

For Referees Only

Solo Campaign 1  
Into The Neutral Zone

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*TRAVELLER*

Zozer Games Design

# Solo Campaign 1 Into The Neutral Zone

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*TRAVELLER*

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Thanks to Ian Stead for permission to use his deckplan and illustration of the Far Trader, and to Diveguy from the Citizens of the Imperium forum, for his genius 'Facts About Kurtz'!

Zozer Games can be found at:

<https://www.pauelliottbooks.com/zozergames.html>

Contact Paul Elliott at [zozer@talktalk.net](mailto:zozer@talktalk.net)

This scenario is set in the Spinward Marchs and can be played with most versions of Traveller, but the best experience will be had with **Classic Traveller** (the LBBs) or **The Traveller Book**. You will find Zozer Games' solitaire book SOLO invaluable too.

# Introduction

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This booklet is a solo roleplaying campaign for Traveller. Set within the Vilis and Jewell subsectors of the Spinward Marches, it chronicles the adventures of a husband and wife team of naval veterans.

## **STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

This solo campaign takes place in the year 991, six years after the end of the unpopular Third Frontier War, the war was so badly run that lots of naval staff were forced to resign, even the emperor (Styryx) abdicated. It takes place within the Spinward Marches in that bit of interstellar space between the Zhodani Consulate and the Third Imperium known locally as the 'Neutral Zone'. It runs through Vilis and Jewell subsectors and is filled with backwater worlds, dead-end locations - adventure opportunities! We should envisage many military veterans (like the PCs) travelling here to get away from the stigma of the war to make a fortune for themselves. There should be plenty of Zhodani and Imperial covert plots occurring in this region.

## **USING THIS ADVENTURE**

The campaign is best run as a husband and wife team with a far trader travelling through the Neutral Zone. Use Zozer Games' book SOLO to play this campaign.

## **CHARACTERS**

Two characters are provided, a husband and wife team of ex-naval officers. They will need to recruit other crew members as needed, use the recruitment rules from Book 4 if needed, or roleplay. The characters begin the game on the world of Ruie, in the Regina subsector.

## **EQUIPMENT AND CASH**

The characters begin with starting cash and can buy equipment suitable for Ruie's Tech Level and Law Level.

## REFEREE'S NOTES

There are a small number of rules changes required to play Into the Neutral Zone.

**Psionics (optional):** The Zhodani nobility cannot perform Clairvoyance, Teleportation and Telekinesis – only Telepathy, and that is through touch only (much like a Vulcan's mind-meld).

**Combat (optional):** Cover provides only a -2 DM. When using the combat tables in Book 1, ignore any *positive* Armour bonuses. Vehicle combat is handled using Andy Slack's vehicle rules. In character generation, Marines receive Rifle 1 not Cutlass as their service skill. And Marines can always trade Blade for Gunnery if desired. Likewise any mention of Fwd Observer is swapped for Gunnery skill.

**Over-Arching Plots:** There are three subplots for this solo campaign that the referee can use to hang smaller plots on (that might crop up in play).

1- A high ranking officer has fled to the Neutral Zone and established a criminal organization, based on the loyalties of more junior ranks who have fled here also.

2- Expedition to Zhodane. Reverse it. Professor Ricket is suspected by the Office of Naval Intelligence of being brainwashed by the Zhodani, as a spy, so when he returns to Extolay for supplies, they arrest him, and his teenaged daughter jumps away in Rock, to be found in a distant asteroid belt orbiting Tremous Dex, as a plot point by the referee later in the game.

3- Arden is a matriarchy of noble women, with extreme laws and hunger for interstellar recognition. The Arden Matriarchy is composed of tough interstellar merchant princesses, all eager to outdo each other, and play the Zhodani against the Imperium, and each Neutral planet against its neighbour. Suggestions that desperate Arden merchant-women have stepped over the line into opportunistic piracy, are denied by the government...

## A JOB OFFER

The player character couple are relaxing in their hotel room on Ruie, after being mustered out from the Imperial Navy a few months ago. Their squadron was blamed for an (in)famous defeat during the recent Third Frontier War and disbanded by the new Sector Duke.

Suddenly, the door bursts open and two guys with guns force them out and into a car waiting outside. They are hustled to attend a meeting in a disused Ruie factory. It is a meeting they can't refuse. Sat opposite them is a stern middle-aged man, his skin black with his head shaved. He does not give his name, nor the name of the organization he represents. This shady boss offers them a job 'in the service of the Imperium' to go into the Neutral Zone and find the identity and location of a notorious naval vice admiral who has fled there to avoid court-martial. This traitor, Vice Admiral Aleksavara Kurtz, has set himself up as some sort of gang lord and pirate king in the unruly worlds between the Imperium and the Zhodani Consulate. He is a loose cannon.

“When you find the admiral,” growls your patron, “infiltrate his team by whatever means available and terminate the admiral's command.” One of the player characters questions that decision: “Terminate the admiral?”

The patron shifts in his chair, “He's out there operating without any decent restraint, totally beyond the pale of any acceptable human conduct. And he is still in the field commanding troops. Terminate him with extreme prejudice. Once the deed is done, report to our agent at the starport on Arden.”

The patron offers them a far trader starship as transport, an armed ex-Imperial Far Trader that had been used for field resupply. Unfortunately they don't have it yet – it is one of twenty being readied for sale at a holding company, all awaiting demilitarization and sale by auction. “Your first task is to get to Jenghe and steal one of those Far Traders from a remote landing field, near the starport. Once it enters the Ruie system we will dock with you and provide new documents, registrations and transponder codes. You get to keep the far trader, and after you report to Arden with proof of the admiral's death you will receive a MCr1 reward. Use the trader as a cover, buy and sell, and listen out for rumors or links to this traitorous admiral and his crime syndicate.”

The meeting is over, and the patron gestures for his (obviously military-trained) henchmen to return you to your hotel. “You understand, commanders, that this mission does not exist, nor will it ever exist...”

# Characters

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## **Jake Garmin**

**Retired Navy Commander**      6A68B9 Age 42 6 terms Cr61,000  
Admin-2, Pilot-2, Vacc-2, Navigation-1, Carbine-2, TAS, Carbine  
Electronics-1, Medical-1, Gunnery-1

Jake Garmin's family was ruined by a cut-throat young executive, now a senior manager within Ling Standard Products of Regina subsector. He became a transport pilot for the sector navy, eventually moving to a base officer's position. His base was attacked by a Zhodani strike squadron and Jake joined the last line of defence, helping to repel the attack. He met Camille four years ago when he was attending a gunnery school on Regina and they were married soon after.

## **Lady Camille Southland**

**Retired Navy Lieut. Cdr**      3669FB Age 42 6 terms Cr5,000  
Navigation-2, Gunnery-4, Engineering-1, Vacc-1 Laser Carbine  
Computer-1, Laser Carbine-1

Camille was born on Villis to a minor noble family and she entered the sector navy as a navigation plotter and weapon specialist. She was highly educated and quickly moved into space-based weapons research and testing. During the Third Frontier War, Camille was assigned as chief gunner on an Imperial battleship, during an attack on a suspected Zhodani raider, she successfully identified it as a civilian liner that was suffering major malfunctions, and her timely intervention prevented a massacre. Her captain at the time has vowed to someday return the favour. After the war Camille gained a position as senior lecturer at the Regina Military Academy. She met her husband shortly after the war.

# Far Trader Oberon

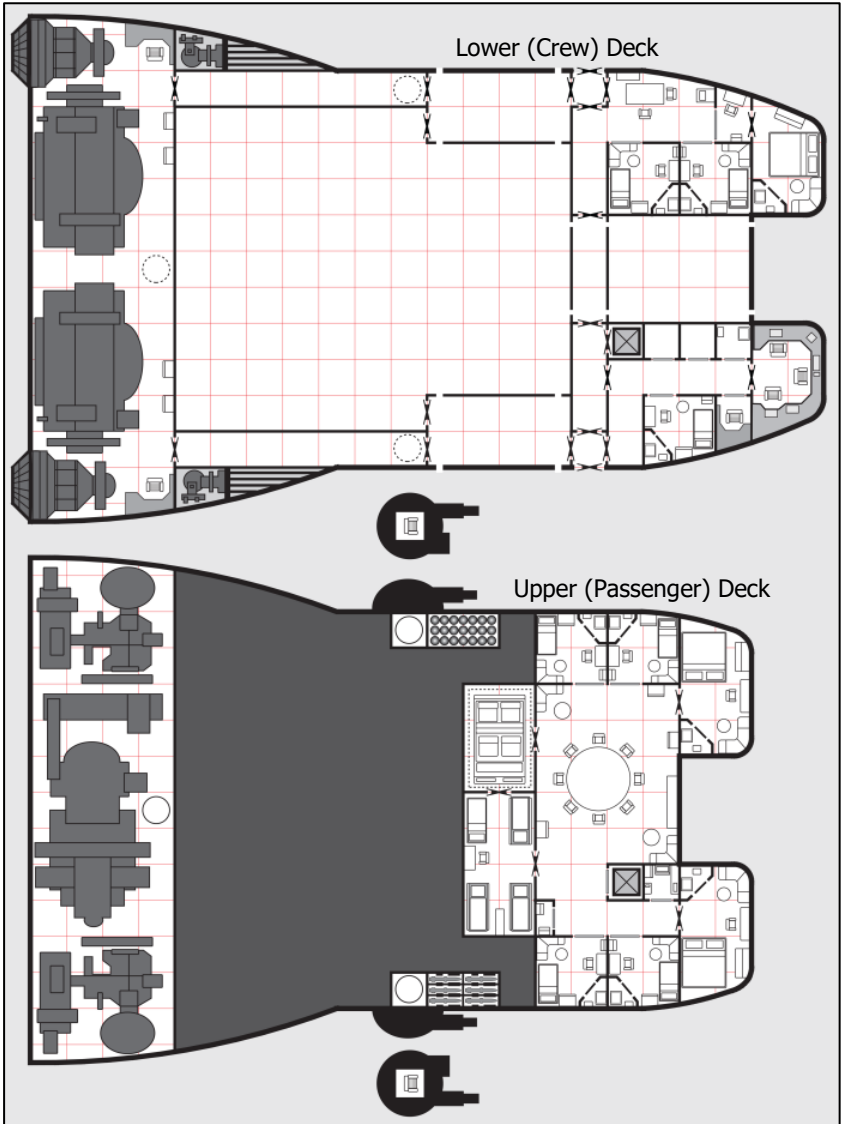
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The basic ship involved in free trade is called the free trader. Some well equipped high-G traders employed beyond the Imperial border are called fast traders. The type A2 far trader derives its name from its jump capability: its drives are capable of jump-2, twice what the standard free trader can do. The far trader can be encountered anywhere in the Imperium. It ranges far and wide, and deals with every world it finds. Even amber zones and red zones are not considered off limits by its captains, provided there is profit to be made and the risk of being caught is slight.

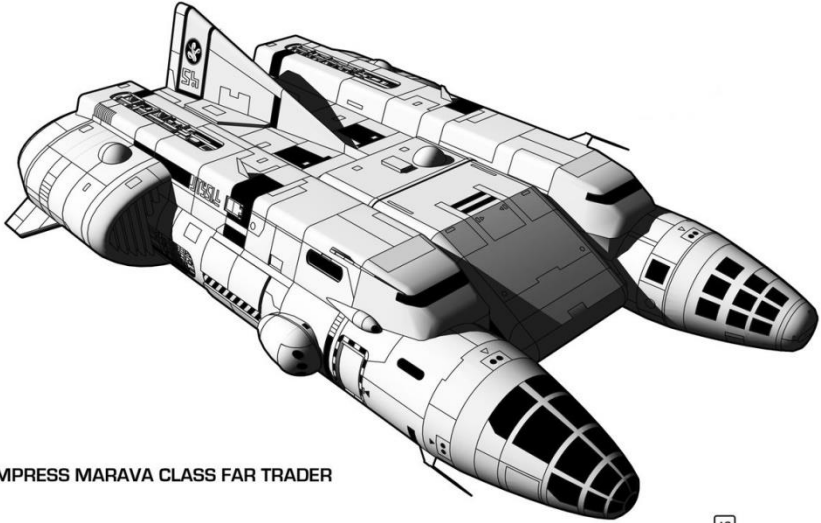
**Far Trader Oberon (Type A2):** Using the type 200 hull, the Oberon is capable of 1-G acceleration and jump-2. Fuel tankage is 50 tons, and the ship incorporates fuel scoops for gas giant skimming. The bridge is standard and has a computer Model/1bis installed. Two tons of fire control support the ship's two turrets, one fitted with a twin missile rack and the other with a twin beam laser. The ship has ten staterooms (four for the crew; six for the passengers) and four low berths. A single air/craft is carried for various ship duties. The ship itself is streamlined for atmospheric landings. Cargo capacity is 61 tons. The Oberon requires a crew of four: captain/pilot, navigator, engineer and medic. The navigator and medic also serve as ship's gunners. The Oberon cost MCr66.175 to construct, including architect's fees and design plan costs.

**Interior Details:** The Oberon is constructed on a two level system. Cargo, bridge, and some drives are on the lower level; passengers, fuel, and power plant are on the upper level. The bridge occupies the forward port section of the lower deck. Its two control positions are surrounded by transparent screens allowing a view of forward and above. Note that the lower level extends farther forward than the upper level. Behind the bridge proper is the computer room and a crew stateroom as well as the ship's lockers, which contain the ship's armoury, survival equipment, cold weather clothing, and other essential materials.





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EMPRESS MARAVA CLASS FAR TRADER

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The forward starboard section of the lower deck is crew quarters. The spacious captain's cabin has transparent screens along one wall and above as a skylight. Outside the three cabins is the crew lounge. Between the crew quarters and the bridge is the forward cargo loading ramp. This ramp and door is equipped with an air lock and it allows a straight vehicle approach for cargo loading.

The upper level forward is the passenger deck. Six passenger staterooms line the outer bulkheads while a large central area (26) provides recreational facilities and a galley. The grav plate floor fields for individual staterooms and for sections of the common area may be adjusted from 0.1 to 2.0 G, depending on the preferences of individual passengers. Behind the passenger lounge is the access door to the excursion air/raft as well as the cryogenic low berth room.

The centre of the ship is occupied by the 61 ton cargo bay. Reinforced deck plating and strategically placed tie-downs make the bay capable of handling modular cargo containers, palletized shipments, or individually packaged items and bulky mechanisms. Above the cargo bay is the ship's 50 ton fuel tannage.

To both port and starboard on the lower level, corridors run the length of the ship, connecting the forward control areas with the aft drive rooms. Each corridor provides access to the ship's turrets, to a cargo air lock, and to the fuel scoop and purification mechanisms. Aft, the drive rooms contain the ship's jump and manoeuvre drives, with the power plant mounted transversely on the upper deck.

**Weaponry:** The ship's two weapons turrets provide tremendous potential for armament in the event that the ship should require it. Oberon is fitted with two duel laser turrets.

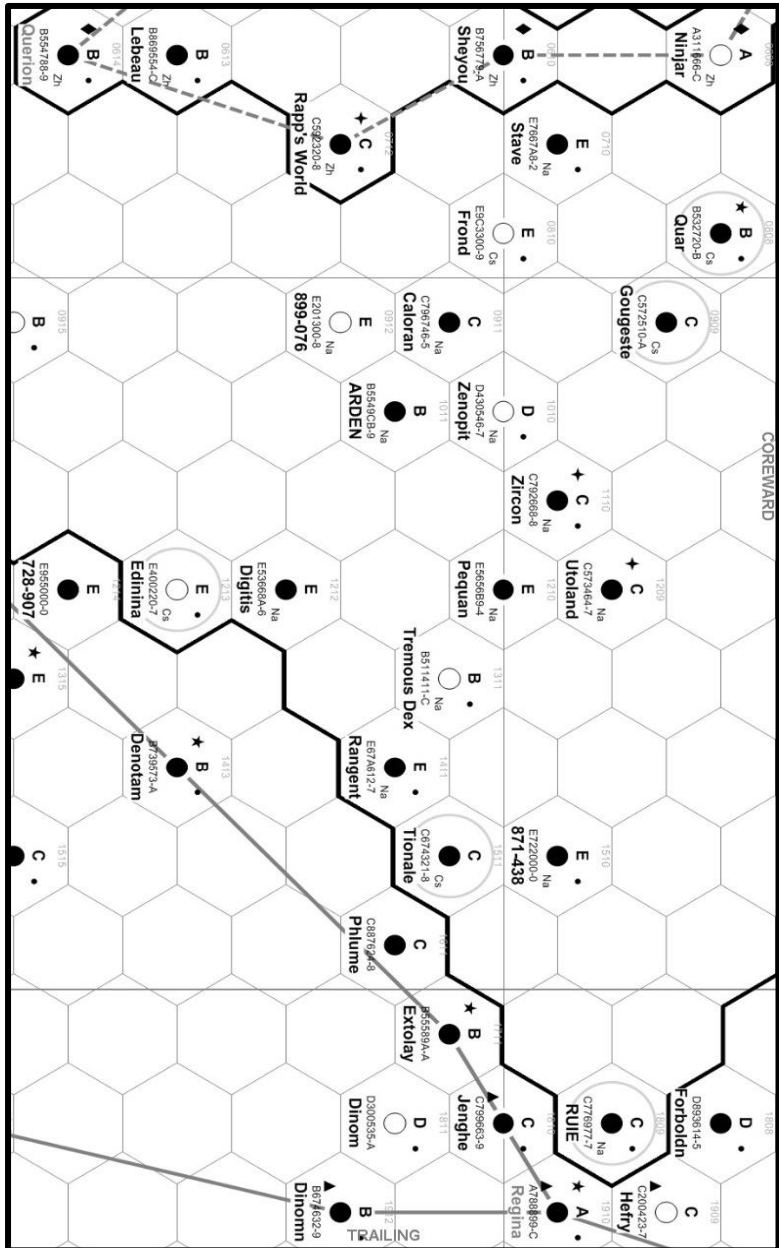
**The Air/Raft:** The ship's air/raft is a standard vehicle intended to provide the means to run small errands on planet while the ship is in port loading and unloading cargo. Massing four tons, the air/raft is an anti-gravity vehicle capable of lifting four tons, including passengers and cargo. It can achieve 100 kph as a cruise speed, with occasional bursts to 150 kph. In extreme situations, the craft can achieve sub-orbital flight, but this performance requires approximately six hours. All passengers would be required to wear vacc suits, as the air/raft is open and not pressurised. The air/raft operates off capacitors charged from the ship's main power plant. One charge is sufficient for about one week or about 10,000 kilometres of cruising. Recharges take about two hours; since they use energy from the ship they are essentially free.

**Peculiarities:** The design of the far trader has ship security in mind, and so all passengers are segregated onto a passenger deck. Their access to the bridge and to other areas of the ship is limited.

**Costs and Revenues:** The monthly payments for a ship of this type amount to Cr275,729. Further expenses for crew salaries, life support, maintenance, and berthing fees amount to Cr60,714 per month, assuming a jump every two weeks. Fuel is free for the skimming, but would add another Cr5000 per jump when its purchase is required. This type of merchant can gross approximately Cr242,000 per month, assuming a full manifest of middle and low passengers and a full cargo bay at Cr1000 per ton of cargo. Obviously, even with a full load, this ship would be unable to make its payments; it could conceivably come close to breaking even if the crew went on shares and salaries were foregone.

# The Neutral Zone

<i>Name</i>	<i>Statistics</i>			<i>Remarks</i>	
Ninjar	A211666	C	Z	Non-agricultural	
Sheyou	B756779	A	Z	Agricultural	G
Lebeau	B869554	C		Non-industrial	G
Querion	B254788	9	Z	Agricultural, Capital	G
Stave	E7667A8	2		Agricultural	G
Rapp's World	C592320	8	Z	Non-industrial	G
Quar	B532720	B	N	Poor, Non-agricultural	AG
FronD	E9C3300	9		Non-industrial	G
Gougeste	C372510	A		Non-agricultural	A
Caloran	D796746	5		Agricultural	
899-076	E201300	8		Non-industrial	
Zenopit	D130546	7		Poor. Non-industrial	G
Arden	C5548CB	8			
Zircon	C791668	9	S	Non-industrial	G
Utoland	C473464	7		Non-industrial	
Pequan	E5656B9	4		Agricultural. Non-industrial	
Digitis	E53668A	5		Non-industrial	
Edinina	E400220	5		Non-industrial	AG
728-907	E955000	0			
Tremous Dex	B511411	C		Non-industrial	G
Rangent	E67A612	7		Non-industrial, Waterworld	G
Denotam	B739573	A	N	Non-industrial	
871-438	E722000	0			G
Tionale	C674321	8		Non-industrial	A
Phlume	C887624	8		Agricultural. Non-industrial	
Extolay	B45589A	A	N		
Forboldn	E893614	4		Non-industrial	G
Ruie	C776877	7		Industrial	AG
Jenghe	C799663	9	S	Non-industrial	G
Dinom	D100535	A		Non-industrial	
Hefry	C200423	7	S	Non-industrial	
Regina	A788899	A	2	Rich. Capital	G
Dinomn	B674632	3	S	Agricultural. Non-industrial	G



Worlds Within the Neutral Zone

The Neutral Zone of the Spinward Marches that separates the Zhodani Consulate from the Third Imperium after 986 is composed of 18 unaligned or client worlds spread along an unofficial trade route between the two interstellar powers. The highest tech level is C on Tremous Dex, Lebeau and Ninjar, two worlds have tech levels lower than 5 (Stave and Pequan. The highest population levels within the zone are on Ruie and Arden, both supporting hundreds of millions of people. Hubs of transport, communications and business close to the Neutral Zone include Regina (Imperial), Ninjar and Querion (both Zhodani).

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**728-907                    E955000-0                    Non-industrial**

'28' is an uninhabited world covered with oceans and desert that is highly tilted on its axis, much like Uranus. This results in high-velocity windstorms half of the year that will literally tear apart anything in the way; in fact, this is the central reason for the lack of settlement. The surface gravity is 1.2 gee, giving storms generated over the warm oceans extra impetus as they hit the land. Storms can travel several times around the globe before dispersing, and can reach internal speeds of several hundred kph. There is one ocean on the planet, in a constant stormy condition, elsewhere the planet is a barren, cold desert landscape. There is one moon. The single continent is high, cold desert, fringed with steppelands, and with wetlands along the coasts.

**871-438                    E722000-0                    G**

A large uninhabited planet, tidally locked to its star. The bright-side is dominated by a burning desert subjected to regular solar flares, and much of the sand's surface has been fused into a layer of thin glass. The darkside is a permanently frozen wasteland, with temperatures averaging -50 degrees. There are some lakes in the twilight zone, but the danger of deadly solar flares has prevented settlement.

**899-076                    E201300-8                    Non-industrial**

'99' is the moon of a large vacuum planet, and has a diameter of 3,000 km. It is covered with a smooth crust of ice striated by cracks and streaks. The long dark lines are caused by stress fractures in the ice, and can vent ice geysers. Heat energy from tidal flexing helps retain an ocean of darkness beneath the thick ice. There is no atmosphere on 99. Around 1,500 ice miners live on the moon, they

are wanderers, drilling down to tap out Helium 3 trapped in rising warm-ice upwellings. Their lives are extremely dangerous, and they haul their Helium 3 to an automated landing station where it is picked up by a scheduled cargo ship from Arden. The Helium miners (and their families), are all from Arden and are a tough bunch.

### **Arden C5548CB-8**

The planet of Arden is small, with a thin breathable atmosphere. It is tectonically active, with geysers and geothermal energy plants that provide power for the population. Highly intensive agriculture is possible as is aquaculture. Vast greenhouses ring the cities, providing food for hungry millions. Mountain ranges are low and rounded, Arden is old and weathered, with deeply cut badlands, heavily eroded coastlines and river valleys. Arden society has always been matrilineal, but a century ago, the government became a matriarchy, ruled by several powerful families each led by prominent women. Society today is dominated the female nobility of these elite families. In turn, other parts of society have seen the rise and dominance of female-only councils, leaders and boardrooms. The nobility dominate interstellar trade and sponsor mercantile activities and expeditions throughout the Neutral Zone. The big Arden corporations, upon which so much of the economy is reliant, are wholly owned by these families. Arden has a very high security rating but this really only applies of off-world visitors and the people on Arden they associate with. The noble families are fearful of any destabilising ideologies, such as sexual equality or open democracy. Visitors are monitored, bugged, minded, followed, tracked and photographed intensely. Men need to understand their place, while off-world women are shown great courtesy and privilege.

### **Caloran D796746-5 Agricultural**

The 20 million inhabitants of Caloran live on a world with an aggressively hostile biosphere. Plant life can react to kill humans that disturb it by releasing toxic pollen. The starport is a minor installation, used to export Caloran's agricultural foodstuffs grown in 'safe areas' on the high plains known as the Great Expanse, where the crops and other plants have been tamed or otherwise bred for compliance. In the wild, threatened plant life releases a spore which within 3D6 hours, affects mental judgement and results in hallucinations, madness and most commonly – suicide. Filter masks prevent such effects, however. Technology is late-industrial, with the Calorans

utilising monorail diesel trains, 6-wheeled grain trucks and 'deltas', simple microlight aircraft. The democratic government calls itself the People's Collective of Caloran.

**Denotam            B739573-A N    Non-industrial            G**

A world with one hemisphere always facing its star, Denotam is a fierce waterworld. On the hot side, steam clouds, ferocious boiling storm clouds and boiling waters can kill instantly. The dark side is perpetually night-time, lashed by rainstorms and lightning. Humans live below the sea surface mining minerals from volcanic vents on the ocean floor. There are two large moons with pull at Denotam, causing the underwater volcanoes and creating huge tides which can leave areas of seabed exposed hundreds of thousands of square kilometres in area. Every 13 hours these vast sand flats are covered over by 300km/hour tidal waves. In comparison, the volcanic ever-dark seabed is a safe place. Humans are organised into three rival mining families or clans, perpetually in conflict. The starport is neutral, a large well supported floating base used by all three sides to ship their minerals off-world. They mine the resources from huge seabed rigs which pipe up the minerals to floating platforms. From there robotic catamaran barges transport the minerals to the starport for shipment. Submersible technology is well developed on Denotam, G-Carriers and grav-buses are used to transport personnel and small cargoes from platform to platform or platform to starport.

**Digitis            E53668A-5    Non-industrial**

The planet Digitis is renown for two things: its high humidity and its gigantic mallorn trees. The planet's low gravity and extremely rich soils allow the trees to grow to fantastic size, upwards of 300 meters in height and 20-30 meters in diameter. The normal respiration of the mallorns, pouring great quantities of moisture into the air, makes the climate a veritable hothouse for plants of all sorts. Unfortunately for the inhabitants of Digitis, there is no great interstellar market for such great quantities of wood (though it is highly prized on some worlds), because of Digitis' remote location. The trees' size, unfortunately, makes them very hard to cut down, making it very difficult for the planet's colonists to clear land for cultivation. In the century or so since colonization, Digitis' colonists have brought land under cultivation only by great effort. The population is constantly threatening to exceed the maximum dictated by the amount of arable



land available. The peculiar conditions of soil, gravity, and atmosphere on Digitis have convinced certain interstellar cartels that the planet could be an agricultural planet of great profit-making potential. They are offer financing if the colonists present a plan to clear the planet which has a good chance of success.

**Dinom                    D100535-A            Non-industrial**

A small, tidally-locked world with a bright face and a dark face. Dinom's polar axis extends toward the central star (and will for another 200 years) - the northern hemisphere is in constant light (the Bright Face), while the southern hemisphere is in constant night (the Cold Face). The equator is a zone of constant twilight and moderate temperatures. Dinom's population of 230,000 is concentrated in three large cities (Rhylan, Medianne, and Napan) which house ore-processing centres. The three main cities are located in the permanent twilight region and are connected via monorail. Each city is governed by a board of directors answering to the shareholder-owners (who number about 10 per city) of the ore-processing centres. The three cities send representatives to Rhylan for the World Board which is responsible for interstellar relations, system defence, industrial production, and Imperial contact.

**Dinomn                    B674632-3 S            Agricultural. Non-industrial            G**

A dry world, with savannah, rocky deserts and sand seas, Dinomn is home to six million humans that are living through the beginnings of an industrial revolution. Here, a dynamic, young democracy has broken away from a powerful mother country called Byzantium that is unwilling to embrace change. The young nation of Rahir has made deals with Exo Elements, an Imperial mining company that is based at the thriving B class starport. Exo Elements actually sponsored the revolution. Dinomn is also home to a native intelligent race, the TL 0 Sandmen. Byzantium is a religious theocracy, based on an old and established religion. Dinomn orbits within a system of six stars, six suns which keep the main world in constant illumination. It is this constant illumination which formed the basis of the Godstar Church in times past. It is predicted that a day of darkness will exist during a lunar eclipse but only every 304 years.

**Edinina E400220-5 Non-industrial AG**

The tiny planet of Edinina is a fiery world where lava was once mined like a precious natural resource. Its bleak landscape is a visual assault of jagged obsidian mountains with towering fountains of fire and lava blasting from beneath the surface. This lava also streaks the blasted landscape in huge winding rivers and plunging cataracts. Edinina's skies are obscured by choking black clouds of ash, smoke and tephra. The intense geological activity creates a natural hellhole that served as a mining penal colony until recently. Edinina was established as a mining facility, designed to extract valuable ores bubbling up in the lava. High-tech dirigibles were used to locate then dredge suitable pools. Prisoners from strict Arden were used to run this mine, a dangerous life. Eight years ago, during the Third Frontier War, the prisoners revolted, killing the guards and taking over. They cannot maintain the facility, and it has fallen into disrepair ('nothing much works around here'), but they continue mining a little to pay for food and other essential supplies brought in by the occasional cargo ship. The world is Amber zoned, meaning it is dangerous to visit, the inhabitants are lawless, volatile, and unpredictable. They live within a democratic society where they judge one another, operating what is almost a pirate code.

**Extolay B45589A-A N**

Extolay is a dark, urbanized world, dominated by a post-industrial cyberpunk culture. It is tidally locked and vast domes act as greenhouses, established in the twilight region alongside the cities to feed the hungry millions. Government is a police state run by a coalition of competing high tech corporations and due to threats of cyber-terror and corporate warfare, the law level is extremely high.

**Forboldn E893614-4 Non-industrial G**

Forboldn is a small, metal-poor world that also has a dense, tainted atmosphere. The carbon dioxide taint is toxic to humans without a filter mask, fortunately this taint exists mainly at low altitudes. Above 1000 metres the atmosphere is safe to breathe. There are ten million inhabitants, living atop high jungle-clad plateaus and mesas, cut by ravines, river valleys and spectacular waterfalls. An industrial consortium, Tanis Ironworks, has risen to prominence and become the effective, forward-looking government of the planet. Balloons and dirigibles have made travel possible between areas previously cut off by low ground.

**Fronid E9C3300-9 Non-industrial G**

The atmosphere of Fronid is dominated by carbon dioxide which has produced a runaway Greenhouse Effect. The pressures and temperatures of this carbon world are deadly to unexposed individuals. Fronid was once the core of a gas giant and it has poisonous seas of liquid carbonyl. Small prospecting expeditions regularly visit Fronid in the hopes of discovering vast diamond reserves.

**Gougeste C372510-A Non-agricultural A**

Gougeste is a cold, dry world swept by ferocious winds and dust storms. Thirteen million inhabitants are involved in open cast mining for much needed metal ores. Volcanic activity adds a sulphur taint to the atmosphere. Law and order is maintained around the starport and the mining hub, but elsewhere gangmasters rule with an iron-fist. The further away from the hubs, the more lawless the environment.

**Hefry C200423-7 S Non-industrial**

A small hot, but airless, planet close to the main star, with a population of 30,000 that lives within several polar crater dome-cities. It is within these shadowy craters that water ice can be found. The cities were once the centre of a helium-3 extraction industry where the substance was mined from the soil that the cosmic rays had dumped onto the surface. The market for helium-3 has shrunk in recent decades and so Hefry's economy has shrunk also. The Scout Service maintain a base on the planet.

**Jenghe C779663-9 S Non-industrial G**

Jenghe is medium sized world almost totally covered with ocean. Much of the land is actually a vast mid-ocean ridge which trails across the planet from pole to pole. This volcanically active ridge opened up only two hundred years ago, poisoning the air with sulphur and other compounds, and forcing the Duke of Regina to send aid. Eventually, for his re-construction work the duke was awarded Jenghe as a fief. It has since proved quite profitable. The Viceroy of Regina is in command here. The two million inhabitants live on the fertile plains of the mountainous volcanic islands, many engage in crystal extraction industries, as well as the undersea extraction of minerals, pouring out of black smokers on the sea bed. The cities are powered by geothermal energy and most are single arcology buildings, huge domed constructs housing hundreds of

thousands of citizens. People are given plenty of freedom on Jenghe, and life is good. The taints often result in black clouds, and terrific red sunsets that are spectacular to watch. The twin suns, red and orange set at separate times, altering the complex play of colours on the surface of Jenghe. There is a scout base here at the C class starport, with X-boat facilities in orbit. Jenghe is crucial the link from Regina to Denotam and on to the Vilis frontier.

**Lebeau                    B869554-C                    Non-industrial                    G**

This waterworld has a large chain of islands inhabited by 10 million Zhodani citizens. The seas are warm and tropical and the islands are fertile and self-sustaining, the high-tech cities also engage in extensive aquaculture.

**Ninjar                    A211666-C                    Non-Agricultural**

A large Zhodani military base is sited on this moon, and serves to promote colonization. Large craters house the main mining cities, connected by a grav tube transport network. The spaceport is huge, bustling and very well developed.

**Pequan                    E5656B9-4                    Agricultural. Non-industrial**

Once a penal world, Exile is a world of two minor steam technology nations on separate continents close to the equator. Upper latitudes are frozen, yet coal mining stations and a primitive culture of ice-faring nomads brave those hostile northern wilds. Each year the ice increases, an ice age has begun.

**Phlume                    C887624-8                    Agricultural, Non-industrial**

Phlume is famous for its World River, rising in the Shield Mountains and virtually circling the planet on the main continent. Phlume is 70% water, with large oceans, and four continents. Most land is covered with tanglemat, an incredibly resilient and dense vegetation forming impenetrable mats up to 5m thick. The tanglemat appears black and purple beneath Phlume's starlight – a red giant. As a result the inhabitants have concentrated their farming settlements on the river banks which flood annually, bringing fertile soil down from the mountains. There are one million inhabitants, most based at the World River's huge delta, which empties out into an island studded bay. Houses float, and people move about by hovercraft and airboat. Ekranoplanes carry traffic out from the delta to the wealthy islands. The starport is situated in the delta, and is used to ship crops of-

world, and industrial products on world. Much of the food is shipped to Regina, Roup and Ruie. The government is by participatory democracy, the independent farmsteads all have a vote and a say, although the large migrant population of labourers do not.

**Quar                    B532720-B N Poor, Non-agricultural                    AG**

A high-tech Imperial base dominates Quar, but the local population struggles to survive in huge cities on the edge of an ever-encroaching desert. Jobs in supporting industries and factories are highly sought after, and workers support large families. Outside the industrial zones, life is lawless and dangerous, there is no established government. Local warlords run their own urban territories.

**Querion                    B254788-9 Z Agricultural, Capital                    G**

A dry, warm world with a varied landscape of grasslands, scrub forest, badlands and high mountains. The Zhodani cities of Querion are located on the coast or on the largest rivers of the main continent. On-shore winds ensure that the farmland is well irrigated. A powerful bureaucracy was established hundreds of years ago to manage the water supply and irrigation canals that feed the farmland throughout the tough dry season.

**Rangent                    E67A612-7                    Non-industrial, Waterworld                    G**

Rangent is an overcrowded waterworld, its 9 million people living huddled in skyscraper cities balanced on the peaks of a single tiny island called Amphipolis, the size of Hong Kong Island. Port Pegasus is the world's starport, a floating landing platform with associated refuelling and repair facilities. The world is governed by a commercial corporation owned by a cartel of powerful crime bosses called the Kravik. Life can be hard on the planet, poverty and squalor are commonplace, wealth and living space is held as a privilege by a few, whilst the millions compete for survival inside the noisy, crowded, trash-filled, dirty, cramped and crime-ridden 'Warrens'. Much of the island is intensely urbanised, skyscrapers and apartment blocks jostle with factories and sky-high shopping centres. Where high tech development has not yet reached, shanty-towns spread across the waste ground. Here the desperate millions hunger for food, money, jobs, roofs that don't leak, running water and a chance at the high life. The island is intensely urbanised and continues to develop. As one approaches the coastline by hydrofoil

or hovercraft from Port Pegasus, the visitor gazes upon a sea of skyscrapers seeming to rise out of the ocean, and like a forest on Earth, each of these towers seems to be outdoing its neighbour to climb higher and faster. With squalor, crime and shanty-towns running rampant at street level, higher is always better, and the rich are on the move into the newest and most luxurious penthouse apartments. Although Amphipolis looks like a single urban nightmare, it is in fact divided up into very distinct zones.

**Rapp's World C592320-8 Z Non-industrial G**

A small population lives on a high, cold windswept plateau, where pressure and chemical taints are avoided and people can breathe without a mask. Here the starport supports a Zhodani base and a small mining and refining industry.

**Regina A788899-A 2 Rich. Capital G**

Duchess Emilene Carval rules the Regina subsector from this world, it is also a powerful military hub and the moon of a gas giant. Regina a rich, warm world with a dense atmosphere that supports wonderful aerial life forms. Immense pagoda trees, resembling a complex network of branches and roots can reach as high as 500metres. Since their roots cannot draw water up those distances, the pagoda trees are topped with huge water-retaining leaves, reservoirs that feed down to their lower levels. Pagoda trees are purple and blue, lending the Reginan landscape an eerie hue. Humans have not colonised the pagoda jungles or the lowlands with their incredibly dense and humid atmospheres, instead they have settled in the mountains, and as the colonies expanded have built cities on the cliff-sides. Regina has six primary cities, Credo, Kingsbury, Princeps, Corona, Regni and Atora. These cities are magnificent, artificial terraces that occupy the cooler and thinner air of Persepolis. Food is grown on elaborate mountain-side terraces in paddy fields and tilled by dedicated agri-robots. Mountain lakes provide drinking water and recreation for the city dwellers. Life is good here. There are opportunities to descend into the pagoda forests, on photo safaris, scientific expeditions, vacations to some of the lowland lakes, waterfalls and to inflatable vacation cabins.

**Ruie C776877-7 Industrial AG**

An powerful industrial centre, Ruie has suffered from centuries of unchecked development and has polluted its air, seas and soils. Desertification has claimed entire regions of the planet, which are now unhealthy no-go zones claimed by scavenger gangs. Yet the hundreds of millions of inhabitants produce the bulk of the goods required by worlds outside of the Imperium. Huge fortress cities contain these millions, along with the factories, machine yards and office blocks needed to support Ruie's industrial capacity. Several competing nations such as Neblethorn, the Comors Union, and Jjngarlu vye for power, resulting in a constant series of border wars and conflicts over oil reserves. Espionage, nationlist fervor and the threat (and fear) of Imperial intervention on one side or another make the planet a dangerous destination.

**Sheyou B756779-A Z Agricultural G**

A garden world, with most settlement on wide fertile plains growing crops, backed by mineral-rich mountain ranges. Sheyou boasts a humid, tropical climate and away from the irrigated farmlands are extensive swamps and mangrove forest. The high mountain chains separate the three main nations on Sheyou.

**Stave E7667A8-2 Agricultural G**

A primitive, Medieval-age society that hugs the coast of a hot desert continent. Trade caravans criss-cross the desert using local three-legged grazers, and oared galleys and sailing ships ply the coastal trade routes. A despotic leader, the zhakan, rules the cities, towns and oases with a tyrannical fist.

**Tionale C674321-8 Non-industrial A**

Most Tionaleans are employed in agriculture on family farms and plantations scattered across the planet's small inhabited region. The starport has become a key stopping place for merchants plying the Spinward Main, and Tionale's low law level, autonomous status, and location directly between the Imperium and the Neutral Zone have made it a haven for smugglers and corsairs. Indeed, starport personnel are famous for their willingness to ignore suspicious cargoes and overlook inconsistencies in ships' papers.

Tionale's extensive outback is inhabited by little studied, six-limbed, Ithilian-Fane, an intelligent race living as TL 0 hunter-gatherers led

by tribal warrior chieftains. Warfare and feuding are endemic among the Ithilian-Fane but attacks on outlying farmsteads have begun. Due to the growing frequency and intensity of the Ithilian-Fane's attacks, Tionale has been classed as an Amber Zone. The colonists have been slow to respond to the mounting threat because they have no armed forces. However, as attacks and casualties continue to rise, public opinion seems to be coming around to the view that the establishment of a militia is essential and inevitable.

**Tremous Dex B511411-C Non-industrial G**

A violent moon orbiting a hot jupiter, Tremous Dex undergoes intense tidal forces and is extremely volcanic. From orbit, sulfur has tainted the sulfur ice sheets green, yellow and orange. The atmosphere is made up of trace sulfur compounds. Beyond the orbit of Tremous Dex are two large asteroid belts. The population of 75,000 live and work around the B class starport, providing technical support, engineering and services for visiting spacecraft. Exo Elements operates the installation on this planet and uses it as a base to exploit worlds and asteroids in the Neutral Zone as well as the lucrative belts within the Tremous Dex system. Tremous Dex is a high-tech hub with extensive repair and maintenance facilities, making it a popular stop-over for traders, miners and travellers within the Neutral Zone. As such it has become a crossroads, a place for deals, meetings and recruitment.

**Utoland C473464-7 Non-industrial**

Utoland is dry and tidally-locked to its star, it has some liquid water and a thin but unbreathable (low oxygen) atmosphere. A small population lives at Akadasi Station on the coast of Butcher's Ocean. The Cinnabar Desert stretches out toward the twilight terminator. The discovery of minerals in abundance led miners to settle here but years later an asteroid belt in the same system caught the limelight and most interests moved into the belt. Some of the colonists stayed on, adapting their lifestyles to become nomadic herdsmen. In the last few decades the planet Arden has taken control, expanded the starport and invited a growing number of miners, disenchanting with corporate domination of the asteroid belt, to return to Utoland. Rich ore veins long abandoned are once again open, ore is flowing again, this time, with Arden's leadership, in direct competition with the big corporations.



**Zenopit      D130546-7      Poor. Non-industrial      G**

This small moon has a very thin, unbreathable atmosphere, but most inhabitants live within a vast impact crater where the air pools and is thick enough to breathe without a mask. Here they farm and run centres of light industry. Rovers take miners up into the highlands, either via a long zig-zag road up the crater wall, or via a series of massive industrial lifts. The starport sits on the lip of the crater.

**Zircon      C791668-9 S      Non-industrial      G**

Zircon has an atmosphere tainted by sulfur and methane outgassing and has glow-fern vegetation, coloured orange, yellow, red and green. This volcano-world has recently come under the sway of Arden and that world has established a trade port here, factors from Arden now dominate the local government. Indoor spas and hot springs are a popular attraction on Zircon.

### **MEETING PIRATES**

No one wants to meet pirates, particularly in the unregulated and unpatrolled space outside of the Third Imperium. But it may happen, just look at the pirate entries on those encounter tables (either in Classic Traveller or in the SOLO book). Who are they? Is Arden sponsoring piracy (see later). Are the pirates working for Kurtz? Are they independents? Roll 1D when attacked by pirates:

1,2 – The pirate crew (if met) are all women. They may well be Arden privateers, but then they may not... if you roll this result twice in a row, then the piracy in the area is dominated by Arden.

3,4 – The pirate crew may give away clues that they are all ex-Imperials. Are these Kurtz's men? If you roll this result twice in a row, then the piracy in the area is dominated by Kurtz and his organisation.

5,6 – If met, the pirates seem to be a mix of men and women, ex-Imperials and non-Imperials, certainly not working for Kurtz or Arden.

# Finding the Admiral

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How is 'Into The Neutral Zone' played? This is a solo campaign and can be played as a solitaire trade and commerce game, with the characters searching for clues as to Admiral Kurtz's whereabouts. When the gang is finally located the player can indulge in roleplaying to infiltrate the gang and get close to Kurtz. The Zozer Games' book SOLO will be invaluable in playing this adventure through. It includes a scene resolution system for Traveller as well as random and programmed encounter and event tables, suitable for a trade flight from world to world. Please have a look at it here:

SOLO <https://www.paulelliottbooks.com/solo.html>

Firstly, the characters will need to plan for the theft of a ship. Next them must book passage on a liner to Jenghe. Task three is to actually steal a far trader and jump back to the Ruie system. With a new ship with new identification, they can proceed to pick up a crew (if needed), supplies, cargo etc. and start their quest for Vice Admiral Alexsavara Kurtz and his gang of pirates.

## **VICE ADMIRAL KURTZ**

Vice Admiral Alexsavara Kurtz is obviously a stand-in for Colonel Kurtz who provides the focus for the plot of the Vietnam movie Apocalypse Now. The two player characters are reprising Captain Willard's role and the Navy PBR patrol boat that takes the captain deep into Cambodia is replaced with the Imperial Commercial Ship Oberon. Vice Admiral Kurtz from Apocalypse Now is rumoured to have organised a gang of disenchanting, dishonourably discharged or plain-unemployed naval veterans from the unpopular Third Frontier War. Many were blamed, hounded out or dishonourably discharged from the sector navy. But is Kurtz a criminal or pirate king? Does he intend to set up his own pocket empire out there amongst the stars? And is the boss and his goons actually working for Imperial intelligence? The navy? Or something else entirely different? What follows is a mechanical system for tracking down Kurtz, and for revealing the truth once PCs come face to face with him.

## THE RUMOUR SYSTEM

There are 13 worlds in the Neutral Zone which may serve as a base or one of the bases of Kurtz and his pirate organization. When the PCs reach one of these worlds, they may hunt for a rumour – roleplay the task. The roll to pick up a rumour is listed below next to the planet's name. Only one attempt can be made **per month**. Move on to the next world and come back later if you have to. A world will only give up a single rumour. The actual rumours are listed on the table further on. Each rumour provides a plot point or event that might be followed up or exploited to gain access to the Kurtz organization.

<i>World</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>World</i>	<i>2D</i>
Caloran	11+	Stave	10+
Digitis	11+	Tionale	11+
Edinina	10+	Tremous Dex	9+
Fronnd	10+	Utoland	10+
Pequan	11+	Zenopit	9+
Quar	9+	Zircon	10+
Rangent	10+		

## THE RUMOURS

Elect to roll 1D6 on either Table A or Table B

### TABLE A

#### *1D Rumour*

- 1 Recent terror bomb attack by Kurtz's group.
- 2 Recent political coup d'état inspired by Kurtz.
- 3 Police operation to capture some of Kurtz's gang has been hushed up.
- 4 Criminal on the run – allegedly one of Kurtz's men.
- 5 Ex-Imperial mercenaries loyal to Kurtz have been hired by the local government.
- 6 A mystery ship landed at the port last week. Talk says Kurtz himself was onboard.

## TABLE B

### *1D Rumour*

- 1 Pirate attack in-system last week, thought to be a Kurtz-style operation.
- 2 Recent successful bank raid swiped 6 million credits, straight into Kurtz's coffers, they say.
- 3 A group of Imperial veterans have been arrested at the starport for smuggling weapons onto the planet. They deny being Kurtz's men.
- 4 Member of government has been assassinated. The media wonder what Kurtz has to gain from this.
- 5 An ex-Imperial officer has just gained a position of power within the planetary government. Is he a stooge for Admiral Kurtz?
- 6 Armed rebellion has recently broken out on the planet, the disaffected groups seem to be armed with top-grade Imperial Marine weapons and anti-vehicle tactical missiles.

## **MEETING KURTZ**

This is a solo scenario – and so we don't want predictability, we want surprises! So here they are. If the player characters track down a rumor which they can somehow exploit to meet members of the gang and then join, perhaps they can get to meet Kurtz. As that looks very likely, in fact when that event looks imminent, roll on the table below for a surprise.

### *1D The Facts About Kurtz*

- 1 Kurtz is what they're told, an admiral who went rogue and is bound and determined to set up his own pocket empire, whatever the cost. Can they kill him? Or do they join him?
- 2 Kurtz is working deep intel for the Imperials while undercover. If the players thwart him, they're risking upsetting a long-term scheme. If they give him free reign will it destabilize things more?
- 3 There is no Kurtz. The PC's sources are being misled, or working off bad information. The organization of pirates and rabble-rousers but Kurtz is not at the heat of it all. In fact Arden is behind the entire plot as a cover for their own empire-building activities!

- 4 Poor Kurtz. What the Imperium takes as a master plot is really a broken, old man with delusions of grandeur, spreading rumours and stories to relive the days he was important. Do the PCs still kill him?
- 5 Kurtz the boogeyman. Vice Admiral Kurtz died during his jump into the Neutral Zone. His frozen corpse among hundreds of others on a derelict starship. But, his name still works to invoke fear, or cast blame. Pirate raid? Obviously Kurtz. Coup attempt? Kurtz is everywhere. Petty criminal escapes? Must be one of Kurtz's men. The pirate syndicate of veterans actively promote Kurtz's name and memory, some may believe his is out there, lost or imprisoned.
- 6 Kurtz is a Zhodani agent - all along, throughout the Third Frontier War, he was a double agent, with another plan in mind. Now he destabilizes the Neutral Zone and turns the fearful worlds against the Imperium.

What the PCs do once they find out the truth is up to them and their conscience.

# Other Adventures

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Of course the hunt for Admiral Kurtz and his nefarious organisation is an excuse to have all kinds of other adventures in the Neutral Zone. Using the solitaire book SOLO, the player characters can indulge in the following:

- Trade and speculation.
- Tourism and travel across worlds of the Neutral Zone.
- Searching for high value cargoes on-planet.
- Looking for patrons and accepting short missions.
- Dealing with encounters in space, at the port and on-planet.
- Escaping from any pirate attack.

## **PUBLISHED SCENARIOS**

In addition there are a number of published adventures and short scenario ideas (the JTAS Amber Zones) that can with a modicum of work be played within the Neutral Zone. Either the player can mandate these missions or can slot them in as soon as a patron encounter is rolled. You may have other ready-made scenarios that you could assign (or 'pre-position' in military parlance) to a world in the Neutral Zone. Just remember to think about where you would receive that mission (the 'trigger world'), it's not necessarily on the world the adventure is to be set).

<i>Accept Mission on...</i>	<i>Adventure (and setting)</i>	<i>JTAS Reference</i>
Arden	Foodrunner (set on Rangent)	5-12
Caloran	Ship in the Lake (Caloran)	2-12
Digitis	Loggerheads (Digitis)	6-32
Dinom	Across the Brightface	-
Dinomn	Coup d'état (Dinomn)	10-36
Extolay	Scam (Extolay)	7-32
Jenghe	Salvage on Sharmun (Ruie)	4-12
Phlume	Werewolf Disease (Phlume)	5-32
Regina	Rescue on Ruie (Ruie)	1-12
Tremous Dex	Expedition to Zhodane ((Tremous Dex)	-
Zenopit	Chamax Plague (Zenopit)	-

## THE MATRIARCHY ON ARDEN

There is no established Traveller setting material that says Arden is a powerful matriarchy (ruled by women), but to me it adds a lot of colour and gives the power-hungry planet an extra dimension. The Arden Society only accepts members from the elite female-dominated members of powerful noble families. Men are second—class citizens. Corporations, government agencies, schools, factories, the military – all are controlled and dominated by women who are members of the female-only Arden Society.

If the PCs travel there, they will find that Camille is thought very highly of (as a female naval officer) whilst Jake is ignored, side-lined or overtly mistrusted. The oppressive government will look for any chance it can to have him arrested or detained (although, see *The Facts About the Patron*, below).

The Arden Society is just as keen as the PC's patron to find out who Kurtz is and put a stop to his grandeur plans. In fact Arden itself wants to dominate the worlds of the Neutral Zone, through diplomacy, commercial pressure and even (rumour has it) piracy. Have fun with the women of Arden! Here are a few ongoing storylines that you can use in SOLO to hang your encounters and smaller plots on:

*Piracy:* Arden approves of and even trains its free traders to engage in opportunistic (and anonymous) piracy. Transponders have been modified to be silenced on command.

*Empire building :* Zircon and Utoland have come under the sway of the Matriarchy through pressure, trade deals and political alliance. This is only the beginning!

*Mercenaries:* Arden has been hiring veterans from the Imperial forces who have moved out into the Neutral Zone in order to seek their fortune, or a ore realistically, seek employment. These mercenary companies are being employed for trade protection, and to support pro-Arden interests across the region.

# Reward

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At some point, whether they have killed Kurtz or faked his death, the PCs might go to Arden to meet their patron's contact in order to collect their reward, that tempting MCr1. Will all go as planned? Well, we don't want things to be predictable do we? Roll 1D:

1, 2 - The agent is at the starport, he is a member of the Office of Naval Intelligence and will pay up MCr1.

3 - The agent is at the starport, he is a member of the Office of Naval Intelligence and will refuse to pay and then threaten the PC's with death if they breathe a word of their mission.

4 -The agent is not there. There is no agent.

5 -The agent is a beautiful femme fatale from the Arden Society. She pays the MCr1. The entire mission to find and kill Kurtz was a Matriarchy plot to eliminate a dangerous opposition. Be aware that this result is incompatible with result number 3 on *The Facts About Kurtz* table!

6 – It is a setup, and a trap. There will be an attempt to assassinate the PCs when they attempt to meet up with the patron's agent. Who are they? Roll 1D:

- 1-2 Office of Naval Intelligence
- 3 Arden Society
- 4 SORAG (Scientific Operations Research and Administration Group) – the Zhodani secret service.
- 6 Commodore Ivan Lessey, the shaven-headed patron who hired them, and Vice Admiral Kurtz's greatest rival for control of his pirate syndicate.