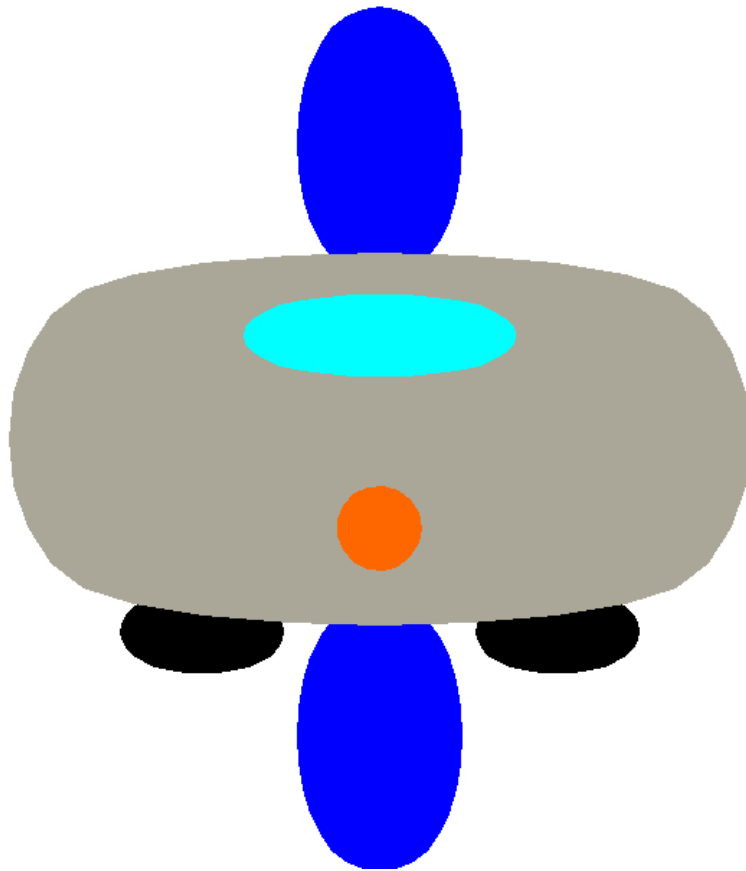


The
Further Adventures
of the
Good Ship
Shenandoah!



This isn't your Daddies' Enterprise. For one thing, some of these ships were built in Detroit! For another, it's only the 21st Century, fifty years after WWII, the Wet Fire Cracker War, instigated by the Cuban Missile Crisis and some meddling alien villains, the Azjeksi, or cockroaches, a fast-breeding Bad Guy race with problems of their own.

The Azjeksi horde attempted to capitalize on the war and became a foe that American and Soviet forces could rally against (read Footfall!, or any other invasion story where 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend'). A little heavy lifting from another alien race, the Loweekree, saved the day (or merely shortened the war and substituted a kinder master, some would say). In the aftermath, world union was struck, based on the UN, but without the little blue bonnets, and with starships (at first captured Azjeksi saucers and later, homegrown with some Loweekree aid). The Security Council became a Senate, the General Assembly is now based on population (50 million per seat, rounding up), and a federal republic united some 'upstart monkeys' into a starfaring people.

Earth, in turn, joined up with a few allied species to take care of the Azjeksi. It sort of snowballed from there, until, quite organically, Earth and Loweek lead what some journalist called a 'Conglomeration of Sentient Beings'. That not-quite-slur stuck, so that today human starships built in Detroit, Volgograd or Shanghai, form the bulk of the Conglomeration Grand Fleet.

The Council of Sentient Beings meets in Clarkesville, a habitat built in GEO, positioned over the Pacific Ocean on the old International Date Line.

The Loweekree are a massive and ancient race, with a mixture of plant and animal features. They evolved from hunting omnivore stock, but adult Loweekree, who live for centuries, fear no predator of less than half a ton, which is damn few, even on Loweek. They are natural libertarians who love individual freedom above all other things, and while their long history is filled with personal violence between individuals, they do not fight wars. Or, as President Kennedy said in his Victory-Day address, "The Loweekree never start wars. They just help to finish them."

Their individualism has cost them millennia of slow development. They advanced from metal working to the steam engine in nearly one hundred thousand years, and from there to the stars in, for them, a breath-taking three thousand. Along the way they 'Loweek'-formed their homeworld into a garden, albeit one with thorns and claws, and brought three barren worlds in their home system to life.

The Azjeksi tend to overrun star systems, breeding until they reach over-population and then fighting amongst themselves or with other species. They are hive-minds and have strong psi powers.

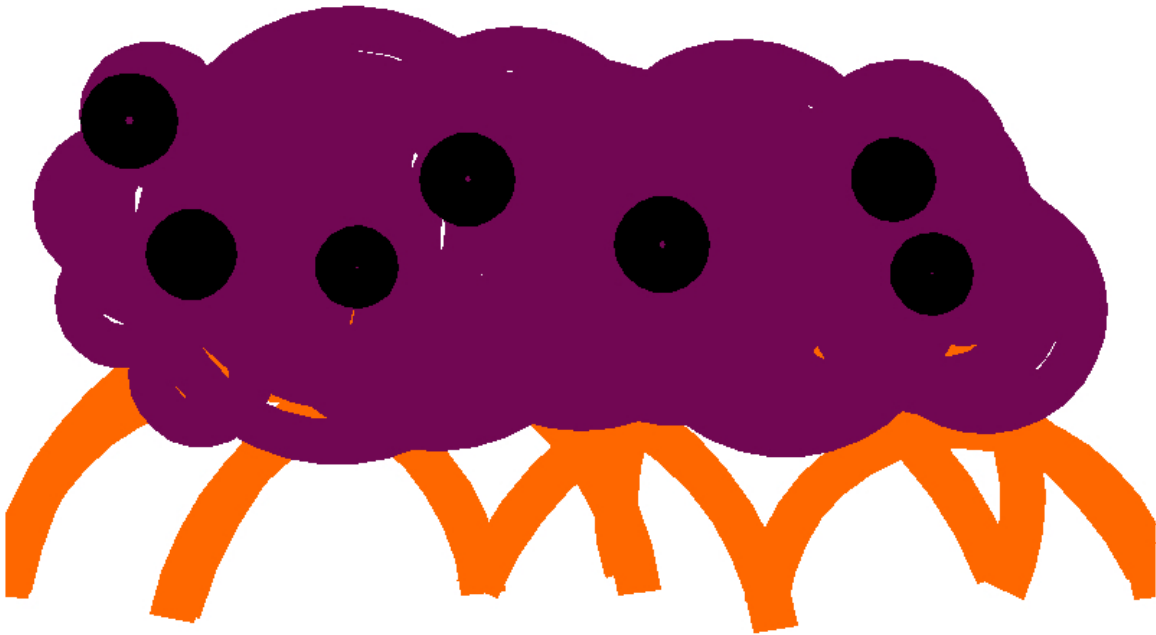
Who's Who of the Conglomeration

(Side note- I apologize for the amateurish drawings, but I thought it would be a good idea if I at least tried to show that these are exotic aliens, not bumpy-heads in latex).



Azjeksi- These dog sized aliens form hive-mind pods of about half a dozen bodies. The individual body is more like a hand or foot, very useful and precious to the whole, but not the whole. Their reproductive strategy is sort of a shotgun blast, like insects. The mindless larvae molt into the adult form and either form new hive-minds or are impressed into old ones, so that the Azjeksi experience a sort of immortality. Humans, well you know a little something about them 8-)

Kwazrig- Chimeras with double-spines, parthenogenic, fun-loving but selfish, etc. The body form is based on two (and sometimes three or more) larvae pairing up and growing together into the mature form. People that have worked with them describe them as amphibian land sharks (and mind you, these are people who *like* them!). The jaw sweeps open, side to side, to take a big bite out of dinner or any other problem. A single eye is well forward on either side of the head. Three fins and the tail runs down each side, each with three digits (the Kwazrig use base three). They pick things up clumsily, wrapping the fin around a handle or scooping up small items, but can hang eight fins on a surf-board like they were born for it (and they like hunting sharks 8-). They often are to be found at the nearest beach or skating on an over-sized skateboard or with inline skate strapped on to all fins. With two brains in one body, they sometimes have some trouble making up their minds!



Loweekree- These aliens are the size of small trees, and have been variously described as 'mangroves that walk' and 'roses that talk' (Of course, that'd be a very big rose bush 8-). They weigh in at a few hundred kilos on average, although the largest ones are the size of small orchards and don't get out much anymore. They reproduce by fission, essentially cloning themselves, although they do tend to swap genes after the fashion of plants. The oldest continuous mind on Loweek remembers fire being discovered and mastered, but is a little fuzzy on the details...

Rootai- Five-limbed herbivores with radial symmetry. Their skeleton is just under the skin and is very like the triangles of a wire-frame drawing. It's extremely tough and flexible, so that the Rootai have no joints. Each limb ends in a hoof, and above that are the mouth and a pair of eyes. Of the species in the Conglomeration, the Rootai are the most insistent that the Azjeksi are exterminated for the safety of the whole, and they are rather nervous around the Kwazrig. The ancient Rootai formed up herds made up of a very charismatic male with as many females as he could keep and their offspring. Modern herds tend to be group marriages, with one dominant male or female.

Spinners- These oddities are nearly as decentralized as the Lowweekree. The lumpy body is mostly composed of multiple specialized stomach-like compartments, with several different bacterial cultures. As one wag put it, the spinners developed a 'technology of spit', although that simplifies the situation to absurdity. The Spinners are capable of digesting nearly anything they catch in their webs, which is a good thing, because they're slow and clumsy on the ground (modern Spinners favor grav-harnesses). They move about by reaching out with a tentacle and reeling in, and they have tentacles all over. Each tentacle ends in an eye and is surrounded by hundreds of fine tendrils, which allow the tentacle to grab on to things.

Vrayona- Flyers evolved from flying fish, feathered snake-dragons. Ten pairs of limbs, the second and fourth pair are true wings and the others are clawed hands on wing-shaped arms (or legs, depending on use). Small, easily breakable, the largest ones are the size of small children. From hunting stock, they also cultivate fruit, make wine and distilled spirits, but farming for them is ranching the few fortunate shores of their homeworld, which is mostly howling desert waste worse than the Gobi or Atacama on Earth.

Probably about time I talked game mechanics...

There are eight Traits common to all characters, plus Edges and Drawbacks, some of which are part of the species package. A human has the eight Traits plus Lucky for free.

Aim- Throwing and basic marksmanship.

Dodge- speed and agility, and, of course, ability to dodge 8-)

Fighting- Brawling and basic handiness with melee weapons.

Grit- Determination, willpower, and force of personality

Hide and Sneak- Hiding, sneaking along, concealing items on your person.

Know Things- General Knowledge, and the base for professional skills.

Notice Things- Perception, other senses.

Psionics- Raw psionic power and skill.

Each Trait is rated from 1 to 8 and you have 1 through 8 to distribute amongst the traits-

Aim-	1	Hide and Sneak-	5
Dodge-	2	Know Things-	6
Fighting-	3	Notice Things-	7
Grit-	4	Psionics-	8

This game uses Hit Points to determine exactly how much violence and injury a character can take and still be alive. Hit Points are defaults to Fighting + Grit + 3, but varies.

The basic dice mechanic is to roll 2d6 plus the likely trait and skill. Reroll and add to rolls of 12.

Initiative is based on your dodge. Roll for each combat, not each round. If the roll plus your dodge is higher than 10, you get an extra action. For example-

You rolled a 12 and a 10, with a Dodge of 3. The total is 23, which is your first action, but you also get to act on 13 and 3. You go earlier and more often than the Kwazrig with a roll of 7 and a dodge of 8, 15 and 5, which is a good thing, too, because he wants to bite your head off.

Edges and Drawbacks, an incomplete listing 8-

Blind
Flying
Heat Vision
Hive Mind
Lucky- Once per game, roll three times and take the best roll.
Natural Weapon
Sonar
Swimming

Psionics Rules

I need to explain how Psionics work in this setting, and talk about why the Azjeksi are master psions.

Damage and Healing

Base damage is the difference between the offense (usually Fighting) and defense (dodge, or grit). Multiply this by whatever the deadliness of the weapon (1.5 for a kick, 2 for a knife, 3 for a blaster) to find damage.

Healing is based on Grit, with modifiers for proper care and special equipment.

Ships and Vehicles

It's a Space Opera, there's always ships, and often vehicles to do violence to, or with.

Weapons

Blades, Guns, Blasters from pistol up to ship-mounted. Also, warp torpedoes.

Lt. Commander Joseph Strazinski
Human Male, Age 36

Captain, Conglomeration Starship Shenandoah
Born- Detroit, USA, Earth

Aim-	7	Hide and Sneak-	2
Dodge-	6	Know Things-	4
Fighting-	5	Notice Things-	3
Grit-	8	Psionics-	1

Hit Points- 16

Lucky- Once per game, roll three times and take the best roll.

Blaster, Deadliness of *3

Dr. Fahlarngan
Rootai Male, Age 53 (29)

Medical Officer, Conglomeration Starship Shenandoah
Born Oodah Valley, Dairrootai

Aim-	6	Hide and Sneak-	1
Dodge-	5	Know Things-	8
Fighting-	4	Notice Things-	7
Grit-	3	Psionics-	2

Hit Points- 10

Running*2
Natural Weapons- Hooves, Deadliness of *3

Needs more work, but there it is. Enjoy!

(BTW- I count this one as a win, but only because I've run games with less 8-)