

# RollPlay

GM

NOTEBOOK

ISSUE 8

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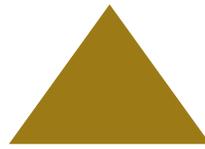
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## Welcome, Patrons!

March has been a bit of a quiet month for RollPlay, and as such, I've had more time to look back (and forward) to reflect and ponder. This issue, as a result, is mostly things I've been thinking about in the big-picture sense, as far as GMing for RollPlay goes. Looking back at the worlds I've built as a GM with my players, imagining future games I'd like to play on the show and offering some advice about how to get the strongest start and end from your games. I've included a short essay on creating NPCs, too - something I think is my favourite thing about playing roleplaying games and sharing those games with y'all. I hope you enjoy a more philosophical moment in the life of a RollPlay game master.

Thank you so much for your support, and welcome to Issue 8 of the GM's Notebook.

**Adam Koebel / RollPlay GM**

# BUILDING THE WORLDS OF ROLLPLAY



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When we think about the things that a GM is responsible for during a campaign, aside from knowing the rules, the big thing we tend to look for is *worldbuilding*. Generally, this is a term that means “making up all the bullshit that makes up the world around the PCs and then remembering it all so that later when the PCs want to know things, you’re ready with the right details”. If we’re coming from a traditional D&D background, we might think that worldbuilding is more literally that - crafting the world itself; maps of terrain, where the cities and valleys, rivers and temples, ruins and wonders lie in the world. We might expand that out to include things like building the cultures and religions of the world we’re making and knowing the calendars, arts and sciences that tie those cultures to each other and the natural world they live in. Worldbuilding, in this sense, is the novelists art. It’s the work that a Tolkien or a LeGuin do to create a world in which to place their stories. Especially if we’re working with a fantasy world, we might feel inclined to create something like the Forgotten Realms or Dark Sun: a whole campaign world crafted *before* play starts.

I’ve done that, certainly. I’ve been the author of hundreds of pages of

details about the world I’m setting my games in. The players, of course, saw only the tiniest sliver of that world and left me feeling frustrated every time, but it’s what kept me returning to the world over and over for subsequent campaigns, pushing the players to discover more of the hard work I’d done. There’s nothing wrong with this style of worldbuilding, certainly, but it’s not the *only* approach one can take, and as I’ve worked more and more with RollPlay and we’ve built new, strange worlds, I’ve learned some new tricks for creating those worlds - tailoring my job to the campaigns at hand. For every game, a world. For every show, a new trick to make that world its own unique thing.

Let’s take a look at what I did to create a few worlds of the four big shows I’ve GMed for RollPlay: *Swan Song*, *Mirrorshades*, *Court of Swords* and *Nebula Jazz*.

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### Swan Song

Swan Song is the style of game that

RPG folks call a “sandbox”. What this means, broadly, is that the world is a wholly formed thing that’ll do what it does no matter whether the PCs are there or not - that the idea of plot hooks and what have you are alien to the world itself (though certainly not foreign to the institutions and factions that exist in the world - giving the PCs a job is the responsibility of the Exchange, not the GM). A sandbox doesn’t present the characters with a life of adventure and excitement, but contains multitudes of those lives, waiting for the PCs to seize upon them. To get their hands dirty.

I used two tools to create the world of Swan Song for us all to play in. The first is the nature of the game itself. *Stars Without Number* is, like the rest of Kevin Crawford’s games, a miracle of random tables. Every planet in the sector, every faction and alien species from the V’ad to the Pfothenhauer was generated using the game book. This task, normally undertaken by hand, one planet at a time, was made much easier by the use of a tool called Emichron, which you can find here: <http://swn.emichron.com>. It’s an automated tool that you can use to generate your own sectors and worlds, too - if you want to explore Asgard Sigma,

feel free to take a look at seed 1A0XKO5. All the tags and elements that started the game down the path we took in Swan Song will be open to your perusal. Kevin’s games all have this amazing set of tables, and whenever I needed the answer to any question about what culture someone belonged to or what chaos might happen on any given planet in the sandbox, all I had to do was look, or roll on the appropriate table. This sort of tool is what allows a GM to be both practical in their world building (I knew only the potential stuff that might occur on any given planet, rather than having concrete ideas for each thing) and also assured that whatever the PCs do, if the GM doesn’t know how to answer, the game will be there to provide a safety net. Improvisation is so much easier when you can garner prompts from randomness.

The second tool that contributed to the world of Swan Song was the Faction Turn, another aspect of *Stars Without Number* that I absolutely adore. In fact, streaming the faction turn was what got me interested in broadcasting Swan Song in the first place. The Faction Turn kept me interested in the larger scale part of the world and helped prevent me from developing that PC-myopia that

can sometimes occur when a GM focuses too hard on what the PCs are doing. Swan Song existed in a world that, for me, always felt organic. Felt like it had momentum, and that was because of our “monthly” trips to the Faction Turn.

Those two elements laid the groundwork for a campaign of heavy improvisation backed up by a real, living universe. It’s what made Swan Song so magical, I think.



### **Mirrorshades**

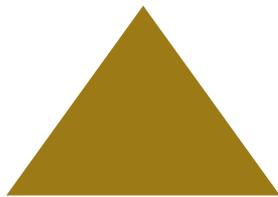
Our Shadowrun campaign was, in so many ways, absolutely opposite from the experience of Swan Song. We were stepping into a universe that, in the fictional cyberpunk year of 2050 (ooooh, so futuristic) was already developed. There were megacorporations, presidential dragons and Universal Brotherhoods already in place and as the GM of a much beloved world, it was my job to tell a story within it. Part of what’s so appealing as

a GM generally about this kind of campaign is that the setting already has a lot worked out for you. I didn’t need to know how the Great Ghost Dance contributed to the dissolution of America into the UCAS we’d see in the game - that was laid out in the rules for me. All I had to do was get an understanding of what was where and how it all fit together. As a show, what’s so great about that is that for fans of Shadowrun, I can drop subtle (or not-so-subtle) hints about things that are in the setting for y’all to pick up on. It’s especially tasty when the players don’t know it’s coming, don’t you think?

So how do you “build” a world that’s already built? Focus on the way things fit together. Draw the PCs into the web of multinational corporate politics, religious and cultural conflict and then let them loose. I did this mostly with a combination of heavily invested NPCs and through the missions that were presented to the characters. Right people in the right place can say a lot about the world. I’m a firmly “show don’t tell” kind of GM, so it was all about using the world to show off its own themes.

Some of this would come in handy when we’d visit another

popular universe not too long after *Mirrorshades* was done - in *Balance of Power*, many of the same challenges were present, and the solutions similar. Though, if you've watched both, pay particular attention to Jesse's glee at being placed into familiar places. In a lot of ways, during *Balance of Power*, Jesse was both player and audience.



### **Court of Swords**

Of all the show's I've GMed for RollPlay, this game is the one whose world was the biggest temptation to go full Gygaxian DM on and just really world-build the hell out of it. I was set to draw complex maps, define every detail of the Four Courts and just really go ham on it. After some time, though, I realized how boring that would be. Not the process of it - I love building stuff - but the exploration after the fact. I've always been more fond of being surprised in my games, and my style of GMing requires a certain uncertainty going in that I think full-on campaign setting construction tends to constrain away. I didn't want

to have to search my notes for who was who and where they ruled from right from the beginning - I wanted that stuff to develop. I think a lot of this comes from spending so much time running and thinking about the style of GMing that you'd find in *Dungeon World*. The idea of playing to find out what happens.

So how much information to give the players so that they can feel like they're occupying a real and concrete space? How much information to give to the audience so they have context for things like the Xulin Valley and mogwai-instead-of-goblins? What was going to be important enough to state right off the bat?

Anything the players can touch during character creation needs context, or needs to be allowed to create context. I was interested in the religion of the world, and the structure of the magistracy - so I brought those to the table from the get-go. I didn't know much about (because I didn't think much about) the races of D&D and their place, or about things like "where do people learn magic from" or "how is the military organized" and so when our first party consisted of a Dwarf and a former military member, I let the players help me work that out. It's a

precedent that I've tried to maintain as we've added new characters and guests. When I'm, not sure about the details of a thing, I ask the player who is most interested to help me out.

That way, the world I'm building is the world that we are building together. It makes the whole thing more fun, for me. I'm still the authority on what is what and where it all fits together but I don't have to feel the pressure of being the only one who gets to make those decisions. I've stuck to a few things all the way through - the cultural inspirations, the tarot, the idea that elves might be marauding space monsters - but lots of details have drifted into the game and been incorporated because of the players' desires. I don't build worlds alone, if I can help it, which brings me to the most recent campaign...



### **Nebula Jazz**

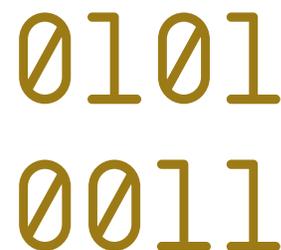
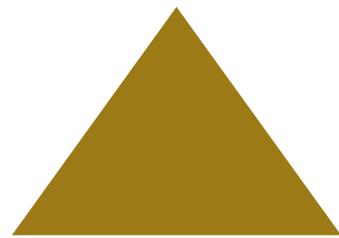
Our most recent game is, and has been from the start, an experiment in chaos. The rules we chose are

intentionally both open and loose and allow for players to really just get in and get their hands dirty. The world, then, has to reflect that. I said from the very start that I would bring a few core ideas to the game (some of which we've seen - the Minghassi Imperium, the fact that Earth blew up in 1986, the Agar'an war, etc) and the players would be allowed and expected to bring the rest. So far, I've been absolutely overjoyed at the mess we're making together. When a player asserts something in Nebula Jazz, the game itself, at its most basic level, screams a mighty "YES" and I have no choice but to scream along. Hopefully in delight. Only occasionally in terror. You want to play a dashing shark man? Okay sure. You want to be a literal slime who seduces young marmot-creatures? Okay, yeah. You want to be the disgraced guardian of an ancient empire of snake people who fell from grace in ages past and whose menfolk keep their emotions in specially prepared pheromone jars except maybe you might be the chosen one for whom the jarring ritual does not apply? Well, shit, why not?

Nebula Jazz is an aesthetic, not a world. It's in the title - it's space improvisation, by all of us. We're

less actors on stage and more a weird, stoned jam band, up on stage in a cloud of psychedelic light, rocking out on instruments made out of weird. It might be the most frightening experience as a GM-turned-creative director that I've had, because I'm not the one in control. I can't step in and say "okay, here's the way this episode is going to go" because the game won't let me. I'm having an amazing time, but only because I trust my players to bring their A game. So far, so good.

The world of Nebula Jazz is likely only going to get stranger, and when the narrative takes us in an unexpected direction, all I can do is build on the themes and paint with the colors the other players are giving me. It's a furious fusion of whatever direction we feel like going in on any given day, and the "world building" part is more improvisational and messy than any other game we've played. Nebula Jazz doesn't have a "world" exactly. It has inspirations and style, more than anything, and the world is just the places where that style congeals. I'm digging it and I can't wait to see what surprises come down the pipe next.



# STARTING A NEW CAMPAIGN



## Getting Started

Part of what I want to do with my GMing on Twitch is show folks some tricks that they can use to do what we do, at home, with their own friends. I want people to see Nebula Jazz or Court of Swords and then go and do those things themselves. Part of this means cool tricks in Roll20, or showing off cool systems that folks haven't heard of before. One thing I get asked a lot is about starting up a new campaign, if there are any tips or tricks I have for it. I think most

gamemasters, even ones embedded in long campaigns (maybe those GMs most of all) think about starting up a new campaign and the fun and excitement that can bring. I know I do. Here's what I think about when I'm planning for a new campaign.

## Players

Players are the most important part of a campaign, for me. The way they interact with each other, the things they're inspired by, the things that drive them to behave certain ways

in-game. Everything that a player brings to the table colours what they do there. I want to play with people who are passionate about at least some aspect of gameplay. They might be particularly into exploring the rules, they might want to learn everything there is to learn about the world the game is set in or they might just want an opportunity to have some dramatic or funny roleplaying on screen. Everyone I play with is an entertainer, in some way or another, and the more I learn about them the better. When JP suggests a player for the cast, or we're discussing who to add to a group, I take some time to get to know them both as a person (by talking to them about RPGs and games in general) and as a streamer - especially lately I'll take some time to check out their stream and see how they are on screen. These things help me, as a GM, choose exactly the right cast for a show. More than anything, I think what makes a show really special is the interaction and chemistry of the cast. Where would Swan Song have been without Wheat and Geoff's energy? Mirrorshades wouldn't have been what it was without Kaitlyn's chaotic influence. Aldo and Rune make Blades a work of dramatic art, right? It's all about the players. That's the place I start. You can do the same with your

players - start your campaign by talking with them! Ask them what games they like, what they love about roleplaying and what they're excited about. Watch them around the other players - try to read and understand their dynamics. The better you "get" your players, the easier your job at the table will be.

## **System**

Choosing a system is a tricky thing, especially when you're just getting started in roleplaying, or playing with folks who are. It's super important, because the rules of the game - how it resolves conflict, what kinds of things the characters can do and how they're rewarded for doing it - all impact and shape the narrative that will fill your game. When we get a group together to play a roleplaying game, we tend to lean towards what feels familiar. For a lot of people, this can be the game they "always" play or it can be the game that they associate with roleplaying games. I wonder how many campaigns of Dungeons & Dragons started because it's synonymous with roleplaying for so many people. Take some time before you choose a game! Learn about some different systems. Watch or listen to an actual play video, stream

or podcast of a game you're curious about. There are so many amazing games out there. Take some time and imagine some alternatives to the usual thing - if you end up back where you started, then your usual game is the right choice. If you discover something new, it might be an opportunity to explore a little. You want to find one that's going to fit what you want as a player, what your players want to do, and is the right level of rules complexity for your group. Make this something your whole group participates in. Swan Song and Nebula Jazz, in particular, really work because the group and the game fit together so well. With a little work and experimentation, you can do the same.

## **Situation**

The term "situation" is something I discovered via the Burning Wheel - it refers to not only the setting of the game world but the things that get the game started, narratively. The "situation" of Lord of the Rings is that Middle Earth is under threat by the shadowy power of Mordor, but the Free Peoples have a hope in the Fellowship of the Ring. The situation is something that the players all should have some input in but ultimately falls to the GM. As an

example, here are the situations for the campaigns I've run for RollPlay, as they looked at the beginning of the campaign.

*"The crew of a shitty spaceship take jobs to pay off said ship and get into trouble just trying to keep their heads above water."*

*"Two sides of a massive conflict struggle over the fate of the galaxy."*

*"A group of badass operatives take on jobs fighting megacorporations in a fantasy/cyberpunk dystopia but actually who cares about that let's see who is smooching who"*

*"Character vignettes show us a fantastic world inspired by Southeast Asia, unfolding the mythologies and history of that world bit by bit."*

*"A whacky space adventure starring a scrappy band of misfits blamed for a crime they didn't commit."*

So what's *your* situation? How you form it, and how much your players get to have a say in it, will shape the campaign to come. Make sure you get it feeling right before you start.

# ENDING A CAMPAIGN



All good things come to an end, and when it comes to an RPG campaign, it's been my experience in the past that the endings are more whimper than bang. More often than not, when we end a campaign, it ends because players move away, schedules change or we just lose steam and the game sputters and dies. Your campaigns deserve better than this. Here's a little bit of advice for ending a campaign on a high note.

## **The End Starts at the Beginning**

The best thing you can do if you want to create a campaign that ends satisfactorily is think about the ending at the start. There's nothing wrong with acknowledging that a campaign is a finite, impermanent thing. Knowing that something will end can give the thing a life it might otherwise not have - there's a kind of energy in knowing how many sessions you expect to play. This kind

of forward thinking can give you a chance to plot out arcs, if you're the kind of GM who likes to do that. Treat your game like a TV show - if you think in 10-12 "episode" seasons you can plan to stop after that and re-examine. If you enjoy the game, and you want to continue, you have the option to renew the game there. If you're finding you want to take a break and play something else, or as a group move on entirely, this is the time to do it. What matters is that you thought about it in advance, and agreed to a certain framework so that the end doesn't catch you by surprise.

### **Work Up To It**

Nothing is worse than having the campaign suddenly end. If you can plan for it, know it's coming at least a few sessions in advance, you can all work together to plan for the ending. It's much easier to work together towards something satisfying if you've got time. Otherwise, you're stuck with that awkward "well, it's over and we're not playing anymore, but all this unresolved stuff is still around". If you can, give yourself a little bit of time to angle in for a landing. It'll make that transition from climax to denouement so much smoother.

### **Let Go of Closure**

Not everything is going to wrap up neatly. Especially at the end of a long campaign. There will always be threads in Swan Song, for example, that just never got followed. Even in Mirrorshades, which we knew would end at a certain point, had questions left unanswered. Embrace that uncertainty and be okay with it. Focus on the big stuff, make sure you get to revel in the big reveal of at least a few things, and let everything else go. Besides, you never know when you might return to the same world with a new group, years down the line. If you're taking good notes, those little unresolved questions can spawn whole new campaigns. You never know when a reboot opportunity will come along.

### **Give the Players a Chance to be the Author**

I steal this ending bit from a game called Fiasco, in which each player gets to frame and describe a scene showing what happened to their character at the end. It's the cheesy bit from all those 80s movies where it talks about how everyone's lives went after the last time we saw them on screen. Don't argue or debate what makes sense or is rational,

here. It's not about calling for rolls or demanding verisimilitude. This is letting the players say goodbye to their character and the world in a fun way. There are no more stakes, right? So when a player says "after killing the Lich Lord, I return to my ancestral Kingdom to find it in ruins. Signs all about show the Black Dragon Xeranthus is the one responsible. I take up my hive-mother's sword once more and venture forth on another quest!" it's your only job to just smile and nod, not to point out that in YOUR mind Xeranthus went south, not north.

This part can be hard for a GM, but you should take a few minutes to say goodbye to your NPCs, too.

### **Get Excited about What's Next**

The best part about ending a campaign is starting a new one! Go out for pizza, talk about what kinds of games, stories and characters you're all excited for next. An ending of one thing is a great time for relief and relaxing and thinking about the next big thing. Embrace it!

# ONE-OR- MORE SHOTS

There's a great thread going on right now, as of writing this, on the Community site about what systems and guests that folks would like to see on RollPlay. (You can find it here: <https://community.itmejp.com/t/what-games-and-or-players-would-you-like-to-see-in-a-future-one-shot/284/3>) and while I think it's great to see y'all talking about it, I wanted to put together some thoughts of my own on what games and shows I'd like to run on RollPlay. There are too many cool people out there that I'd love to play with, so I'm not going to touch that one - it's JP's jam anyway - but I'm the guy with the system plans, so here's what I think would be super

fun to run, either as a one-shot or as a longer, larger series.

## ***Mouse Guard***

First and foremost, the source material is amazing. If you're a fan of Redwall and haven't seen or read Mouse Guard, definitely check out the comic. It's an amazingly cool fantasy story about a medieval mouse civilization that struggles to survive in a hostile world after a terrible war with a kingdom of weasels. There are no humans, and it feels a little like a dark ages setting where the monsters are animals and the crusades were between mouse knights and weasel saracens.

It's way grittier than it ought to be for how cute the characters are. It'd make a fantastic one-shot and I think the way that combat is handled with cards and bluffing and trying to out-guess your enemies is really clever and makes for some good plays. Lots of "oh snap!" moments available for the audience.

<http://www.mouseguard.net/book/role-playing-game/>

### ***Undying***

Vampires and RPGs go together like Bauhaus and black eyeliner. I know that there are fans of the Masquerade in the RollPlay audience and it'd be fun to have an excuse to get gothic for a little while. This game is a diceless bidding RPG where you play super powerful immortal vampires struggling for control of territory. It's played in vignettes over the course of centuries, so it'd be a perfect mini-series. I'd love to play it with folks who know how to get into the drama of a thing. I bet Jesse and Zeke would be great undead creatures of the night. Plus, it's basically all PVP with shifting alliances. Sounds great, right? Might be a bit of a challenge going diceless but I bet we could pull it off with the proper gravitas.

<https://enigmamachinations.com/category/rpg/role-playing-game/role-playing-game-design/undying/>

### ***The Nightmares Underneath***

A proper old-school dungeon crawl with a bunch of super cool twists, this game is set in a middle eastern-inspired fantasy world where horrible nightmare realms full of monsters and treasure and secrets have been popping up and ruining the world. A handful of people (read here: the PCs) are able to traverse these nightmares in search of treasure and can, with some effort, destroy them. The author, Johnstone Metzger, also wrote the Metamorphica, which you'll remember from the DIEkea one-shot. I'm stealing rules from this already for Court of Swords so it's worth considering for a longer campaign, I'd say.

<https://redboxvancouver.wordpress.com/2016/11/14/the-nightmares-underneath-rpg/>

### ***Primetime Adventures***

Primetime Adventures is a classic small-press RPG that I've always wanted to use to run a show because

it's a game about, well, running a show. You pick a genre and create a cast and the game plays out in specific episodes. It has a mechanism for fan mail that I could turn over to chat and it would be really interesting to try out explicitly just being a show for real in a way that the game would support. I'm particularly interested in using this kind of game to do something we've never seen in RollPlay history before - a drama maybe or a police procedural. We could do Mad Men or the Wire. A lot of amazing possibility in this system, if you ask me.

<http://www.dog-eared-designs.com/primetime-adventures/>

### ***The Burning Wheel***

Y'all had to know this was coming. It's the grand-daddy of my deepest, darkest desires for a RollPlay show. Of all the games on this list, this fantastic character-driven, crunchy-

as-heck game is the one I want most desperately to run. It's also the one I'm most careful about running because the cast has to be just right to make it work. I think I've been saving this for when the right folks come along. I did a whole video about why I love it so much (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E79DDGdX62I>) but suffice to say that it's all about the characters and I think with the right cast we could do some very neat things with it. Absolutely worth looking into more, even just so you can see what gets me so fired up about it.

<https://www.burningwheel.com>

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# SWAN SONG

“Spitting would be ineffective.”

– Alpharius

Stars Without Number: Swan Song, Episode 5, Monday April 3, 3200

- 1) 2 months have passed, credits have been earned, Pi is contained in the Swan Song databanks
- 2) A bill of 125,000 credits for grey-market computer parts has come. If they pay it, Pi can continue to grow. If they don't, the Swan Song computer system needs weekly checks (2d6, 12 = fail) or it will fail due to overheating.
- 3) Mr. Sicarian has caught the attention of a group of former Pfortenhauer mercs who are spreading the word that he's still alive.

↳ aboard the Voltaire

- 4) If the PCs install the tech, they get the attention of Le Fantôme, an AI leading a cult on Cabral. While on Anax One, a member of the cult, a cyborg named **Odette Rainier** comes to sneak around, pretending to be part of the mission team analyzing the ship. She attempts to a) confirm that the equipment is for sustaining a "fetal stage artificial intelligence" and b) copy the code-signature of the AI for study.
- 5) While on Anax One, a group of bounty hunters come looking for Higgs;

Bounty Hunters (4) HP 5/AC 4/AB +3/Weapon: Stun Pistol 1d6+1 / Stun Baton 1d8 / RE12 ME15 EV14 Tech16 Luck13

If they successfully restrain him, they take him back to their ship with the intent to take him to Kalaya for questions.

- 6) All that aside, they meet Omar Ibn Said who tells them the details of the mission;
  - 1) They are studying the Insectoid people of Subhadra, particularly their social structure.
  - 2) Deliveries to the facility have been targetted by pirates, of late
  - 3) They want to use the Swan Song as a cargo ship, to sneak past the pirates and deliver some very expensive research equipment
  - 3a) If pressed, Omar will tell them that the equipment is a Multi-Phase Pheromonal Impulse Generator for analysis and testing of non-verbal communications among the V2D.

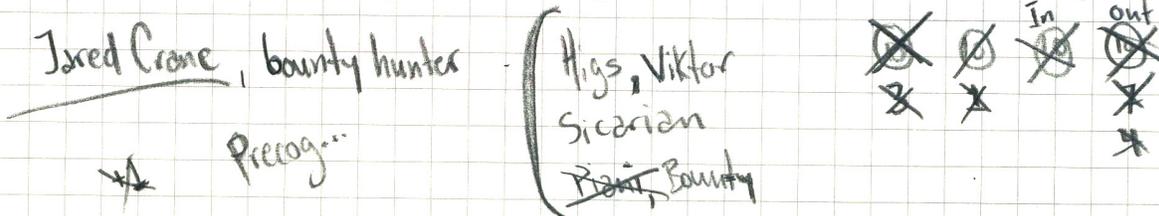
↳ this is a lie, the device is a psychic booster designed to control the V2D.

7) On the planet, the queenless V2D are a population of listless drones, struggling to excavate the "alien menace" to awaken their race.

8) A number of smugglers have a facility here, and employ the V2D as labourers. The smugglers are planning to attack the research station for loot and supplies.

Trip to Subhadra: 2 days to Jump, 6 days to Anaximander 6 days back (14 days) } will have to do May GM  
 2 days to Jump, 3.5 jumps (21 days), 2 days to Subhadra (25 days) } turn before next session...

[A ship called the Stranger in the Alps.] → Omar Ibn Said, Xenosociology Dept



# Swan Song GM Notes

Commentary

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## Pi in the Database

Even after Pi was unbraked, I knew I wanted to keep things off-balance for the crew. From here on, I would have Pi make demands of the crew either behaviourally, socially or fiscally and see what they'd push back on. Pi needed to grow, and like a plant whose roots were becoming too large for the pot they were in, they needed a new vessel. I was pleased to see that the crew was willing to make the requisite purchases, but I wanted to see how they'd react when I introduced Odette to the ship, even briefly. If I remember correctly, Piani didn't trust her and everyone else flirted with her. Looking back, this makes perfect sense.

This is the first time we'd see anyone connected to La Fantome, and at the time, I wasn't sure of much more than the idea that she was an AI and very powerful, who led the planet Cabral via some kind of worship. This stuff came straight from the tags on the planet - all the weird Catholicism stuff came later as we developed the planet and their culture.

## A Group of Bounty Hunters

This is the encounter that led to the infamous fully semi-automatic sniper pistol. Silly jokes from RPGs that stick around forever, shared by an in-group who was there when it went down? Some of my favourite stuff. Still funny, if you ask me.

## Omar Ibn Said

I had, as I think the audience did, some high hopes that the characters would look more into the V'ad and their weird hive influence. Omar was a deeply troubled individual and lying through his teeth to the PCs all the way through. They never really treated the job as anything but routine, which of course is fine - it's an example of how the GM can invent as much weird world stuff as they want, but all that matters is what we see on screen.

## The Stranger in the Alps

Having Mr. Falcon pilot a ship called the Stranger in the Alps made me giggle too hard not to use it. I think a few people in chat caught the connection. These little weird jokes are all over Swan Song, and I loved when fans dug them up.

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