

Traveller is an old game now. The books, supplements, maps etc. across six iterations of the game can fill a large book shelf. To spare you plowing through this massive backlog, I have done my best to strip things down to the very basics necessary for play. The following is an extremely condensed version of the standard Traveller universe and your character's present circumstances.

### **The Ancients**

The entire region now known as Charted Space was once the site of an alien civilization that destroyed itself in a cataclysmic war over a 100 millennia ago. The Ancients, as they are commonly known, had a technology level far in excess of current levels. They are responsible for several important features of the world the players will inhabit. The final war resulted in numerous scarred or shattered worlds due to the planet busting weapons used. The remains of Ancient complexes are scattered across known space, some of which contain widely varying high tech artifacts.

The Ancients were also enthusiastic genetic engineers. The results of two of their projects are apparent today. During Earth's prehistory, the Ancients took many examples of humans and subsequently seeded known space with human populations. There are 40 known cases of human civilizations that have origins in this pre-historic scattering. The most notable are Vland (home of the 1<sup>st</sup> Imperium), Sylea (home of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Imperium) and Zdant (capital of the Zhodani Consulate). This later had a perverse consequence. When Earth finally developed jump drive, the first 'alien' species they discovered were other humans in an obscure outpost of the First Imperium based on far away Vland. (that a story for later)

The Vargr race that dominates the coreward part of known space are also the product of Ancient manipulation of canine stock taken from Earth during its pre-history

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Imperium**

The Imperium is currently the largest interstellar state, just over 1100 years old, comprising approximately 12,000 systems. It is not without rivals and it is not the only major human dominated state. Although its fleets are the envy of charted space, the sheer size of the space that it governs makes its grip very loose. Commercial travel from the core to the frontier can take close to a year. A trip from one border to another can take two years or more. The Imperium's answer to this problem is semi-feudal structure. A vast majority of systems are self-governing, exhibiting almost every form of political and economic structure imaginable. What Imperial authorities primarily concern themselves with is keeping trade between its member worlds open and secure from both external threat and internal conflict. This Pax Imperium has proved enduring and for the most part popular with its member worlds. The government is not, however, representative. Member worlds consent to lack of input in return for local autonomy. The Imperium is governed by a militarily elite arranged in a feudal structure with the Imperial house at its head. This elite is constrained by several factors; the sheer logistics of a governing such a huge place, the massive economic weight of Imperium sprawling mega-corporations, and finally the activity of rival states.

### **The Rivals**

The Imperium must contend with in effect six major foreign powers and a slew of smaller states. The rival powers are (in declining order of importance to this campaign):

- The Solomani Confederation - human dominated state currently in a bitter cold war with the Imperium. The Confederation is committed to the racial superiority of humans descended from Earth (or Sol) itself. They are collectively aggressive and chauvinistic despite their apparent military, economic and numerical inferiority to their great rival.
- The Hiver Federation – outwardly passive state ruled by the enigmatic Hiver race
- The 2000 Worlds - empire of the K'Kree, a herd derived race of militant herbivores dedicated to the liquidation of all meat eaters. Humans commonly refer to K'kree as centaurs due to their general resemblance to the mythological creatures.

- The Vargr Extents – collective name of large number of small interstellar states on the coreward border of the Imperium. The nature of Vargr politics frustrate large states. Vargr are, however, enthusiastic corsairs who have terrorized human space for centuries.
- The Aslan Heirate - A loose confederation of expansionistic Aslan clans. The Aslan are a major race derived from hunter/chaser stock with strict gender distinctions, honor code, and never satisfied desire for more land.
- The Zhodani Consulate – human state ruled by a psionic elite. The Imperium has had numerous frontier wars with this state. The foundation of the conflict is the Imperium's implacable rejection of the use of psionic powers.

### **The Old Expanses & Hinterworlds**

The Expanses are a long settled region on the border Solomani Confederation. It is orderly and wealthy if somewhat stagnant. All of the crew of the Fat Angel are natives of the Old Expanses sector. Next door is a sleepy, backwater sector known as the Hinterworlds. This region has been ignored for centuries largely due to the larger struggles happening elsewhere. It is home to a handful of small subsector size states and is the occasional scene of intrigue between the major powers; in this case the Imperium, the Solomani and the Hivers (the others being too distant).

### **The Fat Angel**

Your ship, the Fat Angel, is a long haul exploratory trader owned by the Old Expanses Group (OEG). With the Solomani border having long settled down after a war 80 years ago, the OEG is looking for new markets away from its base in the Old Expanses. The company is financing the journey for the purpose of collecting ground level information about opportunities all they way across the Hinterworlds sector. With this overarching goal in mind, the Fat Angel will journey to Sysix (HW2935), making contacts and gathering trade information along the way. The journey will take about a year and a half, round trip. Bonuses for returning crew members will be generous.

### **Technology**

Traveller is very much in the mid-20th century space opera vein, and it's vision of the future dates the game significantly. It was written and had its heyday before cyber-punk, nanotech or robust biotech had achieved wide public (or at least geek) consciousness. That said, the creators succeeded in creating a very playable universe. There is lots of space and the arm of the law is short and slow. Here are some quick bullet points of what is possible in the Traveller universe.

- **FLT travel:** travel between star systems is accomplished by faster than light jump drives. Ships enter the tired sf cliché of 'jump space' at one point in normal space, exiting several light years away at another point. Ships are rated by the number of parsecs (hexes on your maps) they move. Jump 6 is the maximum amount of hexes possible at current Imperial levels. Most ships are rated Jump 1 or 2. All jumps, regardless of the distance, take approximately one week.
- **No FLT communication** – Ships are the only method of communication between systems. With the one week time for even the longest jump means that news travels slowly, much in the way it did during the Age of Sail in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Even big news like the death of an Emperor will not reach the borders for months.
- **Psionics** - powers such as telekinesis, clairvoyance, telepathy etc. are real in this world (though in a considerably less robust form than in a X-man comic). This is complicated by the fact that there is a deep and almost universal suspicion and hatred of psions across Imperial and Solomani space. Psions must hide their abilities or face vicious persecution or even death.

- **Fire arms-** chemical based slug throwers are still widely used due the cost and weight of laser or plasma weapons, though these are available.
- **Gravitics** – localized anti-gravity is widely used at higher Imperial tech levels resulting in flying cars, space ships that can hover and initial damping aboard ships.