes time, and even once a victim divulges information the interrogator must succeed at an Average Intuition Check in order to recognize if the information volunteered is truthful or a lie. Otherwise, the interrogator must accept and believe the extracted information as the truth.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in a few hours, though some sessions can go on for days or even weeks.

A standard Action Check is made, considering the Action Difficulties outlined below:

AVERAGE— Subject's Willpower is below 5.
TOUGH— Subject's Willpower is 5.1 to 6.5
VERY DIFFICULT— Subject's Willpower is 6.6 to 8.0
ABSURD— Subject's Willpower is 8.1 to 9.5
IMPOSSIBLE— Subject's Willpower is 9.6 or higher.

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll easier:

1) If the subject is hiding only trivial information or unimportant information then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

2) If the Interrogator uses basic torture, such as brawling, fire, cutting, or the like, then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier); OR

If the Interrogator keeps the victim for over a week and applies prolonged psychoterrorism techniques or advanced methods of torture (for which the interrogator actually possesses a skill in) then the Action Difficulty is made two categories better (much easier).

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll more difficult:

1) If the subject is hiding crucial, proprietary, or secret information then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder); OR

If the subject is hiding information so critical that its divulgence would lead to mass death, genocide, the murder of family and friends, etc., then the Action Difficulty is made two categories worse (much harder).

Interstellar Law

(KNO) The knowledge and training in the laws governing individual and interstellar citizens and corporations, including the military. A skill rating of 40 or higher is needed in this skill to be considered for a legal license to practice law in the ZAON Imperium. Note: When this skill is used in a legal battle (in a court of law), the character receives a bonus if they have the Charm, Seduction, or Manipulation skill—specifically, the lawyer may add the highest rating (not all, just the best) among these three skills to their roll.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished over the course of a few days, though recalling law or making a brief inquiry may take only a few turns. Prolonged legal battles can take weeks or even months or longer.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check generally means that either the debate wasn't argued well enough or that no legal loophole or answer could be found. A blunder results in the character accidentally revealing incriminating evidence or believing all is well even though the law specifically states otherwise.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify legal papers or documents as such; awareness of personal legal rights and responsibilities throughout the Imperium (all major and most smaller worlds). AVERAGE: Awareness and knowledge concerning business laws, corporate liabilities and tax, and thorough knowledge of personal law; criminal prosecution and defense cases. TOUGH: Litigation in a court of law. Governmental or military prosecution and defense. VERY DIFFICULT: Interplanetary and stellar law with regard to contracts and negotiations between worlds and star systems. Imperial indoctrination or inter-empire law, treaties, and settlements. ABSURD: Unknown alien treaties through translational law.

Intimidation

(EGO) Training in this area helps a character better intimidate others, and appear more powerful or confident. It can be used when pressuring a person through acts of fear as well as for other situations, as when putting down a possible mutiny or getting a belligerent or reluctant soldier to submit to one's orders.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in just a few turns.

A standard Action Check is made, considering the Action Difficulties outlined below:

AVERAGE— Subject's Willpower is below 5.
TOUGH— Subject's Willpower is 5.1 to 6.5
VERY DIFFICULT— Subject's Willpower is 6.6 to 8.0
ABSURD— Subject's Willpower is 8.1 to 9.5
IMPOSSIBLE— Subject's Willpower is 9.6 or higher.

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll easier:

1) If the intimidating character is physically larger or stronger than the subject, or is armed and the subject is not, then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

2) If the intimidating character is supported (backed up) by many allies—all of which are physically present—then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

3) If the intimidating character is of a species or group normally viewed with great fear because of reputation or political propaganda, then the Action Difficulty is made two categories better (much easier).

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll more difficult:

1) If the subject is physically larger or stronger than the intimidating character, or is armed and the intimidating character is not, then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder).

2) If the subject is supported (backed up) by many allies—all of which are physically present—then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder).

3) If the subject is of a species or group normally viewed with great fear because of reputation or political propaganda, then the Action Difficulty is made two categories worse (much harder).

Jumping

(STR) [PROXY SKILL] A character with this skill has been trained how to gain the most forward and/or vertical momentum (distance) from a jump as well as how to land safely. Training in this skill strengthens certain muscles associated with the action of jumping. A character's Jumping rating therefore indirectly adds to the distance a character could normally leap (sometimes varies greatly by species). Jumping characters can jump one-half the distance farther than they normally could without this skill (with a running start) for every level of mastery (for every point in this skill).

Languages

(KNO) [PROXY SKILL] A separate skill is required for each alien language chosen. Some languages are more difficult to learn than others and are noted under individual species descriptions. Whenever such a species notes that the InterLak Language skill (the common Interstellar language, a variant of English) is a Biologically-Difficult one for that species, it implies that other species learning this species' language incur the same difficulty as the reverse is true for humans and their sister race to learn that particular language. For example, Medians have great difficulty in learning and speaking InterLak—for them, it is a 'Biologically-Difficult skill'. This also means that humans and other species that learn and speak languages similar in form and pronunciation to InterLak would suffer the same Biologically-Difficult modifier when attempting to learn the Median tongue.

A skilled (2) character is able to converse fairly well in ordinary society, though knowledge of slang is at a minimum, and fast-speaking natives are rarely understood clearly, and vice-versa, but would possess no reading or writing ability. An adept (3) character is able to converse fully, including knowledge of some slang, and can often pass as a native, though detailed conversation would reveal the character's non-native nature; reading/writing level is poor at this level. Most native speakers are advanced (4) characters and have reasonable knowledge of their language, good knowledge of slang, but may not be proficient in proper or formal communication. An expert (5) is always able to pass as a native and even has sufficient understanding of language mechanics to possibly edit or author books in said language (while a master certainly would). Typical members of a given species speak their own native language at an automatic skill rating of 4 (advanced).

Lockpicking

(PRE) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] When it comes to complex electronic or mechanical locks, this skill can help characters defeat them. Whether a code (electronic) or combination/key (mechanical) is required to open a locking device, both types use either a mechanical or electric-servo process to retract a latch or catch mechanism. The lockpicking skill enables a character to reach this mechanism and retract it by either bypassing the lock itself or tackling the mechanics or electronics of the key portion. If only a basic wiring

challenge exists (no codes required behind the keypad), then either this skill or the basic Electronics skill will suffice.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in just a few turns, though some locks are simple enough to require only a single turn whereas others may take minutes or longer.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the lock could not be picked, but no alarm (if applicable) is triggered. It is the gamemaster's discretion as to whether this skill may be re-attempted after failure. Note that mechanical locks stand a cumulative +1 Step Penalty for each failed picking attempt. Worse, if the penalty die is failed then the lock itself is jammed. Blundered rolls typically indicate that either an alarm or bomb is triggered, or that a securing mechanical lock is jammed. Electronic locks are normally unaffected by blunders other than the activation of possible alarms, though a few low-quality ones may short-out and fuse.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: A worn, old-fashioned key-lock. AVERAGE: Standard mechanical combination or worn electronic lock. TOUGH: Consumer electronic lock; high-security combination lock. VERY DIFFICULT: Typical electronic security lock, or a high-security or military mechanical lock. ABSURD: Modern bank vault or maximum security military code lock. IMPOSSIBLE: Certain top-secret military installation or private research industry vaults.

Manipulation

(EGO) This skill is similar to seduction, though the user achieves goals and gets what is wanted through an influential and strong personality combined with powerful psychology. While manipulation won't cause the subject to like the manipulator, it can influence the subject into expending some effort and expense to help the manipulator or to believe what the manipulator is saying.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished during the course of interaction and may require anywhere from just a few minutes on up to several hours or even longer.

It is, however, important to point out that each time a subject is successfully manipulated, that subject may apply a +1 Step Penalty to any future Charm, Seduction, or Manipulation Action Check attempts made against him or her by the same character (user), as this subject grows increasingly intolerant of the manipulator.

Remember, Manipulation is a skill requiring time—sometimes a lot of time—to successfully implement. Manipulation cannot be used on a subject who is combative.

A standard Action Check is made, considering the Action Difficulties outlined below:

AVERAGE— Subject's Intuition is below 5
TOUGH— Subject's Intuition is 5.1 to 6.5
VERY DIFFICULT— Subject's Intuition is 6.6 to 8
ABSURD— Subject's Intuition is 8.1 to 10
IMPOSSIBLE— Subject's Intuition is 10.1 or higher

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll easier:

1) If the subject is already charmed, as per the skill, by the manipulator, then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

2) If the subject's Willpower is 4.0 or below then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll more difficult:

1) If the subject's Willpower is 6 or higher then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder).

2) If the subject is aggressive or very unfriendly then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder).

3) If the manipulator is of a species, race, group, or profession normally viewed with suspicion by the subject's species, race, group, or profession, then the Action Difficulty is made two categories worse (much harder).

Marksmanship, Ranged

(PRE) [PROXY SKILL] This skill improves a character's to-hit probability with ranged weapons, which include beam, energy, and projectile devices. This skill's rating is added to the character's Precision to calculate Ranged AIM. A skilled character is also well trained in weapon safety.

Marksmanship, Thrown

(AGI) [PROXY SKILL] This skill is used by both a baseball pitcher and by someone wishing to accurately lob a plasma grenade to its intended target. While a character's Strength score determines the distance a grenade can be thrown, a character with this skill can throw one-half times as farther than normal. The higher this skill, the more accurate the throw is, too. This skill's rating is used to compute the character's Throwing AIM trait, as described in Chapter 14 of this book. Strength bonus is not necessarily always added to a thrown attack, but heavy items and weapons do receive the bonus.

Martial Arts

(AGI) [PROXY SKILL] Characteristic of the degree of training in specialized unarmed and armed combat. Examples include kickboxing, karate, tae-kwon-do, kung fu, professional boxing, streetfighting, and other forms of highly-skilled hand-to-hand and melee weapon combat. A character's martial arts skill is used to compute the Melee AIM trait, as described in Chapter 14 of this game. Although authentic martial arts also include advanced blocking and dodging, players must purchase the Dodge skill separately, as this martial arts skill considers only the offensive moves for game mechanics purposes. That is, a 'real' martial artist in today's world would have ratings in both the martial arts and the dodge skills, and perhaps some wrestling, too.

Additionally, characters with this skill gain certain other bonuses and advantages as they increase their skill mastery, but none of them are usable if the character is encumbered (half Speed or less):

ADEPT (3): The martial artist may attempt to apply a 'sleeper hold' on an opponent in order to induce unconsciousness. A sleeper hold requires that the character lock an arm around the throat from behind while bracing it with the other arm. This 'vice-lock' pressure might constrict breathing but primarily limits blood flow to the brain. Sleeper holds may only be used on a pinned victim (see Chapter 19: Special Rules, Wrestling). That is, a target must first be pinned using

the normal wrestling rules before this ability can be applied. On any pinned victim, the martial artist may successfully use a sleeper hold by making a standard Melee to-hit roll except that the target's Wrestling Evasion is applied instead of normal Evasion. If the roll is made, then the victim is held and usually cannot break free. Each turn thereafter in which the martial artist continues the hold the victim will suffer 4 Stun damage. Sleeper holds applied too long will thus result in the death of the victim.

ADVANCED (4): Characters receive a +1 bonus to damage they inflict with their hand-to-hand attacks (not melee weapons). Furthermore, advanced characters may parry the attacks of armed opponents even when the martial artist is unarmed, as described in the parry rules (Chapter 19).

Also, advanced characters may attempt a throw in lieu of a normal attack. Throws require a normal Melee AIM hit but cause no damage. If hit, the defender is also allowed a Strength check at a Step Penalty of +1 (+2 for experts, +3 for masters) to avoid being thrown. Other Martial Artists are further allowed to reduce this Step Penalty by 1 (2 for experts, 3 for masters) thereby increasing their chance of averting the throw. Parried or averted throws have no appreciable effect, but a successful throw causes a defender to get knocked down as per the standard Knockdown rules.

EXPERT (5): These characters receive a +1d6 bonus to the damage they inflict with hand-to-hand attacks. Furthermore, the martial artist may elect to inflict wound damage with bare fists, up to half (rounded down) of the total damage scored in a hit. For example, a martial artist rolls a 4 on the d6 and also adds 3 more to that (for Strength bonus, the damage bonus gained with advanced martial arts, and the base 1 point from a punch) for a total of 7 damage. In this case, up to 3 of those 7 points could be delivered as wound damage, if the martial artist so desires. Be aware, however, that if getting an opponent unconscious as quickly as possible is the goal then it is probably better to deliver only stun—as wound damage 'overwrites' any stun already suffered earlier.

Experts may likewise attempt a disarm maneuver aimed at knocking any handheld weapon out of their opponent's hands. A disarm attack doesn't inflict any damage, but does require a normal Melee to-hit roll and that the opponent be within melee range. The opponent, however, is allowed an Dodge Check to avoid the effect. A parried or averted disarm has no effect and the opponent can therefore use the weapon normally that turn. A successful disarm, on the other hand, knocks a single handheld weapon or item out of the opponent's hands (a disarmed item lands 1d6 meters away from its holder).

MASTER (6): Masters may actually strike up to twice in a single combat turn, once per phase for two phases, if available, but only with natural body attacks such as punch strikes, kicks, jabs, and the like. Characters wielding swords or other melee weapons don't gain this advantage. Extra strikes may be directed against different opponents within melee range without penalty, if so desired.

All melee attacks made by masters (sword and hand attacks) are made at one Initiative class faster than the martial artist's normal Initiative.

Masters may also attempt a flying kick (sometimes performed as a sweep kick to the head). This attack may be attempted only once every three turns, uses all of the character's actions for the turn, but is otherwise used like a normal Melee attack. The attack causes normal brawling damage to the defender, except that a successful hit causes a Knockdown if the defender fails an Average Strength Check (Tough if delivered by a Grand Master).

Masters also gain the ability to recover from Knockdowns in one turn instead of the usual two, so long as the knockdown is from a physical blow. This means that the master still loses any action(s) not performed yet in a turn he or she is knocked down, but that master may recover immediately—acting normally in the following turn.

GRAND MASTER (7): Grand Masters gain another melee attack for a total of up to 3 attacks per turn (one attack per phase for three phases, if enough phases are available to him or her). They also receive another +1 bonus to damage when making hand-to-hand attacks.

Also, all melee attacks (hand or melee weapon) made by grand masters are made at two Initiative classes better (as if the martial artist had a significantly faster base Initiative).

Grand Masters may further attempt a disrupt attack against another character's ranged attacks, thereby 'parrying' them. Characters may use any attack action as a disrupt attack, and can do this as many times in a turn as they have melee attacks to surrender to this ability. But, grand masters must also have some means to disrupt opponents who are using ranged weapons. If that opponent is within melee range, then the grand master may use special hits, kicks, and sweeps to accomplish this. If the opponent is farther away (up to around 10 meters or so), then other objects must be used to affect opponents. For example, launching a chair through the air with a kick, throwing a successfully disarmed item into another opponent, or sweep kicking any small nearby object as a projectile are all legal means for performing a masterful disrupt attack. As long as this can be done, then a normal Melee AIM to-hit roll is made without any extra penalties for affecting opponents up to 10 meters away. If successful, the disrupt attack inflicts normal damage to the target but also forces opponents using ranged weapons to lose their ranged attacks for that turn only (assuming they haven't acted yet in the turn). Again, opponents using ranged weapons who are farther than about 10 meters cannot be affected in this manner.

GRAND MASTER (8+): These grand masters gain yet another +1 bonus to damage. Some of these Grand Masters reportedly have the training necessary to inflict a nerve strike. Nerve strikes are aimed at special nerve centers and other vital organ areas and are highly focused in a special manner. A successful nerve strike carries additional trauma, though the effects of this are left to the gamemaster's imagination.

Mechanics

(KNO): This skill is the character's ability to identify, repair, and build mechanical devices. This skill covers electric motors, servos, geared devices, power wiring, and belt systems, so long as such systems are not computers or circuits. Despite the fact that most mechanical devices are controlled by computers or other electronics, sometimes it is the mechanical workings which require repair; and this is where this skill applies. If it is the electronics that are damaged, then the Electronics skill must be used instead. Use of this skill requires a TechKit.

Bots require use of a special skill for they employ combination electronic/mechanical devices of an unusual nature.

JURYRIGGING: If this skill is being used in an emergency to repair a mechanical device, the gamemaster may allow a juryrig attempt. Juryrigging makes the Action Difficulty one less (better), but the repair is only temporary and may fail quickly if placed under stress. Juryrig attempts can be made following a normal failed roll to make repairs properly.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in anywhere from a minute or so for simple devices on up to hours or even days and weeks on complex devices.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the repair, adjustment, or setup failed. Time permitting, this skill can often be re-attempted. A blundered Action Check results in the jamming of or damage to a subject system.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify types of machine technology used. AVERAGE: Assess, repair, or sabotage basic devices such as lift tubes, pressure doors, airlocks, industrial machinery, and hand-held equipment (assuming access to the control systems and mechanics); construct simplistic machines or devices from available parts or scraps. TOUGH: Assess, repair, or sabotage advanced devices such as automated machine systems, security equipment, and large-scale manufacturing machines; construct standard devices or machines from available parts and by provided plans. VERY DIFFICULT: Assess, repair, or sabotage highly-advanced, alien, or unknown devices; construct advanced devices from available parts and plans, or basic machines from hand-built or crafted parts. ABSURD: Assess, repair, or sabotage advanced alien devices (TL12 or higher); construct highly-advanced devices from available parts and plans, or build standard devices from hand-built or hand-crafted parts with original plans.

Medicine

(INT) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] A specific species must be chosen, and each additional species is a separate skill. Characters attempting to treat a species different than their area of knowledge may do so at a +3 Step Penalty (though totally bizarre species or species whose internal structure is quite alien may warrant penalties as high as +6).

NOTE: If additional Medicine skills are acquired beyond the first, then each such additional skill begins with a skill rating of 2 instead of the normal 1 (but still for the ordinary cost of 1 Experience Point). This assumes that the primary Medicine skill rating is at least 3; if not, then this exception is ignored.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Time to use this skill varies greatly depending on the patient's condition. Most uses can be performed in just a few minutes, but surgery always takes many minutes or hours.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check means that the medical professional either failed to heal/correct the injury or problem, while a blunder actually makes it worse! (Possibly resulting in the patient's death—especially during organ transplants—see below.)

First Aid can be attempted only by novice (rating 1) characters. Surgery requires a minimum rating of 3. See Chapter 19 for details on the effects of successful surgery and first aid.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Bandage and bind wounds, perform basic first-aid and treatment to a patient; surgery of a Lightly-Wounded patient. AVERAGE: First aid to a Severely-Wounded patient; surgery and treatment of a Moderately-Wounded patient; treat/cure advanced disease or life-threatening viral infections. TOUGH: Surgery and treatment of a Severely-Wounded patient; perform an organ transplant; treat rare diseases. Attach a cloned replacement limb or sensory organ; treat alien or unknown disease or infection. VERY DIFFICULT: Surgery and treatment of a Critically-Wounded patient; reverse terminal radiation poisoning; treat life-threatening alien infections; correct major neurologic damage. Absurd/IMPOSSIBLE: Perform a body (brain) transplant—very low survival rate.

Physics

(INT) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] The physics skill provides knowledge in the area of physical properties and laws of and governing most substances and materials as well as energy.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Casual analyses require only a turn or two, but in-depth study takes days or even significantly longer.

RESULTS— Failure means that the character's analysis is flawed or that an experiment fails. Blunders indicate a disaster or accident. Time permitting, this skill may be tried again.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify and classify types of materials and energy—assuming property analyses can be performed or sensor devices are available; anticipate basic physics characteristics (especially energy) based on available data. AVERAGE: Analyze energy fields; formulate energy efficiency comparisons. TOUGH: Anticipate advanced energy types' behavior in relation to varying environments. VERY DIFFICULT: Analyze and compute behavioral properties of alien or unknown energy types through proper analyses.

Pickpocket

(PRE) Simply the chance for the thief to lift items from a person's pockets or purses. The art includes lifting items without contact with the victim as well as fast lifts through 'accidental' brushes with a victim.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn, though some casing and/or stalking may be necessary prior to actual delivery.

RESULTS— A failed roll indicates that the pickpocket attempt failed but was not noticed by the victim unless he or she succeeds at an Average Intuition or Awareness check (gamemaster's discretion). Blunders immediately alert the victim of the theft attempt.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Lifting an item from a large open and unsecured purse. AVERAGE: Lifting an item from a typical purse as it is worn; lifting an item from a loose outer pocket. TOUGH: Lifting an item from a semi-tight and outer pocket. VERY DIFFICULT: Theft from a tight pocket or loose inner pocket; getting into a clasped purse. ABSURD: Retrieving an item from a tight inner pocket, the inner clasped or zipped pockets in a closed purse; or a loose item permanently secured by a chain.

Pilot

(AGI) [Pilot, Starfighter is a Professional Skill] A completely separate skill is required for Ground Pilot, SkyCar Pilot, Starfighter Pilot, and Small Ship Pilot (small, fast, and maneuverable ships only [such as corvettes and blockade runners]—otherwise, 'Starship Operations, Helm' is used). A skilled character has a general familiarity with the performance and capability of vehicles and can perform basic operations without a skill check.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is used in real time on an ongoing basis less a specific stunt or maneuver is performed.

RESULTS— Standard failure indicates that the pilot loses control of the vehicle, possibly crashing it. This skill may be usually be re-

attempted. A blundered Action Check results in a collision or other disaster.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Start and drive a ground vehicle; operate a starfighter or small ship in space by performing typical low-speed maneuvers. AVERAGE: Successfully maneuver a ground car at high speed while maintaining control; launch or land a starfighter or small ship; perform precision maneuvers or normal ones in adverse environmental conditions with a starfighter, small ship, or sky car. TOUGH: Perform daring maneuvers, such as flying through a mine field, crossing multiple lanes of traffic at high velocity while avoiding collisions, and so on. VERY DIFFICULT: Perform masterful stunts or acrobatics with the vehicle, such as: flying through a small opening or under a low bridge; spinning a vehicle around a corner or flipping into a roll while passing through openings or obstacles. ABSURD: Perform seemingly impossible acts which defy logic.

NOTE REGARDING FIGHTER PILOTS: Although great pilots come from every walk of life and from diverse racial backgrounds, because of some species' inherent physiology (size, odd shape, etc.) many species are unable to more or less 'fit' into a standard human-sized cockpit and are therefore limited to specialized starfighters or must commission very expensive modifications.

Pressure Suit Ops

(AGI) [PROXY SKILL] The ability to perform while wearing pressure suits, environmental-protection suits, or vacsuits. Normally, characters receive a +1 Step Penalty while wearing suits such as these. With this skill characters are able to alleviate this Step Penalty. Skilled characters (2) receive no penalty when performing actions outside of combat, but still suffer the penalty during combat or other high-stress situations. Once a character reaches advanced or higher levels of mastery (4+), then the character no longer suffers from this Step Penalty at all. Note that this skill does not confer any training or ability to perform in a weightless environment (see Zero-G Operations Skill).

Resist Interrogation

(WIL) [PROXY SKILL] This skill is of great benefit to spies and many others for it applies a resistance modifier against the skills Interrogation and Intimidation. Whenever the character is faced with either of those two skills, the character may impose a Step Penalty on the interrogating or intimidating person, as outlined below:

Resist Interrogation Rating:	*Step Penalty:*
1	None
2	+1 Step Penalty
3	+2 Step Penalty
4	+3 Step Penalty
5 or 6	+4 Step Penalty
7+	+5 Step Penalty

Riding

(AGI) Characters skilled in Riding are trained in how to mount and dismount riding beasts and those of burden. This skill also covers how to properly guide the steed and care for it.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is accomplished in real time.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character either falls off of the mount or loses control of it. Blunder indicate that the rider was bucked off and may suffer an injury (possibly serious) as a result. If the opportunity presents itself, the skill may be used again on the same mount.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Mount or dismount a tamed beast that is still or walking; properly saddle steeds. AVERAGE: Mount/dismount tamed steed while at a canter; shoe a steed appropriately. TOUGH: Mount/dismount a tamed steed while at a gallop; mount/dismount still or walking wild steed; dismount in a leap from tamed animal at a canter. VERY DIFFICULT: Keep saddled and ride a wild or hostile steed; safely dismount a tamed animal at a gallop.

Running

(STR) [PROXY SKILL] The practice of and conditioning for speedracing and sprinting on foot. Training in this score strengthens certain muscles (usually in the legs or equivalent thereof) specific to attaining speed and distance in a race. A character's Running Speed trait is increased by one-half point for every level of mastery in this skill (that means for every 1 point in this skill). Thus, a character with a Running skill of 3 has reached Adept (the third level of mastery) and so would have a permanent +1½ bonus to Running Speed.

Science, Specialized

(INT) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] A separate skill is required for each specialty skill: Archeology, Biochemistry, Biophysics, Genetics, Metallurgy, Microbiology, Nuclear and Quantum Physics, and Pharmacology. Other specialities are also possible. These specialized science skills are similar to other described skills such as Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, or Forensics. A rating of 5 is generally the minimum required for practical application of the science in a useful or beneficial manner. A rating of 6 or better (master) is needed to pioneer new theories and to apply the knowledge in an untried or new area, though most such experts carry ratings over 7. The gamemaster will assign Action Difficulties appropriate to the action being attempted.

Search

(INU) Also called Search/Investigate, this is the ability to rifle through or scour an area for hidden items. The skill includes knowledge of hiding places and other psychological training to boost a character's Intuition score for all search rolls. Any search takes time, and some take a lot of time depending on the size of the area and the number of compartments or other hiding places present.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in just a few turns, though some searches may take minutes or even hours depending on the amount of territory covered.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check simply means that the searching character didn't find any hidden items, whether present or not. Note that players typically make this roll where only the gamemaster can see the result (or the gamemaster rolls for the player). Characters can re-attempt a search if they didn't find what they were searching for, but subsequent searches will take even longer as each place is rechecked and new hiding places are sought.

EXAMPLES— AVERAGE: Locate an object which might not be well hidden but may be among many other objects of similar size/type; Find something that is casually hidden. TOUGH: Find something that was placed in an unusual hiding place, such as behind a picture frame, taped under a chair, etc., or something stowed in a basic consumer-hidden compartment. VERY DIFFICULT: Find something that was very well hidden, such as in a professional false-bottom drawer or panel, or somewhere bizarre such as in a drain pipe, beneath the floor, or inside a furnace heating assembly. ABSURD: Find something that was masterfully hidden, such as a datachip hidden in a shielded and sealed (and working) capacitor installed among similar components inside a working household appliance.

Security Procedures

(INU) A character with this skill has an understanding of security procedures and policies when inside an installation or aboard a small ship. A skilled character can assign a variety of security procedures and protocols designed to control access to various zones, identify trouble areas, and render aid or security where needed quickly.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Use of this skill require widely varying amounts of time.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check could mean that a trouble area wasn't recognized, that the installation of a security system or procedure was flawed, that attempted sabotage or a bypass failed and triggered an alarm, or there may simply be no effect. This skill cannot normally be re-attempted unless the situation changes.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Recognize security zones or areas in need of security. AVERAGE: Determine good locations for surveillance, sensor, and other security equipment; determine good post locations for guards; properly direct security personnel and equipment during a crisis or alarm. TOUGH: Install, bypass, or sabotage basic or standard security systems or protocols. Assess flaws in existing security systems and procedures where already existent or needed. VERY DIFFICULT: Bypass or install advanced security systems or protocols.

Seduction

(ALL) This skill plays on a character's ability to flirt and use attractive sexual connotations to either seduce or gain favor from a member of the opposite or compatible sex. This skill works for any race in which sex is pleasurable or desired, though it only works between members of the same race (all sub-races of humans such as Rians and Draaz are considered the same race) or very similar species. Seduction cannot work on a subject who is angry, hostile, or combative.

A seduced character is one who is willing to submit to sex with the seducer and/or grant favors that would require some effort or expense. Use of this skill can take a while, depending on the circumstances, with hours (or possibly days) not being uncommon. In certain situations, the gamemaster may allow a seducer to continue the seduction (a second or third roll being required) in order to curry substantial material or monetary favors.

A failed Action Check almost always indicates no effect, as flirtatious behavior is generally ignored by uninterested or naive parties, though some subjects may take offense or view the seducer as tactless. A blunder indicates that the subject is revolted by the seducer's advances, and may even take aggressive action.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Use of this skill may require anywhere from a couple of minutes on up to several hours (or even days) of conversation depending on the circumstance.

A standard Action Check is made, considering the Action Difficulties outlined below:

AVERAGE— Subject's Allure is below 5
TOUGH— Subject's Allure is 5.1 to 6.5
VERY DIFFICULT— Subject's Allure is 6.6 to 8
ABSURD— Subject's Allure is 8.1 to 10
IMPOSSIBLE— Subject's Allure is 10.1 or higher

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll easier:

1) If the subject is already charmed, as per the skill, by the seducer, then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

2) If the subject has been manipulated, as per the skill, by the seducer for the same goal, then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

3) If the subject's Willpower is 4.0 or below then the Action Difficulty is made one category better (easier).

The following special situations may adjust the Action Difficulty, making the roll more difficult:

1) If the subject's Willpower is 6 or higher then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder).

2) If the subject is of a different (but vaguely compatible) species then the Action Difficulty is made one category worse (harder).

3) If the subject is of a different species, or of the same sex and species but of incompatible orientation, then the Action Difficulty is made two categories worse (much harder).

Sleight of Hand

(PRE) A measure of trickery and illusion using the hands. This skill can be used to hide a small held item without drawing attention to

the act of hiding it nor revealing where it was hidden. Anything up your sleeve?

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn for a quick effect, but can be carried on for several turns or even minutes for a more elaborate trick.

RESULTS— A failed roll indicates that the trick failed or that the act of hiding was overt and unsuccessful. Blunders usually result in the dropping of the item in question, or an embarrassing mistake.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Hiding a datachip, credit chip, or similar small item. AVERAGE: Hiding an egg or fist-sized item. TOUGH: Hiding a blaster or similar-sized weapon or item. VERY DIFFICULT: Effectively hide a rifle, cannon, or other large item.

Speech

(EGO) A character with this skill is trained in the art of public speaking. A minimum of expert knowledge (5) of the language in which a speech is to be given must first be known in order for this skill to be effective. A successful Action Check results in the audience believing in, being swayed by, or being moved by the speaker.

The size of the audience affected and the reaction from any authorities is left to the gamemaster's discretion.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished over the course of several minutes, though some speeches may go on for up to an hour or more.

A standard Action Check is made, considering the Action Difficulties outlined below:

AVERAGE— Build enthusiasm in a crowd for a particular goal or thing that they already believe in.

TOUGH— Instill an emotion or basic belief into a crowd—specifically excitement about an event or goal already favorably viewed.

VERY DIFFICULT— Insight a crowd to riot, or instill enthusiasm in a crowd that wouldn't ordinarily be very positive toward the idea or goal spoken about.

ABSURD— Calm a crowd that is already rioting, or build enthusiasm in a crowd that is normally opposed to the idea or goal of the speech.

Starship Operations

(VARIOUS) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] *A separate skill is required for each area of Operations: Command [EGO], Communications [KNO], Engineering [KNO], Helm [KNO], Navigation [KNO], Security [INU], and Tactical [INU].* These skills provide the knowledge and training necessary to operate a capital starship. The Command skill covers personnel and leadership training, as well as crisis management and ethics. Communications covers the operation and periodic maintenance of short-range and subspace com systems and their related protocols. Many parallels exist between this skill and the standard Communications skill. Engineering includes operation and maintenance of the main power, drive, and warp propulsion systems, as well as the maintenance and repair of all shipboard support systems and computers. As with the Electronics and Mechanics skills, juryrig rules apply for Engineering repairs. Also, a special TechKit is required for this skill, and a prerequisite of both Electronics and Mechanics at 3 and 2, respectively, are required before learning this skill. The Helm skill is needed to operate the flight controls of any major capital ship, and also includes training in spatial physics, port authorities and their accompanying procedures and protocols, and objective vectoring. Navigation is used to set and maintain long-range courses, operate the warp drive, and maintain fleet cohesion in warp. The Security skill is markedly similar to the Security Procedures skill, though it concentrates more on intruder defense and security personnel management. Tactical includes both offensive and defensive control systems, ethics and laws regarding their use, fire control, and damage impact and aftermath theory. Only Command and Security can be attempted untrained.

Many of these skills take on additional relevance when using the supplemental material governing starship scenarios.

Stealth

(AGI) Skilled characters are able to move stealthily with reduced chances of detection. Higher ratings in this skill include the psychology of intuition and know how to avoid drawing unwanted attention to oneself. A master is, for all intents and purposes, a 'ninja' with regard to stealth, though common sense must be applied—this isn't a B-movie.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in real time.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Stealth at night in a noisy area where guards or workers are not attentive. AVERAGE: Twilight or some noise in a non-security area with perhaps a single guard on duty. TOUGH: Broad daylight or lit area, possibly with one guard on duty. VERY DIFFICULT: Semi-secure area with one or more guards. ABSURD: Secure area with multiple guards; possible surveillance equipment and/or guard animals. IMPOSSIBLE: Very secure area with multiple guards and surveillance equipment; motion trackers and other security equipment or animals on duty.

Strategy & Tactics

(INU) [PROXY SKILL] *A separate skill must be chosen for Ground Tactics, Starfighter Tactics, Capital Ship Tactics, and Fleet Tactics.* A character with one of these skills is trained in the art of warfare, knows book procedures for unit positioning and fallback lines, and can devise clever and inventive strategies. A skilled character is able to devise basic by-the-book tactics and strategies for ground troop units, fighter squadrons, or starship(s), depending on the skill specialty. An advanced character can apply the best book tactics for a given situation, can use them on the fly without previous planning, and can devise spur-of-the-moment tactics that fit a given or new situation. A master is able to devise plans and strategies not known before, can use resources to the best possible advantage, and knows the absolute limits of known vehicles and personnel. A rating of 7 or 8 or better indicates a grand master of strategy consistent with renowned military generals, infamous pilots, and the like.

For rules on how to apply these skills, see the supplement dealing with starship combat scenarios.

Streetwise

(HAR) Streetwise allows a character to assess and identify potential individual threats in a variety of public areas, imparts knowledge of local slang and undertalk, and confers the ability to locate the best contacts for black market or other illegal activities through networking. This skill does not actually impart success in dealings with the underworld, just knowledge of how to navigate it. Therefore, other skills such as charm, manipulation, or even seduction may prove necessary once the right contact is found.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn if calling upon knowledge of an area or group, but may take significantly longer should research be necessary.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check results in the character being unable to 'get-in' to street connections, insulting the locals, appearing as an 'outsider' or police officer, or simply has no effect. Blunders generally warrant reprisal of some kind. This skill can never be re-attempted in the same area or upon the same observers unless a good deal of time has passed or the character's appearance has changed significantly.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Spot and differentiate between hostile and friendly streetgoers; avoid areas where dangers exist (or where there is a lack of authorities). AVERAGE: Glean local gossip without raising suspicion; move through gang-infested areas without drawing unwanted attention or hostilities. TOUGH: Pass local gangs; fit in like a native; establish safe contacts with gang members and other roughnecks for a variety of needs; join loose gangs or low-end organized crime; arrange for illegal imports/exports of valuables or in-demand goods through high gangs or organized crime syndicates. VERY DIFFICULT: Join gangs and organized crime syndicates of all types (this may require quite a bit of time). ABSURD: Join the upper echelons of organized crime families or syndicates (this may require a great deal of time or multiple success rolls).

Survival

(INU) The ability to endure and survive in alien or hostile environments. A skilled character is able to construct basic shelters in a given environment, knows how to forage for basic foodstuffs, and how to survive with regard to resisting infection, sanitizing food, starting fires, and the like when little or no equipment is available.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Resolution time varies greatly depending on whether single tasks are at hand or if prolonged desertion occurs.

RESULTS— Failure indicates that the character is unable to persevere (survive) for an extended period of time in the hostile environment or fails to construct the necessary shelter or forage edible foodstuffs—all carrying appropriate consequences.

EXAMPLES— Assuming characters survive failure, they are allowed to re-attempt actions with this skill. ROUTINE/EASY: Sanitize utensils; start long-lasting fires with appropriate equipment; identify more hospitable areas for making camp; start fires without modern equipment. AVERAGE: Build simple shelters in semi-hostile environments; find basic (safe) foodstuffs. TOUGH: Construct shelters for hostile environments where able; forage for foodstuffs when little is available or safe; survive very hot or cold temperatures; construct a makeready shelter when little or virtually no natural materials are available; build a semi-permanent structure where materials exist. VERY DIFFICULT: Survive extreme temperatures or hostile environments for days; construct a water-purification system from natural materials. ABSURD: Survive extremely hostile environments for days or even weeks.

Swimming

(STR) [PROXY SKILL] Skilled characters can stay afloat for as long as they can stay awake, can perform a variety of basic swimming styles, and can render some aid to others. An adept character is considered a proficient and powerful swimmer, is able to stay afloat indefinitely, and is able to render basic treatment to drowning victims. An expert is able to swim at greater speeds, knows, understands, and can identify (and possibly treat) most conditions and ailments associated with long-term water exposure.

Additionally, the character's nautical Swimming Speed is permanently increased by half its initial value for every two full levels of mastery in this skill (the total is then rounded down) . This means that an average advanced or expert human character (4 or 5) would have his or her Swimming Speed increased from 1 to 2.

Theology

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] A measure of religious knowledge and enlightenment.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is normally accomplished in one (1) turn when calling upon knowledge of a religion or faith, but could require significantly more time to apply should research be necessary.

RESULTS— Failure indicates an incorrect assessment. Blunders result in a potentially dangerous understanding or lack thereof.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify an act of faith. AVERAGE: Identify the specific nature of an act of faith; extrapolate the faith's fundamental belief system. TOUGH: Extrapolate specific ethics of a faith along with morals and values. VERY DIFFICULT: Map entire faith insofar as principles and hierarchy are concerned. ABSURD: Assumptions approach level of faith member's knowledge.

Tracking

(INU) Tracking is the ability to follow or hunt a target in a variety of wilderness and urban settings. This skill provides the knowledge needed to know how to go about finding or tracking someone—not necessarily the skills to actually find them. For example, a character with sufficient tracking might figure out (based on a successful Action Check) that DNA testing on a broken shrub branch could establish the identity of whoever escaped into the woods. Whereas that course of action probably would never occur to a character without this skill. Of course, tracking doesn't provide the training necessary to test the DNA sample.

Similarly, tracking provides knowledge of all manner of skip tracing techniques, but other skills may be needed to actually follow-up on those various trails!

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Use of this skill requires greatly varying amounts of time—from just a few turns on up to days or even longer.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check indicates that no viable signs or trails can be determined. Blunders typically mean that the character has tipped-off the pursued target. Alternatively, blunders could indicate that the character begins following the wrong trail—but is quite convinced by it. This skill can only be re-attempted once conditions change.

Remember, success with the tracking skill indicates that a means to follow has been identified—not that the subject has been found.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Realize that basic public record information might identify obvious places to begin a search. AVERAGE: Spot clues in public or private areas that would lead to any unhidden individual. Realize basic or rudimentary clues that were carefully concealed or hidden that might lead to the target. TOUGH: Follow advanced clues and private records such as banking transactions, transgalactic telecom communiqué, and other privileged information in order to track or narrow the whereabouts of a target. VERY DIFFICULT: Track a target using advanced methods even when the target is carefully covering their trail and removing clues along the way. ABSURD: Uncover clues that might lead to the whereabouts of a protected individual (such as one under a witness protection program).

Two-Handed Fighting

(AGI) [PROXY SKILL] By means of this skill, a character is able to fire two beam or projectile weapons, or wield two melee weapons simultaneously (one in each hand, where species viable) with reduced penalties. This skill does not allow use of two rifle weapons, though, unless the character is strong enough and the GM so allows.

Normally, a character suffers a +2 Step Penalty for fighting with both hands. With this skill, the penalty is reduced as follows:

THF Skill Rating:	*Modified Step Penalty:*
1	+2 Step Penalty
2	+2 Step Penalty
3	+2 Step Penalty
5	+1 Step Penalty
6	+1 Step Penalty
7+	None

Note that this skill does not confer any to-hit bonuses or other combat proficiencies other than being able to use both hands for firing weapons. Likewise, characters still suffer the +2 Step Penalty for the weapon in their non-primary (wrong) hand—this skill does nothing to compensate for that.

Weapons Technology

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] The knowledge and understanding of weapons technology and components. Use of a TechKit is required for this skill.

JURYRIGGING: If this skill is being used in an emergency to repair a weapon, the gamemaster may allow a juryrig attempt. Juryrigging makes the Action Difficulty one less (better), but the repair is only temporary and may fail quickly if placed under stress. Juryrig attempts can be made following a normal failed roll to make repairs properly.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— Though drawing upon knowledge can be accomplished in only a turn, repairs and practical use can take minutes or even hours.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check indicates that the repair/sabotage is flawed, while a blunder means that the subject weapon was overtly damaged. Determination permitting, this skill may be tried again.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Classify weapon types by visual inspection; properly clean (through disassembly) a weapon. AVERAGE: Repair a damaged weapon; replace worn parts or cannibalize a weapon for spare parts. TOUGH: Build a basic or crude firearm or energy weapon assuming certain supplies, parts, and tools are available; incorporate personal modifications into a weapon. VERY DIFFICULT: Change or improve a weapon's range and/or damage potential, though a loss in efficiency is mandatory. Build new or custom weapon types, assuming advanced parts, supplies, and tools are available. ABSURD: Build advanced or more efficient weapon types—nearly always at a high unit cost.

Wrestling

(STR) [PROXY SKILL] Wrestling represents a character's skill and experience with moves and overbearing maneuvers designed to take an opponent down and keep 'em there. This skill is used solely to compute certain character traits, as described in Chapter 14 and Chapter 19 of this book.

Xenobiology

(KNO) [PROFESSIONAL SKILL] The knowledge and study of biology, alien or otherwise. Xenobiology can be best thought of as Biology, Alien Biology, and Zoology all combined.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is takes anywhere from several turns to several hours—dependent on the level of analysis. Complete analyses of new species requires days or weeks.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check may result in improper or inaccurate assumptions. Therefore, this skill cannot usually be re-attempted as the character will be unaware of a failed roll (the player should make such a roll where only the gamemaster can see it). A blunder results in a gross misunderstanding or incorrect assessment.

EXAMPLES— ROUTINE/EASY: Identify prevalent races on sight.; recall general physiological needs such as temperature, atmosphere, and dietary requirements for most species. AVERAGE: Knowledge of most species' anatomical functions—including known poisons/toxins, circulatory system type, basic neurological data, bone or exoskeleton structure, and organ types. TOUGH: Extrapolate species type based on DNA from cellular or tissue samples.

Xenolinguistics

(KNO) [Professional Skill] The knowledge and study of alien languages.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check results in improper or inaccurate assumptions. This skill may not be re-attempted unless the character's understanding of the language is somehow clarified first.

EXAMPLES— Routine/Easy: Recognize (by species) major or prevalent alien writings. Average: Link alien writings to the appropriate species if that species is an average one. Very Difficult: Link uncommon writings to uncommon species.

Important: This is the study of language types and in no way provides the ability to decipher a specific language. Rather, it provides familiarity with all alien languages insofar as being able to recognize which species or culture the language belongs to.

Xenosociology

(KNO) [Professional Skill] The knowledge and study of alien societies and cultures.

AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME— This skill is takes anywhere from several turns to several hours—dependent on the level of analysis. Complete analyses of new societies requires days or weeks.

RESULTS— A failed Action Check generally indicates that an incorrect assumption has been made (usually unbeknownst to the character, of course). Blunders result in gross underestimation or insulting behavior. This check may be re-attempted, time permitting.

EXAMPLES— Routine/Easy: Identify most alien species on sight and determine the general demeanor of such species. Average: Awareness of the basic societal customs and cultural values for most major species and possibility one or two obscure species. Tough: 'Fit-in' with an alien culture without drawing undue attention. Awareness of the societal eccentricities, customs, and values for all major races and some obscure species; anticipate basic customs within unknown or first-contact cultures. Very Difficult: Pass as a native within almost any known culture (in action, not appearance) even when engaged in interpersonal contact (assuming language skills are available); anticipate the eccentricities of unknown or first-contact cultures.

Zero-G Operations

(AGI) [Proxy Skill] Normally, characters receive a +2 Step Penalty when trying to perform in a weightless environment. This skill helps to alleviate some or all of that penalty due to training.

Zero-G Skill Rating:	*Modified Step Penalty:*
1	+2 Step Penalty
2	+2 Step Penalty
3	+1 Step Penalty
4	+1 Step Penalty
5+	None

Note that this skill does not confer any training or knowledge of spacesuits, nor does it alleviate the penalties for wearing one (see Pressure Suit Operations skill).

Creating New Skills

With the aid of the gamemaster, players with a need to create new skills are free to do so. There are a couple of guidelines though, and these may make this process easier for the player and the gamemaster alike.

First, decide on whether or not there is a real need for the skill. For example, there is no real need for an Computer Repair skill as this area of knowledge would be covered under Electronics. Dancing, however, is a skill all to its own and would thus be a valid candidate for a new skill.

Second, decide how this new skill should be categorized. What stat is best associated with it? For dancing, it would be best to associate our new skill with Agility since there is a lot of fancy footwork and balance required to carry-out a good dance.

Next, do some research into the skill in question. What is a skilled character capable of? An advanced character? How about an expert or master? Players will need to discuss these skill milestones with their gamemaster in order to arrive at fair and practical Action Difficulty examples.

Once all of these ideas have been fleshed out, the player or gamemaster (or both) should write up the skill as similar to one of the other existing skills in this book. That way, other players and the gamemaster may refer back to this skill with ease; after all, other players may want to learn the new skill once they've heard of it!

CREATING NEW PROXY SKILLS: This is an area best avoided. Since Proxy skills directly affect game mechanics, any new skills of this nature could destroy the delicate game balance. A few supplements introduce new proxy skills, but these have been carefully tested and also serve a special and direct purpose.

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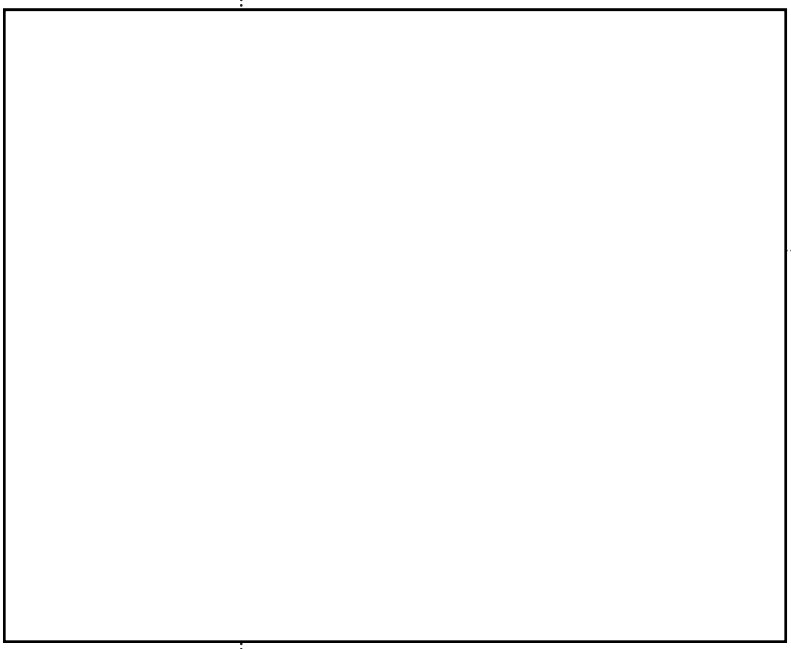
Part Five

Material Goods



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Chapter Twenty-Three

Overview of Material Goods

Introduction

This section has been broken into 3 chapters covering equipment items and services, weapons and armor, and vehicles. The monetary system, its use, and laws covering trade for all of these things are discussed below.

Credits

The Imperial currency was once called unitars, but today is simply known as 'credits' and is abbreviated € (similar to the Euro). As a new electronic money, credits are accepted everywhere and have become the galactic currency even outside of the ZAON Imperium. Assume one credit to have roughly the same buying power as one US dollar in today's world.

Credits are usually spent electronically. Indeed, many merchants will not even accept the physical form of this money. Also, unlike the US dollar, credits do not have sub-units like dimes and nickels. Rather, credits are measured in decimal point fashion. For example, a nutrition bar might be sold for €1.6 at a convenience store. Fractions smaller than a tenth of one credit are always dropped from any final payment transmittals—though unit costs in bulk purchases may be configured down to the hundredth mark (that is, just the final exchange is rounded).

Actual credit chips, the physical form of this money, are generally rare, but somewhat prevalent throughout frontier areas of space. Contrarily, in the major cities on premier worlds many banking institutions no longer store chips and so are completely electronic. Though still a legal form of tender, the Imperium has been slowly removing the physical credit chips from circulation as they are primarily used in crime now. Because of this, few citizens or businesses are willing to accept chips and those that do often find themselves at higher risk for government-ordered audits. Still, many legitimate uses of physical credits remain—especially in frontier areas where they are sometimes even the preferred variant of exchange.

The chip itself is a small circular disc about the size of a dime. It contains a microfine polyneutronic crystalline lattice which can only be grown under very specialized conditions. This lattice is then encased as a wafer in the actual credit chip disc which is comprised of compressed silicone and coated with a fine layer of duidium. All credit scanners contain a lattice sensor which can verify the crystal's structure for authenticity, but in most cases the scanner isn't necessary as the lattice generates a very unique sliver hue with an almost holographic wash to it. Credit chips are extraordinarily difficult to counterfeit and, to date, only 8 cases of success are on record according to the ISA.

Banking and Exchange

Public and private banking institutions exist, and all are interconnected and heavily regulated. Public banks are controlled by the ZAON Imperium, while private institutions are corporations both in and outside the Imperium.

The market is competitive, and so all banks offer interest and other services on major accounts. Small accounts under €9000, however, carry no such incentives, but no bank charges any fee for its services. Many private facilities, though, do regularly reject customer applications based on credit worth and for other reasons, thereby forcing such individuals to bank publicly.

Loans and financing is extremely difficult to obtain, even for legitimate and well-documented businesses. Still, if proper collateral can be surrendered or made easily available for repossession, loans can be acquired. Interest rates of 20% on small purchases and 10% on large ones are typical.

The difference between public and private banks as far as the consumer is concerned is one of privacy and personal preference only. Most private banking corporations guarantee a certain degree of confidentiality insofar as account balances are concerned, though a formal criminal investigation does grant authorities access to such private records.

Financial exchange and spending is accomplished using the citizen's or business's IdentiCard (q.v.). IdentiCards are issued by the government as identification and also serve as a kind of 'debit card'. Each card can maintain any number of bank accounts, and each account is initially uploaded to the card by a bank when the account is opened.

The card plus a personal bio code (bio-electrical signature read by pressing a finger or thumb against a sensor) are used by the owner to make purchases and are read by standardized card scanners, called credit scanners, which are issued by banks. These scanners electronically transfer funds from the buyer to the seller, but only on purchases not to exceed €5000. Furthermore, a single IdentiCard cannot be used to spend more than €10,000 in a 25-hour period. Once the sale is complete, the funds will have been moved between accounts (regardless of which bank the holder subscribes to as all banks that deal in Imperial credits are networked to the Imperial Exchange system as required by law), and the IdentiCard will be updated with a new ledger balance. This balance listed on the card is for the card holder's benefit only (as a reference) and does not represent the actual account balance should there be any discrepancy.

Larger purchases (up to any amount) require specialized credit ATMs issued only to merchants who can prove a need for one. All banks can also handle credit spending of this nature. The difference in credit ATMs is that each such ATM also requires a partial DNA print from both the buyer and the seller for added security. Businesses may license certain employees to be authorized for such a print on a corporate card.

Non-business individuals wishing to exchange credits with one another for any reason are able to do so by pointing their IdentiCards together. Exchanges of this nature are also limited, this time by the card itself, to a maximum of €5000 to any one individual and up to €10,000 per day total. The drawback to this kind of 'sale' is that the actual transfer of funds does not occur until the next time either party submits their card to a merchant or bank for any reason—at which time, the stored information is uploaded and updated in all relevant accounts (a merchant's or bank's scanner only acting as a conduit).

Larger private transactions (over €5000) can also be performed, but this requires that both parties make their exchange at an authorized banking institution using a capital scanner. Unfortunately, sales tax does apply even to these kinds of personal exchanges.

Sales Tax

All transfers of money for any reason (even between individuals) are subject to a sales tax imposed by the Imperium. This tax is equal to a 10% flat rate on the monetary exchange. Even banking corporations outside of the Imperium that operate on the credit banking network are required to collect tax. Sales tax is automatically deducted from the buyer's (spender's) account. Only payments made to the government itself (including public facilities) are exempt from this tax.

Alien Currencies and Banking

Certain worlds and races that have maintained their independence from the ZAON Imperium also maintain their own monetary systems and banking infrastructures. Sometimes, influential alien governments will open-up their banking networks to other worlds and races as well.

Alien banking institutions carry certain advantages and disadvantages. For one, they are completely isolated from the ZAON Imperium and thus the Imperium's probing eyes. They are also obviously exempt from the Imperium-wide sales tax—though most alien banks impose a tax of their own that often carries even higher taxes. The primary disadvantage is that these currencies are accepted only in select regions of space, as most of the galaxy only accepts credits.

Getting funds from an alien institution to any Imperial one can be a bit tricky or may not be possible at all. Most alien banks do maintain agreements with the ZAON Imperium and its credit banking network in order to exchange funds, but any such exchange is once again subject to the Imperial tax. Furthermore, exchanges of this nature typically require 2-5 days to complete, and most banks additionally impose another 1 to 3% fee (often by each bank involved) on top of the tax. Further, territories not approved by the Imperium or who are at war with any other empires often make exchanges either impossible or banks must wait until physical goods are exchanged for the transaction to be secured.

Therefore, an outsider alien citizen stranded in the Imperium could visit any bank to begin an exchange, but the real trick is that that alien would have to first acquire an IdentiCard in order to both open a credit account and to spend anything in the account. Even when aliens maintain both credit accounts and an alien account, they must undergo the exchange process in order spend using their IdentiCard. That is, transfers are never automatic or linked.

Finally, some alien monies exist either solely or additionally in the form of physical currencies. The specifics of which are discussed along with the Alien Exchange Rates in the descriptions of individual races and empires (many of which are dealt with in supplements). Remember, these alien currencies are not accepted in either physical or electronic forms anywhere within the Imperium except, perhaps, the underground.

Availability

Not everything that exists is necessarily available. Further, that which is available may be limited to those with special licenses or exist in only certain areas or regions.

For game purposes, each item found in the following chapters has been assigned an Availability rating. The key is as follows:

VERY COMMON: The item can be found at any local convenience store and at many other retailers throughout the Imperium. Typically, a maximum one-block range in any city.

COMMON: Found at any major retailer or specialty shop throughout the Imperium. Typically within a few blocks in any major city.

UNCOMMON: Only certain specialty shops, high-end retailers, or obscure chains carry this item. Usually at least one such outlet exists in any city of over 50,000 population, with larger cities often supporting several such retailers.

RARE: Carried either by only the most obscure outlets or the most prestigious specialty stores, depending on the item's nature. Only very large cities (population of 5 million) or specialized areas support retailers carrying this item. In any event, the item is very difficult to find.

VERY RARE: The item is available only by certain retailers (or a specific individual store) which may not exist on the world in question. The gamemaster decides which worlds and cities support a store that carries this item. Also, the item may not be advertised.

RESTRICTED COMMON: This item is either illegal or requires a permit to own and/or sell. Nevertheless, the item is quite common and available in every major city on the black market or from retailers if a proper permit is carried.

RESTRICTED UNCOMMON: Available illegally on the black market for the right price, this item must be searched out. Certain items of this nature are legal to own with a permit, and so can be found at certain specialty shops.

RESTRICTED RARE: Sometimes available if a proper permit is owned, but the item is still rare. Illegal, an item of this kind is very difficult to locate, and requires good underground contacts in order to find on the black market.

BANNED UNCOMMON: Owning, possessing, or selling this item is strictly prohibited by law. The item is sometimes found on black markets, but dealings must be made carefully.

BANNED RARE: Don't mess with this item. Specialized Imperial agencies exist to track, investigate, and persecute anyone owning, selling, possessing, or even associated with this item. Finding this item is extraordinarily difficult and most black market privateers are extensively cautious to even admit trafficking in such contraband.

Trade Law

Trade Law refers to any exchange of goods where one item or product is exchanged for another item or product without the use of money (or where augmented with money). Though trade within the confines of alien republics and empires is governed by those governments, all open galaxy trade is controlled and monitored by the ZAON Imperium.

Law requires that anyone or any business conducting trade must report doing so and pay a trade tax of 10% of the net worth. Surprisingly, the law is rather lax in this area, and so most individuals are free to exchange goods among themselves without fear or need to report. In fact, small trade is never investigated by Imperial agencies. Large transactions (over €10,000 net worth), however, are monitored and so must be registered and the tax paid. The process of registering trade is actually a bit time-consuming and so many individuals involved in trade will actually make mutual purchases from one another in order to classify the matter under the sales tax law. Additionally, in less prosperous areas, many of the citizens barter with one another and local merchants to avoid tax.

Businesses are another matter entirely. All business report and pay trade tax should they conduct any trade, and few try to perform unregistered trade. This is largely because of the frequency of business audits and the rather severe penalties that accompany tax evasion.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Equipment and Services

Introduction

The items provided below represent those which are either very popular or specific to the Zaon universe. This book can by no means list every possible item available on the market. Other common or mundane items for which there is a twentieth or twenty-first century equivalent should carry the same price as they would in today's world, though check with your gamemaster first.

Equipment

ATMOSPHERIC SENSOR

€ 800 Availability: Rare Weight: 2 kg
Energy Clip Type: A
Power Drain: 1 EU per full analysis.

These sensor devices are some 30 cm long and 10 cm in diameter. The unit has a display readout mounted on top just below the carrying handle.

A sensor samples the atmospheric environment and can provide enough information to the user to form abstract analyses regarding the composition and breathableness of a given atmosphere.

BACKPACK

€ 30 Availability: Common Weight: 3 kg

Standard backpacks are waterproof, affix to the wearer with an X-cross belt harness, and have numerous sealable pouches and compartments. Backpacks are also buoyant and can serve as a flotation device. They do not sport any anti-theft or pickpocket-protection measures.

BINOCULARS

€ 45 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 1 kg

A mechanical device capable of 20x to 400x zoom. These binoculars are waterproof and can withstand extreme environments. The outer casing is cast from hard polymers and is available in a variety of colors.

BREATHER MASK, EMERGENCY

€ 25 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 1 kg

A small canister about 15 cm long and only 2 cm in diameter is affixed to the end of a translucent plastic nose-and-mouth mask. The mask supplies pure oxygen with the supply lasting about 20 minutes. Since the mixture is pure, periodic and regulated breathing is necessary to avoid oxygen toxicity. Masks are also available with other reactive gasses and mixtures for non-human species at 3 times the cost.

BUG DETECTOR

€ 1,500 Availability: Rare Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: 1 EU for a full room scan.

These tubular-shaped devices measure 12 centimeters in length and have a diameter of only 3 cm. The detector is activated and then moved about the room or area to be scanned. Should there exist any transmitting device (such as a listening item or cam) within 1 meter of this device then the detector will flash a red light and also alert the user with 'beeps'. The frequency of the tone and flashes

increases as the unit is pointed toward or moved nearer to a bug item. The tone and/or flash can be separately disabled by a switch.

Even heavily-shielded listening devices can be detected because it is the signal transmission that is detected. Conversely, any device that transmits its data over a wire cannot be so detected; nor can a much larger device which houses its own subspace transceiver.

CAM

€ 750 Availability: Common Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: 1 EU per 12 hours of operation.

Cams, short for camcorders, are palm-sized video units capable of recording, playback, and certain other features. Although various shapes do exist, most are a flat tablet about 8 x 12 centimeters and only 1 cm thick. A 7 x 5 cm color display screen occupies one side of the unit with touch controls below the screen. The units are rugged, capable of withstanding a drop of up to 5 meters onto a hard surface without damage.

The optics are only a few millimeters in diameter, are capable of up to 200x zoom, nightvision (infrared) recording, and color recording in as little as 1 lux. The unit has a built-in memory capacity of only 500 dynes, but there is also a standard datachip slot in the top end of the unit next to the optics and stereo sound sensors. Pictures are recorded digitally at 60 frames per second in very high resolution. Standard recording uses 100 dynes of rewriteable memory each hour. With a standard datachip's capacity of 7.2 kilodynes of memory, a cam unit can record up to 75 hours (plus 5 more with internal memory) without interruption. In addition to removable media, the unit also sports a mini I/O jack for computer interfacing.

CAM, HOLO

€ 2,400 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: A
Power Drain: 1 EU per hour of operation.

HoloCams are holographic camcorders about the size of one of today's compact hand cams. The device sports three optic lenses in the front of the unit that are capable of three-dimensional image sampling. A maximum of a three cubic-meter object can be sampled, and a 360 degree view is also necessary. If the object has flat and level top or bottom surface areas, then additional angles will be needed to reveal those perspectives as well. Typically, only three capture shots are necessary, at roughly 120-degree arcs.

The unit has a two-dimensional view screen that can be used to view the object from various angles after capture. A holo projector is needed to redisplay a captured image as a true holographic three-dimensional image. Capture requires 500 dynes of memory for every square meter of surface area captured. An average human would require roughly 1 kilodyne to sample. Sampling is performed at very high resolution and is error-free. Holo cams use a series of lasers to capture object topography, and then standard optical lenses to gather color information which is applied through interpolation. Thus, in very low light situations or in complete darkness the object capture will result in a grayscale or colorless (all black) image, respectively. Good lighting is needed to accurately capture color information. Internal spaces or compartments cannot be sampled.

The bottom of the cam has a standard I/O port for computer interfacing and also has a standard datachip slot for recording media. The device has no internal memory. These units are fairly delicate.

CAMERA

€ 50 Availability: Common Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: Roughly 1 EU per year or 2000 photos.

Modern cameras are available in several shapes and sizes, but most are about 8 x 5 x 1 centimeters. All have small display windows in order to view the digitally-captured photographs. Typical units have optical zoom capabilities up to 100x, and can also take photos in as little as 1 lux. A mini I/O jack allows for uploading to computers. A small internal memory supply can store up to 1000 high-resolution photos which can be retained indefinitely (even during a power loss). Most units are quite rugged and can withstand drops up to 8 meters without damage.

CLIMBING GEAR

€ 100 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 5 kg total

Climbing gear includes 100 meters of rope, a grappling hook, multiple spikes and latches, a hammer, a body harness, and certain other safety gear.

CLOTHING

€ see below
Availability: Common to Rare, depending on value.

Countless styles, sizes, and types of clothing are available. Much of it is region-specific according to what is in style at the time. Most of the fashionable and high-end garments are imported from Earth.

The cost of clothing items can be assigned by comparing the item to the nearest equivalent from what is available here on Earth, today.

COMLINK, SHORT-RANGE

€ 50 Availability: Uncommon Weight: —
Energy Clip Type: AAA
Power Drain: 1 EU per year with above average use.

Comlinks are common among not only military personnel, but also business professionals who need to keep in touch with their colleagues or office, and just about anyone else, for that matter. Think of comlinks as the current equivalent to a mobile phone / multi-way radio combination.

Links come in a variety of styles and shapes including wrist bands, earpieces, and badges. Short-range models work up to about 50 kilometers and allow for user-uploadable encryption algorithms. Standard factory encryption is channel selectable and can be matched to recipient links by the user at Encryption Level 10.

Wrist units and other larger links also allow for addressable linking, including access (if within range) to the local comnet in order to contact any business, household, or subspace party.

COMLINK, LONG-RANGE

€ 300 Availability: Uncommon Weight: —
Energy Clip Type: AAA
Power Drain: 1 EU per week with above average use.

Except for an increased power drain and orbital range capability, this device is otherwise identical to the short-range model listed above.

COMPUTER, PALMPAD

€ 100 Availability: Common Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: 1 EU per month of operation.

PalmPads are small handheld computer devices outfitted with an A-type processor and basic operating system. These handy units combine the features of an address book, scheduler with event reminder, short-range comlink, voice-to-text recorder with email, web browser, calculator, still-image camera with simple lens filter, and file transfer and archival management software. All PalmPads possess a single datachip slot and I/O port in the top of the unit for interface capability. Additionally, an internal memory supply of 1.3

kilodynes is reserved for the PalmPad's operating system, programs, and user information storage.

PalmPads typically measure a mere 8 x 12 centimeters with a 5 x 7 cm interactive touch screen. These devices are rugged enough to withstand a drop from about 5 meters onto a hard surface without damage.

COMPUTER, LAPTOP

€ 800 Availability: Common Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: A
Power Drain: 1 EU per day of operation.

Typical laptop computers are available for just under one-thousand credits, house the powerful AI-1 processor and an internal 7.2 kilodyne memory chip with a standard operating system, and sport 4 to 6 external datachip slots. User interface includes standard keyboard, voice-to-text sensor, normal audio, and user-configurable touch pad.

Laptops maintain all of the features of a PalmPad (see above) plus can execute complex software applications.

CREDIT SCANNER

€ n/a Availability: Special Weight: 1+ kg
Energy Clip Type: Varies
Power Drain: average of 1 EU per day of use.

Credit scanners are distributed by banks through merchant account service agreements. Merchants must be able to prove ownership of a valid retail or service business in order to open a merchant account with either a public or private banking institution. These banks will then issue a credit scanner to the merchant or service company as part of their account setup. No fees are imposed for receiving this device, but the unit must be used semi-regularly or service will be withdrawn. Note that the device itself is licensed to the issuing bank by the ZAON Imperium as the entire credit banking network system belongs to the government.

Credit scanners allow buyers to use their IdentiCards to make purchases of up to 5,000 credits by swiping their cards through the device. The scanner then reports this information via the local comnet or a subspace link (if aboard a vessel) to the Imperial Banking Network which updates both parties' accounts instantly. Sometimes, additional information is uploaded to the user's IdentiCard as it is swiped through the unit. These updates are issued by the Imperial Licensing Bureau or by police authorities. Likewise, though the user's account balance and purchases are confidential and held only by the card holder's bank, other information such as the day and time of purchase, as well as the precise location of the deal are deemed public information and transmitted immediately to the Licensing Bureau.

Larger purchases cannot be made using this type of scanner for security reasons, and so require a Credit ATM (see below).

CREDIT ATM

€ n/a Availability: Special Weight: 4+ kg
Energy Clip Type: Varies
Power Drain: average of 2 EUs per day of use.

Credit ATMs are identical to regular credit scanners (above), though are larger fixed models and designed to handle purchases of any amount. For added security, the device requires a fractional DNA print (submitted by placing the thumb, flipper, tentacle, or the like onto a scanning plate) from both parties involved in the transaction. Only certain members of a retail establishment are typically licensed to operate (and submit valid samples to) this machine. If all is well, then both parties' accounts are updated immediately and the sale is complete. Only retailers who can prove a need for a credit ATM will get one. Like the credit scanner, these devices are licensed to the

— QUICKLOOK COSTS —

	€
BASIC GOODS:	
Backpack	.30
Binoculars	.45
Breather Mask, Emergency	.25
Cam	.750
Cam, Holo	.2,400
Camera	.50
Clothing	.Real World Equivalent
Computer, PalmPad	.100
Computer, Laptop	.800
Datachip	.50
Energy Clips	.2–100
EnviroBag	.80
Fire Extinguisher	.15
Flashlight	.10
IdentiCard	.n/a
MealPack, Human	.5
MealPack, Alien	.10
Padlock, SecuraLock	.40
Projector, Video	.400
Projector, Holo	.1,400
Watch	.5–100
COMMUNICATIONS:	
Comlink, Short-Range	.50
Comlink, Long-Range	.300
Transceiver, SubSpace	.2,000
MEDICAL GEAR:	
Medical Scanner	.1,500
MedKit	.25
Pharmaceuticals	.See Description
TraumaPack	.1,000
PROFESSIONAL ITEMS:	
Atmospheric Sensor	.800
Bug Detector	.1,500
Credit Scanner	.n/a
Credit ATM	.n/a
Climbing Gear	.100
Disguise Kit	.900
Forensics Kit	.1,300
Gas Mask	.150
Generator, Portable	.20,000
Hover Cam	.11,000
Jammer	.5,000
JetPack	.4,500
Lamp, Portable	.45
Liquid Rope	.200
MagBoots	.300
Motion Tracker	.5,000
Science Scanner	.3,500
Shelter, Portable	.250
Suit, Enviro	.250
Suit, Flight	.500–4,000
Suit, Vac	.1,000–3,000
TechKit	.300
Torch, Welding/Cutting	.200
Weapon Scanner	.300
Visor	.2,000

issuing bank by the ZAON Imperium as they operate on the Imperium's credit banking network.

Banks and various Imperial agencies also maintain these devices in order for private individuals to conduct large transfers of money to other parties. Transactions can be performed between to people who are not necessarily on the same planet—this requiring that each participant visit a credit ATM (usually at a bank) separately; the transaction being complete once both parties have made their visit and submitted fractional DNA for verification.

Another type of credit ATM is used by law enforcement agencies for purposes of DNA-checked identity verification. Mobile police precincts and some squad vehicles maintain these devices for convenience of identity proof.

DATACHIP, STANDARD

€ 50 Availability: Common Weight: —
Memory Capacity: 7.2 kilodynes

Datachips are the universal standard for information storage media. All chips are rectangular, semi-translucent objects measuring only six centimeters long, by two centimeters wide, and a mere one-half centimeter thick. They weigh only 50 grams.

The chip's surface detail comprises bands of xylinium for matrix stability and is further coated with a polymer sealant to allow a certain amount of rough handling and abuse.

The standard datachip houses superconductive trilinear crystal layering capable of sub-molecular switching. The matrix is then accessed optically via a triangulated quantum focusing beam controlled by an onboard nanoprocessor. This processor catalogs and optimizes stored data, resulting in a standard 7.2 kilodynes of data storage (7,200 dynes of data). Enhanced superconductivity permits extremely fast chip access, with transfer rates approaching 50 dynes per nanosecond. This allows the entire 7.2 kilodynes of stored data to be transferred in as little as 0.144 microseconds (about one-tenth of one millionth of a second).

Datachips have write-protect keys and encryption keys built-in to their nanoprocessors. These keys require a simple code to activate—entered using the OS software of the main computer or device the chip is inserted in. This type of protection is fairly reliable being that it is managed by the hardware, but not particularly reliable if disassembled and/or placed in a hackscanner (Encryption Level of 10), but does keep the bulk of prying eyes out. Highly sensitive data should be encrypted separately using high-level encryption prior to being written to the datachip.

Data loss or degradation is virtually non-existent except in flawed chips (about 1 in every 50,000). The chip's protective xylinium bands inhibit nearly all outside interference and radiation, including direct overload from electroplasma and severe EMP bursts. The chips can be damaged or destroyed, however, via physical abuse (hammering) as well as by high temperatures over 250 degrees (nearly 500F). The chips are unaffected by sub-freezing temperatures.

Finally, most prerecorded commercial chips used to distribute purchased software are permanently stored on read-only datachips. These chips are identical to read/write chips, except that they cannot be erased or written to—though they can be damaged just the same as regular chips.

Today, memory and storage media are the same. That is, data storage devices have become so efficient and fast that they also serve as the processor's memory. Memory is important for two reasons. First, it allows information to be temporarily or permanently stored for later access. Second, software programs are generally quite large and so require memory (expressed in kilodynes) just to keep the program loaded and available for use.

Memory capacity is measured in dynes or kilodynes, and follows the progression outlined below:

1000 dynes of data = 1 kilodyne
1000 kilodynes = 1 megadyne (1 million dynes)
1000 megadynes = 1 gigadyne (1 billion dynes)
1000 gigadynes = 1 teradyne (1 trillion [1012] dynes)

The standard data storage medium for server and mainframe memory is the modular databank—a notebook-sized hot-swappable unit housing 12.2 megadynes of information.

DATACHIP, BASIC

€ 20 Availability: Common Weight: —
Memory Capacity: 1.3 kilodynes

Low-capacity datachips are identical to standard datachips (see below) and are sold by most retailers who offer the standard chips. Dubbed the 'Consumer Chip', these low-end devices are designed inexpensively for many of the consumer electronics devices and systems where little data storage is needed. Low-capacity chips are available for about 20 and have capacities of only 1.3 kilodynes. They are otherwise identical to standard chips and can be used in any datachip slot.

DATACHIP, HIGH-CAPACITY

€ 900 Availability: Uncommon Weight: —
Memory Capacity: 48.7 kilodynes

High-capacity datachips are identical to standard datachips (see above), except house more data. These chips are reliable and use compressed layering to achieve storage capacities of 48.7 kilodynes—a substantial increase over standard chips. High-capacity chips are entirely compatible with all datachip slots, but are no faster than standard ones (about 0.944 microseconds for a full download).

DISGUISE KIT

€ 900 Availability: Rare Weight: 4 kg

This kit is a necessary constituent of the disguise skill. It includes a variety of special makeup, hair pieces, contact lenses, materials for altering teeth shape, and the like. The kit is semi-portable, in the shape of a small suitcase.

ENERGY CLIPS

€ see below Availability: Very Common Weight: Varies

Energy clips are the universal standard for batteries. They are not rechargeable, but may be recycled. There are 7 sizes of energy clips, and these sizes are named using terminology you're already familiar with (today's battery sizes). The physical sizes are, however, a little more diverse.

All energy clips, abbreviated 'EClips', store a non-neutral plasma energy (electroplasma; in laymen's terms a sort of raw, cooled electricity in the form of liquid crystal). This energy is perfectly confined by a superconducting magnet and measured in Energy Units (abbreviated EU). Ninety-nine percent of all modern devices are powered using this type of energy. EClips are stable and so don't lose power when stored over time.

EClip	*Capacity*	*Size*	*Wt.*	*Cost*
AAA	1 EU	1 x 3 x 1 mm	—	€ 10
AA	10 EUs	2 x 1 x 0.5 cm	—	€ 2
A	50 EUs	8 x 3 x 1 cm	—	€ 5
B	200 EUs	10 x 4 x 2 cm	¼ kg	€ 20
C	500 EUs	15 x 10 x 6 cm	1 kg	€ 50
D	700 EUs	20 x 15 x 10 cm	3 kg	€ 70
E	1000 EUs	30 x 20 x 10 cm	5 kg	€ 100

EClips cannot be recharged but are stable and safe even when fully charged. Empty clips are non-toxic.

Energy cells (ECells) are rechargeable, and all ECells conform to the same dimensions and capacities of an E-type EClip except cost 200 credits each due to their built-in recharging components. ECells are not available in other sizes except for very large proprietary sizes used aboard starships for battery power. Most SkyCars and other small to medium vehicles mount a series of ECells in a bank.

ENVIROBAG

€ 80 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 3 kg

EnviroBags are lightweight sleeping bags used for camping. They make use of advanced polymers and fiber that properly insulate—keeping bodies warm in cold weather, but not overly so when temperatures rise. The materials are flame retardant.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

€ 15 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 2-4 kg

Compressed inert gasses and powder quickly extinguish most fires. These units are rechargeable for about 10 to 15 credits. Smaller units for the same cost weigh only half as much (about 2 kg).

FLASHLIGHT

€ 10 Availability: Common Weight: 1 kg

Energy Clip Type: A or AA

Power Drain: 1 EU every ten hours.

Modern flashlights are palm-sized units with large reflectors and arc bulbs. Some can activate a red filter for roadside assistance.

FORENSICS KIT

€ 1,300 Availability: Rare Weight: 5 kg

A forensics kit is a necessary component for proper use of the forensics skill. It contains many sampling materials, sprays, and a small computer device for calculating and interpolating crime scene data. This device is housed in a portable case.

GAS MASK

€ 150 Availability: Rare Weight: 2 kg

Energy Clip Type: AA

Power Drain: 1 EU per day of operation.

Gas masks fit over the user's face and strap to the head. A small computer and crude atmospheric sensor test the air for screening. If the environment can be screened to allow safe breathing, then a mechanical filter does just that. Additionally, a one hour air supply is also included (rechargeable) that is automatically used when unscreenable agents are detected by the computer—thereby sealing the outer air intake vent. The built-in analyzer is a basic one, so the user is able to manually switch to the internal air supply should a suspicious atmosphere or biological hazard be present.

GENERATOR, PORTABLE

€ 20,000 Availability: Rare Weight: 50 kg

Portable Generators are quite expensive because they are powered by a self-contained aneutronic fusion reactor. The device is roughly square-shaped with hexagonal sides and is also quite heavy at 50 kilograms. The unit measures one meter in diameter and one-half meter tall. Normally these units are moved about by an anti-grav lifter (included), but handles on each side of the unit can also be used.

The reactor core is ignited by the manufacturer and then remains in operation throughout the unit's lifespan. A maximum of 250 energy units can be drawn from the reactor each day, and the device sports six standard power feed jacks about it's top for easy access. As the core temperature is automatically adjusted according to the drain placed on the unit, the life of the generator can vary from between 2 to 5 years depending on use.

Generators are completely sealed and so cannot be further adjusted for other applications. Furthermore, safety measures cause immediate core shutdown if the unit is severely damaged or the safety seal broken. Part of the emergency shutdown results in the melting of all core components as a heat-absorption measure. Finally, aneutronic fusion reactions emit no radiation and are very safe.

HOVER CAM

€ 11,000 Availability: Rare Weight: 3 kg

Energy Clip Type: B

Power Drain: 5 EU per day of operation.

Hover cams are generally employed only be reporters and other news and media personnel, though many police departments also use them as a crime recorder. They are quite expensive but have many features and capabilities included in the standard model.

In addition to all of the features of standard cams (see Basic Goods in this chapter), hover cams maintain AI computer systems and a fully-functional anti-grav sled for self-guided mobility. Also included is a user headset with a flip-down eyepiece that displays whatever is being viewed or recorded by the hover cam. The data stream bandwidth permits images to be recorded by either the headgear's datachip slot or the hover cam itself, or both.

Hover cams are 'flown' by a virtual-reality glove, but can be set to track or follow a specific target once that target is focused on by the cam and a control on the glove is activated.

Hover cams require a special permit to own or use (cost is 2,000), and are further limited to a maximum fly distance of 500 meters from the user for privacy reasons. This distance cannot be extended as the cam's transceiver which sends the data stream to the headgear and VR glove is limited by the antenna components.

IDENTICARD

€ n/a

Availability: Issued by ZAON Imperium to every citizen and as a travel visa to visitors.

Energy Clip Type: Special built-in power supply.

IdentiCards are issued by the Imperium to every citizen of the Imperium. They are available at any Imperial Licensing office to those who can prove citizenship and whose fractional DNA print isn't already on file. Non-citizens can be issued these cards, too.

IdentiCards are best described as combination visa/passports and a galactic currency card. The creditcard-sized device displays two information windows. The first is a three-dimensional photo of the owner while the second displays information in readable text form.

The photo window has several touch controls at the bottom that allow a user to view the identified individual from any angle. Further, additional controls permit users to view older pictures in chronological order to demonstrate aging. An updated three-dimensional image is added every time the owner is required to report to a Licensing bureau. This photo is used to match the holder to the card. Should any ambiguity exist (or should the holder be a high-profile suspect) then police officials will usually extract a DNA sample for added verification. Many police officials have DNA scanners in their mobile precinct vehicles, and others may escort persons to a mobile precinct or licensing center.

The text window requires a bio code (bio-electrical signature read via a thumb or finger) to access but can reveal the owner's financial records, vital statistics, criminal record (if any), and logged whereabouts. Other non-viewable information includes a fractional DNA print of the owner (key genomes only). In fact, sometimes members

of the same family or family line can be confused for other family members by officials at police precincts until a full forensics or medical analysis is completed.

Most importantly, IdentiCards are generally the only manner in which a person can make purchases or pay monies to others. The bulk of the 'Chapter 23: *Overview*' describes how to use these cards as currency and for banking.

All information on an IdentiCard is encrypted at an Encryption Level of 16, making it extremely difficult to tamper with. Moreover, the card's contents are routinely updated and checked at various Imperial checkpoints and whenever the holder makes a purchase or transfers monies. For these reasons, counterfeit cards are limited to serving only as physical identification (such as when reviewed by a law-enforcement official outside of the bureau or mobile precinct).

IdentiCards cannot be read or updated remotely. They must be physically handled to view and inserted into any merchant or bureau credit scanner to update. Indeed, simply buying a candy bar links your whereabouts and transactions to the Imperium through the Imperial credit banking network.

Owners are required to visit the Bureau of Imperial Licensing at least once every ten standard years. Card holders are reminded at the eighth and ninth years, and then again repeatedly as the deadline grows nearer. Missing the deadline by so much as one day results in the automatic issuance of an arrest warrant. Hefty fines (and often imprisonment) are imposed on those arrested. Visiting the bureau allows for the user's picture to be updated, along with a routine DNA check. Because of the severity of this law, many citizens routinely visit the bureau every 7 to 8 years—especially business, merchant, and field science persons who may embark on long expeditions. In certain instances, though, researchers and other persons showing proper need can apply for an extended absence permit which suspends the need to visit the bureau until the end of a long voyage or expedition.

It remains highly illegal to carry or possess someone else's IdentiCard. All card holders know that any card found should be reported Lost/Stolen. This is done by pressing a series of touch buttons on the card—this causes the card to flash Lost/Stolen in the text window. Second, the finder should then deliver the card to any authority. Activating the Lost/Stolen code protects the carrier from being charged with illegal IdentiCard possession (a serious felony resulting in imprisonment). Once a card has had the Lost/Stolen code activated it cannot be used for anything and can only be reset by certain authorized Imperial police and officials.

Finally, anyone without an IdentiCard (or who refuses to submit one) who is stopped by authorities is politely 'escorted' to the nearest Imperial Licensing center so that they can either be issued a new or replacement card—depending if their partial DNA print is on file or not. Repeated loss (more than three) results in a €100 fine that is assessed each time thereafter.

JAMMER

€ 5,000 Availability: Restricted Uncommon Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: B
Power Drain: 1 EU per minute (60 turns) of operation.

Jammers are hand-held devices that emit a variety of signals and electromagnetic radiation in powerful bursts. These bursts interfere with or scramble other signal waves. Jammers have a limited range in which they are affective due to signal strength loss, but transmissions within their range are effectively blocked.

Jammers block all comlink signals, sensor scans, radar, and the like within a 30 meter radius of the unit. They do not affect subspace communications.

JETPACK

€ 4,500 Availability: Rare Weight: 20 kg

Worn almost like a backpack, the jetpack enables the wearer to fly around in any direction up to Speed 30 (30 meters per second). A maximum of 185 kg (400 lbs) can be safely supported by the device, and internal fuel supplies permit up to 30 minutes of flight. The fuel supply is rechargeable.

Normal flight is considered a compound action in terms of initiative, while evasive flight permits no other actions. Evasive flight does, however, bestow an effective Evasion score of 6 (not combinable with the wearer's inherent Evasion).

LAMP, PORTABLE

€ 45 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 5 kg
Energy Clip Type: B
Power Drain: 1 EU per 2 hours of operation.

These flood lamps come standard with a tripod base and are commonly used to light campsites, construction areas, and the like. They produce a great deal of light, clearly illuminating a minimum 30-meter diameter area with the equivalent of broad daylight.

LIQUID ROPE

€ 200 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 1 kg

Conveniently housed in small metal canisters about the size of a twentieth-century bottle of hairspray, these dispensers sport a trigger handle that releases about 1 meter of polynychlorinide rope per second to a maximum of 100 meters per bottle. The liquid formula hardens immediately into a pliable material with the strength of a steal cable when forced through the patented aeration spout. Since the bottle's contents are under only minor pressure and must be passed through the spout to properly react with atmospheric gases, rupturing a bottle results in a puddle of mildly flaky goo.

MAGBOOTS

€ 300 Availability: Rare Weight: 4 kg
Energy Clip Type: A
Power Drain: 1 EU for every 10 minutes of use.

MagBoots are specialized footwear outfitted with powerful electromagnets in the soles. These electromagnets are extraordinarily efficient and can support weights up to 200 kg (440 lbs) without accidental release. Sensors in the toes and heels of the boot register step movement and automatically release and secure the magnets. Walking in this manner is limited to Speed 3. Obviously, the boots are only effective when used to walk upon metal surfaces. Some models can be adjusted to accommodate up to three times the normal weight allowance, though at nearly five times the power drain.

MEALPACK

€ 5, alien €10 Availability: Very Common Weight: ½ kg

MealPacks were originally designed for hikers and campers, but have since become mainstream because of their convenience, taste, and nutrition. These packs have two pouches; one contains a fruity replenishing sports drink while the second has a nutrition bar complete with fibre, vitamins, essential protein amino acids, complex carbohydrates, and fatty acids. The drink and bar come in a variety of very delicious flavors, but each pack always supplies complete nutrition good for about one-third of a full day's caloric needs. Balanced nutrition packs suitable for most alien species are also available for double the normal cost.

MEDICAL SCANNER

€ 1,500 Availability: Uncommon Weight: ½ kg

Energy Clip Type: A

Power Drain: 1 EU per full scan and analysis.

Medical scanners are palm-sized devices roughly 18 x 10 centimeters and only a centimeter thick. These devices must be held over and within one meter of the scan subject in order to function. A medical scanner then returns all of the patient's vitals and scans for foreign substances infecting the subject. Complete medical databases aid in diagnosis and can even compute a prognosis. The basic functions of this unit can be determined only by a character skilled in Medicine. An advanced or expert rating is needed to access, use, and decipher all of the unit's capabilities.

Note that this device is required and assumed present when treating any Severely or Critically Wounded patient. Any medical professional attempting to treat a Severely or Critically Wounded patient without the aid of this device does so at a +3 Step Penalty.

MEDKIT

€ 25 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 1 kg

With a cost nearly double that of a basic first aid kit, a medkit contains much more than bandages, antibiotics, and antiseptics. A hypospray along with other professional supplies permits proper treatment of severe flesh wounds and minor internal injuries. Should the buyer possess a medical license, then these medkits also come standard with 2 doses of a sedative, stimulant, and pain blocker pharmaceuticals (see below). Aside from the drugs, this kit is good for two applications.

Note that this item is required and assumed present when treating any wounded patient. Any medical professional attempting to treat a wounded patient without the aid of a MedKit does so at a +2 Step Penalty.

MOTION TRACKER

€ 5,000 Availability: Rare Weight: 2 kg

Energy Clip Type: A

Power Drain: 1 EU for every 10 minutes of operation.

Motion Trackers are typically employed by military personnel and government agents, though the equipment itself is not restricted. These devices enable the user to detect any movement, including its speed, heading, and proximity.

The unit is hand-held and measures about 25 centimeters long. Essentially housed in a wand-type configuration, the grip supports a larger flat-panel display window.

The motion sensor's scans pass through walls and most other matter (even metal), though energy screens and specially-shielded alloys can block the scan. The unit has a 30-meter radius range and displays any moving object as a 'blip'. These blips move about on the display screen in relation to their actual, relative positions to the user. Any movement greater than one centimeter per second registers on the unit—this includes normal breathing for most species.

Walls and other objects do not appear on the screen, so a blip next to the center of the screen might represent movement immediately on the other side of a door or wall just as easily as someone else standing right behind the user. Force fields, however, display as a solid line or curve (depending on the force field configuration). Though movement inside the field doesn't appear on the scope, the force field can be tracked if the field itself is somehow mobile and moving.

PADLOCK, SECURALOCK

€ 50 Availability: Common Weight: 1 kg

These heavy-duty padlocks use a limited fractional DNA surface scan to verify access prior to unlocking. A heavy lock bar comprising a steel/laranium alloy laminated with duomar makes this centimeter-thick link very difficult to cut or blast open. The DNA scan is not very reliable, though, as some owners have reported family members and other relatives as being able to open the lock—their DNA being mistaken for the owner's. The lock is mechanical except for the mini scanner which has a built-in power source good for at least a century.

PHARMACEUTICALS

€ See below

Availability: Uncommon, most require medical license.

Many different pharmaceuticals are available to medical professionals (doctors with the license provision encoded on their IdentiCard). Certain basic drugs such as light sedatives, stimulants, and mild pain blockers are available over-the-counter. Other drugs, such as antibiotics, steroids, strong anti-inflammatories, potent pain blockers and sedatives, and countless others can greatly assist sick or injured patients, and may even be required during treatment or surgery.

Assume pharmaceutical costs to range from 1 to 5 credits per dose and as much as 100 per dose for unusual or specialty pharmaceuticals.

A few drugs sometimes used in play are described below. Note that drugs are usually specific to a species, and so cannot be used on other species. When used on a non-approved species, the effects are usually ignored (8-in-10 chance) or are doubly potent (2-in-10 chance); roll randomly.

Sedatives can be administered orally or by hypo, but cannot be administered through armor. One dose of this powerful drug requires the subject to succeed at an Average Strength or Willpower (whichever is higher) Check or be rendered unconscious for 1d6 hours. If additional doses are administered (regardless of whether the subject was rendered unconscious or not), then a +1 Step Penalty is applied to the stat check for each extra dose. WARNING: too much sedative can result in the accidental death of the subject. If the subject fails both the Penalty Die and the stat check roll, then the victim dies. Therefore, as extra doses of sedative are administered, the subject stands a greater chance of being reduced to unconsciousness by failing either the penalty die or stat Action Check. But, the chance of failing both rolls also increases, which is when death results.

Stimulants are typically administered via a hypo and remove Step Penalties imposed for lack of sleep. This bonus lasts for 2d6 hours. Double doses do not grant further benefits and can even be harmful.

Up to 5 doses of this drug can be safely administered within a one year time span. If a stimulant is then again administered to the same patient within a one-year period of the last dose, then there begins a cumulative 1-in-10 chance of addiction.

Pain Blockers can be used to lesson the effects of injury on character performance by masking pain. This shifts the Step Penalties applied back one threshold. For example, a Moderately Wounded character would suffer no Step Penalties instead of the usual +1. A Severely Wounded patient would suffer a +1 Step Penalty instead of the usual +3.

This drug can be safely administered up to three times in a one-year period. Additional uses within a one-year time frame of the last use result in a cumulative 1-in-10 chance of addiction.

PROJECTOR, VIDEO

€ 400 Availability: Common Weight: ½ kg

Energy Clip Type: AA

Power Drain: 1 EU every 2 hours of operation.

This palm-sized device measures 8 x 12 centimeters and is only 1 cm thick. A 7 x 4 cm viewing window is located on the front of the device for cuing prior to projector activation. The projector's lens

(located on the top end) is only a few millimeters in diameter but is capable of displaying an image of up to 2 meters wide by 1 meter tall on a screen or wall. The image has rich color depth and is displayed in very high resolution. Powerful mini speakers also project 3D sound if part of the playback signal, though bass reproduction is nearly non-existent.

A mini I/O jack allows the device to receive a live video picture from any computer or playback device. Additionally, the unit has a standard datachip slot so that it can playback previously-recorded material. Most video projectors can be directly attached to the bottom of many cams.

PROJECTOR, HOLO

€ 1,400 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 12 kg
Energy Clip Type: C
Power Drain: 1 EU per minute.

Holo projectors are actually a series of three display devices placed up to four meters apart in order to display a maximum image size of three cubic meters. The three projectors are linked by a center device which keeps the projectors at precise 120-degree angles and also processes the information. The center node contains standard and mini I/O jacks for a direct feed, and also has three datachip slots.

Though the device is rather large and heavy, the displayed image can be very high in resolution and is quite realistic (as a still). Lower-res, obviously holographic, full-motion images can also be displayed or played back. This kind of full-motion imagery can only be captured by specialized holoscanners and not by portable holocams.

SCIENCE SCANNER

€ 3,500 Availability: Rare Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: A
Power Drain: 1 EU per full scan and analysis.

Science scanners are palm-sized devices roughly 16 x 9 centimeters and only a centimeter thick. With a range of about three meters, the operator of this device must get relatively close to the scan subject in order to gather any data.

The main benefit of this device is that it can increase Action Check rolls for certain scientific skills. As a general rule, scanner will aid a character using Bot Technology/Repair, Botany, Chemistry, Electronics, Forensics, Mechanics, Physics, any Specialized Science, Weapons Technology, Xenobiology, and Alien Technology. Note that the bonus only applies to analytical and repair attempts using those skills, and not research, ingenuity, or design uses. The scanner makes the Action Difficulty one category better (easier). An advanced skill rating in the skill being used is needed to access, use, and decipher all of the unit's capabilities, and thus benefit from this device.

SHELTER, PORTABLE

€ 250 Availability: Rare Weight: 4 kg

More or less a glorified tent, this item neatly folds down to the size of a bedroll and weighs just a few kilograms. Once unfolded, the tent uses a single 'draw-string' to erect and secure the shelter. Advanced thermal materials help to significantly insulate the interior, which can accommodate up to 4 human-sized figures. Collapsing the shelter is not as easy.

SUIT, ENVIRO

€ 250 Availability: Rare Weight: 6 kg total

Envirosuits include a fully powered gas mask (see above) plus a body suit designed to seal with the mask. The suit offers amazing protection against fire and cold environments, while the mask portion protects against harmful airborne particles and agents while allowing breathable air in (if present, otherwise a self-contained air supply is included with the mask as so indicated). Because of the bulk and restrictive nature of the envirosuit, a +1 Step Penalty is applied to all actions (requiring physical movement or manipulation) attempted while wearing one. The Pressure Suit Ops skill can partially or wholly alleviate this penalty.

Note that most envirosuits suitable for aliens cost at least two to three times the normal cost, and may not be available for all species.

SUIT, FLIGHT

€ 500–4,000 Availability: Uncommon to Rare Weight: 5-8 kg

Unlike small ship pilots, starfighter pilots usually wear special flightsuits designed to provide a self-contained atmosphere in case of cockpit breach, to protect against stress, and to enhance pilot-to-ship communication. Flightsuits are unpowered because they jack into the starfighter's systems—leads for computer, atmosphere, and power (the latter for inertial stress management) exist as jacks along the chest, waist, or side of the suit.

Normal quality suits provide these functions and cost about 1,000 credits. High-quality flightsuits run about 4,000 credits but include additional features such as a 12-hour emergency atmosphere supply in case the pilot is separated from the fighter or the ship's atmospherics are damaged, enhanced computer interface, better inertial stress management, and so on. The precise benefits of these suits are described in the Zaon supplement covering starship combat.

Note that most alien flightsuits cost two to three times the normal cost and they are not made for every species known.

SUIT, VAC

€ 1,000–3,000 Availability: Rare Weight: 10 kg
Energy Clip Type: C
Power Drain: 10 EUs per hour of operation.

Spacesuits come in many shapes, sizes, and styles. Suits designed for aliens do exist, but usually cost two to three times the normal purchase price and may also be much harder to find depending on species prevalence in the purchase area.

Spacesuits maintain fully self-contained environments for use in the cold vacuum of space. Their heaters and atmosphere units are capable of sustaining a human-sized individual for up to 50 hours. Though a power clip change after 50 hours will continue to regulate temperature, the air supply will still run out. Wearing a spacesuit, of course, imposes a +1 Step Penalty on all actions due to bulk and restraints. The Pressure Suit Ops skill can partially or wholly alleviate this penalty.

Note that spacesuits do not contain thruster packs for propulsion, though a 'jetpack' can be affixed to one (see above).

TECHKIT

€ 300 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 3 kg

TechKits are a necessary component for many professionals, including craft maintenance techs, bot tech/repair personnel, general techs, and computer techs, just to name a few. These kits include a variety of diagnostic tools as well as actual implements that allow the work to be completed. Note that the included diagnostic computer is a basic one only and cannot be adapted to other uses.

Attempting most technical skills without this kit incurs a +2 Step Penalty to the dice rolls.

TORCH, WELDING/CUTTING

€ 200 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 4 kg
Energy Clip Type: C
Power Drain: 1 EU per turn (1 second).

These mini plasma torches use an electrical arc to cut through materials or weld others together. The unit's arc must be held and maneuvered slowly along a line, and so cannot be used to inflict damage in combat. Against inanimate objects, the unit can inflict 5 points of superstructure damage per turn of use. Against armor, the unit will cut through 4 points of the armor's EDR rating per turn until superstructure is reached. The device is ineffective versus EDR ratings over 14.

For example, a pair of handcuffs has 4 superstructure and an EDR rating of 5. On the first turn, the cuff's armor rating would be reduced to 1, but only for purposes of this device. On the second turn, the armor would be penetrated and the cuffs would be left with 1 superstructure. Finally, on the third turn the cuffs would be severed. Note that this would render the cuffs useless, of course, but torch use on other larger items may still leave those items functional despite the breach/cut in the item. Common sense must apply, of course.

A security or shipboard door has an EDR of 12 and lots of superstructure—taking 11 turns to breach. A cell door, airlock, and other heavy doors would thus be immune to this weapon. Larger, industrial torches, however, may be able to cut through EDR ratings higher than this.

TRANSCEIVER, SUBSPACE

€ 2,000 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 10 kg
Energy Clip Type: C
Power Drain: 1 EU per minute of use.

Most subspace transceivers are relatively large, measuring about one-half meter by 30 centimeters by 10 cm. The 2,000 credit price reflects the cost of hardware and the quantum link, though monthly service costs must be paid as well. Typically, these costs are paid quarterly or annually and run about 200 credits per month, or reduced to 2,000 a year. If the service contract isn't paid, then service will be discontinued until payment is made in full.

Subspace transceivers transmit voice, picture, and/or data in real-time (up to 1 megadyne per second) between the unit and any other point in the galaxy where another such unit or local calling comnet exists. To accomplish this, the device uses quantum non-locality by housing quantum correlated particles where the associated particles reside with any one of the major subspace carrier companies. The company then decodes the signal header and routes the signal to another particle which in turn is received by the desired subspace or planetside recipient. If the other party uses another carrier company, then the data is first routed via subspace to that company. If the recipient is on a local comnet (city or planetside calling network), then the signal is routed to that net for local calling. Actual data is transmitted by manipulating the particle which, of course, causes identical and simultaneous manipulations in the correlated particle regardless of distance. See Chapter 7 of this game for more information on quantum non-locality.

Subspace communications can be blocked by a quantum disruption (intentional or otherwise) occurring in the vicinity of any subspace transceiver. Data encryption is not necessary as subspace transmissions cannot be monitored or intercepted unless by an unscrupulous subspace carrier company. Should this be a concern, then data can be user encrypted but the final recipient must have means for decoding the signal as well. Note that most of the subspace carriers are private companies that maintain strict privacy policies and will not divulge information even to Imperial officials. Also note, however, that calls to local comnets leave the subspace carrier's domain once they are passed to those nets—most of which are government owned and operated free of charge to the public (high-volume business use often incurs an expense).

Finally, placing a 'call' to a subspace unit obviously does not require knowledge as to the whereabouts of the recipient, nor does such a call cost any credits to make. Since the local comnets are free and the owner of the subspace unit must pay for service, others may place these calls to subscribers free of charge. Similarly, there are no additional fees for each call or lengthy calls made by the owner of the subspace unit, as each unit has a dedicated quantum link.

TRAUMAPACK

€ 1,000 Availability: Uncommon Weight: 2 kg

TraumaPacks are a relatively new item now available that can further restore lost Life points immediately. These packs utilize experimental medical technologies including SpraySkin, a Quantum Stitcher, artificial tissue types, and a sub-dermal Cellular Regrowth Stimulator. Most of these technologies were reportedly developed by NivTech Corporation.

Each TraumaPack is good for only one application, regardless of whether its use was successful or not.

The purpose of this pack is not to stabilize or promote healing (see MedKit, above), but rather to immediately repair damage to a certain degree. Use of this pack requires a Medicine skill rating of at least 5.

Only following regular surgery, qualified medical doctors may use special high-technology TraumaPacks to further upgrade healing patients another Wound Threshold. There are a couple of rules, though:

1) TraumaPacks require a Medicine skill rating of 5 (expert) to use and cannot be applied successfully by individuals with a lower skill rating.

2) TraumaPacks can only be used after a successful Surgery attempt. This is because the patient needs to be properly stabilized and on the road to healing before the pack's regrowth stimulators can be implemented correctly.

3) TraumaPacks are expensive and are used up whether or not they are successfully employed. Luckily, failure to use one correctly can't further injure a patient.

Because of the temporary artificial tissues (which are later overgrown naturally by the patient's own tissues) and other tools employed in this pack, no patient can benefit more than once from another TraumaPack until a number of days equal to the amount of damage present at the time of treatment has passed.

WEAPON SCANNER

€ 300 Availability: Uncommon Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: 1 EU per 10 full scans.

This small palm-sized device measures only 8 by 4 centimeters and only 1 thick. The device has a range of about half a meter and must be waved around the subject individual or area. The device uses a light and/or tone to alert the user to the presence of any of the following: any lasers using a diode or a crystal or gas articulation chamber (this includes blaster weapons which have internal lasers as part of their design); all capacitor coils found in plasma weapons; significant blocks of metal (metal handguns, knives, and other devices); any gunpowder; and nearly all explosives (including grenades).

These devices are commonly employed by law enforcement officials and the military. Commercial uses also exist for liners at starports, but any modern port also employs walk-through scanners that render a three-dimensional x-ray-like image in addition to an enhanced scanning matrix.

VISOR

€ 2,000 Availability: Rare Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: A
Power Drain: 1 EU per hour of operation.

A visor is a cross between headgear and a pair of glasses. First, the visor's view can zoom in or out (up to 300x) and will provide a good picture in as little as 1 lux. Second, in the absence of light, this device can rely on both passive or active infrared. Third, in dark environments where there is little or no background infrared radiation and where emissions of active infrared are not desirable, this device can also emit short-range high-band radar in order to establish a 2D perspective picture of objects (the radar is invisible to other optic cams and devices, though sensor equipment will detect it normally if able to tune to short-wave electromagnetic radiation wavelengths). Fourth, when desired, the unit may also switch to a thermographic view which distinguishes objects by differences in heat (temperature). Thermographs don't really provide a three-dimensional (depth perceptive) field of view, but this can be extrapolated by moving in the presence of similar-sized objects carrying variances in heat. Note that the active infrared and thermograph carry a maximum range of 100 meters.

WATCH

€ 5+ Availability: Common Weight: —

Available in countless designs, colors, and qualities, this device acts to tell time in either mechanical or digital fashion. Mechanical devices are periodically wound, while digital ones are powered by the body's own bioelectric field. Some digital devices also act as an address book, calculator, and voice recorder. Most devices can be purchased for as little as 10 credits, but prestigious items can cost 100, 1000, or more credits, depending on the design, manufacturer, and materials.

General Services

Certainly, there are countless services available on every major world, so this book couldn't hope to list them all. At best, some of the more common are described below. For services not on the list, assume a cost that is roughly equivalent to a similar service from today's world (the late twentieth or early twenty-first century) while using the others listed here as a guide.

Players and gamemasters must rely on common sense for which services are available where and to what degree. Obviously, a luxurious hotel suite isn't likely to exist around a backwater mining colony, though it might be possible if the colony was important and had frequently visiting dignitaries.

ACCOMMODATIONS, APARTMENT

Cost: € 800/mo Economy, 25sq meters
Cost: € 1,500/mo Typical, 80sq meters
Cost: € 5,000+/mo Luxurious, 200sq meters+

ACCOMMODATIONS, CONDOMINIUM

Cost: € 250,000/own, 60 to 100sq meters
Accommodations, Condo, Luxurious
Cost: € 1,000,000+/own, 500sq meters

ACCOMMODATIONS, HOTEL

Cost: € 50/day, Economy, 10sq meters
Cost: € 200/day, Typical, 30sq meters
Cost: € 1,000+/day, Luxurious, 200sq meters

ACCOMMODATIONS, OFFICES

Cost: € 60/sq m/mo, Economy
Cost: € 150/sq m/mo, Typical
Cost: € 400/sq m/mo, Prestigious

ACCOMMODATIONS, WAREHOUSE

Cost: € 10/sq m/mo, Economy, Poor Security
Cost: € 25/sq m/mo, Typical, Avg Security
Cost: € 50/sq m/mo, Secure

DINING

Cost: € 3, Basic Meal
Cost: € 7, Moderate Meal (Typical)
Cost: € 40, Extravagant Meal

LABOR

Cost: € 300+/day, Attorney
Cost: € 3,500/mo, Crewman
Cost: € 11,000/mo, Engineer/Designer
Cost: € 250+/day, Private Investigator
Cost: € 10,000+/mo, Scientist
Cost: € 3,500/mo, Security/Bodyguard—Amateur
Cost: € 10,000+/mo, Security/Bodyguard—Pro
Cost: € 2,000/mo, Worker
Cost: € 4,000+/mo, Worker—Space or Hazardous

Medical Services

EXAMS/OPERATIONS

Cost: Special

So long as the patient is an Imperial citizen, all medical care—regardless of the type—is covered at no charge to the patient. Optional surgeries are usually refused and so some individuals will work the underground for unnecessary or vanity-type operations. Non-citizens are often turned-away and forced to seek other options (of which there are few), though some are accepted if they are of well-known species and citizens of governments that also offer public healthcare. In these cases, the ZAON Imperium 'bills' those governments for any services rendered.

Modern medical science is quite advanced. In addition to a plethora of pharmaceuticals and outpatient techniques, entire limbs or bodily organs can be entirely replaced with relative ease. Replacement of organs is performed through 'organ farming' which refers to the growing of replacement organs from the patient's own DNA samples. The growth can take several weeks, and so patients are sometimes artificially sustained prior to transplantation. In effect, every organ in the body can be replaced with the exception of the brain. Neurological repairs can be made on up to the actual reconnection of a partially-paralyzed victim's spinal cord, but actual reconstruction or replacement is impossible.

Plastic surgery is never covered by public facilities and usually begins with prices starting around 100,000 credits for basic adjustments. Sophisticated surgery of this nature can effectively raise the Allure stat up to 1.5 points (up to 0.5 less than the racial maximum). Assume that each point of Allure so raised costs 100,000 credits and that once Allure reaches 7 or so, costs increase by a factor of 10! (1 million per point).

Security

IMPERIAL ESCORT, POLICE

Cost: € 300/day/officer

Hiring Imperial troops or guards (not marines) requires an inordinate amount of bureaucracy. Also, petitioners must provide a satisfactory reason for their need of such protection in addition to paying the daily fees. Obviously, the recipient of such escorts must be involved in strictly legal matters—after all, they check.

If provided, these 'hired' police will obey general commands with regard to security but must be treated with some degree of respect. Employers that harass or belittle such officers can expect to have their contract canceled without reimbursement of paid fees. Should trouble brew from outside sources (such as an assassination attempt on the employer), these officers will summon backup and take appropriate action.

IMPERIAL ESCORT, VEHICULAR

Cost: € 2,000/day/vehicle

Same as above, but the fees are paid in addition to the individual officers' fees (all paid to the state). These vehicles are the standard 4-person squad fliers.

IMPERIAL ESCORT, STARSHIP

Cost: Special

Sometimes companies will employ the use of an Imperial starfighter escort when moving unarmed or lightly armed freighters through dangerous areas (or when the cargo is exceedingly valuable). When this cargo is moved between star systems, ships up to the size of Imperial Customs Frigates can be employed—though the costs can be extraordinary.

Expect to pay about 25,000 credits per day per starfighter. Fees for actual starships are arranged on an individual basis and are many times greater.

Transportation

LINER, ECONOMY

Cost: € 400/avg trip

Economy seats on interstellar liners are small and uncomfortable. Basic, rather crude meals are provided, as are provisions for one carry-on and up to four other (stowed) pieces of luggage. Expect bad service and rowdy passengers.

No sleeping accommodations are provided and passengers are not allowed to leave the economy seating area expect for restroom/shower brakes (where long lines often form). Because of this, security is present in case travelers get stir crazy.

The cost outlined is for a typical trip lasting from a couple days on up to a week. Very short warp trips can sometimes run as little as 200 credits, while longer ones can run 500 to a thousand.

LINER, COACH

Cost: € 1,000/avg trip

Coach 'seats' on interstellar liners are actually compact cabins. These cabins are generally only 2 x 3 meters in size, offer compact combination shower/toilets, and beds that can be folded back into the wall to reveal two sitting chairs and a small reading table. Passengers are allowed to leave their cabins in order to visit the main ship areas—much like a modern day cruise line. Meals are provided in buffet form in the main ship areas, as are various forms of entertainment, all free of charge.

The cost of 1,000 credits represents a typical warp trip from as little as a couple days on up to a week. Shorter trips are generally a little less expensive (around 800 to 900 credits), while longer ones can run up to double the normal cost.

LINER, LUXURIOUS

Cost: € 8,000+/avg trip

Luxurious cabins aboard interstellar liners are relatively spacious (about 5 x 7 meters), offer access to all the same entertainment available to coach passengers, but additionally provide exclusive dining areas where individual meals are served at no additional cost in restaurant-style fashion as well as providing access to privileged entertainment areas and lounges.

SHUTTLE, IN-SYSTEM, ECONOMY

Cost: € 80/trip

Economy in-system shuttles provide cramped, but reasonable seated service between planets in a system. These trips can take anywhere from a couple hours on up to a day or two. Expect noisy, unruly passengers, but a good price. Crude meals are provided.

SHUTTLE, IN-SYSTEM, COACH

Cost: € 150/trip

Typical shuttle trips between worlds in a single system require anywhere from a couple hours on up to a day or two. Accommodations include spacious seats with a small side table and good meals. Coach passengers are separated from economy ones when aboard larger multi-class shuttles.

SHUTTLE, IN-SYSTEM, LUXURIOUS

Cost: € 500/trip

Same as above, except luxurious passengers are allotted their own cabins. Cabin space is cramped, but well-appointed and reasonably comfortable. Best of all, it is private. Good meal service is delivered to each cabin.

TAXI, INTERCITY, COACH

Cost: € 70/trip

More than a 'taxi', these mini-shuttles carry loads of passengers between cities on a single world. They are spaceworthy, and actually travel into the planet's upper ionosphere when making journeys around the world. They do not, however, maintain the fuel or ability to travel between worlds. Seats aboard these shuttles are reasonable and standardized. Trips between cities never require more than an hour or two, and so meals are not served—though some shuttle services include a complimentary beverage.

TAXI, INTERCITY, LUXURIOUS

Cost: € 400/trip

Same as above, but expect either a cramped cabin or a first-class section with spacious seats and tables.

TAXI, IN-CITY

Cost: € 150/trip

In-city taxis (travel within a single city) are quite expensive because they are rarely used. As mass transit provides very fast and usually direct service or with minimal transferring, taxis are used by the wealthy. Expect spacious fliers with fine decor.

Black Market Services

All black-market services require some kind of contact or at least an exhaustive search of the underground in order to locate the service needed—and this can be a bit dangerous, too. The carousing/gaming and streetwise skills are of invaluable help here.

ASSASSIN, AMATEUR

Cost: € 1,000/hit

Obviously highly illegal, amateur assassins average about 1,000 credits a hit (half up front). Of course, there is no guarantee as to the qualifications or ability of the assassin, nor whether he or she can be trusted to carry-out the hit. Moreover, assassins usually are offered life imprisonment over execution in exchange for revealing their employer, if caught.

ASSASSIN, PROFESSIONAL

Cost: € 50,000/hit

Professional assassins are very expensive (charging half up front) and hard to come by. They are, however, known generally through reputation and can be trusted to make their hit. Furthermore, very few professionals ever reveal their employers if caught by authorities—preferring to die with honor than tarnish their reputations by cutting a deal. Finally, professional assassins are obviously quite dangerous and only idiot employers would double-cross one.

BOUNTY HUNTER, AMATEUR

Cost: € 5,000+exp/job

Amateur bounty hunters are citizens who have devoted a segment of their lives to the capture of runaways in exchange for a quick buck, though some are novices gearing up for a professional life of hunting. The work is quite dangerous, and these types of hunters are not very reliable, though the fact that they are not paid until delivery helps.

BOUNTY HUNTER, PROFESSIONAL

Cost: € 10,000+exp/job

These professionals charge at least 10,000 credits per head and can be expected to bill for all reasonable expenses as well. They are not always honorable, but to the professional bounty hunter reputation is everything. Because of this, these hunters will always do their best to deliver and can be trusted to make the swap without incident rather than tarnish their reputations.

MERCENARY, AMATEUR

Cost: € 4,000+exp/mo

Amateur mercenaries are impetuous, combat-hungry citizens looking for some action. Most overstate their abilities and qualifications, and are often persons discharged from the Imperial Navy or Marines during boot camp on the basis of violent tendencies, gross misconduct, or blatant disregard for authority. Many are dishonorable.

MERCENARY, PROFESSIONAL

Cost: € 8,000+exp/mo

The professional mercenary is good at his or her work. Typically these mercenaries are retired military persons, the best of the street fighters, or ex-guerilla fighters—though many more come from other backgrounds. In any event, they get their work and make their name through reputation. Most are very honorable and can be expected to follow orders like a soldier, though all must be treated with respect. Further, some of these soldiers' loyalties may waver in service of especially weak or dishonorable leaders.

SMUGGLER, GALACTIC

Cost: Special

The cost to employ an amateur or professional galactic smuggler can vary widely depending on whether smugglers have their own ships, are simply consulting, providing contacts, or moving the goods themselves. The fees charged and conditions (if any) are up to the gamemaster and the specific situation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Weapons and Armor

Introduction

Weapons are broken down by type—specifically, into the same categories that armor protects against. These types are Blade weapons, Concussion weapons (such as clubs or grenades), Projectile weapons, Energy weapons, and Lasers (including some advanced alien particle beams). Weapon categories correspond with armor protection type BDR, CDR, PDR, EDR, and LDR, respectively. A special category, Vehicle weapons (vehicle and ship-mounted devices), is also included.

Weapons also list availability, weight, and power drain just as equipment does. Additionally, some other information is included as well. The first is one or more AIM modifiers (to-hit modifiers). These modifiers affect your character's base AIM due to a particular weapon's inherent lack of precision or accuracy when firing in single versus rapid-fire auto mode, where applicable. That is, some weapons are less accurate than others. Damage is of course listed, as is the weapon's rate of fire (ROF) in either rounds per second (rps) or listed as 1 for non-auto weapons. Weapons with an ROF greater than 1 are able to fire in automatic mode—**the number listed is the number shots (ammo) used up each combat turn the weapon is fired in auto mode** (game rules use the Auto AIM modifier along with the Advanced Automatic Weapons Fire rules).

Finally, ranged weapon's short, medium, long, and extreme ranges are listed. These each carry Step Penalties (due to the chaos of distance) to AIM, as noted below:

Short Range (by weapon type)	**No bonus or penalty**
Medium Range (by weapon type)	**+2 Step Penalty**
Long Range (by weapon type)	**+4 Step Penalty**
Extreme Range (by weapon type)	**+7 Step Penalty**

Important: Note that all rifle weapons require two hands to fire, but don't require the two-handed fighting skill.

Also, recall that there are many other modifiers that apply during combat—these are described in Chapter 18 of the game.

Weapon Permits

Laws regarding the ownership and carrying of weapons vary from one corner of the galaxy to the other, but as a general rule the more frontier the location the more lax the law. In most places throughout the Imperium characters are free to carry pistol weapons and most melee items.

In the ZAON Imperium, weapon permits are enforced by local and Imperial governments—especially in cities of any notable size. The purpose of permits is to help keep the peace and to prevent the common criminal from packing more firepower than the average law enforcement official. Pistols almost never require permits.

In the largest cities, such as those on the Imperial homeworld Titan or similar worlds like Tristar, New Corsica, Olympus, Oceanus, Kaelon, and the like, most weapons—even pistols—are forbidden! Though characters can transport small arms in their vessels or keep them in their homes, they cannot carry them on their persons when in public on premier worlds, nor in smaller skycars or the like—weapons must be properly stowed away aboard a starship or checked-in at the port authority whereas home weapons must be locked in a case before transported elsewhere. In

no event other than the most brutal of frontier worlds would the ownership of military-grade weapons be allowed.

Permits are categorized into three levels, and each level covers increasingly deadly weaponry. Descriptions of each, follow:

LEVEL-1 WEAPONS PERMIT: Most rifle type weapons and a few very heavy pistols are covered by this permit. Permit prerequisites require successful completion of a safety test administered by any Licensing bureau. Moreover, applicants must prove a need for this permit. Average citizens are denied permits 99.5% of the time. Backwater residents are more likely to be approved, as are private mercenaries and security guards unless they have criminal records.

The permit fee is 500 credits plus 100 credits every 10 years for renewal. Once granted and paid for, permit information is loaded into the applicant's IdentiCard.

LEVEL-2 WEAPONS PERMIT: These permits are difficult to obtain. They are similar to the Level-1 permit, above, except they govern the use of fully-automatic and very light military weaponry. As a general rule, only top-level private security guards employed in dangerous or sensitive roles are approved for a Level-2. Sometimes, mercenaries, bounty hunters, and others are able to convince their way into getting approved, but this is usually the case only when those applicants are working in frontier areas or pursuing dangerous criminals under Imperial employ. Even when such permits are issued, they often bear zone restrictions which renders them obsolete in major population centers.

The permit fee is 20,000 credits plus 1,000 credits every 10 years for renewal. Once granted and paid for, permit information is uploaded to the applicant's IdentiCard.

LEVEL-3 WEAPONS PERMIT: These permits are never issued to non-military personnel, and govern the use of military-grade weaponry. Level-3 permits are otherwise similar to Level-2 permits, above.

The permit fee, if one can be obtained, is 100,000 credits plus 25,000 every 10 years for renewal. These permits are encoded on the character's IdentiCard.

Projectile Weapons (PDR)

Projectile weapons include any weapon that fires a physical object at high velocity. Examples include chemically-driven slugs, magnetically-accelerated slugs, and even mechanically-driven arrows. Note that projectile weapon ranges reflect accuracy at differing distances and not the distance the bullet actually travels. Most powder-driven slugs can physically travel between 1 and 6 kilometers or so though are accurate to ranges far less than this.

All Projectile weapons are applied against armor type PDR.

PROJECTILE WEAPON SCOPE

€ 1,000 Availability: Uncommon Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: About 1 per month of typical use.

Projectile weapon scopes are designed for powder-driven bullets which naturally lose altitude from gravity over distance. Once attached and configured to a weapon, this scope alleviates 2 Step Penalties from the Medium or Long ranges, and 1 Step Penalty from the Extreme range, resulting in penalties of S: None, Medium: None, Long: +2, Extreme +6.

Note: the scope's bonus is only received if the shooter spends one full turn aiming the weapon prior to firing.

WEAPON BI-POD

€ 150 Availability: Rare Weight: 1 kg

These weapon bi-pods can be used with projectile weapons, energy, weapons, lasers, and just about any other type of SMG or rifle. Bi-Pods MUST be rested on a stable surface in order to be useful, and when properly used they effectively ***double*** a weapon's range categories. For example, a weapon whose medium range was 40 meters would instead be treated as having a medium range of 80 meters.

WEAPON TRI-POD

€ 350 Availability: Rare Weight: 1½ kg

Weapon tri-pods can be used with projectile weapons, energy, weapons, lasers, and just about any other type of SMG or rifle. Tri-Pods MUST be rested on a stable surface in order to be useful, and when properly used they effectively ***triple*** a weapon's range categories. For example, a weapon whose medium range of 40 meters would instead be treated as having a medium range of 120 meters.

STEALTH CROSSBOW

€ 250	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Ammo Type: Quarrels (arrow quarrels)		Per Clip: 8
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 1d6

S: 20 M: 40 L: 70 E: 71+

The stealth crossbow measures a mere 30 centimeters in length (about 1 foot) and uses a composite mechanical wire to propel the quarrel. A nock handle provides easy and quick reloading from the vertical handle clip, though some strength is required. The bow is very quiet and the bolts have been painted a dull dark gray color for stealth.

A new clip of 8 arrow bolts runs about 25.

5MM PEN GUN

€ 200	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: —
Ammo Type: Bullet by Gunpowder		Per Clip: 1
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: -1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 2d6-2

S: 6 M: 12 L: 20 E: 21+

Pen guns are legal by permit only (Level-1) and it is difficult to warrant a permit. The item is regularly available on the black market, however.

The device is a single-shot gun mechanism mounted in a working writing utensil. The gun can be reloaded by using a standard 5mm cased round. These rounds are available for as little as a credit a piece, though are not commonly sold.

COBRA 9MM PISTOL

€ 200	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Ammo Type: Bullet by Gunpowder		Per Clip: 14
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 2d6

S: 20 M: 40 L: 80 E: 81+

Manufactured by the Earth company Cobra Industries, this gun has and continues to see widespread use.

New clips cost 10 credits. Individual rounds can be purchased for 10 credits for a box of 100.

COBRA 8MM SNIPER RIFLE

€ 500	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 3 kg
Ammo Type: Bullet by Gunpowder		Per Clip: 16
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 120 M: 240 L: 500 E: 501+

Cobra Industries also manufactures this rifle version of their popular handgun. The rifle doesn't come standard with a scope, but has provisions for one. A good clip size and great range make this weapon quite popular. This item requires a Level-3 Weapons Permit

New clips cost 10 credits. Individual rounds can be purchased for 10 credits for a box of 100.

SEREESE AUTO 11MM CASELESS PISTOL

€ 300	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Ammo Type: Bullet by Plasma Discharge		Per Clip: 20
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 10 (600)
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: -1	Damage: 2d6

S: 20 M: 45 L: 85 E: 86+

Caseless weapons are becoming more popular and are manufactured by a wide variety of companies. The caseless ammunition is fired using a plasma discharge from fibrous crystal, and the bullet's propellant is specially attached to each round inside of a sealed clip.

New clips cost 20 credits. Individual rounds cannot be purchased because they are caseless. Single-only versions of this weapon can be purchased without permits, but the automatic versions require a Level-2 Weapons Permit.

SEREESE AUTO 8MM CASELESS SUB-ASSAULT RIFLE

€ 550	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 3 kg
Ammo Type: Bullet by Plasma Discharge		Per Clip: 40
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 20 (1200)
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: +3	Damage: 2d6+2

S: 70 M: 150 L: 300 E: 301+

One of the fastest firing weapons on the market today, the all-popular Sereese-brand caseless assault rifle is making a bit of a comeback. Measuring a mere 70 centimeters in length, this weapon is also compact. The caseless ammunition is fired using a plasma discharge from fibrous crystal, and the bullet's propellant is specially attached to each round inside of a sealed clip.

New clips cost 20 credits. Individual rounds cannot be purchased because they are caseless. This gun requires a Level-2 Weapons Permit.

SEREESE AUTO 8MM CASELESS ASSAULT RIFLE

€ 750	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 4 kg
Ammo Type: Bullet by Plasma Discharge		Per Clip: 120
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 20 (1200)
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: +4	Damage: 2d6+2

S: 100 M: 200 L: 400 E: 401+

This assault rifle is difficult to outfit with a scope as it is usually deployed to ground military personnel for close combat. The weapon does have good range, but it's auto-fire capability is quite impressive, as is the increased bullet size and velocity. Whereas a single (non-automatic) version of this rifle is available with a Level-1 Weapons Permit, the automatic configuration requires a military grade Level-3 Weapons Permit.

— QuickLook Costs —

	€
ARMOR AND SCREENS:	
Battle Armor	1,000
Battle Jacket	400
Bombsuit	2,000
Flak Jacket	200
Power Armor	50,000
Weblar	500
Ambassador Screen	20,000
Combat Screen	5,000
PROJECTILE WEAPONS (PDR):	
Projectile Weapon Scope	1,000
Stealth Crossbow	250
5mm Pen Gun	200
Cobra 9mm Pistol	200
Cobra 8mm Sniper Rifle	500
Sereese Auto 11mm Caseless Pistol	300
Sereese Auto 8mm Caseless Sub-Assault Rifle	550
Sereese Auto 8mm Caseless Assault Rifle	750
Cobra Rotary Gun	3,500
Nartan Shotgun	100
Bounty Stinger Pistol	200
Bounty WebGun	1,200
Nova SuperGun	18,000
Spike Grenade	100
ENERGY WEAPONS (EDR):	
Bounty Electrostun Rifle	350
Nova Electromagnetic Pulse Rifle	450
K-Lang Mini-Blaster Pistol	400
Nitak Krowning Blaster Pistol	450
SK-6 Blaster Pistol	200
SK-9 Blaster Pistol	500
SK-9 Blaster Rifle	650
SK-22 Auto Blaster Rifle	800
Nova Blaster Pistol	1,200
Nova Blaster Rifle	2,200
Hornet Crossbow	900
Lynx Phantom-6 Blaster Pistol	1,400
Lynx Auto Plasma Cannon	5,000
Plasma Sword	8,000
LASERS AND PARTICLE BEAMS (LDR):	
Laser Sighting	100
Laser Weapon Scope	800
K-Lang Pen Laser	100
SK-R Laser Stiletto	50
YAG Laser Pistol	200
YAG Laser Rifle	400
Bartani Assassin's Rifle	3,500
Nivean BattleWand	50,000
BLADE WEAPONS (BDR):	
Knife	10
Sword, Small	50
Sword, Heavy	100
Battle-Axe	120
Spear/Javelin	35
Whip	40
CONCUSSION WEAPONS (CDR):	
Staff	30
Club	10
Mace	40
StunGas Canister	50
Smoke Grenade	50
Flash Grenade	100
Plasma Grenade	200
Step Mine	400
Flamethrower, Light Rifle	850
Flamethrower, Heavy	1,100
Mini-Rocket Launcher, Hand-Held	450
Rocket Tube, Shoulder-Launch	1,000
KW-6 Explosives	100
VEHICLE WEAPONS (MILITARY):	
Mini Plasma Turret	11,000
Tank Cannon	25,000
Blaster Cannon	50,000
Cruise Missile	1,600,000

The caseless ammunition is fired using a plasma discharge from fibrous crystal, and the bullet's propellant is specially attached to each round inside of a sealed clip.

New clips cost 50 credits. Individual rounds cannot be purchased because they are caseless.

COBRA ROTARY GUN

€ 3,500	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 34 kg
Ammo Type: Bullet by Gunpowder		Per Clip: 800 belt
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 80 (4800)
Single AIM: —	Auto AIM: +8	Damage: 4d6

S: 140 M: 260 L: 600 E: 601+

These rotary guns utilize a rotating barrel assembly of 5 discrete barrels in order to allow sufficient cooling and gyroscopic stabilization. The entire device is huge, measuring 1½ meters in length, and weighs-in at over 30 kilograms. Individual rounds are large, fast, and highly destructive, and are housed in a belt which feeds into the firing chamber. Good penetration, massive damage, and an unbelievably fast rate of fire makes this weapon one of the most deadly and powerful guns on the market today. It is typically available only to military personnel and mercenaries with a Level-3 Weapons Permit. These devices cannot be outfitted with scopes.

Replacement ammo belts can be purchased for 80 credits and are quite heavy. Belts are often fed from their shipping case stored nearby because of their weight.

NARTAN SHOTGUN

€ 100	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 2 kg
Ammo Type: Buckshot by Gunpowder		Per Clip: 8 shells
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 20 M: 40 L: 80 E: 81+

This Nartan-brand device utilizes a non-pump shotgun shell action, and fires standard buckshot. The weapon's ranges account for buckshot dispersion. Because buckshot doesn't have the same penetration of larger slugs, PDR armor values should be doubled versus this attack. This device requires a Level-1 Weapons Permit.

Replacement shells are available for 5 credits for a box of 10.

Note that solid slugs are also available as an alternative to buckshot. These shells affect PDR armor normally, but incur a +0 AIM base.

BOUNTY STINGER PISTOL

€ 200	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Ammo Type: Darts, drugged		Per Clip: 4 darts
Type: PDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: -1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 2d6-1s

S: 10 M: 20 L: 50 E: 51+

A rather unusual weapon, Bounty-made weapons specialize in non-lethal subduing weapons favored by bounty hunters. This handgun fires special tranquilizing darts designed to render the target unconscious. In order for the dart's drug to be injected, the target's must not be wearing armor.

If the target gets injected, that person sustains 2d6-1 drug-induced ***stun damage*** that lasts for 1d3 hours.

Replacement clips (loaded with drugged darts) are available for 100 credits. Note that the sedative agent is built into the dart and cannot be replaced with other drugs or agents. Too many injections can risk the life of the target (see Pharmaceuticals in Equipment: Medical). The weapon requires a Level-2 permit because of its incapacitating effects.

BOUNTY WEBGUN

€ 1,200	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 3 kg
Ammo Type: Goo Capsules		Per Clip: 6
Type: n/a	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: Special

S: 8 M: 16 L: 30 E: 31+

WebGuns fire capsules of goo through a specialized dispersion nozzle. The goo takes on a net-like shape as it passes through the nozzle and also thickens in consistency from exposure air. In effect, the weapon shoots a sticky net aimed at trapping opponents like a bug impacting a spider's web.

These weapons are fairly large and heavy, measuring over a ½ meter in length. They are also quite accurate because the goo net increases in size as it leaves the gun, and Bounty guarantees muzzle dispersion as advertised for the gun's nozzle will be replaced free of charge. The weapon is ineffective at point-blank ranges.

If this weapon hits, the target must immediately make an Average Strength Check. If the check is successful, the goo net has no real effect and is simply an annoyance. If the check is failed, the entangled character suffers a +2 Step Penalty to any AIM or Action Checks attempted until the gooey net is removed.

Each time a character is hit again, that character must make another Strength Check, but this time the Check is one category harder than the last check. That is, the second time a character is hit he or she must succeed at a Tough Strength Check. The third time will be a Very Difficult Strength Check, and so on.

For each time the character fails his or her Strength Check, another +2 Step Penalty is added.

Net goo is sticky and must be removed by hand. Since this is a disabling weapon, the goo is flame retardant and so won't burn. Characters that were hit but made their Strength checks may remove the goo in 2 turns without hindrance (though they needn't do so). However, a character who was hit and failed their check must spend at least 3 turns removing the goo, at the end of which making another Strength Check at the difficulty of the previous check. If this check is successful, then the character is freed. If not, the character may spend another 3 turns trying again.

Eventually the goo will harden enough to become brittle—this takes a good hour or two, but a character can free him or herself at that time.

A Level-1 Weapons Permit is required to carry this special weapon. Replacement capsules cost 100 credits per cap (not clip).

NOVA SUPERGUN

€ 18,000	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 10 kg
Ammo Type: Depleted Uranium Shards		Per Clip: 30
Type: PDR (-15)	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 1d6+3

S: 140 M: 280 L: 600 E: 601+

Manufactured by the Rian Imperial supply company Nova Industries, this large and heavy weapon has the highest penetration of any modern weapon on record—barring certain alien particle beam devices.

Nova SuperGuns fire spent ferrous uranium using a powerful electromagnetic rail gun. The heavy metal spike slugs are accelerated to near relativistic speeds, leaving them capable of passing through many series of obstacles before losing all of their kinetic energy. Indeed, these slugs can even travel through laranium armor.

Despite the fact that this weapon's slugs typically penetrate most armors, the speed of the projectile is counterproductive in terms of damage to living targets. Thus, this weapon inflicts only 4 to 9 points of damage. Armor, however, is treated as having a PDR value 15 points lower than stated. Therefore, even Power Armor (a body tank) doesn't have any effect versus a round launched from this rail gun. Armor with PDR 16 or higher is treated as having a PDR 1 or higher. For example, an heavily armored surface (say, around PDR 18) would have an effective PDR of 3 versus this gun's 4-9 damage.

These weapons are not intended for use aboard starships, because their rounds pass through multiple bulkheads and interior walls effortlessly, including a ship's outer hull or airlock doors. Even military-grade blast doors and airlocks (PDR 20) can sometimes be pierced by a well-placed round. Obviously, decompression aboard ships is a serious concern—especially aboard commercial vessels where the round could pierce dozens of interior walls before escaping to space.

Finally, the weapon includes a good-quality Laser Weapon Scope which improves accuracy at range. The slug itself, however, would travel hundreds of kilometers through the air if unobstructed. A laser scope is used because the near-relativistic speed of the heavy slug carries it to maximum aiming ranges before gravity can noticeably affect the round. The weapon can be used normally in space. Nova SuperGuns require a Level-3 Weapons Permit because of their high damage and extraordinary penetration capabilities; indeed, they are high-end special forces/military-grade weapons.

Additional clips of spent ferrous uranium slugs are rare, costing about 1,000 credits where available.

"PigLizards all over the mess hall and now this? Well, you brought the fracking thing onboard, so you deal with it!"

—Freighter Captain to her Chief Engineer, after seeing a Space Roach scamper down the corridor

SPIKE GRENADE

€ 100 each	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 1 kg
Type: PDR	AIM: Throwing	Thrown AIM: -1
Trigger: Impact or Time		Knockdn: +3/+1
Primary Blast Radius: 6		Damage: 3d6-2
Secondary Blast Radius: 20		Damage: 1d6-1

Spike grenades consist of shrapnel formed around conventional explosives. The explosion comprises very little flame and produces very little concussion as most of the kinetic energy is efficiently transferred to the shrapnel projectiles. These grenades have a reduced effectiveness versus structures.

Spike grenades require a Level-3 Weapons Permit.

Energy Weapons (EDR)

Energy weapons include blasters and plasma weapons, as well as most other modern sidearms. These weapons typically inflict a lot of damage but have limited ranges.

Blasters are particle accelerators. Basically, a laser heats a 'soup' of electrons fed from the replaceable Energy Clip into a hot plasma while another laser excites strong waves in the plasma. These waves then accelerate ionized oxygen to high energies, expelling them as a bolt. The particle bolt literally blasts a hole in its target, because of a hot reaction and some burning of the oxygen ions originating in the bolt itself. The needed oxygen is retrieved from the air, and blaster weapons also maintain a small cache supply of oxygen in case they are fired in a vacuum (good for hundreds of shots).

Blasters have two disadvantages. The first is that they are not completely quiet like lasers are. They're certainly not as loud as a projectile gun, but they do make significant noise when fired. Also, the bolts they fire are unusually bright red in color, travel at the speed of sound (faster in space) and are thus slow enough that they can often be visually traced back to where they were fired from. Second, blaster bolts disperse and cool quickly when exposed to air and so don't have very long ranges—most unable to fire beyond 150 meters or so. For this reason, blasters are rarely outfitted with scopes. Because heat radiates away more slowly in space, blasters have longer ranges there but still suffer from beam divergence dispersion.

Unlike blasters, plasma weapons rapidly build a charge in a series of capacitors by tapping their replaceable Energy Clips. While one capacitor is firing, the others are charging. The discharge is a really-hot 'glob' of raw plasma. These globs of plasma are then surrounded by a momentary (quickly degrading) magnetic envelope that allows the plasma to remain hot and thus travel through the air or space without rapidly losing its heat. Raw plasma more or less melts holes in whatever it hits and typically scores even more damage than a blaster's particle bolt.

Plasma weapons share the same disadvantages that blasters do. First, they are about as noisy as blasters, making them far from stealthy. They're also bright, this time a hot white color. Second, since the momentary magnetic envelope around the plasma degrades so quickly (in only a few milliseconds), plasma weapons have even shorter ranges than blaster weapons do.

BOUNTY ELECTROSTUN RIFLE

€ 350	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 3 kg
Energy Clip Type: C	Power Drain: 5 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6 Stun

S: 80 M: 120 L: — E: —

Electrostun weapons are neither blasters nor plasma weapons. Rather, they fire specially-tuned, high-voltage charges designed to shock the nervous systems of living beings. These charges don't travel very far at all in the air, but also don't cause any permanent damage to their target. These weapons have no effect on non-living matter.

Electrostun rifles are quite common among security and law enforcement personnel. Additionally, their non-lethal nature makes these rifles legal to own with only a Level-1 Weapons Permit.

NOVA ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE RIFLE

€ 450	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 7 kg
Energy Clip Type: C	Power Drain: 5 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: none; 5d6 versus bots.

S: 100 M: — L: — E: —

Electromagnetic pulse rifles are a bot's worse nightmare. They have no effect on living matter but can severely disrupt the electrical systems within a bot or computer system.

Bots may still apply any EDR armor ratings they have versus this attack, but the rifle inflicts a whopping 5d6 'wound' damage per shot to bots!

K-LANG MINI-BLASTER PISTOL

€ 400	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: A	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 2d6+1

S: 15 M: 30 L: 60 E: 80

K-Lang brand mini-blasters are common among business professionals, merchants, and many other citizens. Since it is a light pistol, it is legal to own and carry one without a permit in many urban locations—save premier Imperial worlds.

Mini-blasters can't store large Energy Clips, but do score good damage and are compact to boot. The typical mini-blaster measures around 10 centimeters in length.

NITAK KROWNING BLASTER PISTOL

€ 450	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: A	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 2d6+2

S: 20 M: 40 L: 80 E: —

Nitak Krownings are noted for their smooth and slim designs. Though not as rugged as the SK blaster series, Nitak blasters have tough scratch-resistant polymer coatings, and inflict good damage for their size. Their smaller size makes them less accurate at range, but the gun's quality finish makes it popular among many.

SK-6 BLASTER PISTOL

€ 200	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 2d6+1

S: 20 M: 40 L: 80 E: —

Quite simply, this is the most common non-military sidearm in the galaxy. Manufactured by the Skrow-owned company Skrow Killtronics, the SK-6 has made its way to every corner of the galaxy. Good damage, very rugged design, decent range, and all at a reasonable price has put many other blaster manufacturers out of business. If this weapon has any shortcomings, it might be its size at about 20 centimeters in length.

SK-9 BLASTER PISTOL

€ 500	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 2 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 2 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 35 M: 70 L: 120 E: —

The SK-9 is a larger, heavier version of the SK-6, manufactured by the Skrow-owned company Skrow Killtronics. Like its smaller cousin, this version is also very rugged—able to operate reliably in nearly any environment including temperature extremes and immediately following recovery from submersion in water, sand, mud, and oils. Indeed, the SK-9's ability to take such heavy abuse and remain reliable has made it a favorite among both non-Imperial law enforcement and criminals.

The device has a stronger power drain on the replaceable Energy Clip but the weapon does score considerably more damage. The longer plasma chamber causes this weapon to measure out at 30 centimeters in length. Further, it is reasonably heavy at 2 kg.

Despite its high damage capability, the weapon is still classified as a pistol and so is legal to own without a permit in most areas.

SK-9 BLASTER RIFLE

€ 650	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 3 kg
Energy Clip Type: C	Power Drain: 2 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 100 M: 150 L: — E: —

The SK-9 rifle is nothing more than the SK-9 pistol outfitted with a better focusing chamber and longer grip. The weapon does weigh more and is longer, too, at 50 centimeters. A large Energy Clip capacity also greatly benefits this design. It is otherwise as durable and popular as the SK-9 and SK-6 models.

A Level-1 Weapons Permit is required to own or carry this weapon.

SK-22 AUTO BLASTER RIFLE

€ 800	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 4 kg
Energy Clip Type: C	Power Drain: 2 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 10 (600)
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: +2	Damage: 3d6

S: 100 M: 150 L: — E: —

Manufactured by the Skrow owned company Skrow Killtronics, this weapon is an even larger version of the SK-9 rifle. Additional bulk and weight results in a fully-automatic version of the SK-9. Because the SK-22 is a blaster weapon with somewhat less recoil than an automatic projectile rifle, it manages to maintain similar overall accuracy to the faster-firing projectile rifles when fired in full auto mode.

Because of its military-grade auto-fire capability, this weapon requires a Level-3 Weapons Permit.

NOVA BLASTER PISTOL

€ 1,200	Avail: Rare (Unc.)	Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 30 M: 60 L: 160 E: —

The infamous Nova blaster is manufactured by the Rian Imperial supply company of the same name. It is typically available only to Imperial naval personnel but can sometimes be found in the civil sector. The weapon is legal to own or carry without permits in most areas.

The Nova blaster pistol is of very high quality, though it is fragile compared to the SK series of blasters, unable to function reliably if contaminated with oils, sand, or other grime. It can, however, fire immediately following recovery from submersion in water and can handle most temperature and pressure extremes without problem. The weapon uses advanced technologies that make the gun very light and quite small as far as blasters are concerned, while simultaneously providing maximum damage and improved range through better focusing. Overall, the weapon measures 22 centimeters in length and a mere 4 centimeters wide (about a third the width of the SK-6).

Even more impressive are the advanced components that not only provide great damage but also unparalleled efficiency. Basically, the

weapon provides the fire power of an SK-9 at the drain of an SK-6. Another interesting feature is that the weapon sports a sliding lever that controls the weapon's output intensity. That is, the weapon's damage can be adjusted to any of the following settings, though the power drain remains unaffected: 1d3, 1d6, 2d6, or 3d6. Finally, the weapon is notably more quiet than the average blaster, though still certainly audible. Unlike other blasters, the Nova series fires a bright blue bolt (instead of red)—something that has become a signature of Imperial arms.

Carrying a Nova blaster pistol where legal to do so can show a certain patriotism when within the core of the Imperium, though many beings (especially those in rimward and frontier areas) consider it to be in bad taste to say the least. Criminals especially are well familiar with this weapon, are used to being at the dangerous end of it, and may take offense to anyone carrying one.

NOVA BLASTER RIFLE

€ 2,200	Avail: Rest. Rare (Unc.)	Weight: 2 kg
Energy Clip Type: C	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 100 M: 160 L: — E: —

With Scope:

S: 160 M: — L: — E: —

The Nova rifle is identical to the above pistol version. In fact, the rifle uses an easily removed pistol in its main housing to accomplish firing. The extended focusing barrel which the pistol snaps into gives this weapon longer range while a larger Energy Clip allows one of the best ammunition stores yet in a hand-held rifle weapon. The rifle version also sports a sliding intensity lever (actually on the pistol, see the Pistol version, above).

Moreover, this device comes standard with a high-quality digital scope. Not only does this scope provide increased range, but it also uses active and passive infrared viewing plus thermographic imaging. The active infrared and thermograph is usable to a range of 500 meters. Identical to the pistol, this weapon fires a bright blue bolt (instead of the customary red one produced by other blasters).

These weapons require a Level-1 Weapons Permit to own or carry, assuming one can get their hands on one. The device is issued only to Imperial naval troops and guards, and so is rarely found in the civil sector. Civilians can obtain them, upon special request, but the waiting period can exceed 12 months. See the note under the pistol version about the sociological effect of carrying this rifle. Additionally, Imperial personnel may inquire as to where and how this gun was acquired. For those who have been authorized to carry one (a simple request made while applying for a standard Level-1 permit), a notation is added to their IdentiCard.

HORNET CROSSBOW

€ 900	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 3 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 2 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 60 M: 140 L: — E: —

The Hornet crossbow is a rather unusual device manufactured solely be an independent company, Hornet Fire. The device is configured in the shape of a conventional mechanical crossbow, yet is also a modern energy device. Because of this special configuration (see below), the device is quite popular among bounty hunters, assassins, privateers, and mercenaries.

Essentially, this weapon is a 2-in-1 device. That is, it combines two different weapons in one gun. Because of this, the unit is nearly as long as a rifle and so quite accurate as well. The weapon's first ability functions like a standard SK-9 blaster pistol or rifle. It's second ability is a stealth capability that uses conventional arrow quarrels. These bolts are fired from the device exactly as if it were a standard Stealth Crossbow (see projectile weapons, above).

Therefore, the user of this device may elect whether to fire powerful blaster bolts or stealthy arrows. Obviously the arrows cause far less damage, but there are times when an arrow is better than a bright, noisy blaster bolt. All parts of this weapon are durable and reliable—nearly as tough as SK blaster weapons.

Because of the weapon's size and damage ability, it is listed as a basic restricted item requiring a Level-1 Weapon's Permit to own or carry (though many have tried to challenge this Imperial classification in the past). Many law enforcement officials also overlook this permit requirement, believing it to be a pistol of sorts.

LYNX PHANTOM-6 BLASTER PISTOL

€ 1,400	Avail: Rare	Weight: 2 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 2 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 25 M: 50 L: 100 E: 150

Lynx Armories markets to both military and civilian sectors, but higher pricing of most their weaponry has resulted in very few military sidearms contracts, though Lynx's heavy military weapons remain common among marines forces, including Imperial.

The Phantom-6 blaster is unique because it projects a holographic sighting rail to a distance of 1½ meters in front of the noticeably small and compact Phantom pistol, which significantly improves both aim and short range accuracy. The holographic sighting has distinct advantages over conventional laser sightings that project a bright red dot on targets thereby alerting nearby enemies and occasionally revealing the shooter's position. Holographic sighting, conversely, ends before the 2-meter mark and can also be easily switched off (AIM drops 1) as well.

Additionally, a rudimentary built-in mini-scanner provides passive distance feedback (up to 100 meters) of when the gun is aimed at living, inert, or electronics (including bots) matter—all of which is dynamically displayed in the holographic crosshairs at the end of the ephemeral sighting rail.

The gun's drawbacks are that it has increased weight compared to sidearms of similar size, and it's compact design and short focusing barrel leaves a high degree of particle dispersion at range which makes it a poor rifle substitute.

Otherwise, the blaster's styling and special features make it a highly coveted weapon.

LYNX AUTO PLASMA CANNON

€ 5,000	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 9 kg
Energy Clip Type: 3E	Power Drain: 2 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 50 (3000)
Single AIM: —	Auto AIM: +6	Damage: 4d6+2

S: 120 M: 180 L: — E: —

Other than capital damage weaponry, auto plasma cannons are quite probably the most destructive and deadly weapons that can still be carried by heavy combat personnel. The unit is huge, measuring over a meter in length and weighing nearly 25 kg with all three E-Type Energy Clips installed. These weapons are sometimes used by

the Imperial Heavy Marines Corps, as well as by overzealous frontier mercenaries of high stature.

Auto plasma cannons inflict amazing damage capable of melting holes in even heavy armor, but haven't much of a range and very little relative penetration. In fact, the effective damage range of the plasma tops out at 180 meters. Still, at 50 shots per turn, there isn't much that can stand for long in front of one of these guns.

Auto plasma cannons appear very similar to a Cobra Rotary gun, employing a series of six discrete barrels because of the immense heat generated in the barrel.

These military-grade weapons always require Level-3 Weapons Permits to legally own or carry.

PLASMA SWORD

€ 8,000	Avail: Rare	Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 every 5 turns + 2 per hit	
Type: EDR	AIM: Melee	Blade Length: 1m
Melee AIM: +0		Damage: 4d6

Produced by a variety of manufacturers, these energy swords vary greatly in capability. Powerful units, such as the one detailed above, are nearly impossible to find and quite expensive. More moderate versions, costing around 2,000 credits with 3d6 damage ability are more common, and regular 2d6-dmg units can be purchased for as little as €900. In any event, these weapons comprise advanced technologies that can prove quite dangerous even to the wielder. As a result, blundered AIM rolls result in wielder injury (apply only half damage).

When off, a plasma sword looks like a sword grip without the blade (also similar to a flashlight from today's world). When activated, the device projects a coherent beam of tuned plasma (actually an arc) within a shaped magnetic field. Various models produce different-colored plasmas, but all seem to function in the same manner.

The hot plasma 'blade' is capable of searing living beings and slicing most objects, explaining the high damage the weapon inflicts. Other than the damage listed, however, the weapon has no other special cutting effects. That is, the weapon doesn't cut through objects like butter, one does have to work at it—especially on harder substances and it is doubtful that such a weapon could penetrate a shipboard blast door even with sufficient time.

The device does impart a unique advantage: It inflicts its normal damage on any other melee weapons other characters might use in a parry attempt against this one. There is one exception: two plasma swords 'clash' with one another without causing damage to either device, but a clash does count as a 'hit' and so drains additional power.

This device is not restricted and is more commonly referred to as a 'Star Sword'.

PLASMA SMARTGUN

€ 15,000	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 10 kg
Energy Clip Type: E	Power Drain: 3 per shot	ROF: 1
Type: EDR	AIM: Plasma SmartGun Skill (PRE)	
Single AIM: +6	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 6d6

S: 160 M: 200 L: 240 E: —

Available only to Wrekiri from Wrekiri manufacturers, this weapon is greatly prized by its users. The technology behind the weapon is booby-trapped, defended, and legally usable only by Wrekiri hunters (according to both Imperial and Alliance law). In fact, the optical targeting system (see below) is only usable by Wrekiri biology, and the few individuals who have managed to adapt the technology to their own biology have always been hunted down by Wrekiri purists.

The Plasma SmartGun is a shoulder-mounted weapon that is secured by a cross-strap shoulder harness. It is relatively large and certainly heavy, but the Wrekiri build and endurance makes toting such an item not uncomfortable. Cabling connects the weapon's targeting computer to a special optical lens that is held in front of the right eye by a headgear piece.

The optical lens is transparent so that background images are unobstructed, but can also be flipped up and out of the way when not in use. A trigger device is mounted in the headgear and is switched via a flexing (squinting) of the eye ridge muscle. This flexing will first bring the lens down in font of the eye if the lens arm had been pulled back out of the way. The second flex (or first if the lens is in place) fires the weapon. Flexing the muscles above the other eye ridge cycles through the various range and target modes. These modes provide several infrared and thermograph views combined with three levels of magnification (up to 200x). Target tracking and lock is present as a translucent heads-up-display overlay. The advanced targeting computer tracks pupil movement and focus via the lens and translates this movement directly to barrel aim in the main gun. The result is a rather precise aim.

Characters using this weapon do not use their normal Ranged weapon AIM scores. Instead, they apply their *Plasma SmartGun* skill (a Precision stat skill), plus the weapon's handsome targeting bonus provided by computer. The result is pitted against the target's Evasion following normal combat rules.

When fired, the device launches a large and extremely hot glob of white plasma (damage type EDR). The plasma is capable of blasting a hole through most materials and armor, generally showering the blast area with a brilliant spray of sparks.

Lasers & Particle Beams(LDR)

Lasers and particle beams are set aside from other energy weapons because they are less 'explosive' at the point of impact, instead having more of a cutting or slicing effect on matter.

Laser (an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) weapons use advanced crystal or gas-chamber focusing mechanisms powered by a capacitor. The capacitor builds up a charge and then releases it in order to generate a momentary laser pulse. The technology itself is older than that in blaster weapons, but lasers do have their advantages.

Lasers have considerable penetration ability but don't cause as much damage or trauma to living beings as physical projectiles or blaster bolts tearing their way through a body do. Laser weapons have a couple of advantages, though. First, they are very effective over long ranges before their beams begin dispersing. Second, laser weapons themselves are light in weight and thus easy to wield, but not as accurate because their light weight makes them difficult to keep steady.

Unlike lasers, particle beam weapons include mostly advanced alien designs (of which there aren't very many). These special particle beams are so intense that they can usually cut or slice through any matter. Many types of particle beams exist (proton beams, neutron beams, electron beams, etc.) but all consist of tightly-focused beams or columns of sub-atomic particles that have been accelerated to complete relativistic velocities. Most of these accelerated particles shred other atomic nuclei upon impact, thereby

breaking down molecular structures completely and severing atomic bonds.

The most powerful and advanced particle beams (belonging only to Niveans and the 'ancient races') fire anti-protons (anti-matter) which literally annihilate other atoms (as opposed to merely shredding them). Generally, these 'slicing' beams are continuous and so can be waved through existing matter—the beam having so much penetration that it often continues on to other targets. All, however, require enormous power supplies and TAL12 or higher technology and so are not dealt with here (see Outer Rim supplement) save for the Nivean BattleWand.

LASER SIGHTING

€ 100 Availability: Restricted Unc. Weight: —
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: About 1 per month of typical use.

Laser sighting is a targeting enhancement that can be added to most projectile, laser, and energy weapons. The device measures a mere eight centimeters in length and one in diameter. By projecting a highly-visible red laser, the shooter is aided by the bright red dot which marks the weapon's to-hit location (also available in other colors). Once attached and configured, this item increases the weapon's base AIM values by +1.

Laser sighting requires a Level-1 Weapons Permit.

LASER WEAPON SCOPE

€ 800 Availability: Restricted Unc. Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: AA
Power Drain: About 1 per month of typical use.

This item functions identically to the Projectile Weapon Scope (described under Projectile Weapons, above), except that it is designed for straight-firing laser and blaster weapons.

K-LANG PEN LASER

€ 100	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: —
Energy Clip Type: AA	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 1d6

S: 5 M: 10 L: 20 E: 21+

Pen lasers are small concealable weapons, that K-Lang is famous for, disguised as writing utensils (that work). They're not particularly powerful, but because they are often used by criminals trying to sneak weapons into restricted areas, they have been restricted to a Level-1 Weapons Permit item.

SK-R LASER STILETTO

€ 50	Avail: Restricted Com.	Weight: —
Energy Clip Type: A	Power Drain: 1 per turn	
Type: EDR	AIM: Melee	Blade Length: 15c
Melee AIM: +0		Damage: 1d6

Laser stilettos are common among street thugs and other criminals, and are produced largely by Skrow Killtronics. They have been restricted as a Level-1 Weapons Permit item for this reason.

The stiletto appears to be nothing more than a grip some 10 centimeters in length. By activating a switch, however, the device focuses a low-power but continuous beam in a specialized configuration. This effectively generates a 15-centimeter 'blade' that is 'sharpest' at the focal endpoint of the blade. The unit hasn't much of a cutting ability, but is just as effective as a normal knife when plunged into an object or victim. The weapon is only dangerous at the "blade's" end point where the laser energies are focused.

YAG LASER PISTOL

€ 200	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 1 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 1d6+2

S: 15 M: 30 L: 60 E: 61+

These weapons are lightweight, small, and common as sidearms.

YAG LASER RIFLE

€ 400	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 2 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 1d6+3

S: 80 M: 160 L: 320 E: 321+

The rifle version of the YAG laser pistol offers excellent penetration. Unfortunately, the weapon hasn't much stopping power. Also, because this weapon is a rifle, a Level-1 Weapons Permit is required to legally own or carry one.

BARTANI ASSASSIN'S RIFLE

€ 3,500	Avail: Banned Rare	Weight: 12 kg
Energy Clip Type: C	Power Drain: 10 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 3d6

S: 110 M: 220 L: 440 E: 441+

Strictly illegal, the Bartani Assassin's rifle is an effective sniper tool comprising a tightly-spanned ring of 5 discrete lasers with a sixth in the center. The laser beams have been reconfigured slightly in order to reduce dispersion over extreme distances (up to 5km) at a slight expense of damage (i.e., the focusing chamber must operate a slightly tighter beam to achieve better beam cohesion). Nevertheless, the weapon can inflict considerable damage and, because it's a laser, it has good penetration ability—especially against armor. Note that the weapon has a two-turn regeneration period, meaning it can be fired only once every three turns.

This weapon does not come standard with a Laser Weapon Scope, though most assassins get their hands on one right away—thereby improving weapon's effective accuracy. An appealing aspect of this weapon is that it can easily be broken down and stored in a small carrying case or briefcase.

This weapon cannot be legally owned or carried because of its assassination effectiveness.

NIVEAN BATTLEWAND

€ 50,000	Avail: Very Rare	Weight: ½ kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1	Auto AIM: —	Damage: Special

S: 25 M: 50 L: 110 E: 111+

One of the rarest of weapons, this device is manufactured by the Nivean Republic. Additionally, the Nivean-owned Imperial company NivTech reportedly obtains and sells these devices as well. BattleWands are not normally available on the market, though a few can be found for sale if one has the right contacts and clout. BattleWands are the same weapons carried by Nivean Protectorate, and are rechargeable. Wands found outside of the Nivean Republic have been adapted to use replaceable Energy Clips.

Imperial scientists have thus far been unable to decipher or at least efficiently reproduce the high-energy output mechanism used in this device.

Nivean BattleWands have several user-selectable settings that adjust this alien weapon's output in a wide variety of ways. Regardless of the setting, one use always drains 1 EU from the clip or power cell. The following settings are available:

1) Stun pulse: 3d6 Stun damage; apply versus EDR armor.

2) Static pulse: no damage to living beings; 4d6 wound damage to bots and electronics; apply versus EDR armor type.

3) Disruptor bolt: 3d6 wound damage; apply EDR armor.

4) Slice: 2d6+2 particle beam wound damage; apply versus LDR armor type.

Aside from its damage capability, what makes this device so remarkable is the fact that the entire unit measures only 30 centimeters long and weighs only 300 grams.

Despite its alien nature, the weapon is legal to own or carry, though the weapon is subject to inspection and its owner harassment by law enforcement officials who are unfamiliar with the device.

Blade Weapons (BDR)

Blade weapons include knives, swords, spears, and any other edged or piercing implement that an attacker swings or clobbers another character with.

All Blade weapons are applied against armor type BDR.

KNIFE

€ 10	Avail: Common	Weight: 1 kg
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee/Throwing	AIM: +0/+1
Damage: 1d6		

Everything from kitchen knives to hunting knives exist. Heavy military issue versions inflict 1d6+1 damage instead of the normal 1d6.

SWORD, SMALL

€ 50	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 2 kg
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: +0
Damage: 1d6+3		

Swords are more of an unusual weapon in the modern world, but are sometimes seen in a ceremonial stance. A variety of shapes exist, including the saber, katana, and scimitar. Certain serrated versions inflict 1d6+5, but these are rare.

SWORD, HEAVY

€ 100	Avail: Rare	Weight: 4 kg
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: -1
Damage: 2d6+4		

Large swords are almost never seen in the modern world, even in ceremonial roles. Most are simply wide-bladed, long, and sometimes serrated. Their unpopularity rests with the blade's size and weight. Use of this weapon is considered a compound action during Initiative and so slows initiative one phase.

BATTLE-AXE

€ 120	Avail: Rare	Weight: 4 kg
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: -1
Knockdn: +2/+4	Damage: 2d6+1	

The battle-axe is somewhat common on tribal worlds, but is rarely seen in modern societies. Xom sometimes favor weapons like these except twice the size and weight, inflicting 2d6+4 damage. Use of this weapon is considered a compound action during Initiative and so slows initiative one phase.

SPEAR/JAVELIN

€ 35	Avail: Rare	Weight: 2 kg
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee/Thrown	AIM: +0/+1
Damage: 1d6+1		

Spears and javelins are typically tribal weapons. They can be thrown using the Throwing AIM trait, rather than wielded.

WHIP

€ 40	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 2 kg
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: -1
Knockdn: Special	Damage: 1 point	

Whips have two weapons applications. First, they can be used to strike (snap) and inflict a small wound upon the target (1 point of stun or wound damage). Second, whips can be used to entangle victims.

Entangling a target requires a successful AIM roll and inflicts no damage. Rather, the whip makes one or more lashed loops around the target or portion thereof. Yanking and entangled whip is where the benefit is gained, for anyone caught by it suffers the following penalties: 1) initiative slowed by one phase; 2) a +1 Step Penalty to Melee AIM or a +2 Step Penalty to Ranged and Throwing AIM for the next turn only; and 3) a -1 reduction to Evasion for the next turn only. All of these penalties assume that the Strength of the attacker is within at least 2 points of the target's strength. If the attacker is much weaker, then penalties are ignored.

Called shots (if allowed by the gamemaster) are possible with this weapon. However, called whip shots can only be used for one of two purposes: 1) the whip can entangle the legs/feet of the target in hopes of a knockdown—a Tough Balance Check applies if successful; or 2) a small item up to a maximum weight of 4 kg can be entangled and yanked away or toward the whip user. If, however, the entangled item is held by another, then a contested Strength Check is required to free the item.

SONISWORD

€ 3,500	Avail: Rare	Weight: 6 kg
Energy Clip Type: B	Power Drain: 1 per turn	
Type: BDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: -1
Damage: 3d6+4		

SoniSwords (pronounced Sawni-) are heavy swords outfitted with special electrically-powered sonic resonators. The resonators attune to certain frequencies measured the instant the blade strikes an object, thereby increasing the blade's effective sharpness versus the object struck.

The sword is otherwise similar to a regular heavy sword, though the blade metal is somewhat more resistant to breakage. A battle-axe version of this weapon also exists but is very rare. The axe causes the same amount of damage.

Concussion Weapons (CDR)

Two types of concussion weapons exist. There are those that produce blasts with physical force behind them and those that inflict

'crushing blows' upon the target. This doesn't mean all exploding weapons are concussion weapons, just those that create a shock wave where the energy from the blast is absorbed by all nearby objects in the form of a concussion force. Fire is also covered under this weapon type.

Crushing weapons include clubs, fists, or even being struck by a moving vehicle and apply against armor type CDR.

STAFF

€ 30	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 3 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: +1
Knockdn: +1	Damage: 1d6 Stun	

Staves include ornamental, walking, and fighting sticks typically around two meters in length. They can be fashioned from hardwood or light metals. Staves are thought to be somewhat more accurate than many melee weapons because they are long and used in a broad sweeping motion.

CLUB

€ 10	Avail: Uncommon	Weight: 2–3 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: +0
Knockdn: +5	Damage: 1d6+1 Stun	

Whether a character is wielding a two-by-four, baseball bat, or steel pipe, the weapon counts as a club. Use of this weapon is considered a compound action during Initiative and so slows initiative one phase.

MACE

€ 40	Avail: Rare	Weight: 3–4 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Melee	Melee AIM: -1
Knockdn: +5	Damage: 1d6+3 Stun	

The mace is nothing more than a glorified club. Most models consist of a shaft topped by a knobbed or spiked weight. Use of this weapon is considered a compound action during Initiative and so slows initiative one phase.

STUNGAS CANISTER

€ 50 each	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 1 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Throwing	Thrown AIM: -1
Trigger: Impact or Time		
Primary Blast Radius: 6		Damage: 2d6+2**s**
Secondary Blast Radius: 12		Damage: 1d6**s**

StunGas canisters are large grenades designed to release a lot of sedative gas very quickly. Their purpose is of course to knock-out the enemy without having to resort to lethal force. They are therefore rarely used by Imperial naval personnel.

Anyone caught within the primary blast radius of a StunGas canister takes 2d6+2 stun damage with unconscious lasting for 1d3 hours. Persons in the secondary blast radius take 1d6 stun with effects lasting for 1 hour.

It is sometimes possible for victims to hold their breath in order to avoid this stun damage, and rules for this are discussed in Chapter 19: Consequential Damage, StunGas and Anesthezine.

These grenades require only a Level-2 Weapons Permit because of their non-lethal nature.

SMOKE GRENADE

€ 50 each	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 1 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Throwing	Thrown AIM: -1
Trigger: Impact or Time		
Primary Blast Radius: 6		Damage: Special
Secondary Blast Radius: 20		Damage: Special

Smoke grenades explode with a huge puff of smoke. The smoke is relatively heavy and tends to linger for a while. Anyone attempting to target (shoot) in or out of the primary blast area do so blindly (+3 Step Penalty). The secondary blast area is more like a thick fog, and so causes anyone targeting in or out of this zone to do so with a +1 Step Penalty. Smoke grenades are sometimes used to aid an escape.

A tear gas variety is also available at no extra charge. This version operates exactly like a regular smoke grenade, except that anyone caught in the primary area of effect who can't or doesn't hold their breath suffers a further +3 Step Penalty to all actions from hacking, coughing, and choking. Holding one's breath can help (see Chapter 19: Consequential Damage, StunGas and Anesthezine), but characters will still suffer the blind/haze penalties unless they also close their eyes tightly (which carries equivalent penalties of its own). Those in the secondary blast area make Average Willpower Checks or suffer a reduced+1 Step Penalty; those that succeed suffer no penalty at all. Finally, certain species who possess chitinous eye coverings (without mucous membranes) or don't breath an atmosphere are unaffected by the tear gas portion of this weapon.

Smoke grenades (including the tear gas variety) require a Level-3 Weapons Permit because of their rampant use in crime.

FLASH GRENADE

€ 100 each	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 1 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Throwing	Thrown AIM: -1
Trigger: Impact		
Primary Blast Radius: 8		Damage: Special
Secondary Blast Radius: 16		Damage: Special

Flash grenades are rare and difficult to find. Few military or mercenary organizations choose to employ them because of their limited effectiveness. Flash grenades simply explode in a brilliant flash of light designed to temporarily blind onlookers. They are sometimes used by criminals during a heist or when making an escape.

Anyone involved in a combat situation is allowed to make a standard Intuition check as the flash grenade is used. If successful, they avoid the effects by shutting their eyes and/or looking away. If they fail, then anyone within the primary blast radius is completely blinded for 2 full turns. Furthermore, these victims suffer lingering 'spots' that interfere with their vision for another 3 turns after that—which results in a residual +2 Step Penalty. Victims caught in the secondary blast radius are affected in the same manner, but the full blindness lasts for only 1 turn and the partial for 1 turn after that.

These weapons require a Level-3 Weapons Permit primarily because of their popularity among criminals.

PLASMA GRENADE

€ 200 each	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 1 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Throwing	Thrown AIM: -1
Trigger: Impact or Time		Knockdn: +9/+3
Primary Blast Radius: 6		Damage: 3d6
Secondary Blast Radius: 16		Damage: 1d6

Plasma grenades are common among marines and other ground troops. They are designed to explode in a white-hot flash of fire accompanied by extreme concussion. Persons anywhere near a

plasma grenade when it goes off are often literally blown off their feet due to the amount of damage combined with the effective knockdown 'damage' bonus.

Plasma grenades have strong blast radii, but the secondary radius inflicts far less damage and has a bonus of only +3 toward knockdowns.

Plasma grenades require a Level-3 Weapons Permit because of their highly destructive nature.

STEP MINE

€ 400 each	Avail: Banned Rare	Weight: 2 kg
Type: CDR	Skill: Demolitions	
Trigger: Foot pressure of 2 kg or more		Knockdn: +10/+3
Primary Blast Radius: 3		Damage: 3d6
Secondary Blast Radius: 8		Damage: 1d6

Step mines have been banned by all civilized militaries in the galaxy because of their inhumane effects. Essentially, a step mine is nothing more than a plasma grenade that has been fitted with a pressure switch. As soon as something heavy enough steps on one of these, it detonates right under that person.

FLAMETHROWER, LIGHT RIFLE

€ 850	Avail: Banned Unc.	Weight: 8 kg
Ammo Type: Napalm Discharge		Per Clip: 20 uses
Type: CDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1 or 5
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: +3	Damage: 1d3+

S: 30 M: — L: — E: —

Flamethrowers use arc ignition switches to ignite a mixture of highly-flammable jelly similar to napalm. Because of their inhumane nature and potential for property damage, these weapons are illegal to own or carry. Because these devices are rifles, they require two hands to use.

Characters sprayed with this weapon suffer the damage noted above on the first turn only. Thereafter, they are on fire (multiple hits do not cause additional regular burning) and take additional damage as noted in Chapter 19. Note that this napalm-like fuel mixture is very sticky and so is difficult to remove from a burning victim. Even placing the victim underwater will only temporarily extinguish the flames—as soon as the victim resurfaces, the hot jelly will begin to burn again. Only complete immersion in cold water for at least 5 turns or a solid dousing from a modern fire-extinguisher will stop the burning. Otherwise, the burning will continue for 1d6 minutes before the jelly has burned itself out.

Replacement fuel cartridges are very difficult to find but cost about 400 credits where available.

FLAMETHROWER, HEAVY

€ 1,100	Avail: Banned Unc.	Weight: 15 kg
Ammo Type: Napalm Discharge		Per Clip: 30 uses
Type: CDR	AIM: Ranged	ROF: 1 or 5
Single AIM: +2	Auto AIM: +3	Damage: 1d6+

S: 30 M: 50 L: — E: —

These devices are identical to their smaller cousins, above, except that they spray more fuel and cause more damage (about double). They are, of course, strictly illegal. Because these devices are rifles, they require two hands to use.

Replacement fuel cartridges are very difficult to find but cost about 1,000 credits where available.

MINI-ROCKET LAUNCHER, HAND-HELD

€ 450	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 4 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Ranged	Single AIM: -2
Ammo: Explosive Rockets		Per Clip: 6
Trigger: Impact		Knockdn: +4/+2
Primary Blast Radius: 4		Damage: 2d6
Secondary Blast Radius: 8		Damage: 1d6

S: 4 M: 8 L: 20 E: 60

The hand launcher is a rather simple (relatively cheap) series of launch rods, a handle, and a trigger mechanism. The device is large for a pistol configuration, but can be held in one hand. Up to six missiles are attached to the launch rods and must be fired separately.

These missiles have no guidance computers or aiming ability, but are very fast and fly in a straight line. Thus, the missiles are fired like a projectile weapon except that each missile explodes as soon as it impacts any surface.

Owning or carrying this weapon requires a Level-3 Weapons Permit.

Each replacement missile costs 100 credits.

ROCKET TUBE, SHOULDER-LAUNCH

€ 1,000	Avail: Restricted Unc.	Weight: 8 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Ranged	Single AIM: -1
Ammo: Explosive Rockets		Per Clip: 1
Trigger: Impact		Knockdn: +15/+3
Primary Blast Radius: 8		Damage: 6d6
Secondary Blast Radius: 20		Damage: 2d6

S: 30 M: 60 L: 100 E: 400

These single-shot shoulder-carried missile launchers fire a medium anti-vehicular missile. The missiles are large enough to cause significant personnel casualties when directed against troops.

A plasma grenade-like explosion, large blast radius, and massive damage result in this weapon requiring a Level-3 Weapons Permit. They are typically deployed only to ground-based military forces.

As the bulk of this item's cost is in the missile, the tube itself is largely disposable. Where replacement missiles can be found, they usually sell for slightly less at 1,700 to 1,800 credits.

KW-6 EXPLOSIVES

€ 100 each	Avail: Banned Unc.	Weight: 2 kg
Type: CDR	Skill: Demolitions	
Trigger: Time, pressure, impact, or remote		Knockdn: +8/+4
Primary Blast Radius: 6		Damage: 3d6
Secondary Blast Radius: 12		Damage: 1d6

KW-6 is a common plastique explosive. It is not nearly as effective versus characters as a plasma grenade is, but inflicts double damage on structures. The explosion is geared entirely toward concussion.

KW-6 is highly stable, and so can't be detonated by sharp jolts, physical abuse, or even low-temperature flame. However, shooting a blaster bolt into it will certainly set it off.

The 2 kg weight includes a detonator (one of choice, see above). Additional plastique can be purchased without a detonator, but the cost is the same—though the weight is about 1 kg per 'dose'. Each dose after the first increases the damage by 1d6 in the primary area and by +1 in the secondary blast radius. Remember, the damage is doubled versus structures and objects.

Because this explosive can inflict considerable property damage, it has been banned within the Imperium (though certain military organizations still use it).

Tau'Za'aan (Special)

Tau'Za'aan *(pronounced: **Tao'Zaw'Awn**)* are the rare wearable ancient weapons and devices originally manufactured by the Za'aan Lords long ago. Za'aan who possess one or more of these devices are considered Za'aan Lords, of which there are a great many. It is illegal, under Imperial Law, for a non-Za'aan being to possess or use Tau'Za'aan. So jealous are some Za'aan Lords that stories tell of full Imperium battle groups dispatched to hunt down and destroy a small merchant vessel whose occupants had stolen Tau'Za'aan so that the device could later be recovered from the debris field. Still, many non-Za'aan do secretly own and use these devices. The devices are, however, considered 'priceless' and so are not listed in the weaponry or equipment price lists. A few do exist on the black market, but there has never been any consistent or set price for them.

All Tau'Za'aan devices share several traits in common:

1) They are all fashioned from *Xephereal*, an unbreakable shiny chrome-metallic non-metal material that is nearly weightless and has a melting point above that which can be achieved by modern high-energy particle beam or maser systems. Only a properly tuned quantum 'key' wave can be used to temporarily sever Xephereal bonds to gain entry, and thus very few governments or militaries possess the resources or know-how to gain access to Tau'Za'aan inner components. Xephereal can also be made temporarily or indefinitely flexible by weak quantum key waves, while maintaining its strength and integrity—which a Tau'Za'aan device can implement partially upon itself to render its shape flexible (and thus wearable) where appropriate. All Xephereal is extremely valuable and not known to exist anywhere except in these devices and the hull armor of the various remaining ancient original Za'aan Lord Intergalactic starships. (Estimated at TAL19)

2) All Tau'Za'aan tap zero-point energies in the universe's spatial fold layer to power themselves. They therefore have an inexhaustible 'internalized' power source. (Estimated at TAL20)

3) Tau'Za'aan have no controls, buttons, or switches. They are all actuated by telepathic thought only. They rely on weak telepathic thought projection amplified and carried along nerve fiber, and thus cannot be operated remotely—they must be properly worn (they sink flexible Xephereal tendrils into the wearer's flesh and attach directly to nerve bundles). Furthermore, most Tau'Za'aan cannot be easily removed from a wearer while the wearer is living because most varieties of Tau'Za'aan wrap their essentially indestructible Xephereal shapes around an appendage. These devices 'loosen' themselves from the wearer upon the wearer's death or upon the wearer's wilful desire to release them. (Estimated at TAL19)

4) The internal components of Tau'Za'aan vary depending on the device's functions, however they all adhere to spatialtronic subsystems built upon physics principles so advanced that no species (the eldest Za'aan Lords included) has ever deciphered their secrets since the time of the first Imperium's collapse when Za'aan Lords originally manufactured them. (Estimated at TAL18-19)

5) Tau'Za'aan have been manufactured for many millions of years, and whether a particular device is a mere 10,000 years old or a venerable ninety-million years aged, its reliability and apparent age is no different than any other Tau'Za'aan. The devices are effectively ageless.

6) Following the collapse of the first ZAON Imperium at the hands of the Malons, the Za'aan Lords have lost their ability to build these devices. Although there remain a great number of Tau'Za'aan, no new ones have been created by anyone since that time (more than 10,000 years ago). The Za'aan Lords are attempting to reverse engineer these devices (like most of their own ancient technology) to improve the might of their Imperium, but rumor has it that they have made little or no progress insofar as comprehending their own Tau'Za'aan inventions.

➤Although usually closest to EDR weaponry, Tau'Za'aan devices often transcend typical classifications categories and so each device (or each effect emitted by a particular device) is categorized individually using the standard PDR, EDR, LDR, etc., damage-type designations.

➤The following Tau'Za'aan devices are listed not alphabetically but instead by order of prevalence (and thus inverse of prestige) among Za'aan Lords, starting with the most common device variants:

TAU'ZA'AAN-VENAAR

€ Priceless | Avail: Restricted Rare | Weight: 14 grams
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy
Type: CDR | AIM: Ranged | ROF: 1
Single AIM: +3 | Auto AIM: — | Damage: Special

S: 20 | M: 40 | L: 60 | E: —

Venaar Tau'Za'aan is often called a *force-glove* by Rians—many of whom have suffered from its power. Venaar appears as metallic chrome because it is fashioned of Xephereal, like all Tau'Za'aan, and is shaped like a bracer worn over the wrist and lower forearm with tendrils which adhere to the back of the hand and sink into the hand to reach nerve fiber just above the knuckles. Along the chrome-like surface of the bracer portion, Za'aan inscriptions appear engraved and glow blue-white when the Venaar is readied or activated.

The Venaar allows its wearer to hurl a wave of kinetic force energy at an opponent. Wave force energy appears as a translucent spatial distortion ripple that travels very quickly and impacts a target with massive stopping power (ranging from a body slam on up to the equivalent of being struck by a moving vehicle if the wearer's mind is strong enough [see below]). These waves are thrown or shot from the wearer's hand and can be partially or wholly absorbed by enough concussion-resistant armor (CDR rating).

Additionally, an inverse wave can be yanked back toward the wearer's hand at half the maximum force and mass normally allowed. And, when intentionally actuated at lower power levels, these waves can be used to throw or retrieve small items fairly accurately. Crude manipulation of stationary objects is also possible, but tricky. For example, a lever could be pulled or a large button pushed, but fine motor work, typing, or other intricate work cannot be performed—this is **not** telekinesis.

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically actuated, the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the maximum power and effect that can be wrought with Venaar and is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

Actuating this device, which is performed telepathically, drains a flat 2 points of psion from the wearer's current Psion Pool.

Psion Pool	Weapon Dmg†	or Max Shove	or Max pull
19–30	1d3 stun	2 kg	1 kg
31–45	1d6 stun	10 kg	5 kg
46–64	1d6+2 stun	20 kg	10 kg
65–75	2d6+1 stun	40 kg	20 kg
76-87	3d6 stun	100 kg	50 kg
88–93	4d6 stun	200 kg	100 kg
94–100	5d6 stun	600 kg	300 kg
101+	6d6+2 stun	1 metric ton	500 kg

†Wearers can deliberately discharge a stroke less powerful than they are capable of (removing one or more d6 as desired), but doing so does not change the psion cost to fire the weapon.

TAU'ZA'AAN-FORLAAR

€ Priceless Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 6 grams
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy

Forlaar appears to be a solid band of Xephereal worn like a chrome ring on the finger. Each such ring made has unique inscriptions (in the Za'aan language) encircling it which glow a subtle blue-white at all times. Forlaar function only when worn by telepathic individuals, and the ring sinks Xephereal needles into and through the finger bone.

Forlaar generates a continuous defensive energy field around the wearer which energizes into a potent spatial-distortion shield whenever the wearer is struck by any projectile or 2 or more total points of real or stun damage in a single turn. The device is similar to a Screen, but far more advanced and functions without a set number of uses because of its inexhaustible and powerful energy supply.

The shield protects against all energy and kinetic impact damage, and also protects from **all projectiles** (even slow ones) regardless of whether they are below the 2 damage threshold. Even some forms of large area contact or touching causes the shield to energize. Thus, a tiny poison needle or dart would be deflected even if the needle or dart itself scored only 1 point of damage (or no damage at all), as would a fist swung in attack or even an open hand grab.

In combat, Forlaar defends the user from damage using a standard screen rating which must be overcome before damage can penetrate to the wearer. The rating (listed in the table below) is the amount of damage the shield will absorb each turn. Any damage inflicted by one or more weapons hits within a **single turn** that exceeds this rating will then pass through the shield as if the shield was not present (until the next turn when it re-energizes again to full strength). For example, if a wearer with a shield strength of 14 is struck by a single 18-dmg blaster bolt (or alternatively by three 9-dmg blaster bolts all in the same turn), then 4 points of damage would penetrate to the wearer.

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically linked to its wearer, the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the affinity between the Forlaar and the wearer (how focused the spatial distortion field around the wearer is) and thus the maximum power and effect that can be achieved with Forlaar. This is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

The device does **not** drain any psion from the wearer's mind in order to keep the device on standby alert, nor does it drain any points with each activation because such activation does not require telepathic instructions to energize. The device can be voluntarily suppressed telepathically by the wearer so that the shield will not activate in defense, and doing this drains 1 point of psion but the device will thereafter remain offline until so commanded telepathically again by its wearer to enter a state of readiness.

Psion Pool	Shield Rating
19–30	2
31–45	6
46–64	10
65–75	14
76-87	18
88–93	22
94–100	26
101+	30

TAU'ZA'AAN-CELAAR

€ Priceless Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 1 gram
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy

Celaar are curved chrome lenses fashioned from Xephereal. When placed in the eyes (like a contact lens) of a telepathic being, they sink tiny needle-like projections into the eyes and attach directly to the retinal optic nerves. The eyes then appear chrome, however, the wearer can telepathically instruct the lenses to display any color, iris, and pupil configuration desired, for the outside surface of the lenses are merely cosmetic. Miniature spatialtronic circuitry housed within the lenses provides both real and enhanced vision which is sent directly to the optic nerve in real time. Where effect-appropriate, Celaar projects a heads-up-display (HUD) graphical informational overlay (in the Za'aan language) which is superimposed over normal sight (and naturally viewable only by the wearer).

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically controlled (for example, the enabling and disabling of optical zoom), the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the maximum power and effect that can be wrought with Celaar and is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

Actuating this device, as well as any Celaar feature the wearer is capable of, does not drain any psion from the wearer's Psion Pool.

Psion Pool	Vision Type† (see below)	R/T AIM†
19–30	3x	+0
31–45	10x	+1
46–64	50x	+1
65–75	100x, TA	+2
76-87	200x, TA, MT	+2
88–93	500x, TA, MT	+3
94–100	1000x, TA, MT, CA	+3
101+	5000x, TA, MT, CA, DBA	+3

†Vision Types are explained below, and 'R/T AIM' refers to the AIM trait bonuses for both Ranged AIM and Throwing AIM only. The '##x' vision type notation refers to the optical zoom ability which may be displayed 'picture-in-picture' or 'full-view'.

TA (Tactical Analysis): This HUD can be switched on or off at will. It scans both optically and by passive sensor sweep to identify, pinpoint with visual markers, and motion track moving and living objects within the wearer's field of view. Where possible, non-database information can be gathered and displayed (but not stored) such as the power and strength of energy weapon bolts or projectiles, the speed of moving objects and creatures, new threats, perspective range calculations between any two points, atmospheric and wind factors, and so forth.

MT (Motion Tracking): This HUD actively scans the surrounding environment using a quantum scanner and then displays a topographical representation in either a 3d perspective or flat 2d map and shows movement of organic and inorganic objects within its range (including walls, rooms, and other cover). Maximum range is exactly equal in meters to the wearer's current Psion Pool size, and cannot be blocked by any known element (metals, minerals, etc.), though a force-field will either sharply diminish its range or completely block the scan depending on shield strength.

CA (Compositional Analysis): This HUD allows the wearer to thoroughly scan any object focused on and within several meters range. It provides data comparable to a hand-held science scanner.

DBA (DataBase Access): This HUD is zero-point tied (via a microscopic spatial fold) to the ship's primary spatial computer core in only one of several remaining original Za'aan starships, and functions regardless of range or any known methods of signal jamming. Because each Celaar was originally manufactured with a DBA uplink

to a specific starship computer system, the DBA feature will only function if the ship it was originally tied to is still operational and online. If so, the user may read and write to that ship's computer system (some Za'aan language ability, access authorizations, and computer system knowledge is required). Access of this type provides remote encyclopedic knowledge of anything stored in the primary computer core, as well as the ability to activate various shipboard functions (anything controlled by the primary computer) including remote flight of the Za'aan ship.

TAU'ZA'AAN-WILAAR

€ Priceless Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 9 grams
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy

A triangular plate of Xephereal chrome is worn on the back of the hand where it sinks below the skin and affixes itself to bone and nerve. The device is normally not visible below the skin, but when activated a reddish glow pattern of Za'aan glyphs shine brightly.

Wilaar allows the wearer to erect walls of force energy which energize into place. The walls need not adjoin or 'attach' to other temporary or permanent structures, for they are free-floating but anchored in space to any large relevant body (such as a planet's mass and will thus keep their positions relative to the planet and how the planet moves). Walls must be shaped flat and rectangular with no more than a 4:1 width/height ratio, and can neither be energized out of direct line-of-sight nor behind other solid barriers such as physical walls or force-fields. Wilaar walls must also spring into being where they can easily push aside fluid matter (for example, erected in air, vacuum, or an open watery environment) else they will fail. Thus, a wall could not spring into being such that it would cut a creature in half, permeate a preexisting force-field, or divide something as viscous as beach sand.

These walls appear as a thin layer of translucent blue liquid. Touching the wall with mass or energy sends ripples rolling across its surface similar to a pond. The wall is actually a zero-point spatial fold which has folded back upon itself. Matter (including air) and energy cannot pass through the wall, but enough energy or kinetic force applied to the barrier will overload the weak spatial flux and cause it to collapse entirely. Furthermore, the wall's energies degrade rapidly over time on their own as well. Therefore, each wall has a given number of 'Damage Points' and when these points are gone (from weapons hits or time loss) then the wall collapses entirely without a trace. Any wall automatically loses 10 damage points per turn (approximately 10 every second of time that passes) from simple temporal degradation. This loss can therefore be hastened further by inflicting damage upon the wall, on a point-for-point basis.

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically actuated, the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the maximum power and effect that can be wrought with Wilaar and is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

Actuating this device to create any wall of any allowable size drains a flat 10 points of psion from the wearer's current Psion Pool.

Psion Pool	Damage Points	Maximum Area	Max Range
19–30	50	4 sq meters	4 meters
31–45	100	9 sq meters	8 meters
46–64	200	25 sq meters	15 meters
65–75	400	50 sq meters	30 meters
76-87	800	100 sq meters	60 meters
88–93	1600	200 sq meters	120 meters
94–100	3200	300 sq meters	240 meters
101+	6400	400 sq meters	480 meters

TAU'ZA'AAN-BOLAAR

€ Priceless Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 11 grams
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy
Type: EDR AIM: Ranged ROF: 1
Single AIM: +1 Auto AIM: — Damage: Special

S: 50 M: 200 L: 400 E: 800

Bolaar is the most feared and infamous of the Tau'Za'aan devices, and reasonably rare. It is a chrome disc of Xephereal which sinks into the palm of the hand and attaches to bone and nerve. When readied and for several seconds after each use, blue-white Za'aan glyphs glow brightly from beneath the skin where the device rests.

Bolaar allows the wearer to discharge raw zero-point energy in the shape of a fine stroke of brilliant blue-white lightning, which is hurled from the palm where the device is buried. The stroke lasts approximately one full second, is accompanied by a thunderclap so loud that all those within 60 meters of the stroke must survive an Average Strength check or suffer partial loss of hearing for 1d6 hours (excluding the wearer), and can hit distant targets (up to 1 kilometer away). In darkness and at night, a display this grand generally lights up the surrounding skies—a spectacle possibly visible for kilometers in every direction.

Armor and screens will offer some protection versus this energy, and so characters may apply any EDR ratings in defense of this attack. Please note that a zero-point energy stroke is not really lightning and has both similar and different properties compared to real lightning. For example, it cannot be deflected with a lightning rod because zero-point energy does not follow the path of least resistance. Also, the impact reaction is more 'explosive' than electrical. Indeed, some Za'aan Lords deliberately aim their attacks to the ground nearby a particularly fast or difficult-to-hit target in order to bring down such foes with collateral damage within the blast radius rather than risk the bolt passing far beyond the target.

Strokes from this device have been measured in the millions of degrees centigrade (several orders of magnitude hotter than true lightning) and react differently from known plasma energies behaviors. Bolaar attacks affect all known materials except Xephereal.

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically actuated, the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the maximum power and effect that can be wrought with Bolaar and is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

Actuating this device to discharge an energy stroke of any allowable power drains a flat 2 points (for 8d6 damage bolts or less) or a flat 5 points (for 1d6x10/1d6v damage bolts or greater) of psion from the wearer's current Psion Pool. The 2-cost and 5-cost bolt types are separated by a dotted-line in the table below:

Psion Pool	Weapon Dmg[†]	Secondary Blast Radius & Dmg
19–30	1d6	1 meter, 1-point of damage
31–45	2d6	2 meters, 1d2 damage
46–64	4d6	4 meters, 1d3 damage
65–75	6d6	6 meters, 1d6 damage
76-87	8d6	8 meters, 1d6+1 damage
88–93	1d6x10 or 1d6v	15 meters, 2d6 damage
94–100	3d6x10 or 3d6v	30 meters, 3d6+1 damage
101+	7d6x10, 7d6v, or 1d6c	<30m=9d6 or <100m=3d6

[†]Wearers can deliberately discharge a stroke less powerful than they are capable of (removing one or more d6 as desired), but doing so does not change the psion cost to fire the weapon. Also note that the wearer is not immune to any secondary blast radius damage caused by more powerful strokes should that wearer be within that radius—though normal EDR protections, if any, still apply of course.

TAU'ZA'AAN-IOMAAR

€ Priceless Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 12 grams
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy

Stories of powerful Za'aan overlords in possession of Iomaar are still passed down among Rian children. Less than one-hundred of these ineffable devices are thought to still exist, and each is a prized possession among the greatest ranking Za'aan Lords, including the Emperor and many prominent Za'aan Senators.

Iomaar appears similar to Wilaar, being a triangular plate of Xephereal chrome, but is worn inverted in the forehead where it sits atop the skin and sinks Xephereal tendrils directly into the wearer's brain, with additional tendrils anchoring it securely to the skull.

An unstoppable weapon of mass destruction, Iomaar generates a bioneuralectric pulse which travels at the speed of sound, expanding outward from the wearer in a ring wave that simply drops any number of living organisms within range. All living things are instantly struck unconscious, collapse immediately in a state of neuraleptic shock, and (if the pulse is potent enough) many will subsequently die within minutes. Prompt medical attention administered during those crucial minutes can prevent death and allow for a complete recovery. The wearer of the device is naturally unaffected by all of its effects (and is further unaffected by all Iomaar effects unleased by other wearers of other Iomaar devices).

There are no known methods of protecting oneself from an Iomaar pulse weapon. Preexisting force-fields of at least moderate strength are said to halve the unconsciousness duration in individuals protected by them, but wearable screens have no effect. Significant degrees of separation between the wearer and organisms within range (such as crew beyond dozens of bulkheads aboard a large warship, or persons protected deep underground) can also attenuate the effect to half or less the normal results. Bots, computer systems, and all other inorganic matter is entirely unaffected.

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically actuated, the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the maximum power and effect that can be wrought with Iomaar and is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

Actuating this device, which is performed telepathically, requires a portion of the wearer's neuralectric energy and thus drains a hefty 40 points of psion from the wearer's current Psion Pool.

Psion Pool	Pulse Range	Unc. Duration	Chance of Death
19–30	5 meters	5 seconds	—
31–45	10 meters	10 seconds	—
46–64	40 meters	1 minute	1%
65–75	100 meters	10 minutes	5%
76-87	200 meters	30 minutes	10%
88–93	400 meters	2 hours	20%
94–100	800 meters	8 hours	40%
101+	1 kilometer	12 hours	60%

TAU'ZA'AAN-EEMAAR

€ Priceless Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 14 grams
Energy Type & Drain: Inexhaustible Zero-Point Energy

The rarest of all Tau'Za'aan is the highly-coveted Eemaar, of which only nine working ones are known to exist. The Emperor possesses one, as do two of the ranking Za'aan Imperial Senators and several of the Regional Overlords.

Eemaar are fashioned as chrome Xephereal arm bands worn above the biceps. The bands graft themselves to the flesh, linking to primary nerve bundles.

Every Eemaar device manufactured was intrinsically linked to a specific ancient original Za'aan starship (at the time of its manufacture) and if that warship is powered down or destroyed then that particular correlated Eemaar is rendered temporarily ineffective or forever useless, respectively. More than one Eemaar was manufactured for each ancient original Za'aan starship.

Eemaar functions as a remote link and zero-point spatial fold actuator. It can be used to transport the wearer nearly instantaneously via a zero-point fold from anywhere in the universe back to the original Za'aan starship it is tied to. Once aboard the starship, the device is no longer needed until the wearer is once again away from the ship because aboard any of the original ancient Za'aan ships it is possible to directly use the zero-point fold transporter onboard to travel to any known location.

Because this device (like all Tau'Za'aan) is telepathically actuated, the telepathic strength of the wearer's mind determines the maximum power and effect that can be obtained with Eemaar and is rated by measuring the wearer's **current** Psion Pool size.

Actuating this device, which is performed telepathically, drains 20 points of psion from the wearer's current Psion Pool.

Psion Pool	Maximum Mass Encompassed by Spatial Fold
19–30	50 kg
31–45	100 kg
46–64	200 kg
65–75	500 kg
76-87	1 ton
88–93	2 tons
94–100	4 tons
101+	10 tons

Vehicle Weapons (Military)

Vehicle weapons are those that are so large that they're generally vehicle-mounted and designed to combat other vehicles. When aimed at other vehicles or large structures, they are measured using the vehicle damage system. 1d6 vehicle damage translates to about 10d6 standard damage.

MINI PLASMA TURRET

€ 11,000 Avail: Restricted Rare Weight: 50 kg
Energy Clip Type: 6E Power Drain: 4 per shot total
Type: EDR AIM: Ranged ROF: 100 (6000)
Single AIM: — Auto AIM: +10 Damage: 4d6+2 or 1d3v

S: 360 M: 540 L: — E: —

Mini-plasma turrets are commonly affixed to light-armored military vehicles and some larger police patrol vehicles. In addition to special mounting, an armored shield, and targeting system, this device is essentially two auto plasma cannons linked together. Note that bonuses for standard tri-pod mounting are already included. Naturally, a Level-3 Permit is required.

TANK CANNON

€ 25,000	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 800 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Gunnery	Gunnery AIM: +0
Ammo: Explosive Shells		Per Clip: Special
Trigger: Impact or Time		Knockdn: +10/+5
Primary Blast Radius: 10		Damage: 1d6v
Secondary Blast Radius: 30		Damage: 1d6-2v

S: — M: 500 L: 1000 E: 1001+

Tank cannons are mounted on medium to heavy military vehicles. The cannon consists of a three-meter barrel stemming from an auto-shell-loading turret device. The cannon is huge, very heavy, and fires high-explosive shells similar to a mortar.

This device does not come standard with any shells. Each shell must be purchased separately for about 1,000 credits apiece.

This device is not covered by Weapons Permits. Rather, special licensing is required. Civilians of any sort are denied this license, though some companies have managed to obtain them.

BLASTER CANNON

€ 50,000	Avail: Restricted Rare	Weight: 350 kg
Energy Clip Type: n/a	Power Drain: 20 per shot	
Type: EDR	AIM: Gunnery	ROF: 1
Single AIM: +0	Auto AIM: —	Damage: 12d6 or 1d6+1v

S: 600 M: 1000 L: — E: —

Blaster cannons are found mounted to medium and heavy military vehicles. They are nothing more than a very large (about two-meters in length) blaster rifle. The device is very effective against single vehicular targets because of its armor penetration. To lighten the weapon's weight, the power clip system is mounted elsewhere on the vehicle and fed through a conduit. Please note that the bonuses for tri-pod mounting are already included in the weapon's listed ranges.

This device is not covered by Weapons Permits. Rather, special licensing is required. Civilians of any sort are denied this license, though some companies have managed to obtain them.

CRUISE MISSILE

€ 1,600,000 each	Avail: Banned Rare	Weight: 1,800 kg
Type: CDR	AIM: Gunnery	Range: 200 km
Trigger: Impact	Knockdn: +20/+10	
Primary Blast Radius: 100		Damage: 3d6v
Secondary Blast Radius: 300		Damage: 1d6v

Banned throughout the Imperium, ownership or transport of a cruise missile is investigated by the Imperial Safeguards Agency. These missiles are extremely illegal because of their use in terrorism.

Cruise missiles are quite large (about three meters in length) and very heavy. A mini starfighter engine is used to propel the missile, and an advanced artificially-intelligent computer guidance system delivers this behemoth to its end target.

The device contains a powerful sensor array and is extremely accurate—typically impacting within 1 meter of the exact target point. Damage is incredible.

Anti-missile systems have difficulty shooting down this device due to advanced ECM equipment and a speed of over 5,000 kph. Terrorist use of these weapons is seen only out on the frontier because all heavily populated worlds are protected from large inner-city explosions (see Chapter 7). Where this is true, a cruise missile's damage is reduced by about half.

Cruise missiles containing nuclear warheads are available for between five and ten times the normal cost and produce catastrophic results. Luckily, worlds protected with inertial dampers confine such explosions to an effect similar to a non-nuclear version of this device. Electromagnetic pulse warheads are also available and reportedly have increased effectiveness versus bot armies.

The Imperial Navy no longer employs these devices, though this is likely because of other advancements in orbital bombardment.

Personal Armor

All armor has BDR, CDR, PDR, EDR, and LDR ratings for different types of attacks, each corresponding with a type of weapon damage. How these are used in combat is explained in Chapter 18 of this game. Different types of armor also have other ratings as described.

Because certain types of armor can interfere with law enforcement's ability to stun or take down a suspect, advanced armors generally require some kind of Weapons Permit.

Also, some armors are quite bulky and heavy, and therefore lower the wearer's effective Evasion trait significantly.

BATTLE ARMOR

€ 1,000	BDR: 7
Availability: Restricted Uncommon	CDR: 6
Weight: 8 kg	PDR: 9
Class: Bulky	EDR: 8
Evasion Penalty: -2	LDR: 4

Battle armor comprises layered laranium and is laminated with duomar. The armor is similar to a battle jacket in that it is made up of a series of interlocking and free plates that are strapped over the user's body. These plates cover more than just the torso; they also cover the arms and legs, and further offer an optional light helmet, too. Battle armor is fairly bulky and heavy, and so cannot be disguised beneath clothing.

Owning or wearing battle armor requires a Level-1 Weapons Permit.

BATTLE JACKET

€ 400	BDR: 6
Availability: Uncommon	CDR: 4
Weight: 5 kg	PDR: 8
Class: Somewhat Bulky	EDR: 6
Evasion Penalty: -1	LDR: 3

Battle Jackets are popular modern vests that comprise interlocking plates designed to strap on over the wearer's torso (front and back). This armor plating is fashioned from duomar laminated laranium and so is rather lightweight and thin. It is possible to wear this armor under clothing, though onlookers will obviously notice the armor. Battle Jackets are completely legal to own or wear.

BOMBSUIT

€ 2,000	BDR: 4
Availability: Rare	CDR: 14
Weight: 12 kg	PDR: 7
Class: Very Bulky	EDR: 6
Evasion Penalty: -3	LDR: 2
Other Penalties: +1 Step to AGI/PRE	

Bombsuits are heavily padded armor designed to absorb the most amount of concussion force—the kind usually generated by explosions. Because of the quantity of padding required to shield against

explosions, characters wearing this armor tend to look like giant white marshmallows.

This armor is rare but legal to own or wear. It is decidedly uncomfortable, however.

FLAK JACKET

€ 200	BDR: 4
Availability: Uncommon	CDR: 3
Weight: 4 kg	PDR: 7
Class: Somewhat Bulky	EDR: 5
Evasion Penalty: -1	LDR: 1

Flak Jackets are 'primitive' vests of specially-woven kevlar and other damage-absorbing materials. They are reasonably bulky and heavy, but quite affordable. The vests are more prevalent on backwater worlds, and are almost always obvious when worn under clothing. These jackets can be worn without a permit.

POWER ARMOR

€ 50,000	BDR: 13
Availability: Restricted Rare	CDR: 10
Weight: 65 kg	PDR: 16
Class: Extremely Bulky	EDR: 12
Evasion Penalty: -3	LDR: 8
Other Penalties: +2 Step to AGI skills	
Energy Clip Type: E	
Power Drain (operational): 2 per minute	

Power armor requires a Level-3 Weapons Permit to own or wear, and the specific permit provision is extraordinarily difficult to obtain. This military-grade armor is actually a special robotic suit that the wearer gets into. Typical suits stand about 2½ meters high, though larger versions are also available. Because of the armor's weight, hydraulics are used to power the contraption and permit movement. A network of sensors and hydraulics thus respond to the user's movements within the suit and then translate the movement to the armor's hydraulics in order to generate movement. Power armor hydraulics bestow an equivalent Strength of 9, regardless of the wearer's natural strength.

The heavy armor plating used in this armor offers unparalleled protection. These suits are rarely seen except when deployed by special ground forces (and even then are quite rare). They are fitted and adjustable to a range of human sizes, but cannot accommodate other alien shapes or sizes.

Power armor is very rare for reason that it is feared by both crime lords and Imperial troopers alike.

WEBLAR

€ 500 +	BDR: 3
Availability: Common	CDR: 0
Weight: 2 kg	PDR: 4
Class: Minor Bulk Only	EDR: 5
Evasion Penalty: -0_5	LDR: 2

Weblar is one of the most popular forms of armor protection available today. It is a lightweight thick cloth woven from laranium strands laminated with duomar. The strong cross-hatch weave provides excellent resistance against projectile penetration while the reflective duomar coating refracts and weakens laser beams. The laranium strands also aid in energy absorption and dispersion—providing excellent protection against blaster bolts.

The result is a cloth padding that can be stitched into a variety of fabrics and clothing that offers effective and subtle protection. Note that the cost indicated above is for the weblar only, and that the cost can easily double for custom stitchery, though some garments are currently sold with weblar already included. Weblar is manufactured by Keobi Labs, Inc.

Weblar is legal to own or wear without a permit and is entirely invisible at casual distances to the naked eye.

UNIFORM, IMPERIAL OFFICER'S

€ n/a	BDR: 3
Availability: n/a	CDR: 0
Weight: ½ kg	PDR: 4
Class: Minor Bulk Only	EDR: 5
Evasion Penalty: none	LDR: 2

All officers in the Imperial Naval have special uniforms (the white uniforms) which have standard weblar-like protection. These uniforms are not available for sale, though can rarely be found on the black market (banned rare, prices starting at 5,000 for 1-stripe, 25,000 for 2-stripes). It is, of course, illegal for non-authorized personnel to wear one.

UNIFORM, IMPERIAL GUARD/TROOP

€ n/a	BDR: 5
Availability: n/a	CDR: 3
Weight: 1 kg	PDR: 7
Class: Somewhat Bulky	EDR: 6
Evasion Penalty: none	LDR: 4

All Imperial guards and troops have standard charcoal-gray uniforms with a black V-shaped vest that is additionally worn over the fabric. The uniform itself has standard weblar-like protection (see Weblar for stats), while the vest (and helmet if present) offers additional protection according to the stats listed above.

These uniforms are not for sale though are sometimes available on the black market (banned rare, priced around 3,000); where they are, they are certainly easier to find than an officer's uniform. It is, of course, illegal for civilians and non-authorized personnel to wear one.

Personal Screens

These personal force fields generate an invisible spatial distortion field that follows the contour of the wearer's body. Field response is energized to a very low level so that the field energy does not activate or interfere with normal activities. The instant the field zone is struck, however, the spatial distortion concentrates at the point of impact, burning-out the shield actuator and increasing resistance to the attack. The moment of strike, an area of the force field at the point of impact is visible as a momentary red, blue, or blue-green glow (depending on manufacturer and origin). The field has no effect (and doesn't react to) attacks made by the wearer.

An important note about spatial distortion fields is that slow moving objects are able to push through them. That is, the slower the object's movement, the less resistance is encountered. For example, a knife could be gently pushed through the field, but a bullet is too fast with too much kinetic energy.

Screens do not use Energy Clips or any other form of regular power. They do have very small built-in batteries that provide the very low power needed to keep the shield's distortion field energized, but are designed to last for more than two decades while providing such constant protection.

The real power in these portable shield generators are the flash capacitors, typically numbering between one and three, which store the high-energy needed to repel attacks. Because the power needed

to energize a shield far exceeds that which could be housed in portable Energy Clips, high-yield capacitors are used instead and act like a fuse—discharging and burning out both the capacitor and usually the field generator upon use. Thus, each personal shield device is good for one, two, and sometimes three (depending on design) 'hits' before being rendered inert. In truth, the devices that contain two or more 'charges' physically have two or more capacitors and if one charge is activated in an attack, it is burned out and the other(s) if any remain. It is important to remind wearers that when a shield activates in response to damage, the device energizes for a full turn (sometimes two turns) and protects against all hits in that turn or turns. Once the shield goes down, if the unit still contains additional unused charges, then those capacitors will activate and raise a shield if the wearer is struck again the next turn or turns following the collapse of the previous field.

Shield energizing cannot be stopped with EMP or other field interference and operates off of a basic physics principle—a kind of cause and effect relationship. Because of this, these portable shield generators cannot be turned off or disengaged. They will activate if shot or struck regardless of whether they are worn or not. And, if two or more devices are worn or in the immediate vicinity of the wearer, then all of them will energize in response to the same attack—making use of multiple devices impossible. The only way a 'backup' shield device can be owned or possessed is if it is stored away from the wearer and later retrieved.

See Chapter 18 of this game for more details on how screens work in combat, and Understanding Modern Technology (Chapter 7) for how force-fields work.

AMBASSADOR SCREEN

€ 10,000	BDR: 12
Availability: Restricted Rare	CDR: 20
Weight: 1 kg	PDR: 18
Class: Light	EDR: 24
Evasion Penalty: none	LDR: 16
Uses/Charges: Three (3)	
Damage Threshold (DT): 2	

Ambassador screens are extraordinarily rare and typically worn only by world leaders, Senators, and certain high-ranking naval officials. They require a Level-1 Weapons Permit to own or wear.

The ambassador screen's flash protection is highly effective versus assassination attempts because of its high-absorption capability and two (2) turn sustained discharge. Further, the screen has enough power to absorb several hits. What makes this screen so practical is that the entire unit can be worn on the belt or in a pocket; measuring a mere 12 x 8 x 4 centimeters in size.

COMBAT SCREEN

€ 3,000	BDR: 11
Availability: Restricted Rare	CDR: 19
Weight: 13 kg	PDR: 19
Class: Somewhat Bulky	EDR: 21
Evasion Penalty: -1	LDR: 9
Uses/Charges: Two (2)	
Damage Threshold (DT): 4	

Combat screens are very similar to ambassador screens but are available for only a fraction of the cost as they have not been miniaturized to such an extreme. The device is worn as a backpack and is quite heavy and a bit bulky. This device weighs nearly 15 kg. The upside is of course the tremendous protection offered.

Combat screens require Level-1 Weapons Permits to own or wear, but it is of course very difficult to get a hold of one on the market (legal or otherwise).

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Chapter Twenty-Unknown

Cybergear

Introduction

Cyborgs (short for cybernetic-organisms) are beings comprised of both natural 'flesh' and unnatural technology. More importantly, they are beings organically born and later outfitted with technology—not the other way around.

With organ farming and other advances in medical science, cybernetics (short for cybernetic technologies) are typically rare and unnecessary. Certain relatively unobtrusive cybergear such as the neural computer are more accepted and not altogether rare. Sometimes the use of full cybernetics can prove beneficial—especially in commercial and military applications. Most cybernetic components originate from Venwon science and are in heavy use throughout the Venwon people.

Robotics, the earlier form of cybernetics, is similar to bot technology. Actual machinery—easily recognizable as such—is in this case attached to a living being. However, with the advent of biotechnology that fully integrates with organic components, robotics are rarely if ever used. This is especially true given how robotics require constant recharging of battery packs and energy cells.

Biotech, short for 'biotechnology', is the modern form of cybernetics. Biotech entails use of advanced machines designed to operate seamlessly alongside living tissues with little or no maintenance. These machines are actually based on a number of organic technologies and principles, requiring no outside power source. Use of their host's own biochemical resources enables them to convert glucose or other available energy constituents into usable power.

Many military organizations (and some commercial ones) sometimes use biotech cybernetics for many of the same reasons that robotics were previously used. Biotech also provides a more clandestine approach to the usually overt robotics—indeed, modern biotech can reproduce entire limbs and other organs that cannot be distinguished from the real thing through any means short of a medical scan.

Finally, banks and other lending institutions will never advance funding for these operations as they cannot be easily repossessed.

The Rules

Cybergear can be added to a player character in two ways: First, it can be inserted as a step in the character creation process—this costs Starting Experience Points. Second, it may be purchased any time after the game starts—this costs credits and earned Experience Points (see below). Therefore, all available options in this chapter include both an Experience Point cost as well as a credit cost. Read all rules before beginning:

If you're making a new character, then these rules may be 'inserted' into the *Benefits and Drawbacks* or the *Improve Skills and Stats* chapter (stage) of Character Creation (or whever makes the most sense). Players may spend any number of Starting Experience Points (SXP) to 'buy' what they want. Players may not spend any credits, however, until after the game has begun.

Once the game has started, players may not use leftover Starting Experience Points or to purchase cybergear—they must spend credits AND Experience Points later earned to do so. The credit costs listed include surgical installation.

Note that between 80 and 95% of all cybergear credit costs are surgical costs, not a device expense! The reason some earned Experience Points are also required in addition to the credit costs is because the cybergear patient must spend considerable time learning how to use the device in a manner similar to how physical therapy and rehabilitation is used to regain motor control lost due to serious injury—time which could otherwise be invested in perfecting/raising other talents or skills. A very few devices, such as an Atmosfilter, require only credits because there is no physical therapy learning period to use the static device.

➤Check cybergear descriptions carefully for any prerequisites. For example, a HUD Screen requires a neural computer in order to function.

There is no limit to the amount of cybergear that may be installed in a living being—space permitting—other than practical considerations. But, maintenance and/or repair costs (if any) should also be kept in mind along with the exorbitant purchase cost (most of which are surgical fees).

Cybernetics are generally designed to replace other organ functions and so don't add any real weight to the character's overall mass. Other add-on items also have negligible weight. Certain items, however, are indeed heavy and require that players adjust their character's weight appropriately. Note that weight adjustments of this nature do count against a character's overall encumbrance.

— QuickStart Guide —

(recommended for experienced players only)

➤These are Advanced Rules

➤Cyborg creation works with all of the normal character creation rules.

➤If you're making a new character, then you must use Starting Experience Points if you wish to install cybergear—this is done as part of the *Improving Skills and Stats* stage (chapter) of Character Creation. You may not spend credits until after the game has begun.

➤If the campaign has already started, you may not spend any leftover Starting Experience Points to purchase cybergear. Rather, you must spend credits to buy the items (and surgery) you want, **AND** an amount of earned Experience Points (to learn how to use the item similar to how significant time must be devoted to physical therapy to regain use of motor control lost due to injury).

➤Common sense must apply. For example, making a Spino cyborg might be possible, but there certainly wouldn't be much room components. Other than what is practical given physical space concerns, there is no limit on the number or amount of implants. Note that 80 to 95% of the exorbitant monetary costs of cybergear are due to surgical fees and NOT the cost of the device itself. Also note that there is great stigma associated with cyborgs in most civilized locales.

➤Check selected cybergear for any prerequisites. For example, the HUD Screen requires a neural computer.

➤Most implants do not add weight. A few do; watch item descriptions for notes on whether weight should be added to the character's encumbrance.

➤There are a couple of Optional Rules:

➤Gamemasters may elect to place limits on the amount or number of cybergear that may be installed. This is especially true on smaller species.

➤Gamemasters may assign a chance for rejection by the character's immune system to new implants (typically around 5 to 20% chance).

➤The gamemaster may also elect to reduce a character's Agility, Reflex, and Harmony stats based on the amount of cybergear installed.

➤You're Done !

Biotech Devices:

The following biotech cybergear is available in the Zaon universe. Remember, biotech devices are based on electro-chemical properties designed to interact seamlessly with living tissues. Many devices are indistinguishable from the organs they replace; many are obviously implants. All costs include installation (which is partially why, depending on the surgical location and procedures needed, the costs can be so high). Depending on the device, eighty to ninety-five percent of the total biotech cost is the surgical cost—NOT the cost of the biotech device itself. **Also, only surgeons specializing in biotechnology can properly install such devices. This type of surgery is highly specialized.**

ATMOSFILTER: [20 SXP / €50,000+0XP] This device is installed in the trachea and serves as a filtration mechanism. It blocks nearly all airborne particulate matter—from dirt to bacteria to a variety of harmful gasses—though very small particles such as virals can pass through 30% of the time. Filtered particles are trapped in an artificial globulin (manufactured as needed by the device) which then hardens and seals each minute particle in a protective resin. This inert resin is then introduced into the bloodstream where it is later eliminated by the renal organs and then passed from the body. Note that although this device safely neutralizes airborne hazards, gasses and other biohazards that can enter the body through the skin or other orifice are unaffected by this device.

BIOFILTER: [25 SXP / €120,000+0XP] The BioFilter is actually a series of interlinked miniature devices positioned at key points in the cardiovascular system. These devices, in unison, screen the blood for unregistered matter.

Unregistered matter includes all manner of drugs, bacteria, bubbles, and other substances foreign to the bloodstream. Very small particles (including most viruses and other free proteins) can often penetrate these screens. Filtered particles are neutralized by an inert globulin and then allowed to pass from the body. Important: This device does not prevent the effects of drugs and other injected serums, though it will hasten their excretion from the body (often in a matter of seconds or minutes). For game purposes, sedatives and other medical drug applications are ineffective 50% of the time, and those that do manage to take their effect will have their durations shortened to less than one-tenth normal. Note: If the host also

Optional Rules

Several additional rules governing implanted cybergear are available to add more realism to the campaign:

Optional repair costs can leave an injured character paying up to 50% the original retail cost of all cybergear in order to get everything working again—especially after being reduced to Critical Life in combat.

Other options, should your gamemaster elect to employ them, include assigning a percentage chance for rejection by the character's immune system, placing a limit on the amount of cybernetic components that may be implanted, and even lowering a character's Agility, Reflex, and Harmony scores because of its presence. Gamemasters are neither encouraged nor discouraged from implementing rules such as these—the choice is up to them.

maintains a Neural Computer (not included), this device may be connected to it at no additional charge—and doing so allows the computer to register (temporarily or permanently) new matter in order to allow safe transport within the vascular network (for example, to volunatarily allow a medication to take the desired effect).

BIOREG: [40 SXP / €110,000+5XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* This device (actually a small network of devices) works with the hormonal (glandular) systems as a regulator. When the neural computer (prompted by conscious thought) determines an increased need for certain hormones, this device will stimulate the necessary glands in order to increase production. The cyborg may use this device to gain a special +1 bonus to all Strength, Agility, and Precision stat checks and skill rolls, including all types of AIM. Additionally, the Speed trait may also be increased by 20%. Safety lockouts prevent this device from being used for more than a total of 20 turns per day, as increases in adrenalin and other hormones tend to stress the body's organs. Though possible, hacking safety lockouts is not recommended as most who have done so have either died or suffered great injury from partial systemic failure. Finally, note that those who use this device for very long at all always significantly shorten their lifespan!

CYBERCOMM: [20 SXP / €150,000+5XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* This device is implanted in the skull or neck (usually out of sight, though if the cyborg has already loaded the cranial cavity with a large neural computer and multiple databank modules or other devices, then the device may be partially visible above the skin's surface) and acts as a typical long-range comlink. The neural computer (not included) then allows thought patterns to be organized into mathematical code or synthesized speech patterns which are transmitted through this comlink device. Note: the CyberComm unit uses typical comlink encryption algorithms by default (see equipment), though its interface with the required neural computer allows for more sophisticated encoding (if the character possesses the correct skills).

CYBERJAWS: [25 SXP / €90,000+2XP] This wicked contraption actually replaces the cyborg's teeth as well as most of the maxilla bone and all of the mandible bone with hardened laranium. Further, heavy FibraMuscle connects the mandible to the skull (anchored and strengthened by polymer fibers to the new maxilla implant). The result: unbreakable metallic teeth and jaws. Teeth are usually exaggerated and pointed for maximum carnage. Cyborgs outfitted with these jaws are capable of biting through steel cables, laranium paddle-locks, chains, and the like. Victims can also be bitten if one or both hands can first be used to restrain the target. Versus living tissues, the jaws inflict 1d6 points of damage per bite. Against harder materials, the jaws inflict 1d6+3 points. Note that some cyborgs dispense with the surrounding flesh of the mandible (lower jaw) in order to fully expose their jaws (and not just their teeth). Contrarily, an enamel-colored polymer can also be affixed to the new laranium teeth for a more natural appearance.

CYBEROPTICS: [20 SXP / €85,000+2XP] An artificial eye available as either a standard or tech version—the standard version appears exactly like a biological eye available in a variety of natural and unnatural colors; the tech version appearing robotic or mechanical and may even include mounting hardware which extends beyond the normal unit. The implant replaces a biological eye and interfaces with the optic nerve. Vision is slightly superior and offers perfect clarity. Furthermore, the eye is not affected by bright flashes or sudden increases in ambient light—the iris operating at nearly ten times the speed of a natural one, plus a regulator will instantly reduce the flow of data to the optic nerve should a change in lighting be sudden enough to overload the nerve. If a neural computer has also been installed (not included or required), then the device has the added function of being able to record what is seen depending on the kilodynes of memory available. Additionally, a neural computer allows for the CyberOptics to be situated in a non-standard location (different field of view) without confusing the brain. Examples of this include a third eye which faces backwards, upwards, or even forward. Note that a bright flash still renders this device 'blind' during the flash despite the fact that vision recovery after the flash is immediate.

CYBEROPTICS, ADVANCED: [35 SXP / €150,000+5XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* Advanced CyberOptics are identical to CyberOptics (above) except that they include additional features. First, these optics can zoom in or out (up to 300x) and will provide a good picture in as little as 1 lux. Second, in the absence of light, this device can rely on both passive or active infrared. Third, in dark environments where there is little or no background infrared radiation and where emissions of active infrared are not desirable, this device can also emit short-range high-band radar in order to establish a 2D perspective picture of objects (the radar is invisible to other optic cams and devices, though sensor equipment will detect it normally if able to tune to short-wave electromagnetic radiation wavelengths). Fourth, when desired, the unit may also switch to a thermographic view which distinguishes objects by differences in heat (temperature). Thermographs don't really provide a three-dimensional (depth perception) field of view, but this can be extrapolated by moving in the presence of similarly-sized objects carrying variances in heat. Note that the active infrared and passive thermograph carry a maximum range of 100 meters. Also note that the safety measures which protect against bright flashes and other sudden changes in lighting also extend to the infrared and thermographic views. Even the radar view is protected from powerful bursts of enemy radar. Flashes and other electromagnetic bursts do render these and regular CyberOptics 'blind' during a flash or burst, though vision recovery is immediate.

CYBERSCANNER: [60 SXP / €300,000+10XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* CyberScanners require that their antenna be open and exposed (that is, they cannot be subdermal), though the rest of the unit is typically mounted cranially. In any event, the device is connected to the neural computer (not included) and duplicates the effects of a Motion Tracker and Science Scanner (see Chapter ?). The antenna can be either a long flexible wire or a small rectangular or oval screen, and is partially retractable in some models.

DERMALWEAPON: [40 SXP / €80,000+5XP] ***Prerequisites:*** *Requires a Neural Computer and optionally a PowerCell.* DermalWeapons are fairly large and mostly mounted above the skin (typically on the arm). A DermalWeapon is actually more accurately a weapon mount, because it is configured as a modular hardpoint for one of several interchangeable weapons (one such weapon is included at no extra cost, see below). This hardpoint is connected to an internal PowerCell (not included) which supplies electroplasma energy to the weapon and is limited only by the amount of energy that can be supplied by the particular PowerCell. Firing is controlled by a neural link to the neural computer (not included). Interchangeable weapon modules are locked to the hardpoint (and are treated as a single object) unless unlocked by a securing lever on the unit base (in which case the weapon may be removed,

exchanged, or repaired). One of the following weapon modules is included with this hardpoint (additional weapon modules are available at €2,500 each): SK-6 Blaster; YAG Laser; or ElectroStun. Optionally, an SK-22 Rapid-Fire rifle unit is available for €4,000. Regardless of the choice made, this cybergear item adds about 2kg weight to the character, not including the weight (perhaps significant weight) of the attached weapon itself. Important: Remember that each shot fired by a DermalWeapon places a drain on the PowerCell it is connected to to the same degree that it would upon an energy clip (see Chapter ?). However, some versions of these weapons are available with standard E-Clip slots for power, and so don't require a bodily PowerCell, but a Neural Computer is nevertheless required.

DURACLAW: [30 SXP / €40,000+6XP] The DuraClaw is a retractable laranium blade used for combat. The blade is implanted along the top of the forearm and then extends out from the wrist at the back of the hand. The other option is configured as an elbow spike, but this is less common. A DuraClaw consists of either dual serrated-blades, or a large single serrated-blade, and is fashioned of hardened laranium. When fully retracted, the blade is invisible except for the small opening in the skin at the back of the wrist or elbow where the blade springs forth. The system uses a small amount of FibraMuscle to extend the blade, and is triggered by the cyborg who flexes a certain 'muscle' (the 'muscle' being a benign series of nerve endings which the user learns to 'flex'). If a neural computer is also installed (not included), then the blade can be controlled via the computer instead, but this serves no added purpose other than to halve the XP learning cost. Regardless of the configuration, the blade or blades cause 1d6 points of damage per hit.

DURACLAW, HEAVY: [30 SXP / €45,000+6XP] This unit is identical to the standard DuraClaw (see rules above) but is only available as a forearm extender (elbow spike not available) and causes more damage. The single or dual blade unit is plainly visible and quite large—extending from the wrist to the end of the hand in its **retracted** state. When activated, the blade extends one-half meter forward of the wrist and causes 2d6 points of damage per strike when weilded like a sword. Because of the blade's size, part of its housing and the extender unit rises above the surface of the skin along the length of the forearm. It also adds 2kg of weight to the character's body.

DURALIMB: [25 SXP / €100,000+10XP] ***Note:*** *Cost is per limb (arm or leg). Includes FribraMuscle.* A DuraLimb replaces a normal arm or leg with a biotech version that is stronger and more durable. DuraLimbs cannot add an additional limb to a character. The limb duplicates the bone and tissue structure of the host's original limb, but uses laranium for the bone and synthetic biotech tissues for the flesh and skin. Additionally, bundles of FibraMuscle are also included and provide enhanced strength and (sometimes) precision. The entire appendage is attached to the body's original joint structure, and also interfaces with the nerve endings that would normally continue down the limb. Only medical personnel via an examination can determine that this device is indeed not an original body part. A DuraLimb's included FibraMuscle increases the cyborg's Strength stat by 1_0 full point in only the synthetic limb (the other limb, unless also a DuraLimb, retains its original Strength). (See *FibraMuscle* description for why a strength increase occurs instead of a set Strength Stat figure.) The limb never grows tired from sustained action, though repeated heavy actions can leave a character short of breath (unless that cyborg is also outfitted with a SportsHeart [see below]). DuraLimbs weigh roughly the same as their biological counterparts. Additionally, the cyborg receiving this limb gains a one-tenth increase in Life (round normally) due to the limb's enhanced durability. For example, a cyborg with 14 Life would gain 1 Life for a new total of 15 Life. If the same Cyborg with 14 Life instead replaced both arms and both legs (all 4 limbs) with DuraLimbs, then it would gain 4 additional Life for a total of 18 (the calculation being made on the cyborg's original total, rounding to the nearest whole number). Similarly, a cyborg with 15-24 Life would gain 8 additional Life for replacing all 4 Limbs. Note: Cyborgs who also have a neural computer installed may have additional nerves which interface directly with the computer (at no extra charge). This results in a 0_5-point increase to the Precision stat in the affected limb only.

DURALIMB, HEAVY: [40 SXP / €200,000+10XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires SkelPlating;* ***Note:*** *Cost is per limb (arm or leg). Includes Heavy FibraMuscle.* The Heavy DuraLimb is identical to the standard DuraLimb (see above for rules) except that it must be attached to SkelPlating-reinforced bone at the joint to accommodate the greater stress (from strength). This heavy version includes larger bundles of enhanced FibraMuscle that result in a Strength increase of 2_0 points. The same one-tenth increase in Life is also gained as outlined under the DuraLimb, above. Although the limb appears entirely natural (unless overloaded with additional and optional components which may force certain systems above the skin's surface), the limb does appear heavily muscled (like a body-builder's). Obviously, this might look a bit strange if the cyborg was outfitted with only one such limb and didn't have a natural Strength stat of around 6_0 or so. A slight increase in Precision is also possible (see DuraLimb, above).

DURALIMB, MODULAR: [40 SXP / €200,000+12XP] ***Prerequisites:*** *Requires SkelPlating and a Neural Computer.* ***Note:*** *Cost is per arm. Includes Heavy FibraMuscle.* This limb is available only as an arm (no leg versions exist). The limb is otherwise identical to the standard DuraLimb (see above for rules), except in four principle ways: One, it must be attached to a cyborg that has already been outfitted with SkelPlating in order to accommodate the added stress (from strength). Two, it includes large bundles of enhanced Heavy FibraMuscle that result in a Strength stat increase of 2_0 points (note that a one-tenth increase in Life occurs also as outlined under DuraLimb, above). Three, the limb does not appear natural in any way. Skin and flesh-like areas are present over most of the arm, though the FibraMuscle extends above the skin's surface in large wiry bundles, as do a number of technological components. Four, half of the forearm and all of the hand have been replaced by a modular appendage which feeds directly into the neural computer. When this module is removed, the forearm ceases at what would be the midpoint of the forearm, ending in a jack designed to accommodate modules designed for this Modular DuraLimb. Note: modules which are in place are locked and cannot be removed except when consciously unlocked by the cyborg. Modular DuraLimbs add 5kg weight to the character's body. This limb comes standard with one such module (at no extra charge), and additional modules may be purchased at a cost of €17,500. The available modules are as follows:

MANIPULATOR: This module ends with a 'hand'-like extremity which includes a total of eight grasping and opposable clawfingers (four oppose the other four and accommodate side-to-side motion for complex grasping). In addition to being able to operate controls, wield firearms, and the like, other clamps allow for strong seizure of items and equipment.

INTERFACE: The Interface module terminates in a series of ports and sensors. The main port serves as a standard I/O Port (see below) as well as an I/O Drive (also see below). The I/O Port is extendable and so can be used as an active linking device. Additionally, this module houses a biotech version of the Atmospheric Senor, Bug Detector, and Telescoping Duomar Drill.

WEAPONS: The Weapons module houses an energy weapon in the same manner as a DermalWeapon (see above) in the first half of the module. Obviously, this module requires that the cyborg have a PowerCell installed. If there is no PowerCell, then the energy weapon will be incapable of firing. The other half of this module is designed to house any one of the following (one at a time): A flamethrower attachment with refillable and/or replaceable cartridges; a projectile pistol or rifle assembly (even an automatic one—though not a military-grade heavy weapon); or an elctrostunner. Although the primary energy weapon is included at no extra charge, the secondary weapon assembly must be purchased in addition to the cost of this module at a cost equal to the hand-held version (see Equipment) plus €1,500 more for special fittings.

STORAGEPOD: This module ends in a simple pincer device capable of only rudimentary grasping, but also leaves the bulk of the module empty. This empty area serves as a secret compartment or storage area and can house a volume equal to about two liters. Access is via a large lifting hatch or smaller sliding panel (most modules include both). Either access panel appears as part of the module's matrix (and not as a hatch or panel) and is securely locked—opened only by the cyborg via its own neural computer command.

FIBRAMUSCLE: [20 SXP / €60,000+7XP] ***Note:*** *Cost is per limb (arm or leg).* FibraMuscle is a synthetic biotech filament bundle designed to contract when stimulated by the same type of bioelectric pulses received by living muscle tissue. In this manner, the FibraMuscle can be implanted in place of standard muscle tissues. The synthetic muscle is stronger than normal tissue and also never gets tired from sustained motion (though repeated heavy actions can leave the cyborg short of breath—unless, of course, that cyborg is also outfitted with a SportsHeart [see below]), as the FibraMuscle still feeds off of the body's nutrients and oxygen as a power source (it just doesn't leave a waste build-up). These bundles of synthetic fiber provide a 1_0-point increase in the cyborg's Strength stat in the treated limb only. That is, the cyborg's other limb would of course retain its natural strength unless also outfitted with this device. The strength increase can exceed the character's species maximum. Note: The reason this cybergear raises strength rather than just setting it at a certain level is because a character (or species) with bigger arms or legs will have more natural muscle tissue and nerve saturation which can then be replaced with more of this stronger synthetic tissue.

FIBRAMUSCLE, HEAVY: [30 SXP / €90,000+7XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires SkelPlating.* ***Note:*** *Cost is per limb (arm or leg).* Heavy FibraMuscle includes advanced, more compact, versions of the same synthetic material used in standard FibraMuscle. It is otherwise identical to standard FibraMuscle (please read the description, above), except that it provides a 2_0-point increase in Strength in the treated limb and also requires that the cyborg have already been outfitted with SkelPlating in order to prevent bone breakage from the additional stress. Note that the strength increase can exceed the character's species maximum.

FIELDSCRAMBLER: [50 SXP / €100,000+2XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* A field scrambler is implanted in the chest or abdominal cavity. It is switched on and off by the neural computer (not included) by thought command. This device scrambles all carrier-wave transmissions within a radius of 20 meters. That is, all comlinks, radar, motion trackers, sensors, and other wave devices are rendered inoperable within the scrambled area (including the cyborg's own signals). The device is low-powered (hence the short range) and, like most biotech devices, is powered by the body's own biochemical fuel. The device has no effect on subspace transmissions.

HUD SCREEN: [60 SXP / €120,000+4XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* The HUD (short for Heads Up Display) Screen provides additional information to the cyborg as well as improved AIM and other benefits. The device consists of both a command module (hardware and software attached to the main neural computer) and a specialized lens (fitted beneath the cornea of the eye). The lens can be fitted to a biological eye or any of the CyberOptic devices, and is permanent. HUD Screens project data onto the retina (or CyberOptic photosensor) in a heads-up display format. To the user, these projections appear as lists of data and other information that overlay the peripheral areas of vision and are of 50% opacity (meaning they are translucent). Even when displaying large amounts of information, the HUD Screen doesn't obscure the character's vision (due to the 50% opacity), but can nevertheless be deactivated by mental command (via the neural computer). In addition to providing pertinent data from the neural computer, this device can also project a cross-hairs heads-up display guide for weapons fire. Targeting works with the neural computer and uses subroutines to automatically track multiple targets while determining optimum hit locations for each. The character's own weapon is simultaneously tracked by extrapolating its projected hit location from the weapon's perspective angle (information returned from both neurological data and obtained three-dimensionally by analyzing the weapon's position as it is held out in the field of view). This results in a dot or secondary cross-hairs guide which moves as the cyborg moves its own weapon—making it easier to line up the marker and the target's preferred hit location. The result: a $+2_0$ increase in the character's Ranged AIM trait. Other AIM traits are unaffected. Additionally, the HUD Screen can aid the character in watching for weapons—especially when they are only partially exposed or the brandishing individual is at a distance—by automatically displaying warning markers on the weapon's locations. Weapons are identified via a specialized databank included with the HUD hardware component which lists all known weapon types and can even catalog new ones. Other types of information returned by a HUD Screen include distance and speed computations, estimated weights and material types (by cataloged visual comparison and interpolation), and estimated freshness of pizza.

I/O DRIVE: [15 SXP / €80,000+1XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* This device serves as a datachip slot. The slot drive can read and write to standard datachips (sending and receiving information from the neural computer), but in order to do so it must be at the skin's surface. Cyborgs who are careful about maintaining a natural guise will often try to hide these drives in hair or with a somewhat inconspicuous removable skin tab. Others will openly display these ports on arm or chest modules or even on the head.

I/O PORT: [20 SXP / €85,000+1XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* This port allows the cyborg to link its neural computer with another computer or device similarly outfitted with a standard jack or port. This device consists of a small, largely unno-

ticeable, port that is often located on the scalp. If desired, the port can be hidden in the hair or 'plugged' with a somewhat inconspicuous removable skin tab. In order to actually connect this port with another computer's jack, a cable must be used. Cables are included with the purchase of this option, and must be stored separately on the cyborg's person.

NEURAL COMPUTER-10: [40 SXP / €400,000+8XP] The neural computer is a matrix of processors and integrated memory banks linked directly with the cyborg's organic brain via dozens of specialized synaptic nodes. Neural computers are quite small and are implanted directly in the host's brain. The computer acts more like a subconscious reasoner, leaving conscious thought to the organic brain, working on background information and handling any computational or memory needs. This does result in an increase to the cyborg's Intellect stat because of the added reasoning ability. Additionally, the user gains a photo-eidetic memory capability, allowing the storage and immediate retrieval of thoughts, ideas, data, and imagery. Anything previously viewed by the character can be recalled instantly at a later date—even the page of a book could be recalled (and thus re-read) from memory. Memory capacity is measured in kilodynes of data, where approximately one month of memories requires about 1 kilodyne (kd). This rate of storage includes most details from every day, including complete conversations, things read, a computer screen, street configurations, general number of people, and so on, but not what every passerby seen was wearing, overheard background noise or chatter, nor every passing vehicular license plate. That is, full-motion video is not recorded—only periodic images which are then pruned to an abstract description and then stored to memory. Essentially, anything of the cyborg's focus is recorded in detail, other data is not (and cannot be). Due to memory limitations, data must occasionally be wiped in order to allow room for new data and memories. Wipes are generally performed on a substantive basis, meaning that all details not deemed critical are purged but where an overall recollection exists. After this kind of memory 'compression', approximately one year devoid of details can be stored in only 1 kd of data. Finally, Skillware (as used in Bots) can be loaded and used provided there is sufficient memory available. These software programs are very large in terms of memory requirements but carry skill rating equivalents in a variety of academic skills. The Neural Computer-10 comes standard with 10 kilodynes of memory, increases the user's Intellect stat by 1_0 points, and accelerates the character's Initiative by one class. Neural Computers do not count toward meeting the minimum prerequisites for telepathic ability. The increase in Intellect can exceed the character's species maximum. Finally, it is important to point out that Neural Computers do not replace the brain's normal thoughts or have anything to do with personalities, nor can they be used to record or generate skillware or other skilled know-how—skillware requires the resources of giant software megacorporations. Therefore, no benefit to the Knowledge stat is received—especially due to the differences in how memory works with a neural computer (more like a library and less like real brain memory).

NEURAL COMPUTER-20: [60 SXP / €600,000+10XP] Identical to the Neural Computer-10, above, except that the Intellect stat increase is 2_0 points and the unit comes standard with 20 kd of memory.

NEURAL COMPUTER-30: [80 SXP / €2,000,000+15XP] Identical to the Neural Computer-10, above, except that the Intellect stat increase is 3_0 points and the unit comes standard with 30 kd of memory. In addition, the character's Initiative is accelerate by 2 classes instead of only 1.

NEURAL DATABANK: [15 SXP / €200,000+2XP] ***Prerequisite:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* The Neural DataBank is nothing more than a memory expansion module for a neural computer and must be installed alongside the neural computer in the cranial cavity. Multiple banks can be implanted in one individual, but no more than a dozen such devices can be safely installed—each additional installation beyond the first dozen carries a cumulative 10% chance of a fatal or debilitating stroke. Each Neural DataBank adds 20 kilodynes of memory storage.

NUTRASYZER: [30 SXP / €180,000+0XP] ***Prerequisites:*** *Requires a PowerCell and a Neural Computer.* This medium-sized device synthesizes all of the organic nutrients that the biological tissues require—thereby eliminating the need to ingest food or liquids. It is installed in the abdominal or lower chest area, and must be connected to a neural computer in order to accurately recognize nutrient need. The device is large enough that it must either be allowed to protrude from the skin's surface or it may be housed completely within the body by replacing the stomach and/or intestines (once these organs have been removed, however, solid food can never again be ingested—unless the device is removed and new organs are farmed). Further, the device must also be connected to a PowerCell, which the Netrasyzer then drains and in turn converts electroenergy and raw materials into usable biochemical nutrients. The device comes standard with enough raw materials (in concentrated form—the basic protein building blocks and other substances) to last approximately 20 years, after which the entire device must be replaced. Nutrasyzers drain 10 energy units of power from the main PowerCell every day.

POWERCELL-A: [25 SXP / €60,000+0XP] PowerCells are not typically required for biotech, though certain devices do require 'real' electroplasma energy power to operate. The PowerCell-A is identical to the A-Type EnergyClip (see Equipment) insofar as the amount of energy it can store and also in size as well, except that this device is rechargeable. The PowerCell is small enough that it can be housed inconspicuously within the body, but because it needs an external jack for recharging, a small port must be located somewhere on the skin's surface. These ports are installed either on the chest, abdominal region, wrist, shoulder, or neck. The jacks can be 'plugged' with an artificial removable skin tab in order to help disguise the port. A recharging cable (included) is carried separately on the cyborg's person and fits any standard power jack. Recharging requires one minute per energy unit regained. In addition to the standard recharge jack, larger overt clip slots can also be connected and installed on the skin's surface at no extra charge. These slots enable the cyborg to 'plug-in' any standard A-Type EnergyClip into the slot, thereby allowing the being to draw power directly from the clip instead of from the internally-housed PowerCell. Alternatively, the cyborg may even use these clips to recharge the PowerCell at the same speed as a normal jack connection. Note that clip slots are plainly obvious and further don't allow the inserted clip to go very deep (which leaves most of it sticking out).

POWERCELL-B: [30 SXP / €70,000+0XP] Identical to PowerCell-A, above, except that this device is only slightly larger and is equivalent to the B-Type EnergyClip (200 EU).

POWERCELL-C: [40 SXP / €85,000+0XP] Identical to PowerCell-A, above, except that this device is much larger and typically protrudes above the skin and is equivalent to the C-Type

EnergyClip (500 EU). Cyborgs with Nutrasyzers who have also had their entire digestive tracts removed are able to completely house this device internally—otherwise not. These cells are also large enough that they add weight to the character's body. Weight equals 3 kg.

SHIELD, ADAPTIVE: [80 SXP / €220,000+6XP] ***Prerequisites:*** *Requires a PowerCell and a Neural Computer.* An Adaptive Shield Generator is a self-contained personal force-field device. This device is manufactured by NivTech, the Nivean-owned company, and is very expensive and quite difficult to obtain even if one has the money. The generator is small and mounted internally, consisting of a software and hardware module. The hardware module generates a spatial distortion field similar to what is used aboard starships, including a small inertial damping field as well. These shields do not form bubbles, but rather closely follow the contour of the user's body. The shield is adaptive because the neural computer is able to adjust the shield's harmonics in order to increase its effectiveness versus certain types of weapons and alter the shield's Damage Threshold (DT). Like any other screen, though, the unit maintains built-in fuse charges that activate and then burn-out after use. These charges can be replaced/repaired for a cost of €20,000 a piece and are surgically swapped. The unit comes standard with and holds a maximum of five such charges/uses, each lasting for 3 turns. The software module interfaces with both the neural computer and the generator, together being capable of analyzing the type frequencies and harmonics of any successful weapon strikes in order to provide data to the user and automatically adjust the shield for a better defense if so desired by the user. If the cyborg is able to visually ascertain a weapon type prior to a weapons hit (a HUD Screen can help in this manner, see above), then the shield may be adapted before impact. These shields are highly efficient, possessing dynamic armor ratings and absorbing all damage below their ratings at the time of impact. The user may not switch this device on and off, though its DT can be set anywhere from 1 to 10 points of damage. Unless specified, the shield is considered set to its last adaptation. Adaptation is user-selectable and allows for distribution of absorption strengths as follows: The user gets 25 shield rating points to divide among the five different shield ratings (e.g., BDR, EDR, etc.). These points may be divided in any manner, except that no rating may be set above 12 (i.e., all ratings must be between 0 and 12). This configuration can be changed once per turn and may be effected by the neural computer—thereby leaving the user undistracted and able to function normally every turn (the change occurring on the user's Initiative Phase). Any damage inflicted by a single shot above the shield's rating penetrates to the character. All damage below the rating is absorbed by the shield for the three turns in which it remains active, after which one of the shields uses/charges is burned-out. Depending on the model, the spatial-distortion which occurs at the point of impact is visible as either a bluish-green or green glow that expands outward from the impact point over the cyborg's body one-half meter and is also audible as a basal thump. Weight equals 2 kg. For more information on screens and shields, see Chapter 23: *Armor and the Equipment*.

SKELPLATING: [20 SXP / €150,000+0XP] Strengthening the cyborg's skeletal support structure is sometimes necessary because of the great stress and weight DuraLimbs and other cybergear may place on them. SkelPlating does just that. The cyborg's entire skeletal system (all of the bones) are coated and encased in laranium plating to help prevent breakage and to bear heavy weight. A small amount of filament fibre is also used to link joints more securely. Doing this benefits the character's resolve against attacks by increasing the cyborg's Life score by 1 point. Please note that laranium bone plating is not actually solid plates, but rather contains many holes to allow for vascular access. Despite the very light laranium alloys, this option still adds about 5 kg of weight to the character's body.

SPORTSHEART: [20 SXP / €90,000+0XP] This biotech version of the heart does not tire and provides nearly twice the valve action of its biological counterpart. Its purpose is to allow the cyborg to function for extended periods of time without rest. When combined with DuraLimbs (or at least FibraMuscle), characters are able to run great distances or climb treacherous cliffs without stopping or tiring. A SportsHeart will not, however, prevent biological muscle tissue from tiring—though it may extend the workout somewhat by providing good blood flow to fuel and cleanse the tissues. Note: Heavy use of this heart will deplete the body's fuel reserves—requiring increased intake of a balanced diet.

STEALTHFIELD: [40 SXP / €200,000+0XP] The StealthField essentially 'cloaks' the character from scanning devices. It does not make the character invisible or difficult to see through visual means. What it does do is provide a number of ECM tools that combine to either absorb, deflect, or return false scans. Radar, sensors, motion trackers, and other scanning devices fail 7-in-10 times. Whenever an opponent attempts to scan a cyborg outfitted with this device, apply a +5 Step Penalty to the dice roll. If no dice roll is required, then apply a 7-in-10 failure rate to the device. Even if the scan is successful, inconsistent, intermittent, or incorrect readings are obtained 5-in-10 times (make a die roll to determine). Note: If the user also maintains a neural computer, then this device may be connected to it at no additional charge. Doing so enables the cyborg to switch the device on and off at will (2XP).

SUBGUN: [40 SXP / €50,000+5XP] SubGuns are biochemically-powered weapons mounted under the skin in the arm just above the wrist. The gun port is normally retracted and non-visible, though a small bit of FibraMuscle allows the user to 'flex' the weapon forward about five centimeters in order to expose the barrel. The weapon is small, so the wrist mounted gun is inconspicuous except for the barrel opening which appears as a double slit scar along one of the sides of the wrist. A removable skin tab can also be used to 'plug' the opening in order to help further disguise the weapon. Because the weapon is powered biochemically, it cannot be fired very many times and inflicts only limited damage. The weapon can be fired once each day for every 1_0 points of Willpower (or portion thereof) a character possesses. For example, a character with 6_1 Willpower could fire the weapon 7 times in one day. The weapon fires a small bolt of energy that inflicts 1d6-1 points of damage per shot with a range and effect similar to a mini-blaster.

SUBGUN, POWERED: [30 SXP / €40,000+5XP] ***Prerequisites:*** *Requires a PowerCell.* The powered version of the standard SubGun (see above) is the same as that device but is instead connected to an internal PowerCell (not included). The weapon can therefore be fired any number of times (power permitting—each shot drains 1 energy unit) and scores 2d6 points of energy damage with a range similar to a mini-blaster.

SUBLAR: [35 SXP / €350,000+0XP] Sublar is the cyborg version of weblar armor. It makes use of a poly-laranium mesh laminated with duomar that is very light, tough, and reflective. The resulting mesh is then carefully implanted surgically beneath the cyborg's entire dermis. Because the mesh is implanted below the dermis (and not just the epidermis), the mesh is entirely invisible—

leaving the flesh just as supple as before. The procedure is expensive and time consuming, but can be well worth the while as weblar armor is one of the best types available today. Sublar cannot be combined with other armors any better than other uses of multiple armors—See Chapter ?. Also note that even injuries deflected or absorbed by the sublar may still leave the cyborg with permanent (sometimes severe) scarring (not to mention bleeding) as weapon strikes must first pass through the skin before the armor has a chance to stop them. Naturally, modern plastic-surgery can eliminate most or all of these, but it becomes an additional step in the healing process. Weight equals 4 kg.

VOICEDRIVE: [30 SXP / €75,000+8XP] ***Prerequisites:*** *Requires a Neural Computer.* This simple and small device replaces the larynx and is connected to the neural computer via any of the computer's typical neural node wires. It serves in the same capacity as a standard biological larynx would, except that the dynamic range of sound produced is widened. Additionally, software allows the neural computer to use the VoiceDrive to mimic other voices and sounds with good accuracy. Note: the mimic ability is not typically quite as good as a bot's is, and can be detected as a facsimile via a Tough Intuition check when attempting to reproduce someone else's voice (for purposes of hearing beings—not computer voice print security checks).

WAVEPORT: [25 SXP / €40,000+2XP] This tiny device is designed to replace the entire hearing organ of most any species. It can pickup sound at twice the ability of its biological counterpart, and also includes safety thresholds that instantly decrease decibel volumes transmitted when a rise in noise could be otherwise painful or damaging.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Vehicles

Buying Used Vehicles

Pre-owned vehicles of all types are available for less than the standard price. Larger vehicles tend to hold their value better than smaller ones, but none are available for less than 30% the normal price (i.e., 70% off of MSRP).

Buying used vehicles carries some risk. First, these vehicles are more difficult to repair. Second, they break down more often, requiring more maintenance. Indeed, sometimes buyers are better off with new vehicles.

For game purposes, take one-tenth of the percent by which the price is discounted and apply it directly as a special Step Penalty modifier to maintenance and repair rolls of the gamemaster's choice (usually about 1/3 of all rolls). Furthermore, the discounted percentage becomes the percentage chance for a system failure or breakdown every time the vehicle is pushed hard.

For example, buying a vehicle at 70% the normal price would leave its owner with a +3 Step Penalty to one in every three repair efforts while the ship itself would stand a base 30% chance of system failure every time it was pushed hard.

Ground Vehicles

These are cars not all that different that what we see in today's world. Most are electric, running on rechargeable power cells, and all are relatively safe. Standard ground vehicles hold either two or four passengers, though luxurious models can accommodate up to eight. Cars have maximum speeds around 200 kph.

Air Vehicles

SkyCars are very popular, able to transport people quickly while no longer being limited to the road. Still, larger cities force motorists to adhere to designated skyways in order to reduce the likelihood of accident. SkyCars accommodate anywhere from one to nine passengers, whereas a SkyBus can handle over 30. Most CargoSkiffs are about three times the size of a ground truck, able to transport relatively heavy loads. All sky vehicles are limited to about 400 kph and cannot leave the atmosphere. They run on rechargeable energy cells, just like ground vehicles.

Space Vehicles

Starfighters are single-person craft designed for combat. They are not capable of faster-than-light travel but are by far the fastest of the space vehicles. Most fighters are capable of atmospheric combat whereas all are capable of atmospheric entry and take off. All are legally armed.

Blockade runners are small vessels, housing no more than a dozen or so passengers and crew, capable of quantum drive and highspeed maneuvers. They have very little in the way of cargo space, but are

typically armed. Corvettes are similar in design, though somewhat smaller.

Freighters come in all shapes and sizes. They are designed for one thing: hauling cargo. Few are armed, most are slow, but all are capable of FTL. Stock light freighters are decently quick, about the same size as a blockade runner, but not as fast. Some stock light freighters are armed. Heavy cargo freighters are larger but still not considered to be a capital vessel. Super freighters (not listed here), however, are enormous.

Finally, transports are glorified shuttles, used to move upwards of 50 people between worlds. Most are capable of warp.

Submersible Vehicles

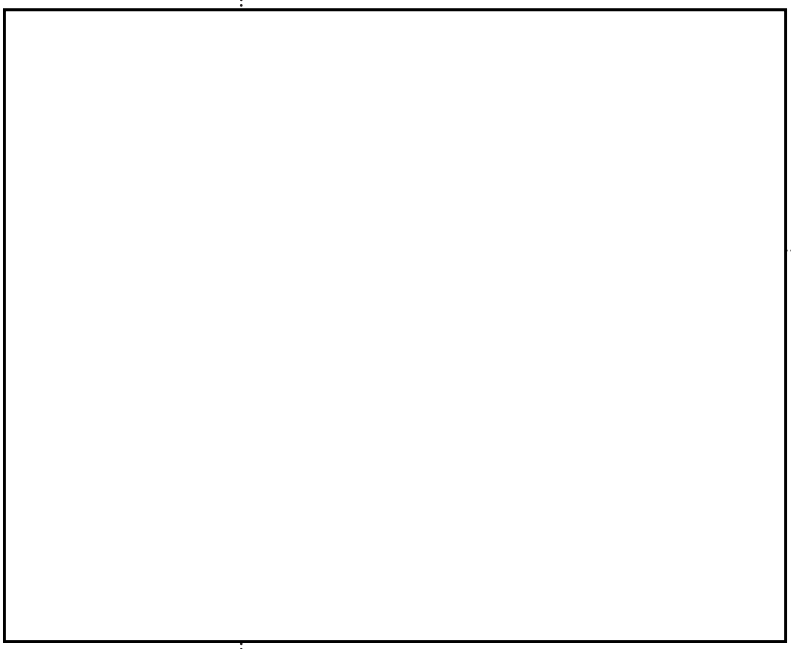
Many worlds have underwater cities and dwellings requiring a submersible to reach them. Starfighters, SkyCars, and other vehicles are not able to travel in a medium as dense as water. Submersibles use either props or jets to achieve movement.

— QuickLook Costs —

	€
GROUND VEHICLES:	
Car, Economy	7,000
Car, Typical	12,000
Cary, Luxurious	35,000
Truck	30,000
AIR VEHICLES:	
SkyCar, Economy	18,000
SkyCar, Typical	25,000
SkyCar, Luxurious	50,000
SkyBus	50,000
CargoSkiff	60,000
SPACE VEHICLES:	
Blockade Runner, DeGorra Class	425,000
Blockade Runner, Lancer Class	1,500,000
Blockade Runner, Orca Class	3,150,000+
Blockade Runner, Starspinner Class	5,600,000
Freighter, Heavy Cargo, Typical	1,100,000
Freighter, Stock Light, Typical	350,000
Starfighter, Battlefighter Class	1,050,000
Starfighter, Guppy Class	380,000
Starfighter, Hornet Class	1,750,000
Starfighter, Icon Class	960,000
Starfighter, Nightvenom Class	1,200,000
Transport, Typical	400,000
SUBMERSIBLE VEHICLES:	
Deep Explorer	25,000
HydroRay	35,000
Skimmer	8,000

Part Six

Gamemaster's Section



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CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Overview of Gamemaster's Section

Attention Players !

If you're the kind of person who doesn't like to know the end of a story before you watch a movie or read a good book, then stop here. The rest of this section contains a few spoilers that might take away from the surprise and excitement of your game. Only gamemasters should continue reading as they need to know more about the political intrigue going on behind the scenes, the capabilities and stats of your adversaries, and some adventure plots you might be playing out.

The Gamemaster

Deciding to be the gamemaster takes courage, for it is a demanding job. You must construct exciting adventures for your players, and each adventure must be full of plots, subplots, memorable villains, good friends, and action. Sometimes you'll even need to design maps (these can be sketched out on graph paper) which detail the facilities, ships, and/or wilderness areas your adventure is to take place. And all the while you must keep the pace of your game going and the excitement up while being prepared for the unexpected. You must also be well versed in game rules, be fair and impartial to everyone, and have decent common sense.

But relax, although this sounds like a lot (and it is), this section of the book provides several tools that will help you design an outline for your game and make the whole process moderately easy (and rewarding!). Be prepared to spend more time with this game than your players do, but the role of gamemaster needn't consume too much of your time. Indeed, some of the best gamemasters are those who know the basic outline of their adventure, are familiar with the tools in this section, and then simply 'wing it' from there.

How this Section is Organized

Part 6 of this book is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter deals with gamemastering rules, the second covers a few basic plotlines for you to build upon, and the third and fourth chapters provide non-player characters (NPCs) as well as a few bestial creatures and suggestions how to play them.

The gamemastering chapter discusses the basics behind constructing a campaign, how to handle player questions or disputes, tricks for adding color and realism to the game, things to watch for that players some times do, and a few additional rules for keeping player characters in check. How to end an adventure and deal out experience is also part of gamemastering.

Chapter 29 deals solely with adventure themes. The goal of the chapter is to supply Adventure Seeds to which gamemasters can further develop and flesh-out into unforgettable quests.

Finally, Chapter 30 concentrates on the NPCs in the game. Tips for how to make villains and allies memorable as well as how to handle reactions to player characters is also discussed. At the end of this chapter you'll find several templates for adversaries your characters might frequently encounter (like an Imperial Trooper) plus those which you might not be able to figure out on your own (like the stats for a typical member of the HonorGuard or ISA).

Additionally, info on pets, beasts, and a few bots is provided as well. These serve as NPCs of a different sort.

Enjoy!

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Gamemastering

Introduction

Players wishing to act as the gamemaster need to read this chapter carefully. The first part is geared toward adventure design, game philosophy, and how to handle your players. The rest of the tools presented address a number of rules topics directly and any special considerations concerning them.

Designing an Adventure

You've seen it every time you watch a movie or read a book; there's always a plot—though not necessarily much of one. Coming up with a plot—and thus an adventure—for your players is easier than it sounds. All you have to do is 'borrow' a basic plot (not story) outline from a movie you've seen or a book you've read. You may have to adapt it slightly so that it fits with the Zaon universe, but plot outlines rarely involve enough specific detail where this becomes a problem. If you're up to the challenge, feel free to come up with your own original plot, too. The next chapter in this section offers a list of sample ideas you can use for your game.

Setting the Proper Mood

A good game requires that you take a few steps conducive to an effective play environment. Make sure that you're properly prepared and that you've selected an area free from distractions and excessive noise—this is critical. Playing in a public venue will work but only if you and your players are not interrupted by the presence or questions of passerbys. Similarly, bringing a young child, sibling, or pet along with you may make the event more family-oriented but it will likely interfere with building suspense and game action if they're constantly interrupting with questions or attentive needs. If you can handle the distractions then good for you, but be absolutely sure that you're not disrespecting your fellow players' ability to enjoy the game.

DEALING WITH RULES LAWYERS: Rules Lawyers are players who quote rules to you for any number of reasons. Usually, these players are simply trying to be helpful, as you may not know all the rules. Other players may be trying to use the rules to their advantage, or even badger you into giving them their way. When this happens during play, it can be disruptive. A player who occasionally points out a rule and who is helpful in doing so is not a problem and should be thanked. But players who stop the game frequently and therefore take away from other players' ability to enjoy the game must be dealt with.

First, remember the cardinal rule: You're the Boss. Gamemasters should know the rules, but they're not expected to memorize all of them. The best gamemasters will accept rules input so long as it is brief and not overly argumentative.

Second, inform players of your stance on this subject before the game starts. Tell them that if they experience a rule during play they believe you have used incorrectly, that they shouldn't be afraid to inform you about it briefly. But be clear to them that you may be purposely altering the rule for a specific reason or you may be play-

ing by different rules (house rules). Therefore, whenever a rules dispute arises it can be briefly discussed, but any in-depth discussions (or arguments) have to be saved until after the game session has ended. If players know that by biting their tongue for the time being that they will get ample opportunity to discuss the rule later, those players will likely be much happier with you and you with them.

For example, a player who is running a telepath character with manifested talents decides to shape a manifested talent that you're not an expert on. You then explain what happens, but the player interjects saying that the power works in another way. If you don't know, you might take your player's word for it or you might stop the game to look up the power's description. But it is usually better for all involved if you fudge it—decide how it works for now in the best interests of game balance and then research it and discuss the matter with your player after the game.

SETTLING ARGUMENTS: Having arguments is human nature, so expect that it'll come up eventually (hopefully not very often). For the most part, arguments center around one of two things: either how a rule works or a player becomes upset because of another player's actions (or your actions). If it's about a rule, then handle it as you would a rules lawyer (see above). If it's about you being unfair, tell the player that you'll discuss it privately with him or her after the game, but for now the game has to keep moving. If it's about the actions (or lack thereof) of another player character, you may have some work ahead of you.

First, don't be afraid to express any of your own displeasure you may have over one player's cruelty or abuse of another. Technically, you shouldn't order that abusing player to take other action (after all, his or her character is theirs to do with and control as they please), but you can certainly let him or her know how uncool their choice is. Be careful that you don't allow your own displeasure to result in harsh treatment of that player's character—you must remain impartial—as mistreating that player yourself in turn only leads to hurt feelings and possibly the loss of an otherwise good player. Conversely, don't be afraid to give the abused player a boon of some kind to help raise spirits—any bullies will think twice about abusing other players if the abused ones wind up with all the fortunate luck and treasure! Being nice can pay off.

There is one case where you must be careful about awarding abused players. Some players outright ask for abuse or warrant it through actions of their own. Additionally, some of the best roleplayers will have their characters attack another player character when it is 'in-character' for them to do so. This, of course, should be very rare as players ought to have some idea or notion of which actions will provoke another character in the story. And players also shouldn't be creating characters that are so short-tempered (even if it is a realistic character personality type) that it detracts from the game—if they do, you might suggest they choose another personality archetype so that everyone can enjoy the game.

KEEPING EVERYONE TOGETHER: As each player controls the actions of a character, it is certainly possible that disagreements will arise and characters will go off in separate directions as a result. Again, you should never tell a player that they can't do this—else they'll start to feel as though they're not really 'running' their character because you are. But there are a few things you can do to keep everyone together—and keeping everyone together is very desirable.

Realize that when characters go off in separate directions, that you must essentially divide the group, gamemastering one group and then the next while the others sit idly by twiddling their thumbs (or worse, getting into mischief). Even worse is when you divide the group and cause the same effect except this time it isn't the player's fault that they're sitting around while you deal with only part of the group. There are certainly times when a good gamemaster might separate the group in order to add to the suspense by scaring players (imagine a blast door closing suddenly, separating the lone tech from the rest of the group while the tech then hears some alien monstrosity's growl from behind)—this is good roleplaying but should be used sparingly, and make sure you don't kill off your character in the process. So, just try to be respectful of everyone's time (and time is valuable) by keeping everyone together.

The simplest way to get everyone back together is to either generate dependence between characters or lure them back with something they want—just be discreet about it because players don't like to be manipulated. Dependency should already exist to some degree, but imagine a player running a doctor character who is upset and wanders off. That character could easily be persuaded into rejoining the group if confronted by possible combat or physical threat he or she may be unprepared to handle alone, or you could even lure the character back by having the party stumble across some nifty equipment, medical instruments, or other gadgets that that player is now missing out on. Fudge the story a bit if necessary to get people back together. The same rules apply to characters of a combat nature. Even if they are the full brawn of the party, you can still make them wish they were with the main group. Imagine a lone Xom fighter who, on his way out, gets stuck in an elevator or locked in a room. This Xom might not have the tech skills necessary to get out (but he hopefully has a comlink to call for his comrades' help). If it's the party who's abandoned another player, have them get stuck (better yet, captured) or otherwise have need for the character they've ostracized!

If none of the above works, you can attempt a more devious solution by giving a slight decrease in attention and time to the party member(s) who strayed and split from the group. That is, instead of dividing your time evenly, subtly give more time to the others and increasingly less time to the one who wandered off in hopes that he or she will get bored. After all, it's only fair that you spend a proportional amount of time to the number of players you're dealing with at the time. If a group of five has a lone character stray, you might work your way up to giving four-times the length of play to the main group and thus only brief attention to the lone character.

HANDLING NOISY PLAYERS: Even the best gamemasters can experience trouble from noisy or unruly players if GMs don't know how to deal with them. You don't have to possess a forceful personality to get control over you players, either. A few guidelines are all you need.

First, eliminate or monitor outside influences that can detract from play. Mood music is great for game atmosphere, but be very sure that volume levels are down low. After all, players need to hear not just the words of their fellow players and gamemaster, but also the inflections as well. Never have TV on during a game—this is a sure disaster. Also, while its quite common and enjoyable to serve refreshments at game events, make sure that moderation is in order else you'll lose control once the event turns into a picnic or party (depending on how lame or crazy you and your group are).

Second, realize that game events are all about having fun, so some amount of unrelated conversation or joking is to be expected. If your local comedic player cracks a great but unrelated joke in the middle of a game and everyone is laughing aloud and having a good time—go with it and enjoy it yourself. But these types of distractions shouldn't be too common. When players begin having too many game-irrelevant conversations, then it is time for you to step in. Be nice about it, but be firm and use a sharp voice (not a harsh one, nor

should you ever yell). Don't be afraid to repeat yourself, louder if necessary, and if all else fails then simply ask the disruptive player to leave. If you can't bring yourself to ask a friend or player to leave, then ask the entire group collectively if they'd rather put the game off for another time—chances are that they'll settle right down (and if they don't, don't become upset, just realize that that particular day may not be the best time to play the game through no fault of your own).

If your players don't get to see each other outside of the gaming group, then it's often best to start each game with a 'socialization hour' in order to give people time to hang out and catch up. However, be sure people still arive on time. If a player arrives later knowing that he's only missing the hang-out period, and then arrives wanting to socialize—you've got a problem. Nip it in the bud before that happens.

Third, if you are intently involved in roleplaying out an interaction between an NPC and one or more of your players, and you find that a couple of your other players are involved in another outside conversation, don't worry about it unless it is disruptive to you or your involved players. But, never re-describe a situation to distracted players should events take a sudden change where they weren't paying attention because of an outside conversation—that way, those players are more likely to pay attention in the future. Don't go as far as attacking the unattentive player's character, because then you're saying that the character is not paying attention when it is actually the player who isn't. However, that doesn't mean you can't immediately state that mercenaries jump into the room and point their weapons. As attentive players describe their characters jumping behind cover, the unattentive ones might just leave their characters standing there and open targets... Just be sure to give them ample time to announce their actions as if they were paying attention, and take the time to explain the situation normally. That is, don't purposely hurry in order to cause harm to befall unattentive player characters—take it at a normal pace so that your actions are fair and give everyone a fair opportunity to respond as they normally would. Also, don't do this if the player has actually stepped out of the room for a legitimate reason such as to visit the bathroom.

Like it or not, cell phones are a normal part of modern society. When your player's phone rings loudly in the middle of a quiet, damp dungeon setting where you just spent the last several minutes carefully setting the proper eerie mood with recorded sound effects of dripping water, try to refrane from momentary lapses in sanity that might cause you to leap across the table upon sharp figurines in order to grab your player's cell phone only to hurl it from your 21st floor apartment window into the city abyss below. If you're the kind of person who can't stand a phone interruption, then it's only fair to inform your players in advance: explain that phones must be off so that calls go to voicemail during the game, else they should find another game. Better yet, lighten up a bit. Life happens, and it shouldn't be a problem for an occasional call during the game. It only becomes a problem when a particular player loses track of what's considerate and what's not by receiving too many calls.

Adding Color with Good Descriptions

The heart of good story is not its plot, as many might believe, but rather how the story is delivered. Good delivery uses many or all of the senses while simultaneously moving a player by drawing a parallel to real life events in which the player can identify. For simplicity, combine these two aspects into a single delivery. That is, use analogies and examples of sensory perception that are well-known or easily recognized:

SIGHT: Imagine how things might look. Is the light dim, casting shadows or flickers? Are there wires hanging like dark vines from gaping black holes in the ceiling of an abandoned research lab? Do you see beads of moisture condensation, like those from the side of a cold soda can, on the walls for some reason? What about plant overgrowth making it difficult to see farther than a few feet? Are the plant's leaves and vines moving strangely in the passing breeze? Does the world look dead from space or is it bustling with activity?

SOUND: Imagine how things might sound. Is there a low hum from the reactor or drive engines? Does the sound of the shuttle ride sound like a car ride? Do you hear dripping from a leaky coolant pipe? What about water spraying from a broken pipe making it impossible to hear any nearby movement? Could the deck plates creak like old wooden floors when stepped on? Imagine that an alien beast might release a dreadful roar which echoes down the corridors or through the woods, making it impossible to tell which way the sound is coming? What about the stomping of something very heavy walking on the grating one or two decks up? Imagine being on a ship when you hear the sound of metal twisting and then snapping from outside?

SMELL: Imagine how things might smell. Is the air stale or fresh? Is there something rotting nearby? Does the pungent odor of animal waste assault you when you enter a room? How about something reminiscent of a public restroom? Conversely, is the scent of good cooking in the air? Consider the scent of flowers? Or does the waft of perfume grab you as the ship's beautiful captain walks by?

TOUCH: Imagine how things might feel. Are things cold or hot? Does the alien device feel like the skin of a snake? Human skin? Is there a sticky film on the keypad? Could the floor feel slick like an iced sidewalk? Does everyone get thrown to the side, perhaps against the wall, when the ship is struck by weapons fire or an asteroid? Does the surface feel smooth as glass, rough like concrete, abrasive like sandpaper, wet like a slimy slug, soft like a cat's fur, or pleasant like human skin?

TASTE: Use sparingly, but do imagine how things might taste where appropriate. After a fight do the characters sense the salty copper-like taste of blood in their mouths? Could the water taste strangely bitter like old cough medicine? Does the coffee have a strange almond flavor?

How to Encourage Roleplaying over Roll-playing

Getting players to roleplay (as opposed to roll-play) can be a bit of a challenge—especially for new groups as well as seasoned ones set in their old-fashioned habits. One of the most rewarding ways role-playing games can be carried out is when each player speaks in character. Moreover, add an accent or twist to your voice for dramatic effect—you needn't produce an accurate or even good accent, the goal is simply to make your voice different than it usually is; which can even be as simple as a change in pitch.

That is, when your character says something, you say it using a different inflection in your voice. That way, the other players know immediately if either you (personally as the player) are speaking for game mechanics reasons perhaps to describe an action, or if your character is speaking his or her lines. And speaking differently for your character is also a surefire way of making that character memorable for all.

Speaking in character can be a little intimidating at first, but it gets to be quite easy. In a group where no one is speaking in character, you as gamemaster must take the lead by setting an example. You've actually got the benefit of having many different character NPCs that you get to roleplay. This means that you can try different inflections in your voice and stick to the ones that are easiest or most entertaining. Just be sure to do it. If you don't do it or do it only part of the time, the other players will be less inclined to do so as well.

In addition to leading by example, let your players know from the onset of the game that you will be awarding experience for good roleplaying and speaking in character. If necessary, make it a lot of experience (you won't be disappointed), but don't go crazy with handouts else other players will complain.

Fudging the Rules

'Fudging' the rules is synonymous with bending them. This is both okay and not okay, depending on who's bending them and why. As a general rule, gamemasters can fudge all they want, but players can't.

Gamemasters shouldn't fudge when it is obvious to the players, and they shouldn't be doing it all that often, either. The main reason a gamemaster fudges is to add to the game's excitement while stabilizing game balance, but only when necessary. For example, if you pit a villain against the party who is either too weak or too powerful, you can secretly increase or decrease that villain's Life score, armor rating, Evasion trait, AIM, or other game factors without drawing undue attention. Why would you do this? Simple. A villain who is too weak is no fun because there is no challenge. One that is too tough will probably kill off all the players—that's no fun (at least not for the players). Why would a villain be too weak? Players can surprise you and/or you may have underestimated the amount of damage an entire group of combat-hardened characters can deliver. In the future you can simply pit more villains or tougher ones against your players. But in the interim, this might be the arch villain at the climax of the adventure and you don't want him dead that fast. The answer: Fudge. Pump up your villain or suddenly have some guards run around a corner to join him.

One thing to watch out for is logic. You should be careful that none of your fudging blatantly violates logic. Both you and your characters depend on logic in a science-fiction universe, so don't start bending the laws of physics. You'll be very sorry in the long run.

When players fudge, that's different entirely. Some call it cheating. Don't allow it. But fudging might not always be obvious to you. Players may make honest mistakes, like forgetting to mark off damage on their character sheets during an exciting or intense battle. Others may downright cheat on purpose. Your job is to be aware of your players' actions, but not to micro-manage them. You hopefully trust them well enough that you needn't keep photocopies of their characters on file, but even if you suspect cheating, never accuse your players of it. Just pay closer attention in the future. Even if you catch someone 'red-handed' there's usually the chance that it could still be an honest mistake, in which case accusations only result in hurt feelings, loss of good players, or arguments.

Another type of fudging is actually a form of badgering. This occurs when players declare actions for their characters and then want to 'take-them-back' or 'backup' after they discover the consequences. These players are usually prepared to argue with you at length about how their character wouldn't have performed the action regardless of their saying so (or they were 'just joking'). For example, a player might say that they pry open a mysterious alien crate and look inside. You describe how the space roaches suddenly jump out and bite their face. Your player then says they were only kidding and never opened the box because their character never would have done something like that—ever. When this happens, feel free to allow the player the one chance to backup but with a warning: in the future anything said is done! No exceptions, joking or otherwise. From then on, that player can never back up again. Some GMs give this warning in advance of play, when the player first joins their group—if you do, just be very sure the warning is very explicit or even written down for them. If your warning is in the middle of a list of house rules you're rambling off to them, chances are they could honestly miss one or two, including that one.

Encumbrance, Money, Big Weapons, and Technology

Part of game balance relies on your common sense and keeping players in check. Four notable areas to watch for are encumbrance, money, big weapons, and technology.

ENCUMBRANCE: This must be monitored for two reasons. First, it isn't realistic for player characters to be packing around an entire equipment store with them—and many want to do just that. Where are they going to put everything? Players can insist that they want to carry a lot of stuff, but if they do, be sure to have them properly tally the weight while you review any bulk concerns. Second, lots of equipment can make the character's jobs easier, but is this what you really want? Think about it, an otherwise typical situation might become a real challenge should the characters be ill-equipped to deal.

One point worth mentioning about encumbrance is that a lot of players are inherent packrats and will go on the principle: better safe

than sorry. Fighting this instinct will take some effort and attention, but it's well worth it.

If necessary, try to get the player to imagine what it'd be like for them to carry a proportionately similar weight (possibly a lot less weight if they're physically smaller and weaker than their character) for hours at a time.

MONEY: Money can also be a problem if players are dealing in too much of it. Many gamemasters underestimate the power money has in a modern universe and learn to regret it only after it's too late. Sure, you can devise a means to rid characters of their wealth later, but doing so typically upsets the players far more than they would be if good monetary fortunes never made it their way in the first place. Also, just because one character might be royalty doesn't necessarily mean that that character has access to family wealth. After all, do you really want characters buying their own starfleets?

BIG WEAPONS: Heavy weapons is another point to watch for. By big weapons, those that deal out a helluva lot of damage is what is meant. You may have noticed that Auto Plasma Cannons and other heavy (military-grade) weapons require high-level permits to own or carry. These permits should be difficult to acquire. The reason you will want to restrict these types of weapons from being too common is that it raises the stakes:

Characters with big weapons will kill anything you throw at them unless what you throw also has big weapons. If both sides have big weapons, then things become a game of chance, where the first person to hit is likely to kill the other. Conversely, small arms fire allows hits to go back and forth several times (assuming armor is worn) and thus promotes suspense and gives both sides the opportunity to withdraw to fight another day. This philosophy can have significant campaign implications.

TECHNOLOGY: This is the last point to watch for. Specifically, never allow characters to develop new technologies. The reason is that it is easy enough for players to find loopholes in existing technological items that allow them to gain unbalanced power, but devices they design will almost always promote this. Realistically, characters shouldn't be developing new technologies even if you allow them anyway, considering that if a lone character could do it then why wouldn't the thousands of huge megacorporations filled with entire teams of brilliant researchers have done it already? Truth is, they have, and that's why if it doesn't already exist there must be a reason...

Note that there is a difference between inventing new technologies and customizing existing ones into something unique. That is, if someone with the weapons technology skill wants to build or modify a blaster weapon following a unique design, they should be able to attempt that skill feat. Just ensure that any custom weapon designs aren't any better overall than existing designs. Sure, they can be better in one or two areas, but at a trade-off in another. Common sense must apply.

SUPER CHARACTERS: Finally, remember that in the Imperium (and many other nations) it is illegal for individuals to gain considerable *personal* power such as that afforded by some cybergear, Manifested Telepathy, and the like.

Handling Combat

Combat can be tricky even for seasoned gamemasters. The goal is to give the players a good challenge without killing their characters. Attaining this balance takes a little experience, and if you're ever in doubt it's safest to throw a smaller threat at them and then add more to it later. Think about it, it's far easier to have a few more guards run around the corner if you had sent too few than it is to remedy the problem of too many.

WHEN TO KILL-OFF A PLAYER CHARACTER: Remember this rule well: never intentionally kill a player character unless that character (not player) seriously deserves it. If you make an honest mistake or the luck of the dice fail the player but are good to you, that's what Heroism points are for! Heroism points save characters from these situations.

Conversely, don't be afraid to give a character what is justly deserved. Examples of just deserts are when a single character rushes a whole platoon of soldiers, tries to battle a giant Gorgon or Megasaur with a handgun, or attempts a lone assassination of a powerful Senator or Naval Governor. Acts such as these are stupid and the character's life is probably going to end. But be very careful that you observe the differences between foolhardy acts such as these and those of true bravery. Generally, it is not a bad idea to fudge (a little bit) if characters are doing something very brave regardless of personal risk—just don't let the players know you'll do this else they'll learn to fool you by simulating bravery when they know there is no real danger. Examples of true bravery are when a lone character runs out into the middle of a crossfire to retrieve a fallen comrade, when a character heroically draws fire so that others can escape, or when bodyguards shield another with their own bodies. Acts of true bravery needn't be only by trained combatants. Rather, think of the true bravery of the tech who has to run into the middle of a firefight or into an engineering chamber that could explode at any second in order to make a critical repair.

However, there are times when characters will die while standing up for what they believe in. For example, a character could die and be commemorated for bravery while trying to save another character. Likewise, a character who rams his ship into an enemy war cruiser in order to change the tide of a losing battle is going to die a hero.

YOU HAVE TO BE IMPARTIAL: Gamemasters are human, too, but no matter how tempting it might be Never Take-Out Personal Feelings of Aggression on a Player's Character!

HANDLING INITIATIVE: The standard Initiative rules account for as much realism as possible for combat initiative, however those rules might be difficult for some players to grasp. If this is the case, a more simplistic method can be used instead. A simple method is to use the current Slow, Average, Fast, etc., speed class, and roll a d6 each turn as indicated in the standard rules to vary initiative, but to ignore 'wrapping' rules. In other words, each turn's initiative can be discrete from other turns. Each turn is thus new. The only problem is that becoming more 'slow' than 'Slow' means just moving at the very end of combat after the regular 'Slow' characters. UltraFast is the reverse.

SPECIAL COMBAT RULES: Many gamemasters enjoy the element of surprise (as do many players). The best way to handle surprise is to require the surprised party to make individual Average, Tough, or even Very Difficult (or worse) Awareness Checks.

Another element to consider in combat which many gamemasters forget to include is Wrestling. In real life, police and other forces are

more likely to wrestle or overbear their opponents than to sit at a distance and shoot—especially if they're trying to capture their targets instead of outright kill them. Therefore, don't be afraid to have NPCs rush a party in an attempt to physically overpower them—your players might be in for a real surprise. Contrarily, don't take this too far, and always use common sense (even brave Imperial Troopers aren't too likely to rush a Xom or heavily armed party). Whatever the case, the wrestling and overbearing rules are designed for speed and ease of use—take advantage of them.

Unusual Action Checks

You should always feel free to associate a skill with a different stat for purposes of a single roll in a unique action, where it makes since to do so. For example, a dancing skill might fall under Agility in normal instances, but may need to be temporarily assigned to Strength should a character need to keep dancing over a very long period of time. Singing to sway an audience might involve Influence, but trying to hold a note for two minutes might also be require Strength.

Similarly, the Medicine skill might be momentarily assigned to Knowledge if the character is taking a medical exam. Or, Medicine might be temporarily assigned to Intuition if the doctor needs to make a complete guess. As always, commons sense should apply.

In-Depth Action Checks

Gamemasters should call for Action Checks during play to test character skill (regardless of whether or not the character has that skill). But not all tasks are as simple as making a single dice roll, even if all aspects of that task fall under one skill's purview. Therefore, when player characters undertake especially complex or drawn-out tasks, require a series of successes instead of only one.

For example, using Mechanics and Electronics to construct a new sliding door for a corridor isn't necessarily all that difficult, but it is very time consuming. For such a task, feel free to require as many as two or even three successes each! This could mean a total of up to five successes would be needed to complete the task.

Whenever more than one success is required, players are allowed to roll a failure or two. As a general rule, if you require that three successes be made, then the task doesn't fail until three failures have been had. If you require four successes, then the task doesn't ultimately fail until four failures have been rolled. In these situations, it becomes a race of successes versus failures—which ever side tallies up to the required number determines the event's outcome.

Still, there are other times when using multiple skills solves this need. For example, Computer Hacking would be used to tap a database, and then a roll with Computer Operation would probably be sufficient to locate the specific data being sought.

Stat Checks

Stat Checks are a very convenient way of testing characters in diverse situations. Good gamemasters use Stat checks very rarely because there is nearly always a skill that could be applied (even if that character doesn't possess that skill).

For example, having players roll a Tough Agility check for walking across a slippery log to get to the other side of a canyon is not only a bit brutal, it's also an error. This is because the Balance skill exists for situations just like this. Also, be careful regarding outcome, as failure probably means they fall and die. Sure, the log might be very slippery or narrow and you could even have a failed roll indicate the character is now hanging on for dear life or dangling from a branch (the others will have to attempt a rescue and then may think twice about crossing the ravine themselves).

Similarly, you wouldn't have your characters roll an Intuition check to notice guards hiding nearby because that's what the Awareness skill is for. Of course, without Awareness, the Action check is essentially just a stat check by default, but it is important to call for it as a skill check so that players who have been trained to notice things stand improved chances.

Another issue to consider involves common sense and so there are no hard or fast rules for this. For example, having a big muscle-bound character roll a Strength check while trying to pry open a door probably isn't the best solutions because if the roll fails how will you adjudicate a character with a lower Strength making a similar attempt? What if the weaker character made the attempt first? This is not a cardinal rule, because a weaker character might be able to succeed at prying open the door because the stronger character may have 'loosened it', but this same argument can't be applied to picking up a small boulder or pushing over a cement block. Probably the correct way of handling this particular scenario would be to assign a weight to the object characters are trying to move or pry open. Then, tally up all the weight characters can lift (noted under the Strength stat description). They either can or can't do it. This works for doors, boulders, or any other act of raw Strength and easily allows for teamwork.

Despite all of the foregoing, there are select times when raw stat checks might be necessary. For example, Knowledge checks could be used to see if characters know bits of fact or information about something too general to be covered by a specific skill (training).

Handling Starship Combat

Gamemasters have two options for resolving any situation in which a ship carrying or controlled by the player characters battles with another ship. The first option is generally recommended for a role-playing group.

The first option is to roleplay the combat. This means that the gamemaster describes the battle action, possibly using counters or a drawing, and then gets the players to describe their actions or plans. Roleplaying out this kind of action allows each player to do something onboard the ship, because the focus is on the crew and not the two battling ships. You should ask players to make Starship Ops skill rolls, as well as other skill rolls, where appropriate. This fuels the excitement. Be sure to include colorful descriptions during this type of roleplayed battle, such as consoles sparking or exploding (possibly requiring Evasion checks to escape real damage), having the ship rock hard throwing characters around, describing the sound of twisting metal, computer-announced alerts regarding hull breaches and atmosphere loss, and so on.

The second option is two make use of the Zaon Wargame which handles starship combat engagements in the form of tabletop wargaming. Those rules are very in-depth, but can detract from the

roleplaying experience as the game quickly becomes overrun with tactical war simulations. If not all characters in the group are actively involved in tactics, then they may become bored and lose interest in the game.

Awarding Experience

How experience is awarded (and how much) is no secret to players—they need to know which actions warrant reward. The types of experience, together with examples of deserving actions, is described at the beginning of Chapter 20; *Character Improvement*. Gamemasters need to be especially familiar with the first part of that chapter and must pay very close attention to the examples listed there. Go back and read it again now. Then, once you're familiar with it, read it yet again.

As a general guideline, about 2 to 8 Experience Points (total between all three types) is the right amount to award for a four hour game session. Always address each player individually, awarding for each type before moving on to the next player.

Doing this, think carefully about the types of physical actions listed in the Chapter 20 examples and then decide on a number between zero (for a character who performed absolutely no physical skills) to as much as 10 or so for a character who did all the fighting in the group and did a lot of it at that. Average characters who do some fighting probably warrant about 1 to 3 points. Don't be afraid to award zero points or a lot for characters that deserve it. After all, your goal is to encourage play and thus participation by each character. If characters get experience for not doing anything but tagging along, they'll continue to avoid participation.

Then, go back and do the same for Mental experience. It is not unusual for a player to do lots of fighting (and thus get a lot of physical experience) but no roleplaying, NPC interaction, puzzle-solving or the like (and thus warrant zero experience from the Mental or Bonus categories). Similarly, you might have a player who's very good at roleplaying social interactions with your NPCs and other player characters (and be quite entertaining) but not participate in battles or puzzle-solving. Whatever the scenario, it is critical that you only award players for the types of actions they do. If they want experience in other areas they're not used to playing, they'll have to improve the way they play.

Finally, try not to underestimate the value of good roleplaying and in-character speaking that goes on. Award it handsomely in the form of Bonus Experience.

Ending a Game Session: More than You Might Realize!

Ending play for the night involves more than saying 'good-bye'. A good gamemaster always asks for player feedback. Don't turn this into a one-by-one interrogation, just throw questions out to the group and listen to those who speak up. Some questions to ask:

1) What did you enjoy most about the adventure tonight?

2) What part of the adventure did you like least and why?

3) Were there any NPCs you especially enjoyed interacting with?

4) Did you like the style of roleplaying used or would you like to see more speaking in character or instead more action?

5) Was the game session about the right length? Or, would you prefer a longer or shorter game?

6) Is the campaign story arc, from what you have experienced thus far, interesting and/or exciting to you?

Ask other questions that pertain to your game. But above all, listen. Listen to what your players tell you because you'll be able to include more of what they like and less of what they don't in the next game. Doing this creates more fun for everybody.

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Chapter Twenty-Nine

Adventure Seeds

Campaign Types

Story placement is limited only by your imagination. However, a few of the more popular campaign styles are listed below:

COMMAND STRUCTURE: This is where your player characters are all part of a military or other organized force. Characters in a military organization can conveniently be issued orders by their superiors and thus be sent on assignment after assignment, therefore eliminating the need for you to lure your group into an adventure your players might otherwise not elect to pursue. For example, your group might be intelligence officers or a special ops team for the Imperium, Coalition, or United Earth Nations. Characters will have ranks (one character will be the team leader), but all must report and obey their superior officers.

PRIVATEERS: The player characters could have gathered to form a special privateer business, each of which owns interest in that organization. These characters advertise themselves as specialists, and take-on missions from those who pay the right price. Employers can be legitimate militaries who might want to keep their 'hands clean' by sending a non-affiliated team that they can disavow, or could also be corrupt corporations, a wealthy family, or even environmental groups who don't normally keep such operatives on staff. Actual mission assignments are as diverse as those in military service (see above).

TRADERS: So long as someone's got a ship capable of cargo, the group could be running (or smuggling) goods to and fro as a business—legitimate or otherwise. There's no telling what unexpected cargos might be carried. Characters will have to negotiate for each cargo when looking for new business, or they might have a regular contact who brokers shipments through them.

ENTREPRENEURS/EXPLORERS: These are the real adventure seekers, possibly staking claim to a new world, looking for new planets to colonize, or studying scientific phenomenon for a research corporation. Private and public research grants may equip characters to handle their explorations.

DESTINY: Those with delusions of grandeur or big enough egos might be trying to start their own empire! First, a new world will have to be settled, citizens will need to be lured there by the promise of high-quality life, and imports/exports will have to be managed. Second, business interests and taxes must be levied without chasing away new colonists. Third, shipbuilding (or buying) must commence, and your group will have to prepare for threats both internal and external—including having to deal with the Imperium at some point.

PIRATES: Unscrupulous characters might raid the shipping lanes, looking for cargo to steal and then resell. But, good-intentioned characters can also be pirates as well by conforming to a sort of 'Robin Hood' principle. These characters will have to keep their ears open for tempting cargos while planning to deal with escorts and avoiding the authorities.

Selecting the Right Adventure

Once you've determined a campaign type, coming up with the right adventure for your players requires a little planning. You'll want to consider whether your group would most enjoy an adventure fraught with action or one where there is little or no fighting but lots of puzzle-solving. Combination adventures are typically best, for it permits players to exercise their cleverness in puzzle-solving while also participating in a battle or two.

Setting the Time Period

It's generally a good idea to keep the current game date as close to 3056 (New Calendar) game time as possible. This is mainly because a few important future event timelines will unfold in forthcoming supplements.

It Needs to Make Sense

The final step in putting together an adventure is simply a checklist item. Make sure that there is a logical reason for the characters to be involved. This isn't to say that fate and happenstance can't play a role, but they shouldn't be the case very often. One thing to avoid is having beginner (or even seasoned) characters involved in a plot concerning Imperial Senators, major world leaders, whole militaries, or galactic dominance. That is, with many trillions of people in the galaxy, your characters are not likely to single-handedly affect the entire galaxy on a grand scale. That's kinda like you running for president or making national news in a big way—if only we had 10,000 times more people in our country.

What can be more fun (and realistic) is for the characters to make a real difference on smaller worlds or for local regions of space. An analogy would be you running for mayor of a town, or organizing or changing events there. Being newsworthy locally is difficult, but attainable. Common sense should apply.

Adventure Seeds

The following paragraphs provide a brief outline or plot synopsis of various adventures you may wish to use. Feel free to modify the ideas or use ones entirely of your own devising.

Packaged adventures are also available as supplements for Zaon, and carry sub-headlines such as: A Zaon Adventure for _____ Characters. The blank might contain words like: Beginner, Seasoned, or Expert, and serves as a guide to your group's ability to handle combat and difficult puzzles. Packaged adventures such as those are entirely fleshed-out, including complete NPC biographies, maps, area descriptions, and case examples.

SEARCH&RESCUE: The PCs are asked or ordered to rescue someone—possibly someone important. This person might have gone missing, might have been kidnaped, or may have run away. If kidnapers are involved, the party will have to devise a means of rescue without putting the hostage at risk.

PIRATE RAID: The ship PCs are on might be raided by pirates or they may happen upon another ship currently being raided. This could also be a ship the PCs are escorting (either onboard or alongside in another vessel) or the PCs might just be on vacation aboard a liner that gets hit. What will the players do?

UNETHICAL ORDERS: If the PCs are part of a military organization or are retained by a corporation, they might be sent on a mission where they are expected to perform an unethical act. Orders might include strafing a defenseless village to stop a spreading infection or rigging a liner to blow-up in order to kill a crime lord too well protected to get at directly (while incidentally killing everyone else aboard). What will the PCs do? Hot debates should follow. Can the PCs come up with an ingenious way to achieve the same goal without hurting innocents?

LOST CONTACT: A research corporation might lose contact with a base out on the rim. The characters are sent to investigate. What will they find? Has some alien parasite or deadly menace taken control?

HEROES: The characters are caught or trapped with a group of civilians. There is no obvious way out or answer, but time is running out—the reactor is going to blow, the ship is sinking in an ocean, or the hull is collapsing in space. The characters must come up with a plan and implement it in order to save not only themselves but many innocent bystanders. What will they do?

ALIEN STALKER: The PCs happen upon a damaged vessel as part of a salvage operation or search and rescue but find that the crew is dead and something is stalking them. Alternatively, something gets aboard the PCs' ship and their vessel is nowhere near a port or planet where the PCs can get off the ship or get help. Will they be able to band together and stop this menace who's possibly more powerful than they before it kills them?

CRASH LANDING: The PCs' ship goes down on some uncharted world. Maybe they discover a radio signal beacon not far from their crash site; maybe they need to find parts for their vessel or get water and food. The jungle of this world might contain all manner of nasty critters or even a whole new sentient species. The PCs must initiate first contact, prevent a fight, or escape from being captured. How will the PCs get home?

LOST IN SPACE: The navigational computer aboard the PCs' ship gets fried. How will they know where they are? Will they ever find their way home? Do they stumble across an old ship with an intact nav computer? What else is onboard this ship?

SPACE ROACHES: The PCs' ship somehow gets infested with Space Roaches (see Chapter 31). How will the characters cope? Can they devise a clever means to rid themselves of this menace?

AMBASSADORIAL ESCORT: The PCs must escort an ambassador or other important dignitary. Something goes wrong: an assassination attempt, kidnapers, or even pirates. Is the ambassador actually the person behind the whole ruse?

SENTIENCE: The ship carrying the PCs suddenly develops sentience. Maybe it is psychotic, funny, or controlling. The computer uses onboard defense routines to keep characters away from the computer core.

ANCIENT ALIEN SHIP: The PCs stumble across or follow clues leading to an ancient alien vessel. Perhaps this ship belonged to the Xenoth, Azec, or Ptah millions or even billions of years ago. Incredible secrets are awaiting them—along with incredible power. But will something go wrong? Does the ancient race show up to claim the vessel before it can be turned over to authorities?

ISA AGENT: Seasoned and expert characters probably did something against the Imperium at some point in their pasts. An ISA Agent is now investigating. Can the PCs convince the agent otherwise? Or, will they be forced into a deadly confrontation?

BIGGER PROBLEM: While the PCs are busy working on one mission, they stumble across a hidden alien base. Perhaps these aliens are plotting something terrible. The PCs must either destroy the base or (if there's time) get out safely to report their findings.

BIGGER FISH: A warlord has moved his fleet into the PCs' area and tries to take over. Outside Imperial territory, characters don't have the military resources to stop him. What will they do? Perhaps clever strategy will work? Maybe an old rival or enemy can be tricked into battling the warlord for the PCs?

DANGER TURNED HUMOR: The characters are being hunted or have ventured aboard a derelict space station in horrible disarray. Strange sounds, frightening turns of events, and horrible evidence mounts to impending doom. But it all turns out to be a Joplyd or Spino pulling a prank or perhaps even doing something innocent with the side-effect happenstance of scaring the characters first. All the torn-up ship interior might not be a beast ravaging the ship but just a Joplyd searching for the ex-captain's stash of porn.

SUDDEN DANGER: Perhaps the PCs are on a routine assignment (maybe even escorting a dignitary to a research station) when sudden danger strikes. Maybe a research station has stumbled across a new technology or has unlocked the secret to an ancient alien artifact. Somehow word has gotten out and now many forces are on their way as fast as they can to seize control. Maybe there are also agents on the inside who foil the characters' plans.

INTERCEPTION: The PCs' employer gets word that someone important is going to be assassinated. While the dignitary is guarded, the PCs are sent to intercept the renowned assassin. Maybe their search leads them to discover that the assassin is actually one of the guards assigned to protect the dignitary? Maybe the PCs must protect the dignitary who doesn't want their help?

ASSASSINATE: The PCs are given the immoral task of taking-out an evil crime lord. They'll have to learn about their target, get through his bodyguards, and make the hit. But, maybe they learn more than they bargained for. Perhaps they learn that the crime lord isn't so bad after all—a kind of 'Robin Hood' just standing up for what he believes in but who was painted as cruel and evil by the authorities.

HOSTAGES: A group of terrorists has seized a luxury liner and is holding it hostage. They have made political demands that must be met or they will destroy the liner. Additionally, they will destroy the liner if anyone attempts to dock. How will the PCs sneak aboard? How will they put a stop to the small army that has taken control?

BODYSNATCHER: A new type of alien has taken control of an Imperial Senator or other high official. Only the PCs know this and can't get anyone else to believe them. How will they deal with this threat? How can they move against someone so well protected by their own military?

DANGEROUS COURIER: The PCs are given a package which must be delivered. Unbeknownst to them, the package contains something highly coveted. Many different forces will be trying to get it.

ESCAPED PRISONER: A military prisoner has escaped and the PCs must hunt him down and bring him back—alive if possible. But this prisoner is a master operative with many skills and tricks.

IMPRISONED: The PCs are put in prison for a crime they didn't commit. They might be recognized by some of the prisoners who may want revenge. They might also get the opportunity to escape. If they do, can they gather enough evidence to prove their innocence before the authorities track them down?

GLADIATORS: The PCs offend a backwater world leader who orders that they be taken to the gladiator pits to fight. The gladiator arena might include an abandoned city or even a whole jungle. Will they survive? Can they work together as a team, using cleverness and ingenuity to overcome Bangor hunters?

BOT GOES HAYWIRE: A battlebot or assassin bot goes haywire and must be hunted down. But this bot is an expert at combat and subterfuge. How will the players handle this menace?

NAVAL SURPRISE: The PCs encounter another (friendly) vessel belonging to the same navy, or perhaps a police vessel. Unfortunately, this ship has been commandeered by aliens who open fire upon the PCs' ship. The PCs might be captured. They might have to set traps for when they are boarded. How will they handle this force who has the advantage?

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CHAPTER THIRTY

Non-Player Character Templates

What NPCs are Made Of

There are two types of NPCs: Significant and Insignificant. Significant NPCs are those that get names and are in effect no different than player characters (except they usually don't have any Heroism points). Insignificant NPCs are those who usually go nameless (or their name is only trivial) and have little real meaning for the story—that is, they could be replaced by a similar character type without affecting the game story.

Making NPCs Memorable

Good villains are what players love to hate with great passion. Luckily, making an NPC villain or comrade memorable only requires a little fleshing out. Basically, this involves creating an NPC with all the attention and care that you use when making a player character. That's all there is to it. Come up with a good name, personality type, and character connections just like you would a player character.

You can also go one step further by following a few rules during play. First, go ahead and give the NPC your version of Heroism. You don't actually have to assign points, just know that so long as you can justify in your own mind that NPC's survival, go ahead and let them live if it's good for the story. That way, the same villain can return yet again to challenge your players—and as much as players hate this, they also love it. Just ensure there is a logical explanation for how the villain survived. The villain might even be so proud as to explain to the group their grave error or oversight that allowed his or her return.

Finally, when using your recurring villain, have that character adhere to a few quirks or mannerisms. These can be a distinct accent, a twitch, the habit of always carrying one hand inside his jacket, certain types of clothes, an entertaining or attractive sidekick, or even the annoying smell or sound which could indicate your villain was previously in the vicinity or is currently nearby. Whatever you do, give him real character and make him out to be a real bastard...

NPC Reactions

Properly roleplaying NPC reactions is of paramount importance to a good game. NPCs are not mindless automatons—not an Imperial Trooper nor even your average citizen—as they have feelings, desires, and goals, too. Keeping this in mind will help you better portray them.

NPC DEMEANOR: An NPC's demeanor simply describes the personality type of the character. Personality is different than the character's Attitude (see below). The five Initial Demeanor Types are:

Playful— Someone who is playful will readily approach player characters for attention or to befriend them. Playful people tend to interact well with others.

Friendly— This person is open to being approached and talked to. They are typically polite and courteous, such as some passerbys on a busy street.

Indifferent— Indifferent folk tend to keep to themselves and may walk away when approached. Many are naturally suspicious of others and have their own goals in mind.

Aggressive— Aggressive persons will also readily approach player characters, but using a threatening posture when they do so. Bullies and territorial persons are usually considered Aggressive, but so is someone who is currently angry.

Malicious— This means hostile and even combative. This person is not just looking for a confrontation, but also plans on carrying it out—usually in the form of a fight. Most Malicious actions involve senseless violence and cannot be predicted.

INITIAL ATTITUDE: How NPCs initially respond to a player character depends on many factors, including common sense. There are, however, a few guidelines you can use to help determine an NPC's attitude toward a particular character. These guidelines are based on player character stats and traits so that players who build personable and attractive characters in lieu of strong combat ones can enjoy the deserved benefits of added attention and charming interactions.

Initial Attitude in an NPC is set by the character who approaches or is approached by and initiates interaction with the NPC. This Initial Attitude was determined during character creation, and conforms to the following chart:

PC's **Allure Stat**	**NPC's Initial Attitude**
less than 3_0	*Hostile*
3_0 to 4_4	*Cold*
4_5 to 5_9	*Neutral*
6_0 to 6_9	*Friendly*
7_0 to 8_4	*Charmed*
8_5 or more	*Infatuated*

Also, just as a player character's Extended Attitude can over time enhance or spoil Initial Attitude by moving it up or down on the above chart, as shown below in the modifier chart, some NPCs have additional modifiers. For example, an Imperial Trooper might include a standard -1 modifier possibly because of their aggressive or indifferent demeanor or for other reasons.

PC's **Harmony Stat**	**NPC Extended Attitude**
less than 2_5	-2
2_5 to 4_5	-1
4_6 to 7_0	±0
7_1 to 8_5	+1
8_6 to 10_0	+2
10_1 or more	+3

For example, a player character with an Allure stat of 4.0 but with a Harmony stat of 7.5 encounters an Imperial Trooper. Because the trooper has an optional additional -1 Attitude modifier the GM has chosen to use, the trooper is initially Hostile instead of the usual Cold (cold because of the PC's Allure). However, so long as the trooper doesn't become combative, that trooper will move from Cold to Neutral once the trooper warms up to the PC's above-average inviting personality over the next several minutes or hours.

Being Prepared

It's very important that major NPCs are pre-designed and ready for play. That way, you don't have to interrupt the flow of the game in order to determine what your NPC's stats, skills, or traits are. Have these hashed out before the game session. This doesn't apply, of course, to insignificant NPCs—those you can either makeup during play by simply 'winging it' or you can also use some of the basic templates (provided below) which give the average stats for many of the more commonly encountered NPCs (such as an Imperial Trooper).

Remember, what follows below are typical examples of those character types and in real life each individual would be a bit different. Luckily for game play, that usually doesn't matter.

GM's are encouraged to photocopy NPC templates (permission granted to photocopy the templates on this and the following several pages for personal use only.) That way, you can quickly check-off damage boxes and reference other important combat information during play from these disposable NPC templates.

Enjoy!

NPC: Imperial Troopers

Troopers are quite common (on nearly every street corner) of high population Imperial worlds. Backwater worlds may have little or no Troopers on site. For more information about Imperial Troopers, their ranks, and uniforms, see Chapter 3: *The ZAON Imperium*.

ROLEPLAYING: You are the Proud! You are the Few! (well, sorta) Have some attitude. After all, you've managed to make it through the Imperium's stringent screening tests. But also remember, you're here to serve and protect—not bully or frighten the public. Still, people should show their respect, shouldn't they?

NPC: Imperial Officers

Officers are not nearly as common as rank-and-file Troopers, but they are encountered—especially 1- and 2-stripe ranks. For more information about Imperial Officers, their ranks, and uniforms, see Chapter 3: *The ZAON Imperium*.

ROLEPLAYING: You're proud but cautious. You have been extremely well trained in leadership and interaction. You have seen many of the tricks and deceptions used by smugglers, spies, and aliens. You are on the lookout for these traitors to the Imperium as well as new ones. You're not easily fooled, but then again you're only human.

NPC: Local Police (non-Imperial)

Local police are prevalent mainly on backwater worlds and other areas where Imperial Troopers are rare or non-existent. They come from the very citizen populations they're now trained to protect and are not as skilled, capable, or well-equipped as Imperial forces.

ROLEPLAYING: You've been charged with protecting the locals—some of which are your friends, family, or relatives—and you've probably been doing it for quite a while now. You don't always have the best equipment and backup isn't always nearby, but you've come to earn the respect of your community, and citizens chip in to help you whenever they can.

NPC: The Mercenary

These are soldiers out for hire. Some were kicked out of Imperial basic training for their short tempers or instability, whereas others believe they are more important and better trained than rank-and-file soldiers. Many have never even considered structured training, having grown up in rough neighborhoods on backwater worlds or may be part of a crime family.

ROLEPLAYING: You've been paid to do a job, and that job might include killing. You're pretty good at what you do, but sometimes you and your colleagues bully others into submission via fear. Your reputation is important, so you're not likely to betray your employer, but then again, your life is more important than their's.

NPC: The Smuggler

Smugglers are usually just glorified freighter captains, though some are involved in transporting contraband for profit. Others are trained in fighting, might know Imperial customs regulations better than anyone (including all the loopholes), or even offer privateer services, too.

ROLEPLAYING: You're making a good living, but you have to work at it. You know Imperial customs procedures, how to foil some of them, but you're definitely not looking for a fight. Spending a few months in jail is probably better than trying to fight-off a squad of Troopers. Still, sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do.

NPC: The Pirate

Pirates are either part of organized crime or travel in chaotic bands (or even alone). They make a living by raiding shipping lines with little or no protection, robbing or hijacking freighters, and then reselling (sometimes by repackaging) the stolen goods. Most pirates are not professionally trained, but many have learned good skills after having been on the run for so long from Imperial forces.

ROLEPLAYING: Nobody cares about you so you don't care about anyone else. You're here to get the stuff, and it doesn't matter what you gotta do to get it. You're not stupid, and so running from an Imperial frigate is better than facing certain death. But, if a corporation is foolish enough not to guard their shipments, then they don't deserve their money—you do. You don't necessarily use undue cruelty on the civilians you rob, but sometimes you gotta blow 'em up to get at what you want.

NPC: Average Citizens

The average citizen in the Imperium is content. They work for a living, raise large families, and feel secure by the Imperium's dominance. Nearly all citizens live on high-population worlds in giant megalopolises, but a few live on frontier backwater planets.

ROLEPLAYING: Your safety comes first, but you're sometimes willing to help strangers. You're nice and courteous most of the time, but you gotta work and that leaves little time for outsiders. You hear about the pirates, all the new aliens, and strange stuff out on the rim—all of it from the news. Still, you don't always believe everything you're told, but overall the Imperium's a damn good place to be.

NPC: Xom Marine

Some are employed by the Imperial Heavy Marine Corps while others are private mercenaries—but that doesn't make much difference in terms of ability.

ROLEPLAYING: You respect strength, mainly physical strength, but you only truly revere he who has greater physical prowess than you (few indeed). You enjoy the intimidation your size and bulk elicits in others, but you're not overly cruel. A good fight solves most arguments. Remember honor.

NPC: The Bounty Hunter

Bounty hunters are both legitimate businessmen working for the Imperium, corporations, or even individuals who hire them, and also criminals in the employment of overlords, warlords, crime families, and crooked companies. Most stick to either the legal or illegal side of things, but a few of the best are sought by both sides.

ROLEPLAYING: You've got a job to do and that involves danger. Usually they want 'em alive, but sometimes dead is just easier. This is your job—how you make a living—and that's how you treat most of your hunts: as a job, nothing more. You're not about to give up your own life while working, but hey, things can get pretty rough.

NPC: Assassin Bot

Assassin bots are strictly illegal and banned throughout the galaxy—including the Coalition, Endori Sovereignty, and Skrow Principalities. The Vreen Federation, however, is rumored to use them. The Assassin bot described below is not a disguised or clandestine bot, but rather appears similar to a battlebot.

ROLEPLAYING: Sometimes sentient, sometimes not, you have no sense of self-preservation other than surviving to finish the job. Once the job is done, everything else is secondary. All other organic life (other than your creators/owners) is irrelevant. The only reason you don't commit mass genocide is because it would spark a hunt for you. But, if you have to blow up an entire ship to get one person, so be it.

NPC: The HonorGuard (human)

The HonorGuard is a Coalition special ops organization founded by the Vagar and now open to the best the Coalition has to offer. Before using an HonorGuard operative, read all of the 'Agencies' section in Chapter 4.

ROLEPLAYING: Imperial life isn't for you. The Coalition has the right ideas, though not everyone agrees on which are best. Your job is to use your superior training and ability to keep the Coalition independent without violating the honor, ethics, and morals you fight to protect. You believe that even when on your side, extremists hurt everybody.

NPC: Syndicate Operatives (human)

One of the most ruthless organizations in the galaxy, Syndicate Operatives are the top hitmen, spies, and muscle it has to offer. Some are professionally trained, others have gained their experience through cruel practice, but all are just as capable as professional operatives such as those in the HonorGuard.

ROLEPLAYING: It's all about power and money, and you're working for people with both. You're not an idea man, but rather an implementer—someone who does your boss' dirty work. You do just about anything you're told to do, and there's a price for failure: usually early retirement if you're lucky, otherwise death.

NPC: Imperial ISA Agents

No one, not one person, has ever gone up against an ISA Agent and survived. It is true that groups of many highly trained operatives and soldiers have put a stop to a lone agent, but such occurrences are rare. Before using an Agent NPC, read all of the 'Agencies' section in Chapter 3!

ROLEPLAYING: You only care about your duty to keep the Imperium safe. You're both physically and mentally superior to everyone, and you show absolutely no fear or emotion of any kind. You will stop at nothing to achieve your mission, but you at least hesitate before the hapless slaughter of bystanders (and will usually avoid this).

NPC: BattleBot (typical)

Although rare, BattleBots are employed by both the Coalition and Imperium. They are reserved for ground-based operations and few boarding actions. Basic strategy calls for these units to precede troops and clear target areas of hostiles. Most use the Bipedal Pod chassis, which consists of a large block unit mounted atop two powerful leg units. The main body block houses the internal components, usually with heavy weapons mounted to either side and missiles on top.

ROLEPLAYING: You are not alive and you are not sentient. Your programming directs you to follow standard procedures, meaning you can be tricked. But, the CyberFX AI-2 processor is quite advanced and uses state-of-the-art operating software to foil simple traps, lures, and tactics. There is no remorse, no emotion, and no mercy—just shooting until the mission is complete or you are recalled.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Pets, Beasts, Bots, and Pests

Introduction

The bestiary contains a sampling of species and other lifeforms that are not sentient. This includes animals (domesticated and wild), mundane bots and robots, as well as parasites.

Pets include a wide variety of animal companions and steeds—some friendlier than others. Horses, dogs, cats, iguanas, and even Raklarian worgs are found in this chapter.

Beasts covers wild animals, some of which are aggressive. Lions, tigers, crocodiles, and Kraf'kan megasaurs are examples of wild animal beasts.

Bots, short for both robots and androids, describes non-sentient bots of all kinds. Sample cleaning bots, inspection bots, and sentry bots are detailed in this chapter.

Pests include lifeforms deemed parasitic or annoying in the extreme. Small and large pests are described, including the dreaded space roach, engine spiders, piglizards, and Vreen stinker gnats.

Game Stats

Every lifeform found throughout the Bestiary begins with a set of game stats and traits and ends with a short paragraph or two which describes the creature's overall behavior as well as any special abilities it might have. These attributes make the creatures playable in terms of game mechanics. Most of these stats and traits are already familiar, but a few have been added solely for these NPCs. Therefore, a brief description is warranted:

HABITAT: Describes which worlds, lands, or areas this lifeform can be encountered. Preferred climate and terrain is sometimes listed as well, where applicable.

PREVALENCE: Refers to how common or rare the lifeform is. The degrees of prevalence are:

Very Common— The lifeform is found everywhere in its natural habitat area. Examples would include mosquitoes in a Louisiana swamp or spiders in a garden.

Common— Encountering the lifeform in its habitat area is expected and not difficult. Examples include rats in a New York City subway, pigeons in San Francisco, or other birds in a jungle.

Uncommon— The lifeform can be encountered in its habitat area, though only infrequently. Examples include hyenas on the African prairies, an alley cat, or raccoons in North America.

Rare— These lifeforms are seldom encountered in their natural habitats. One must usually search for them. Examples include elephants on the African prairies or a bear in Northwestern U.S.

Very Rare— There are probably only a handful of these lifeforms (or maybe the lifeform is unique) and so an extensive search is usually required to find one. Examples include most endangered species.

HOW ENCOUNTERED: Notes whether the lifeform is encountered as a solitary individual, or in groups, packs, or even swarms. A typical number range is also listed, indicating how many are found.

DISPOSITION: This is the nature or temperament of the lifeform. Though a particular lifeform's behavior may vary from indi-

vidual to individual, a broad generalization is made here. The basic degrees of disposition are:

Skittish— Very easily frightened. Will run at the first sign of movement or if approached.

Playful— Like a puppy; will probably follow the characters around, wanting lots of attention.

Friendly— Such as many dogs or other domesticated animals. Can usually be approached.

Indifferent— Ignores most passerbys; may run if frightened or attack if cornered. Examples include raccoons in suburban neighborhoods.

Aggressive— Defends its habitat area from unwanted intruders; easily provoked into an attack. Examples include a rabid dog, rhinoceros, or lion.

Malicious— Attacks on sight, even when not provoked. Difficult to escape the lifeform's attention. Examples include army ants, a hippopotamus, or hungry sharks, piranhas, or gators in blood-soaked waters.

SIZE: Categorical classification of the lifeform's overall size. Possible base sizes are:

Tiny— 30 centimeters or less (about 1 foot)
Small— Up to 1 meter
Medium— Roughly human-sized
Large— 2½ to 4 meters (7½+ feet or so)
Huge— 4+ meters in height (13+ feet high)

Other possibilities can include Microscopic, Insect, or other special sizes.

INTELLIGENCE: This is a generalization of the lifeform's intellect ability. The categories are broad (for example, all mammals here on Earth are considered to be of Animal intelligence, with the exception of certain primates). Each category also carries an Intellect equivalent for game purposes. Note: The following list encompasses only non-sentient degrees of intellect.

Cunning— INT range of 1_0 to 1_9. Examples include monkeys, some apes and baboons, and dolphins.

Animal— INT range of 0_5 to 0_9. Examples include raccoons, cats, dogs, and most other mammals.

Instinct— INT range of 0_1 or 0_4. Examples include most reptiles, fish, and sophisticated to non-sophisticated insects.

None— INT of 0_0. Examples include most plants.

SPEED: Simply, the lifeform's Speed trait. Use it the same way as regular characters do.

INITIATIVE: This lists the lifeform's Initiative Class. Use this score like you would with a regular character.

LIFE: Refers to either the Life trait or Superstructure trait of the lifeform. Listed in parenthesis are the Light, Moderate, and Severe wound threshold life amounts plus the Critical Life amount, if applicable. Remember that all lifeforms suffer the +1 or +3 Step Penalty to all actions when Moderately or Severely Wounded, respectively.

ATTACKS: This is a list of various attack forms the lifeform can use and the amount of damage they inflict. Only natural weapons (claws, teeth, and the like) are listed here. If the lifeform can use spears, for instance, those weapons and the damage they inflict are listed under Weapons and Equipment.

Unless otherwise noted, all damage is of type BDR.

OTHER TRAITS AND STATS: Evasion, AIM traits, Wrestling Ratings, and others are also listed but all operate according to normal rules. Not all lifeforms will have all of the additional traits (for example, many lifeforms won't have the Throwing AIM trait because they can't throw anything).

Note that most animals will use their Melee AIM trait when making attacks with their natural weapons (or even spears, if applicable).

Also, many animals possess only the Strength, Agility, Reflex, Allure, Intuition, and Harmony stats. A few may possess other stats, too, but these are rare. Lack of a stat prevents Action Checks in that area and hence any such skill actions.

SKILLS: Even animals can become skilled in certain areas with experience. This section lists any skills the lifeform has and the skill's rating. The second number in parentheses is the Action Check, if applicable (the total of that skill's rating combined with the appropriate associated stat score), and is listed only for convenience.

Note that many animals have the Attack/Maul skill. This skill is similar to Martial Arts but also includes fundamental wrestling skills. It is usable only by lifeforms with Intellect stats below 2.0 and can never have a skill rating higher than 4.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT: Though usually only listed for bots and robots, Weapons and Equipment refers to anything held by or installed in the lifeform but that is not technically a natural part of it.

SPECIAL LISTINGS: A few listings in the following chapters may contain additional headings. These should be self-explanatory. For example, many of the lifeforms in the Pets chapter include a price in credits for a trained specimen. If in doubt, check with your gamemaster.

Pet: Aboga

Cost: € 280
Habitat:—Indigenous to Rajoal, but often domesticated as pets.

Prevalence:	Uncommon (Rare)
How Encountered:	Individual
Disposition:	Indifferent
Size:	Small (nearly 1 meter long)
Intelligence:	Instinct
Speed:	1/2/2
Initiative:	Slow
Life:	3 (1/1/1/2)
Attacks:	None
Evasion:	5_5
Melee AIM:	5_0
Wrestling Rating:	3_2
Knockdown:	1

Stats—
STR: 1_5 AGI: 5_0 ALL: 4_2 REF: 3_5 INU: 4_5 HAR: 7_1

About as popular as pet snakes of twentieth century Earth, Aboga are a sloth-like reptile sometimes worn about the forearm where the creature will remain for hours without moving. Aboga have no teeth and so swallow their insect prey whole.

Far from playful or friendly, these indifferent creatures are said to be soothing—their muscular contractions acting to massage the arm. They are otherwise unremarkable.

Pet: Cat, House (domesticated)

Cost: € 150
Habitat—Indigenous to Earth, but often domesticated as pets.

Prevalence:	Uncommon
How Encountered:	Individual as pet
Disposition:	Friendly (some are Indifferent or Spiteful)
Size:	Tiny
Intelligence:	Animal
Speed:	½/8/½
Initiative:	Fast
Life:	3 (1/1/1/2)
Attacks:	1d2-1 bite
Evasion:	7_5
Melee AIM:	6_0
Wrestling Rating:	3_7
Knockdown:	1

Stats—

STR: 1_5 AGI: 6_0 ALL: 4_5 REF: 5_5 INU: 7_0 HAR: 4_0

This includes all breeds of domesticated house (indoor and outdoor) cats. The Harmony stat of this species varies greatly.

Pet: Dog, Guard or Attack

Cost: € 800
Habitat—Indigenous to Earth, but often domesticated as pets.

Prevalence:	Uncommon
How Encountered:	Individual as pet
Disposition:	Indifferent (some Playful or Aggressive)
Size:	Small (about 1 meter long)
Intelligence:	Animal
Speed:	1/9/½
Initiative:	Fast
Life:	8 (2/3/3/4)
Attacks:	1d3 bite
Evasion:	5_5
Melee AIM:	7_5
Wrestling Rating:	6_3
Knockdown:	4

Stats—

STR: 3_2 AGI: 5_5 ALL: 4_5 REF: 5_5 INU: 7_0 HAR: 5_0

Skills—

Attack/Maul @ 2
Tracking @ 1 (8_0)

Guard and attack dogs are bred from pit bulls, Great Danes, or other medium to large size dogs—all of which are indigenous to Earth—and trained to fight. Most are fanatically loyal to their owners and highly protective. The Imperium requires a permit to own or walk such an animal publicly (cost of 300/year). The Southern Alliance also requires permits (cost of 400/year).

Pet: Dog, Small or Puppy

Cost: € 400
Habitat—Indigenous to Earth, but often domesticated as pets.

Prevalence:	Uncommon
How Encountered:	Individual as pet
Disposition:	Friendly (many are Playful)
Size:	Tiny
Intelligence:	Animal
Speed:	½/8/½
Initiative:	Fast
Life:	3 (1/1/1/2)
Attacks:	1d2-1 bite
Evasion:	7_5
Melee AIM:	5_5
Wrestling Rating:	3_6
Knockdown:	1

Stats—

STR: 1_8 AGI: 5_5 ALL: 7_0 REF: 5_5 INU: 7_0 HAR: 8_0

This species includes terriers, poodles, Shih-Tzus, Pomeranians, or the puppies of larger breeds—all of which are indigenous to Earth.

Pet: Pocketpillar

Cost: € 1,200
Habitat—Indigenous to Bosseva, but popular as pets.

Prevalence:	Uncommon (Rare as pet)
How Encountered:	Family of 2-7 (Individual as pet)
Disposition:	Playful
Size:	Tiny (12 cm long [about 5"])
Intelligence:	Cunning
Speed:	¼/¼/¼
Initiative:	Average
Life:	1 (0/0/1/1)
Attacks:	None
Evasion:	7_0
Melee AIM:	6_0
Wrestling Rating:	3_1
Knockdown:	1

Stats—

STR: 0_3 AGI: 6_0 ALL: 8_5 REF: 4_0 INU: 5_0 HAR: 9_5

Pocketpillars are small furry caterpillars about 12 centimeters in length. Their fur is extremely soft and similar to a Persian kitten's. Two large beady-black eyes are half-buried beneath the fur, just above a tiny button nose. A small toothless mouth is also located on the ventral side of the head and is used to munch soft grass. Their effective Allure is 8_5.

These playful creatures are extremely intelligent for their size and unusually clever. In their natural habitats, Pocketpillars construct nest communities and pair for life. They bond very well with most sentient species, too, and can be trained to perform a number of tricks. When held or carried, they produce purring and cooing sounds.

Pocketpillars are abundant in the grasslands, jungles, and forests on Bosseva, but their populations are controlled by several predators. Bossk regularly harvest Pocketpillars and export them throughout the Imperium and Alliance where they are highly sought and in great demand. Pocketpillars will not breed, however, once removed from their natural habitat. They earn their name because they are content to nest in their owner's pocket.

Pet: Raptor, Gomarian

Cost: € 5,000
Habitat—Indigenous to Gomar, but sometimes domesticated

Prevalence:	Rare (Very Rare as pet)
How Encountered:	Flock of 3-18 (Individual as pet)
Disposition:	Skittish (Pets are Friendly)
Size:	Tiny (40 centimeter wingspan)
Intelligence:	Cunning
Speed:	½/2/½, Fl 25
Initiative:	Very Fast

Life: 2 (0/1/1/1)
Attacks: 1d2-1 combine from both claws
Evasion: 10_2
Melee AIM: 7_5
Wrestling Rating: 4_7
Knockdown: 1
Stats—
STR: 2_0 AGI: 7_5 ALL: 4_5 REF: 8_2 INU: 8_5 HAR: 5_0

These falcon-like birds are greatly valued because of their cunning and ability to serve as a 'watchdog'—emitting a screech when danger is perceived. Gomarian raptors possess taloned zygodactyl feet used for defense and capture of prey (see below) but have no beak. Rather, a soft elephant-like nose is used to siphon nectar from the flying Fio lilies native to Gomar. All of the bird's feathers and down are bright white except for a streak of sky-blue which stretches from the forehead and fans out in the tail feathers.

Pet: Worg

Cost: € 15,000
Habitat—Indigenous to Raklar homeworld, used as steeds
Prevalence: Rare (Very Rare as steed)
How Encountered: Pack of 2-7 (Individual as steed)
Disposition: Aggressive
Size: Large (2m long, 1.7m high)
Intelligence: Cunning
Fear Check: Yes
Speed: 2/10/1
Initiative: Fast
Life: 34 (11/11/12/12)
Attacks: 3d6 bite and 1d6 paw (+8 STR bonus)
Evasion: 7_0
Melee AIM: 8_0
Wrestling Rating: 8_2
Knockdown: 17
Armor Type: Natural hide
BDR: 3 CDR: 3 PDR: 2 EDR: 2 LDR: 1
Stats—
STR: 10_5 AGI: 6_0 ALL: 4_5 REF: 6_0 INU: 7_0 HAR: 5_0
Skills—
Attack/Maul @ 2 Dodge @ 3
Tracking @ 1 (8_0)

Raklarian Worgs are huge wolf-like animals sometimes domesticated as steeds. Their one-ton bodies are short, very stout (more so than a malamute), frighteningly nimble, and extremely strong. A worg's massive jaws and half-meter-long fangs can crush most humanoid-size prey in a single bite. When attacking as a pack, they prefer to gore and maul their victims.

Domesticated worgs are sometimes mellow enough to be considered friendly, but the instinct to gore is strong. The Raklar are the only known species able to tame these beasts which are indigenous to their homeworld, but worgs are far from fanatically loyal to even the Raklar (most are quite belligerent and bore easily). Few worgs are seen outside of Raklar territory, and when they are they have undoubtedly been tamed as steeds.

Beast: Megasaur, Kraf'kan

Habitat—Indigenous to Döno'ka
Prevalence: Rare
How Encountered: Individual
Disposition: Aggressive
Size: Huge (40 m long, 25 m high)
Intelligence: Instinct
Fear Check: Yes @ +2 Step Penalty
Speed: 4/8/4
Initiative: Slow
Life: 400 (130/130/140/85) {40 Vehicle}
Attacks: 10d6 bite, 4d6 claw, 4d6 claw (+24 STR bonus); alternatively may trample for 12d6 (+24). {total=1d6+2v, 1d3+2v, 1d3+2v}
Evasion: 0
Melee AIM: 4_5
Wrestling Rating: 18_2
Knockdown: 200
Armor Type: Natural hide
BDR: 8 CDR: 20 PDR: 6 EDR: 8 LDR: 4
Stats—
STR: 34_0 AGI: 2_5 ALL: 1_2 REF: 0_5 INU: 2_5 HAR: 1_5
Skills—
Attack/Maul @ 2

These bipedal monsters weigh over 30 metric tons, rise over 25 meters in height (over 80' high), and are more than 40 meters long (over 130' long). Their massive head alone is greater than five meters in length and is filled with half-meter-long razor-sharp teeth. The earth-shaking thunder generated by the megasaur's gait is frequently mistaken for earthquakes.

The megasaur is a carnivore indigenous to Döno'ka, the Kraf'kan homeworld. It roams the jungles mainly in search of large herbivores common to its habitat, typically ignoring humanoid-sized life, but occasionally wanders into Kraf'kan cities. When it does, the threat is not from being attacked or eaten but rather from being trampled—not to mention thousands or millions of credits in damage to the streets and structures. Although small arms fire can sometimes penetrate the creature's hide, they cause little damage overall and further seem to only enrage the beast. Typically, only capital weapons are used to subdue a rampaging megasaur.

Beast: Okerum

Habitat—Indigenous to Glaam homeworld
Prevalence: Rare
How Encountered: Thicket of 2-4
Disposition: Malicious
Size: Medium
Intelligence: Non
Speed: 0
Initiative: Slow
Life: 13 (4/4/5/8)
Attacks: 4 separate 1d6 vine constriction attacks (+1 STR bonus)
Evasion: 3_5
Melee AIM: 4_0
Wrestling Rating: 4_7
Knockdown: 6
Armor Type: Natural hide (bark)
BDR: 1 CDR: 3 PDR: 3 EDR: 3 LDR: 0
Stats—
STR: 5_4 AGI: 4_0 ALL: 4_6 REF: 3_5 INU: 4_0

Okerum is a vampiric plant consisting of vines, a thick stalk, and many small flower-like organs used to detect the heat, moisture, scent, and vibrations generated by potential prey. They are usually encountered as a thicket of two to four such monsters, intermingled with and often disguised by mundane vines and other lush jungle vegetation.

Although the plant cannot actually uproot and move, it can bend from side to side and lash out with its heavy vines. It uses these vines to constrict prey, suffocating or crushing them to death. Once

dead, the vines remain tangled around a body, sprouting special hollow roots into the fallen flesh. These roots then siphon all bodily fluids as nutrients for the plant (the main plant roots in the ground draw only water from the soil).

Found only on the Glaam homeworld, Okerum are generally of little threat. But for the Glaam and offworld biologists, Okerum can prove deadly.

Beast: Tiger, Siberian

Habitat—Indigenous to Earth (Siberia)
Prevalence: Rare
How Encountered: Individual or Group of 2-4
Disposition: Aggressive
Size: Medium
Intelligence: Animal
Speed: 4/26/1
Initiative: Fast
Life: 20 (6/7/7/8)
Attacks: 1d6 bite, 1d2 paw, 1d2 paw (+6 STR bonus)
Evasion: 7_5
Melee AIM: 9_0
Wrestling Rating: 7_3
Knockdown: 10
Stats—
STR: 8_7 AGI: 6_0 ALL: 4_8 REF: 5_5 INU: 7_0 HAR: 4_0
Skills—
Attack/Maul @ 3 Dodge @ 2

Siberian tigers are the largest cats on Earth, more powerful than even the savanna lion. They are efficient predators, able to leap upon victims, using their powerful bite and two claw attacks to quickly subdue most prey.

Bot: Cleaning Bot

Cost: € 1,100+
Habitat—Most enclosed public and private areas in TL9 or higher; most starships and starports.
Prevalence: Common
How Encountered: Individual or Team of 2-4
Disposition: Indifferent
Size: Tiny or Small
Speed: 3/6/–
Initiative: Average
Life: 6 Superstructure (2/2/2)
Attacks: None (see below)
Evasion: 8_5
Melee AIM: 3_0
Wrestling Rating: 2_7 Passive
Knockdown: 4
Armor Type: Natural hide (plate coverings)
BDR: 5 CDR: 2 PDR: 5 EDR: 4 LDR: 1
Stats—
STR: 2_5 AGI: 3_0 REF: 6_5 INT: 2_0 KNO: 4_0
Skills—
Dust @ 3 (6_0) Sanitize @ 3 (5_0)
Vacuum @ 3 (6_0)
Equipment—
Wet/Dry Vac & Compressor
Mop & Spray Cleaner Assembly
Internal Miniature Trash Mulcher and Compactor
Forced-Air Duster & Light Feather Brush Assembly
Basic Optics Cam & Bacteria Sensor

Cleaning bots are used by many cultures and civilizations ranked at TL8 or better, and are quite prevalent in TL9 or higher civilizations. Most are programmed to activate and clean on a regular schedule (such as the night shift), while some are parked in corners and await for programmed conditions to occur (such as a spill), whereas those aboard advanced starships are occasionally tied-in to the ship's computer and alerted to trouble areas via the ship's internal sensors.

Nearly all cleaning bots are indifferent, ignoring the activities of other bots, animals, and humanoids, constantly going about their business. They are well programmed to stay clear of an remain out of the way of the activities of higher lifeforms—cleaning bots are relatively fast to manage this. Because of their mundane programming, these bots will not attempt to defend themselves if attacked, though they may try to 'stand clear' of the attacker.

Though completely sealed with no I/O port, stories are told of some cleaning bots which were reprogrammed to 'attack'—thereby spraying a variety of cleaning fluids at their targets and mulching any fallen personal items...

Bot: Inspection Bot

Cost: € 7,520
Habitat—Docking facilities, hangars, loading bays, and gangways at most Starports, StarBases, and cargo ships.
Prevalence: Common to Uncommon
How Encountered: Individual or Team of 2-3
Disposition: Indifferent
Size: Medium
Speed: 3
Initiative: Average
Life: 12 Superstructure (4/4/4)
Attacks: 1d2 Stun dmg from Punch
Evasion: 6_0
Ranged AIM: 7_0
Melee AIM: 4_0
Throwing AIM: 4_0
Wrestling Rating: 4_0
Knockdown: 8
Armor Type: Natural hide (plate coverings)
BDR: 5 CDR: 2 PDR: 5 EDR: 4 LDR: 1
Stats—
STR: 4_0 AGI: 4_0 PRE: 7_0 REF: 6_0 INT: 4_0 KNO: 5_0
Skills—
Business/Admin @ 2 (6_0)
Search @ 3 (7_0)
Language (InterLak) @ 5 (9_0)
Equipment—
Multi-Function Science Scanner Assembly (for cargo)
Comlink, Short Range
ComputerLink, Telescoping
Audio Receiver / Speaker / Optics (all basic)

Inspection bots are sometimes used to handle routine cargo inspections in lieu of using personnel. These bots are quite efficient, using their scanner assemblies to detect contraband or unreported cargo. They are also skilled in searching for hidden compartments and disguised contraband, though won't necessarily apply such skill without cause.

Inspection bots have basic protocol routines and can interact with cargo ship captains, discussing destination, taxes, regulations, and bulletin boards to locate potential buyers. Most have squeaky or annoying voices.

Countless models exist, some built as base humanoids, while others roll about on wheels or tread assemblies (a few even hover). The most popular model (because of its low price and dependability) is JR45X2QFART, manufactured by Repetitive Industries, which is a humanoid model with tread rollers instead of legs. This model is

described above and available for only 7,520 credits, which is heavily discounted from 11,520 mainly due to software and parts purchased in bulk by RI.

Bot: Sentry Bot

Cost: € 4,750 (4,100 w/o rifle)

Habitat:—Private corporations, some retail establishments, private starports, hangars, loading bays, and some non-Imperial starships.

Prevalence:	Uncommon
How Encountered:	Individual or Squad of 2-6
Disposition:	Aggressive
Size:	Medium
Speed:	3
Initiative:	Average
Life:	18 Superstructure (6/6/6)
Attacks:	1d2 Stun dmg from Punch
Evasion:	6_0
Ranged AIM:	7_0
Melee AIM:	3_0
Throwing AIM:	3_0
Wrestling Rating:	3_5
Knockdown:	12
Armor Type:	Natural hide (plate coverings)

BDR: 5 CDR: 2 PDR: 5 EDR: 4 LDR: 1

Stats—

STR: 4_0 AGI: 3_0 PRE: 7_0 REF: 6_0 INT: 3_0 KNO: 4_0

Skills—

Weapon Permit, Level-1

Weapons—

Weapon	Single	Auto	ROF	DMG
Sk-9 Rifle/held	9_0	—	1, EDR	3d6

Equipment—

Comlink, Short Range

Audio Receiver / Speaker / Optics (all basic)

Sentry bots replace the living security guard, thereby delegating the monotonous duties of a watchdog to a fully automated non-sentient bot. Most are thin and have little in the way of options (20 CUs total, 6 available). They are not designed for military duty, nor are they particularly reliable in the field. They are reasonably good with hand-held pistols and rifles, but are generally too slow for melee combat. Most can operate for about a week before needing to be recharged (PlyCell-70). For retail stores, warehouses, and many other private establishments, however, they perform their function well.

Sentry bots operate on the Generic AI-3 processor, and so can be tricked if one knows how. Contrarily, they are usually foolproof when reacting to a crime or other programmed conditions. Programmed instructions can vary from simply notifying others, attempting to detain intruders by physical force, or opening fire. All such bots carry blaster rifles (often slung over the back when not in use).

The most prevalent model, GS1188, is manufactured by Automation, Inc., and is sold for only 4,750 credits with rifle included (discounted from 5,870). Without the rifle, GS1188 is available for 650 credits less. Without weapons permit software, it is available for 1,000 credits less. Without permit software or the rifle, the GS1188 is available for a total of 3,100 (1,650 less).

Pest: Engine Spiders

Habitat—Any power cell, reactor, or other energy-storage or generating device.

Prevalence:	Rare
How Encountered:	Horde of 2-7 or more
Disposition:	Malicious
Size:	Tiny (8cm long)
Intelligence:	Instinct
Speed:	1/7/-
Initiative:	Fast
Life:	2 (0/1/1/1)
Attacks:	1d2 Stun Electric Shock
Evasion:	11_0
Melee AIM:	7_0
Wrestling Rating:	4_0
Knockdown:	1
Armor Type:	Natural shell

BDR: 3 CDR: 4 PDR: 5 EDR: 9 LDR: 3

Stats—

STR: 1_0 AGI: 7_0 ALL: 2_5 REF: 8_0 INU: 4_5 HAR: 1_0

Engine spiders are small spider-like parasites about eight centimeters in length (about three inches) and bright white in color. They have ten legs and round bodies, are able to leap up to a meter high, and are extremely agile.

These spiders earn their name because they most often infest the engines of skycars, starfighters, and capital ships. In actuality, they are attracted to any power source, including reactors, batteries, power cells, energy clips, power conduits, and generators. This is because the animal feeds off the energy contained in or generated by such devices. A single spider is able to consume 1 EU of power every minute, with larger populations able to actually drain a starship's generating reactor power (not the reactor fuel). After a single spider has consumed 100 EUs, it will divide by way of agamogenesis, thereby forming two spiders, a process which takes anywhere from a few minutes to a couple of hours.

Spiders need only be in proximity to the power they drain to feed off. Typically, spiders can drain from up to 20 centimeters distant from the actual raw power. However, stronger sources such as a reactor can sometimes be drained from a bit further away, though in those cases the spiders are more likely to feed off primary and secondary power conduit junctions where they attach to the reactor.

These spiders are not intelligent enough to combat aggressors, but should they be handled, struck by a conducting weapon, or cornered, they will deliver an electric shock that inflicts 1d2 points of Stun damage. Ranged weapon users are immune to the shock, but use of energy weapons can sometimes cause one or more spiders to leap upon their attacker, shocking him or her, and draining the weapon. Spiders are able to drain while delivering their shock. Also, because of their affinity for energy, most energy weapons cause very little damage as it is difficult to overload the spider. Furthermore, their naturally hard shell offers some protection against more mundane weapons.

Engine spiders are immune to radiation, do not breathe or require an atmosphere, and can withstand high temperatures (not temperatures inside a reactor), but are easily killed with cold fire-suppression sprays or if the temperature is lowered to freezing or less (most reactors must be shut down and allowed to cool).

No one knows where engine spiders first originated, but some believe they once dined on natural energy phenomena until more appealing sources of energy were harnessed by modern technology.

Pest: Space Roaches

Habitat—Small starships (corvettes, blockade runners, shuttles, yachts, cargo ships, escorts, assault ships, transports, freighters, and tugs). Sometimes infests Destroyers or Liners, but nothing larger, nor any large installations or stations.

Prevalence:	Rare
How Encountered:	Individual or horde of 2-7

Disposition: Malicious
Size: Tiny (15 to 20cm diameter)
Intelligence: Cunning
Speed: 3/13/4
Initiative: Ultra Fast
Life: 4 (1/1/2/2)
Attacks: 1d3 Bite
(Ignore any BDR armor ratings)
Evasion: 12_4
Melee AIM: 8_5
Wrestling Rating: 5_1
Knockdown: 2
Armor Type: Natural hide
BDR: 2 CDR: 12 PDR: 5 EDR: 11 LDR: 5
Stats—
STR: 2_7 AGI: 7_5 ALL: 0_7 REF: 9_4 INU: 8_5 HAR: 1_5
Skills—
Attack/Maul @ 1

The dreaded space roach does not usually prey directly on living hosts, but rather on small starships and spacecraft. Space roaches are spherical organisms about fifteen to twenty centimeters in diameter, most of which is a giant maw filled with sharp teeth. A mismatch of arms, tentacles, suckers, flippers, and danglies sprout from various points on the creature's body, and new ones grow where needed to adapt to new environments.

These pests can devour nearly anything, including silicon, organic matter, and many metals. They infest small to medium-sized space-faring vessels, ignoring vessels of destroyer class or larger. Once a single space roach attaches to the exterior hull or any internal area of a vessel, it will begin burrowing its way into and around the ship's machinery, multiplying within hours of the initial infestation. Space roaches prefer to dine upon a ship's food stores, but will also consume small animals and pets as well. Occasionally, individuals may attack a lone humanoid for food. Once a ship's stores are depleted, these parasites move on to various electronics and machinery. Much of the damage to a ship's systems is quite minor, though extensive infestations can disable a vessel over the course of many years unless restorative repairs are implemented regularly.

Space roaches tend to gather in the darker areas of a ship (especially engineering), but are cunning enough to disable lighting around desired nesting sites that are brightly illuminated. This is, in fact, one of the first signs of a space roach infestation: various room and corridor lighting going dark. Lighting is often disabled by gnawing on the power cables leading to the light, but they will also chew-up the lights themselves if those lights are reactivated too many times—not to mention the repair technician should the repair be witnessed.

Other signs of infestation include the pitter-patter of tiny feet running around in the ventilation ducts, tiny puddles of sticky black feces, or even the occasional disruption of a shipboard system from gnawing damage.

Once a starship has been infected, it is virtually impossible to cleanse the vessel of every parasite. Space roaches are incredibly resilient and can easily adapt to any environment created onboard. Space roaches don't breathe, are unaffected by vacuum, can withstand environmental extremes, are immune to most radiation, and cannot be killed by gas or poisons. Traps consisting of a laranium cage with fresh meat within are the most common form of space roach management, but even laranium can be gnawed through given enough time. And, having acquired a resistance to most forms of energy (from gnawing on power cables), space roaches absorb much of the energy in blaster bolts and discharges from other modern weapons. Therefore, blades and projectile firearms are the preferred weapon of choice when fighting these parasites, but since space roaches tend to nest in the engineering areas it is not always wise to fire high-power projectile weapons.

What many ship owners find most frustrating is that even when giant traps are set (filled with lots of meat), at least one or two space roaches won't budge from their hiding places no matter how appetizing the bait. This means that when exterminators claim to have gathered all of the parasites, enough remain to begin multiplying once again. Furthermore, since space roaches are very difficult to scan and few exterminators that want to stay in business can guarantee their services when dealing with this particular animal, 'exterminations' become more of a regular maintenance routine. Lastly, most pest control companies refuse to deal with space roaches at all, as more than one exterminator has been killed or seriously mauled while trying to bait one of these beasts.

In combat, space roaches are extremely fast, cunning, and inventive. Their bite is especially nasty and can occasionally be delivered in such a way that any BDR armor ratings are ignored. And although they are not intelligent enough to engineer real traps, they have established certain cause and effect relationships such as cutting power cables leads to downed lights, or weakening one side of a column or stack of cargo containers leads to its directional collapse atop of prey.

When coexisting with space roaches, there are a few rules to live by:

1) always travel in pairs, as a single person is often mistaken for a snack;

2) attempting to combat these animals leads to reprisal, so instead try to periodically lure the bulk of them offship with bait;

3) never keep food (or allow crumbs) in engineering or around other sensitive equipment—after all, the danger is great enough as it is;

4) don't bother trying to hide food or store it in sealed containers, this only creates a bigger mess;

5) shop for food frequently or eat out, as stockpiling rations only leads to a bigger infestation;

6) the more hidden or protected something is the more curious these animals become;

7) avoid dark corridors or rooms, but never try to repair the lighting and if you must go there use a flashlight and be quiet about it;

8) never shine a light directly at anything you think might be moving;

9) don't keep small pets, and if you do then become unattached to them as soon as possible; and

10) learn to sleep with the lights on (and with a friend).

Pest: Suidasaur (PigLizard)

Habitat—Urban, suburban, and rural areas
Prevalence: Common and Uncommon
How Encountered: Individual or group of 2-7
Disposition: Skittish, Playful, or Indifferent
Size: Tiny to medium (20 cm to 1 meter)
Intelligence: Animal
Speed: 1/5/1
Initiative: Average
Life: 3 (1/1/1/1) to 12 (4/4/4/6)
Attacks: 1-point Bite
Evasion: 6_5–1_5
Melee AIM: 3_5
Wrestling Rating: 3_5 (average)
Knockdown: 1 to 6
Armor Type: Natural hide
BDR: 2 CDR: 3 PDR: 2 EDR: 1 LDR: 0
Stats—
STR: 1–5 AGI: 3_5 REF: 3_5 INU: 6_0 HAR: 4_0

Suidasaur, or piglizards as they are more commonly known, are perhaps the most prolific nuisance in the galaxy. Every known inhabited world has a piglizard population of some degree, and newly discovered worlds are rarely piglizard-free for long before one is inadvertently introduced to the environment aboard freighters, boxed goods, and even some liners. The problem is so widespread that the Imperial Bureau of Health rates worldwide infestations with a PL-factor (PigLizard Factor) ranging from 0 to 9 based on data gathered by both inspection and census forms.

The Suidasaur gains its nickname because of its appearance—something vaguely a cross between a pig and a lizard. They are quadruped scavengers with their hind legs providing most of the creature's locomotion. The forelegs are weak and usually reserved for gathering and managing food; the being is able to walk about on its hind legs for a time. In addition to their short legs, cloven hooves, random patches of curled bristly hair, and a cartilaginous snout used for digging, the creature sports a cork-screw tail and anywhere from five to seventeen eyes mounted on short stubby stalks which are randomly sprinkled atop its head.

The animal's size is dependent on the environment. In urban areas, piglizards rarely exceed 20 to 30 centimeters in length and most average half that size. They grow larger in suburban zones, and in rural areas they can achieve nearly the size of an Earth cow.

Once introduced to Titan, the piglizard quickly led to the eradication of rat populations. Similar pests were driven to extinction on other worlds where scavengers competed with piglizards for dominance.

Urban piglizards often travel about as either scavenging individuals or as entire flocks where refuse is plentiful. Imperial authorities and waste management technology has kept populations under control and at a minimum in the heart of the Imperial City and in other upperclass areas. City slums are a Suidasaur's haven.

In rural communities on agricultural worlds, piglizards prey on farms. Imperium-wide estimates place the piglizard as responsible for trillions of credits in lost crops annually.

Biologists remain baffled by the Suidasaur's remarkable proclivity for adaptation and survival. Piglizards are tough, can go months without food if necessary, are largely unaffected by atmospheric and environmental extremes, can stomach most pesticides, toxins, and pollutants, and breed very quickly. So quickly, in fact, that scientists discovered that individual piglizards are able to reproduce asexually if necessary.

Aside from unchecked populations, piglizards are undesirable due to the foul odor they exude and frequent passing of gas. They do, however, consume large amounts of rubbish which has alleviated much of waste management's workload on many a world. Despite their foul odor and alien toxin-ridden biology, piglizards are edible and actually quite nutritious when properly cooked, though the taste is said to be difficult to stomach.

Pest: Vreen Stinker Gnats

Habitat—Around any food; especially rotten food.

Prevalence:	Rare
How Encountered:	Cloud of 10-60 or more
Disposition:	Malicious
Size:	Insect
Intelligence:	Instinct
Speed:	12
Initiative:	Ultra Fast
Life:	¼
Attacks:	None
Evasion:	12_5
Melee AIM:	9_5
Wrestling Rating:	n/a
Knockdown:	n/a

Stats—

STR: 0_1 AGI: 9_5 ALL: 0_5 REF: 9_5 INU: 9_5

Indigenous to the planet Vree, these prolific pests have managed to infiltrate most of the known galaxy. Stinker gnats earn their name because of the strong acrid odor they exude. Each gnat is a good two centimeters in length (about three-quarters of an inch) but are prodigious fliers, generating a loud whiny buzz. They are common around seedy restaurants and where rubbish is allowed to ferment—especially on backwater worlds.

Vreen stinker gnats are actually harmless to humanoids, but quickly ruin foodstuffs by laying their eggs within. After a brief gestation (usually within thirty minutes), the eggs will hatch and the maggot pupae will begin burrowing around in and consuming the food. Requiring only a few hours of this, maggots will harden and then metamorphose into an adult gnat overnight, but burrowed foods will be quickly spoiled from noxious odors exuded by the maggots.

As individuals, a stinker gnat can prove quite annoying, preferring to land on the faces of humanoids or in the middle of a meal. The mere presence of one generates a detectable odor, while a cloud of gnats can quickly foul the air throughout an enclosure. High agility and good eyesight enables them to escape most swat attacks, permitting continued irritation.

In order to help control stinker gnat populations, the Imperium has instituted several new laws aimed at keeping trash off the streets of all major cities and fining restaurant establishments that allow infestations to go untreated. Additionally, most customs officials will scan imported foodstuffs for any sign of maggot larvae—confiscating infected products.

A number of sprays and trap devices handle the gnat problem fairly well.

APPENDICES

What's Here

This appendix begins with continued material from the book's preface, and also contains all of the Character Record Sheets used in this game plus the Character Worksheet, as outlined below. You may photocopy the items in this appendix for personal use only. If you prefer, you can also download printable copies from our website address, noted in *'Getting More Information',* below.

1) Character Worksheet (2-pages)
2) Zaon Character Record Sheet
3) Extra Weapons / Equipment Sheet
4) Telepath Supplemental Sheet

Getting More Information

For more information about Zaon products, supplements, any errata, or to contact us with questions, feel free to drop by our website:

http://zaon.org

Our dot-org site offers real-time discussion forums where your game questions are answered and where information regarding future supplements is often available prior to actual release. You can even offer your opinion on what should happen next in the Zaon universe and what supplements are needed most.

Additional information, including company news, press releases, and official downloads are available at:

http://www.zaon.com

Submitting Information To Us

<Instructions/legalities for writing/art and ideas>

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

a number of characters, a detailed description of the universe, land, or locations where the story takes place, and an adventure the characters undergo. Roleplaying games also incorporate characters, locations, and adventures. The main difference, however, is that the roleplaying game 'story' hasn't been told yet—the players actually 'write' the story as they play the game. But, relax, this isn't as difficult or time-consuming as it sounds because players don't actually write the story on paper, they merely tell it as they go along.

One player, the gamemaster, acts as a referee by describing the universe, lands, or locations his or her 'story' takes place. The gamemaster (GM) also knows what the adventure goal is and what obstacles lie in its path. Because of this, the GM does not participate in the story the same way the players do.

The other players, instead, each control only one character in this story and must decide where their character will go and what that character will do—but there are limits to what these characters are able to do (which is where these rules apply). The players will also very likely be surprised by what obstacles must be overcome and what twists the adventure will take. Furthermore, if the adventure is fraught with too much risk, the players may decide to undergo a different adventure altogether of their own!

This means that unlike a novel where the story takes a definite path, the characters in a roleplaying game may do all sorts of unexpected things and create their own adventure and corresponding trouble in the process. The GM, therefore, must be prepared to referee all of the actions the players choose for their characters—a task not to be taken lightly. Often, GMs must use their best judgment when describing consequences to player character actions.

Luckily, the rules in this book make the gamemaster's job much easier as they provide limits to what characters can realistically do in the story. The rules also provide the gamemaster with a great deal of background information about the universe and lands in which this story takes place. With these resources, gamemasters can describe locations they have already read about and then continue to describe what happens to the player characters and what those characters see and hear as they travel to other locations.

But the gamemaster's role doesn't end there. It is also the GM's job to act as a player of a different kind—one who must roleplay the actions and words of all non-player characters the player characters come into contact with. This means that when a player character decides to talk to the local barkeep, the GM must roleplay that barkeep just as he or she must roleplay the police, the street beggars, the bystanders, the Imperial agents, and everyone else in the universe—a challenging yet rewarding task.

Most people learn best by way of example. So, perhaps a good means for further clarifying the way a roleplaying game is played is to provide a brief example of play. The following can be thought of as a sample scripting of typical exchanges during the middle of a game session:

GAMEMASTER (GM): Okay, you've all reached the clearing where you left your ship, but you notice that the main hatch is open.

PLAYER 1: What! How's that possible?

GM: You can see a series of footprints in the mud leading to and from the hatch. Also, the outside control panel has been opened and a bunch of wires are hanging out with some kind of device attached to them—it looks as though someone cracked the security code in order to gain entry.

PLAYER 2: I ready my blaster rifle in case the intruders are still here, and I use the infrared imaging scope on my rifle to scan the surrounding forest for any lifeforms.

PLAYER 1: Can I tell anything else from the footprints?

GM: Okay, you begin scanning the forest but you haven't picked up anything warm-blooded yet. You, on the other hand, can see that the footprints are definitely boot tracks—possibly belonging to Imperial troopers! [Pointing to player 3] What are you doing?

PLAYER 3: Um, can I see any movement inside the ship?

GM: No. As far as you can tell, the corridor is empty.

PLAYER 1: Guys, I don't like this. Imperial agents wouldn't be here unless they thought we still had the item.

PLAYER 2: Well, we don't, so they can't arrest us... Can they? Wait, have I detected anything in the forest yet?

GM: No, and you've pretty much covered the entire area.

PLAYER 2: Well, what should we do?

GM: {shrugs}

PLAYER 1: I start moving toward our ship, as quietly as I can. I motion the rest of you to follow.

PLAYER 2: Okay, we follow, but I keep my rifle ready!

GM: All right, you reach the hatch. There's still no movement in the corridor and you don't hear anybody, either.

ALL PLAYERS: We move inside, slowly.

GM: As you move inside you suddenly hear a roar echo down the corridor—kinda like a lion's—and then some very loud and heavy stomping from the deck plates above you, as though something very big or heavy is walking on the grating...

Hopefully this example provided better clarity on how to roleplay. But there are several unanswered questions in the above scenario. What unpleasant alien monstrosity awaits the crew onboard their ship? Will the crew be able to defeat it if it is hostile? These questions can be answered using the game rules.

Following in Part # of this book, players will create their own characters complete with strengths, weaknesses, and skills. That way, the player and the gamemaster will know what is realistically within each character's abilities. Once this is known, the story can continue.

WHAT THE DICE ARE FOR

At certain points in the story there will be questions that neither the player nor gamemaster can (nor should) answer. These typically involve some random chance which adds to the suspense of the game.

For example, in the above scenario, the crew could encounter some horrible alien beast. The beast may lash out at the crew and the characters may open fire with their weapons. When the character shoots, does the weapon hit its target? What if the beast jumps onto a high ledge and is thus farther away (and therefore harder to hit)? What if the shooter was an expert marksman? How would you determine these outcomes?

Situations like these require dice in order to generate a random number. This number can then be pitted against the skill and range of the target. For example, player 1 might be the ship's pilot and have only average marksmanship ability (say a skill rating of 2 to hit a human-sized target that was somewhat close), while player 2 might be an expert marksman (with a skill rating of 5 to hit the same target). Combining these skill numbers with certain static numbers unique to each character results in a total Action Check number that is then added to a dice roll in order to inject a random number variable. This final total must equal or exceed the target difficulty number set by the gamemaster based on how challenging the task is.

As the game rules call for several ranges of random number generation, four types of dice are needed to play Zaon™. A six-sided dice is needed to generate a number between one and six (this dice is the same type that is used in many board games and can even be borrowed from such games for use in this one). The other three types are an eight-sided die, a ten-sided die and a twelve-sided one.

The eight and ten-sided die generate numbers between one and eight and one and ten, respectively. The twelve-sided die is marked with 1 through 12 on its sides. Usually, you will need to roll both an eight and a twelve-sided die at the same time for each action your character attempts during play. Six-sided dice are used mainly for damage calculation and are rolled in multiples as declared by the rules. Therefore, unlike the eight, then, and twelve-sided dice which you need only have one each, you may need several or even many six-sided ones.

Players and gamemasters alike should each own their own set of dice.

Using these dice, players will be called upon to make dice rolls for their characters many times throughout their adventure. The gamemaster will also roll dice for non-player characters as well as for other reasons. Calls for dice rolls are noted in this book as either an Action Check which means to roll both the ten and twelve-sided dice (more on what this means later), or in multiples of six-sided dice in a #d6 format, where the # refers to the number of dice that are to be rolled. For example, 4d6 would mean to roll four six-sided dice in order to generate a random total between 4 and 24.

Also, sometimes dice will be noted in a #d6+# format, where the last # indicates a number to be added to the dice total rolled. For example, 1d6+3 would mean to roll one six-sided die and then add three to the result (for a possible range of 4 to 9).

Additionally, sometimes there won't be a number in front of the 'd6' (e.g., d6). This is the same as saying 1d6.

Finally, rarely you will see the notation '1d3' which means to generate a random number between 1 and 3. To do this, roll a d6 but halve the result rounding up (1 and 2 equals one, 3 and 4 equals two, and 5 and 6 equals three).

Players and gamemasters that do not own any dice can purchase them at game and hobby stores where this game is sold.

GLOSSARY OF BASIC GAME TERMINOLOGY:

Gamemaster (GM), or Referee: The player who, rather than controlling a single character, directs the story of the game and resolves the outcome of actions attempted by the players' characters (by using the game rules).

Player Character (PC): A player character is a character that is controlled and directed by one of the game's players.

Non-Player Character (NPC): NPCs are characters just like player characters except that they are created and directed by the gamemaster and are for PCs to interact with.

Adventure: A specific 'journey' or 'episode' in a larger story. Adventures are often completed in one to three gaming sessions (sessions typically lasting from three to five hours).

Campaign: An entire story arc that includes several adventures. Campaigns may go on indefinitely.

Character Worksheet: The temporary 'form' used to aid players by stepping them through the character creation process.

Character Record Sheet: The permanent 'form' used to record all details about a player character in game terms.

Action Check: A term calling for the roll of both your ten and twelve-sided dice together.

d6, 2d6, 3d6+2, etc.: A script used to note how many and of what type of dice are needed for a particular role. A d6 would call for the player (or gamemaster) to roll one six-sided die. 2d6 would mean to roll two six-sided dice and add the results together. A d6+3 calls for one six-sided die to be rolled and then 3 to be added to the result, and so on.

Rounding: When the rules state that a number total should be rounded, unless specifically stated otherwise you must round DOWN. For example, 3.8 would round to 3.

MATERIALS

In addition to the dice, players should also keep pens and pencils on hand in order to track changes and improvements to their character. Scratch paper is also a good idea.

Character record sheets are available in the back of this book to record player characters for Zaon, and these and other forms and worksheets in that Appendix can be photocopied for personal use, where so indicated.

A good playing area away from distractions (e.g., TV, loud music, obnoxious neighbors, open fire pits, UFO landing sites, and the like) is also important. A table or other writing surface (even a clipboard) will aid the player by making it easy to jot down notes about the adventure and also provides a flat surface in which to make rolls with the dice.

Finally, a good selection of snacks and beverages (including pizza) can help fuel the excitement.

PLAYING THE GAME

Starting with Part #: *Character Creation*, players will be guided through the building of their character down to the very last detail. Once this is complete, players (and thus characters) will be ready to face any adventures their gamemaster can devise. But first, let's take a look at the fictional universe play takes place in...

— *PROCEED TO PAGE 3*

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ZAON™ CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

PERSONAL DATA

Name:
Species:
Age: Gender:
Height: Weight:
Background Kit:
Your Name:

EXPERIENCE and HEROISM

Heroism
Your GM:
Unspent Physical: Unspent Mental: Unspent Bonus:

LIFE and ARMOR

LIFE
Going To Moderately Wounded
No Step Penalty
+1 Step Penalty
Total
=Wound =Stun
+3 Step Penalty
Start Here
Going To Severely Wounded
CRITICAL LIFE

ARMOR
Armor Type:
Ratings: BDR CDR PDR EDR LDR
Evasion Penalty:
Screen
Ratings: BDR CDR PDR EDR LDR
Uses: DT:

TRAITS

Ranged AIM
Melee AIM
Throwing AIM
Wrestle Rating
Knock Down
Temp Evasion
EVASION

Initiative
SPD / /
Movement Breakdown
Ultra Fast / Very Fast / Fast / Average / Slow
Total Concentration
Strength Bonus to Dmg
ATTITUDE /

STATS and SKILLS

Skills marked with "†" can't be attempted Untrained

ALL WIL STR EGO REF HAR PRE INU AGI KNO INT

- Climbing +
- Jumping
- Running
- Swimming
- Wrestling
- Other : +

- Seduction +
- +
- +

- Concentration
- Devotion
- Hide Thoughts
- Resist Interrogation
- Other : +
- Other : +

- Manipulation +
- Speech +
- Starship Ops, Command +
- Other : +
- Other : +
- Other : +

- Interrogation +
- Intimidation +

- Acting +
- Animal Handling/Training +
- Carousing/Gaming +
- Charm +

- †Etiquette +
- Streetwise +
- Other : +
- Other : +

- Alien Technology +
- Appraisal +
- Awareness +
- Disguise +
- †Forensics +
- Forgery +
- Search +

- Security Procedures +
- Starship Ops, Security +
- †Starship Ops, Tactical +
- Strategy/Tactics, +
- Survival +
- Tracking +
- Other : +

- Gunnery
- †Lockpicking +
- Marksmanship, Ranged
- Pickpocket +
- Sleight of Hand +
- Other : +

- Balance/Acrobatics +
- Dodge
- Marksmanship, Thrown
- Martial Arts
- Pilot, Ground/Small Ship +
- †Pilot, Starfighter +
- Pressure Suit Ops
- Riding +
- Stealth +
- Two-Handed Fighting
- Zero-G Ops
- Other : +
- Other : +
- Other : +

- †Astrophysics +
- †Computer Hacking +
- †Computer Programg. +
- Cryptography
- Demolitions +
- †Medicine, +
- †Physics +
- †Science: +
- Other : +
- Other : +

- †Bot Tech/Repair +
- Botany +
- †Business/Admin +
- †Chemistry +
- Communications +
- †Computer Operation +
- †Craft Maint/Repair +
- †Electronics +

- History +
- Interstellar Law +
- †Language:
- †Language:
- Mechanics +
- †Starship, Comm +
- †Starship, Engineering +
- †Starship, Helm +

- †Starship, Navigation +
- †Theology +
- †Weapons Technology +
- †Xenobiology +
- †Xenosociology +
- Other : +
- Other : +
- Other : +

Action Difficulties for Skills: Routine/Easy (No Roll OR 10) Average = 10 Tough = 14 Very Difficult = 18 Absurd = 22 Impossible = 26

WEAPONS

WEAPON	AIMs: Single	Auto	ROF	DMG	TYPE	S(+0)	M(+2)	L(+4)	E(+7)	Shots	Clips

BENEFITS / DRAWBACKS

CREDITS

€

EQUIPMENT

Encumbrance:

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ZAON™ EXTRA WEAPONS / EQUIPMENT SHEET

WEAPONS

WEAPON	AIMs:	*Single*	*Spray*	ROF	DMG	TYPE	S(+0)	M(+2)	L(+4)	E(+7)	Shots	Clips
WEAPON	AIMs:	*Single*	*Spray*	ROF	DMG	TYPE	S(+0)	M(+2)	L(+4)	E(+7)	Shots	Clips

Grenade/Missile	AIM	DMG	TYPE	Skill or Range	Primary Blast	DMG-1	Secondary Blast	DMG-2	Knockdown	Ammo

ARMOR and SCREENS

Armor Type: _____ BDR CDR

Evasion Penalty: _____ *Ratings:* PDR EDR LDR

Screen Type: _____ BDR CDR

Evasion Penalty: _____ *Ratings:* PDR EDR LDR

Uses/ Charges: ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

Damage Threshold: _____

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Item:	Value:	Location:

STORED EQUIPMENT

Item:	Value:	Storage Location:

NOTES

_____

_____

_____

_____

CHARACTER'S NAME

YOUR NAME

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