

THE CULTURE

BIOSCALE

A JUMPCAIN
CYOA

Welcome to the universe of The Culture.

For those of you lucky enough to be a pan-human of The Culture, you'll find your time here to be largely without troubles – at least, not the sort of life-or-death troubles other places and other species experience. Your trouble is what to pick to wear to the latest party, what people will say about you, and what kind of high you'd like your drug-glands to produce to really accentuate the evening.

But perhaps that's not what you're after. There are a few Culture citizens who like to live dangerously, travelling to foreign worlds in order for Contact to lift them into post-scarcity economics and proper civilization. Not to imply you're a biological – the drones of the Culture are no less its citizens.

Or, even more distantly, you might be from out-Culture entirely, an alien or un-Contacted humanoid species completely, and living a very different life to that of the pampered Culture citizen or Special Circumstances agent.

This jump focuses on the scale that the biologicals of this galaxy interact at. If you are more interested in the level of interaction that the Ships and Minds work on, please consult the "The Culture – Minds" jump.

Please accept these **+1000 CULTURE POINTS** for your use.

TIMELINE

You may insert at any point from 1327 CE (the Idiran-Culture war's outset) to 2875 CE (the end of the War in Heaven), but these 10 years must not overlap with time you spent here in the "The Culture – Minds" jump.

AGE & GENDER SELECTION

The common lifespan of many pan-humans and alien species among the galactic Involved stretches easily up to 300 years, with no irreversible loss of physical ability. The common cause of death is deciding they've had a good life and choosing to die, or be put into long-term stasis. Sentient AI's – Drones, Objects, Avatars/Androids – are likely to last even longer. Therefore, freely choose your age up to 500 years.

Considering that Culture pan-humans can adjust their own sex on a regular basis, the lack of gender among Drones and Objects, and diverse gender arrays among the alien species (including species with 3+ genders, hermaphroditic traits, asexual meiosis and neuter castes), you may freely choose those options for yourself.

STARTING LOCATIONS

Roll 1d8 for your starting location, or select the starting location based on your chosen background. If you purchase the **NATION** item, you may instead start there.

1. UN-CONTACTED PLANET

The cradles from which new civilizations arise and go forth into the galaxy. As a consequence, the civilization here might range from non-existent, to tribal, feudal, industrial or space-faring, but in any case they don't know for sure that other galactic civilizations exist. I regret to inform you there's probably a war going on. **Special Circumstances** or **Out-Culture** may select this starting location.

2. CONTACTED PLANET

You begin on a planet with a society which has developed faster-than-light travel. It might be very much below the Culture in terms of technology, or equivalent in development to the Culture itself. **Contact** or **Out-Culture** may select this location.

3. CULTURE ORBITAL

A small ring-world that orbits a star. It has been terraformed and flooded with a breathable atmosphere, and represents the majority of locations where the Culture lives. A Mind resting at the hub of the orbital maintains the infrastructure and guards it against disaster, while seeing to the needs of the possibly hundreds of millions of pan-humans that live there. **Citizens** may select this starting location.

4. SHIP (with a capital "S")

You begin aboard a Culture Ship; probably a General Systems Vehicle dozens or hundreds of kilometers across. If you prefer not to be surrounded by millions or billions of other people, you can pick a General Contact Vehicle with a "crew" of 50-300 travelling through the outskirts of the galaxy. **Citizens** or **Contact** may select this starting location.

5. OUT-CULTURE SHIP (with a little "s")

Most Culture Ships would probably balk at anyone calling this...vessel...a ship. It probably doesn't even have a proper Mind in control, maybe a lower-tier AI or *shudders* an actual *crew* responsible for manning it. It doesn't slip gracefully through hyperspace, but barges and pushes its way along the skein, and don't even get a Ship started on the field configuration! Nevertheless, this starting point might have a small or large population of Out-Culture aliens or pan-humans muddling their way through life, the galaxy and everything. **Contact** or **Out-Culture** may select this starting location.

6. OUT-CULTURE STATION

Not all species hold the same appreciation of the aesthetic that the Culture do with their Orbitals. They prefer space habitats that are free of repulsive nature, or simulate the twisting warrens of their home or the water-filled ocean reefs. It could be an artificial world, like the Shellworlds.

This might even be a megastructure, like a (Dyson) Ring, or an orbit-spanning tangle of interwoven tubes of water like a Morthanveldt Nestworld. **Special Circumstances** or **Out-Culture** may select this starting location.

7. SOMEWHERE STRANGER

There are plenty of other options even more bizarre than alien space stations. Solar-system-sized bubbles constructed to hold air or water inside which people live, amalgamations of multiple species' habitats chained together with hyper-strong cables, a lonely escape pod hurtling towards something. **All Backgrounds** may select this starting location.

8. FREE PICK

BACKGROUNDS

Choose one. Any of these backgrounds may be taken as Drop In, with no accompanying established personality or memories.

CITIZEN

A typical member – if one could assume such a thing – of the Culture. Someone who lives on an Orbital or Ship, engages with their fellows in person and through data networks, votes on policy, takes trips and holidays to far-away places, throws parties, takes up hobbies, discards hobbies, and generally just enjoys living life until they get bored and decide to die or go into long-term stasis.

CONTACT

The extroverted side of the Culture is their Contact section; a pretty-much-official diplomatic and exploratory group. Travelling aboard a fittingly named Contact Unit – a sentient Ship with a capital 'S' – the Contact section goes forth to Contact worlds deemed fit to join the galactic community, or doesn't, if more harm than good would come of it. Contact also manages the Culture's affairs with other Involved civilizations, though this aspect tends to be rather routine stuff, unless it turns into a war, in which case it gets exciting and terrifying very, very quickly.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

SC are a subsection of Contact who are notorious for breaking many of the rules of etiquette that the rest of the Culture holds so dear. They act autocratically when the Culture favors democracy, they ignore rights held as inviolate, they deceive, steal, lie, fight, and kill.

If Contact finds a planet in urgent need of deniable meddling, members of SC including Minds, Drones and pan-human agents – sometimes recruited from outside the Culture - may take up covert operations, insinuating themselves into businesses to spur innovations, governments to steer policy, militaries to change invasion strategies, funding groups that need the money to effect change, and in general interfering when they *shouldn't*, but *must*.

OUT-CULTURE

However, the Culture is just one of millions of civilizations in the galaxy. Some higher-tech, many lower; some ancient beyond knowing, and some so young they are still confined to their own gravity well. This background is therefore a lot more freeform than the others, and your own imagining is likely to be the driving factor in defining your existence.

Things out-Culture, however, tend to be a bit nastier. Usually they haven't made it to post-scarcity, so economics, wars, famine, poverty and prejudices are common in these societies.

OUT-CULTURE DISCOUNTS: Because of the wildly varying nature of the species and the civilization you might come from, the Out-Culture background does not have fixed discounts.

Instead, pick 2 x 100cp, 1x 200cp, 1x 400cp and 1x 600cp perks that are not for another background to be discounted.

GENOTYPE (SPECIES)

Select one.

The mix of various species which join different galactic civilizations means that it's not necessary for Culture backgrounds to pick the Culture Pan-human species, or for Out-Culture to choose an Alien as their species. SC employs regular pan-humans, aliens and drones as well as more enhanced agents and Offensive units.

BASELINE PAN-HUMAN or HUMAN-SCALE ALIEN - 0CP (+200CP OPTION)

There are a great many species that could be described as human, human-ish, human-like or humanoid; most of them not even sharing a common genetic heritage. While they might be unusual to our eyes and might have extra fingers, arms that reach their shins, or green-black skin, on the whole they more-or-less fall within the physical parameters of Earth humans. You therefore have a lot of leeway in designing your body's size, colorations and shape, but are not particularly capable of extraordinary feats as we would reckon them.

Alternatively, this option may be used to start as an alien instead of a human, somewhere between 0.5 and 5 meters in length or height. You can pick a canon alien that meets this description – from the mattiform Alutridia to the tentacled Affrontors to the tripedal Homomdians and Idirans - or make your own species up. The main restriction is that the species must be biologically plausible, and you may choose an area of physical advantage (such as, excessive strength compared to humans) which must be balanced out by a comparable area of disadvantage (such as being excessively slow to move and act compared to humans).

If you do not take any of the variant options below, you may have an additional **+200CP** to spend as you wish on the other sections of this jump.

CHANGER UPGRADE - 0CP (Upgrade to Baseline Pan-human, not compatible with Culture Pan-human or any Alien species)

Changers are minor species of humanoids who have the ability to adjust their physique and coloration to mimic other pan-humans. During the Idiran War, they were feared by the Culture and their allies for their ability to impersonate anyone, down to their voice, gait, mannerisms and fingerprints. In addition to their shape-altering ability, they have glands to deliver sedatives or neurotoxins in their saliva and through scratching with their fingernails, as well as a great degree of control over their body and its functions, for example to suddenly and copiously sweat to lubricate their way out of a grapple, or greatly slow their breathing and heart rate to nearly undetectable levels to conserve oxygen or feign death.

CULTURE PAN-HUMAN or INVOLVED ALIEN UPGRADE - 0CP

Culture citizens have many latent features hidden in their genes – redundancy, adaptability and over-design are all words best describing them. The two most widely-gossiped about features are, of course, their drug glands, which can produce a wide range of chemicals ranging from recreational to life-saving, and their reproductive organs, which we shall gloss over for the sake of propriety.

Yet the list of amendments is much longer, including but not limited to: rapidly clotting blood and very slow regeneration of lost limbs, skin that darkens in days to block high UV light, stronger bones and muscles that adapt to local gravity conditions, digestive system bypasses to avoid alcohol or poison, eyes that see well in darkness, an immune system that can resist basically any non-engineered germ or virus, vastly increased lifespans, a genetic switch to transition from male to female and vice versa, hold or prevent pregnancies, the removal of many defects in humanoid evolution, the need for only a couple of hours sleep, and control of their dreams when they do.

Overall, no single feature gives them an overwhelming advantage over other pan-humans, but the sheer number of enhancements to improve the quality of their lives draws envy from countless less advanced civilizations.

This suite of upgrades may also be applied to a Human-Scale Alien race, to indicate aliens of similarly sophisticated augmentation.

SC ENHANCEMENTS - 200CP (REQUIRES CULTURE PAN-HUMAN or INVOLVED ALIEN)

On top of the normal Culture enhancements, Special Circumstances further boosts its agents with integrated technology. A cybernetic mini-antimatter reactor keeps you powered without need of oxygen for years, an augmented high-speed nervous system handles its power and send it to other systems, fingernails that can fire lasers, a network of fibers that sense distortions to the skein of reality, a neural lace, an internal transceiver, and the ability to use your nervous/electrical systems as an Effector to remotely control electronics, although maybe not as adroitly as a drone would. This suite of enhancements may also be applied to a purchase of **Human-Scale Alien** with the **Involved Alien** upgrade to represent Aliens equipped for a similar role in espionage and dirty tricks.

MEGASCALE ALIEN – 100CP

You're...big. Really big. Likely from a gas-giant world or an oceanic ecosystem of some sort, your body is somewhere from 200 meters to 1500 meters in length, probably ovoid, spherical or torpedo-shaped. Xinthian Tensile Aeranothurs or Dirigible Behemothurs are examples of this genotype.

ECOSYSTEM – 200CP UPGRADE TO MEGASCALE ALIEN

You have passengers, parasites, symbiotes and many general hangers-on, effectively carrying an ecosystem around on your back. Or under your skin, or in your body cavities. I didn't say this was wholesome from a humanoid perspective.

The difference between you and any other filthy animal is that your parasites are meter-scale alien life forms which themselves can be up to human-level intelligence, devoted through instinct or reason to defending you from hostiles and acting on your behalf (if their brains and disposition allow it).

DEEPER CONNECTION – 200CP UPGRADE TO ECOSYSTEM

As per Ecosystem, you carry around a population of life. Unlike the Ecosystem, these life-forms can connect to your nervous system through some method – probably an extremely gross one from a humanoid point of view. This allows you to tap into their mind to extract sensory records from their memories, so you can experience what they experienced recently and to install programming and personality alterations. This connection ability only extends to your ecosystem (and possibly the beings that make up the ecosystems of others of your own species), and not random beings you might encounter.

SENTIENT AI – COSTS BELOW

You are an AI of comparable intelligence to a human or drone, with a mind rating of 1.0.

Sentient AIs think and process information around 1,000 times faster than a human, compared to Minds which process in the billions of times faster. However, as the mind rating indicates, sentient 1.0 items, drones and androids are not really a great deal *smarter* than humans, just faster thinkers.

OBJECT – +100CP or +200CP

Civs have put sentient minds in a lot of weird things over the deci-aeons. Buy an item from the Items section; Your body is now that form. Want to be someone's House AI? A sassy plasma gun? Or just want someone inside you – because you're a sentient space suit? This is your option.

Many of these options will have trouble moving on their own – a House is fixed in place; a sentient gun still needs someone to pick up and carry/aim it, though they might fire on their own. These forms are worth **+200CP**.

On the other hand, some items clearly have their own mobility, like a space suit, vehicle, or spaceship, and are therefore worth **+100CP**.

No matter what form you pick, you'll likely have significant trouble socially interacting with others in person, especially with individuals from civs that do not recognize the personhood of AIs, but less so when interacting with Drones and Minds.

DRONE – 400CP

The drones of The Culture are like their ships in miniature; often small, floating ellipsoids or blocky cubes, with their own sensors, force field emitters, A-grav and various means of communication over short and long range.

Within the Culture, they are considered fully-fledged citizens. Since they wholly artificial in nature, they are immune to many of troubles that might afflict a bio – old age, vacuum exposure, hunger, lack of air or water, toxins or drugs, and plain old hormones that get in the way of thinking clearly. Their artificial shell, small size, repair systems and speed make them usually tougher to kill than something made of meat, too.

ANDROID / AVATAR – 400CP

Like a drone in the shape of a human, these artificial beings are often used by Ships as avatars to interact directly with their passengers or guests, but you are a completely independent AI. You have more or less the abilities of a Drone, but in the shape of a pan-human (or Alien). You're bigger, not able to use A-grav with the same maneuverability and making yourself a larger target.

However your outer appearance might mimic a pan-human, if necessary allowing you to hide among them. Your internals are clearly advanced and technological in nature.

OFFENSIVE DESIGNATION – 400CP (REQUIRES DRONE OR ANDROID/AVATAR)

You are a system designed for combat operations. You are substantially more difficult to kill than the default due to armor, redundant systems and hardening. You can operate while heavily damaged and can field-repair if you can find raw materials.

You have a variety of offensive and defensive systems, including: Manipule fields strong enough to lift a car and fold it in half, an internal cache of 2-4 knife missiles (which in turn have their own, smaller submunitions and force fields), an antimatter bottle for power and Maximally Destructive Self-Termination, military grade effectors, Coherent Radiation Energy Weapons (ie: lasers & masers), force fields that can push you supersonic from a standing start and hypersonic with some run up, or just to block incoming fire.

Comes with the Offensive Little Drone drawback as mandatory for no additional cp.

PERKS

Perks are discounted 50% to the matching background, with 100cp options becoming Free.

A CLEAN TABLE – 100CP, CITIZEN

You can derive enjoyment from the simplest tasks. Despite whether a machine could do your job much more efficiently, you enjoy doing things just to know you've done something. Your work, if you could call it that, frequently brings you to new people who have an appreciation for your efforts. Something as simple as cleaning off a table can start a new friendship.

BUT WHAT A NIGHT! – 100CP, CITIZEN

As a Culture citizen, you have the reputation of a party animal to uphold, but somehow when you go looking for a good time, serious consequences never seem to come around. As long as your general objective is fun, revelry and/or debauchery, and not 'serious business', you and your partying companions never seem to get into trouble you can't finagle, flee, fight, or fuck your way out of.

From mixing weird alien drugs that have never been tried before, to a bar fight, or chasing someone who stole your hat, a night out with you can be a wild ride, but nobody really comes off worse for wear. Some ripped clothing, being thrown in a lake, maybe a bruised ego or a walk of shame in the morning, at most - it all just makes for a great story to tell everyone the next night you hit the town.

BORN BON VIVANT – 200CP, CITIZEN

Despite their reputation for hedonism, the people of the Culture virtually never get out of control with it. They learn their limits and the limits of others early in their development, and as a result practically never become jaded and desensitized to pleasure, practically never descending into cruel depravity or going past the extremes of self-gratification into self-inflicted torture.

As one of the Culture, you are immune to the siren song of addiction, of building resistance to highs, or needing greater and greater physical or emotional sensation to satisfy you.

LIFE TASK – 400CP, CITIZEN

Those citizens of the Optimae with enough single-mindedness and who live long enough have often mastered a particular skill, sometimes to an unbelievable degree. You have a level of ability in one somewhat narrow hobby or skill which is unmatched by a trillion others. A hobby of music translates to being able to compose performances millions of people would invent money for, while a Player of Games may find their skill at boardgames nearly unmatched across swaths of the wider galaxy (discounting the lofty Minds, of course, who are cheating by surpassing biological ability in every way).

REFERER – 600CP, CITIZEN

To the surprise of many Minds, a small handful of people appear to challenge them in mental ability. Thirty or forty in a trillion, these humans don't think as fast as Minds do, yet if given the same information as one and enough time to consider all that information, come to the same correct conclusions as Minds time and time again. You find yourself as one of these people, called Referers, who the Minds value as a kind of sanity-check.

Your mind is certainly capable of absorbing and memorizing vast amounts of information as quickly as you can access it; however, the true genius of a Referer is ultimately unexplained, but buried in intuition and leaps of insight.

Out of the chaotic sea of data at your disposal, valuable information seems to float to the top and your mind easily picks it out and makes useful associations between separate points. Frequently, if you don't even have solid data, you can just straight up make a guess about the specifics and it'll be right, or pretty close. Once you've got some data, you can work through a variety of "what-if" scenarios to simulate the results of a certain course of action just as accurately, and in as much detail, as a multi-ton Mind can, only you don't have to set up and simulate a virtual universe from first principles. You just have to think it through and you will come to insights that anyone else would need a lot of simming and hard number crunching to match. If you wish it, word will spread that you are a problem-solver without equal.

DRINKING UP THE SCENERY – 100CP, CONTACT

Part of the task of Contact is to experience new worlds on behalf of the citizens who stay home. When you embrace a new world as its local inhabitants do, you experience a richness of sensation and emotion that the locals are probably desensitized or blind to. It could be a relatively grey and depressing city, but it would only make the rare highlights even more vibrant by contrast. Every new world and culture you meet only reinvigorates your desire to keep travelling to see and experience the next place, more new people, and more new worlds.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES – 100CP, CONTACT

It's a big galaxy, but somehow you keep running into familiar faces. Call it fate or sheer random luck, whatever you like, in a galaxy of countless trillions, you're bound to run into old friends, lovers, family, and foes, often entwined into the same events that you've become ensnared by.

THE SOCIAL ANIMAL – 200CP, CONTACT

To keep up the diplomatic end of Contact's mission, its members are possibly even more social than the Culture's norm. Informal ambassadors like you have the experience to read a room with a glance and blend into every form of event, no matter the species. Whether you need to deliver an off-the-cuff speech at an economics summit, or lead a ballroom dance in the arms of a local prince, or hold an emergency military negotiation where every second sentence back and forth is an explicit threat.

CULTURAL PREPARATION – 400CP, CONTACT

Before they are sent to investigate a planet, Contact members are prepared for their insertion. So too will you – except as a dimension hopper, you will be prepared for your arrival just before you set foot on each new world. You receive the following three benefits.

1. An information upload of the general overview of your entry location, a little history, and any critical information about the environment or local life forms. Dry, encyclopedic knowledge, but useful nonetheless.
2. One or two local languages, over and above whatever you normally get. These will only be commonly used languages, not extinct or isolated ones.
3. A series of small changes to your appearance, to better match the locals; you might still have something of an "exotic" look, but these mods are enough to avoid people thinking you're not from the same planet.

Each of these three benefits – the history uploads, the extra languages, and appearance modifications – can be individually selected or denied before arriving at a different planet or worlds - even if you "drop in" to a world without a background. These changes apply equally to arriving in a new jump and travelling between planets or worlds within the same jump. See Notes if further explanation is needed.

CONTACTING – 600CP, CONTACT

The whole point of Contact, after all, is to make contact with new worlds and new civilizations. And if the world isn't ready for contact with the Culture? They nudge it along. As an experienced member of Contact, your expertise is frequently requested when evaluating civilizations for uplifting.

Given sufficient information, you have the wisdom and knowledge to evaluate a civilization's level of maturity and their suitability to be Contacted by extra-terrestrials or handle new technology and societal change (eg: government types, laws, economic models etc).

If they are ready, you are trained in first-contact scenarios to make peaceful contact in a way that does not disrupt the society too much.

If they aren't ready, you can estimate what effect different technologies or societal changes will make on the society, and judge whether they are inherently harmful or dangerous, and what will be most beneficial to the society's progress and the uplift process.

You can introduce and insinuate these technologies or societal changes in ways that the local population will not suspect are the result of a superior civilization meddling with them. This is a long-term process that usually takes many decades or centuries.

HOWEVER – 100CP, SC

The Culture has a very long list of things it would never do, either for abstract moral reasons, or pragmatic and practical ones. That said...sometimes things *must* be done, for terrible reasons and in terrible ways, and such things are done while the rest of the Culture looks away. You enjoy a place in this moral blind spot, where your coworkers (and if they exist, superiors) deliberately don't ask questions so you don't have to lie back to them, drones casually take a flight to the other side of the orbital when you need a moment alone with someone, and nobody on your side acknowledges how dirty your hands are.

TROUBLEMAKER – 100CP, SC

If there's one thing SC agents are known for, it's sowing chaos in their wake. This isn't strictly their fault, as they're often sent into situations that are all but inevitably going to become disasters anyway. Nonetheless, your average SC agent needs to know how to operate in a disaster. Or start one.

You have a keen eye for being able to disrupt, sabotage and interfere with systems and equipment. This includes finding the weak point in plans of action or chains of logistics.

Further, you are extremely good at taking advantage of chaos and the unexpected, and have something of a sixth sense for anticipating distractions you didn't even come up with to escape or act.

A PIECE OF NIGHT – 200CP, SC

A special agent is hardly useful if they can't avoid detection. The cutting-edge technology does a lot of the heavy lifting, but you've also trained in making yourself difficult to find. Hide from surveillance, shake a tail, identify and subvert alarms and sensors. Unencrypted systems that rely on wires and electricity might as well not even exist when it comes to stopping you.

EMERGENCY DISPLACE – 400CP, SC

Of all the people who need this, it's Special Circumstances agents. You can request an emergency displace to puck you out of trouble and set you down somewhere safely, regardless of whether there's actually a Culture or equivalent Ship in the area to help. However, it takes about a minute to activate after you push your mental panic button for the displace to actually happen.

You should take care to assume the position, as well: curl up into as small a ball as possible – otherwise the small, spherical displacement field might shear off any arms or legs sticking out.

The emergency displace can do things like teleport just your head, if worse comes to worse.

You are deposited anywhere within the orbit of the same world that you deem is "safe".

USE OF WEAPONS – 600CP, SC

Your training has made you into an artist of violence, and your instruments are the weapons of war. With a beam rifle you'll carve buildings and armored vehicles into sculptures of destruction, with a knife you will paint walls red with blood. There are very few who, with equal tools, would be able to match your level of skill. For all that you can create scenes of rampant destruction with any weapon you can find, these are merely the side effects of your skill and brutal efficiency.

This masterful use of weapons applies to anything used offensively that can bring harm to your enemies, in such broad and general terms as including psychological warfare and informational attacks. You are well aware that a truly beautiful piece of propaganda or devastating psychological assault is as likely to end a war as any bullet.

OUT-CULTURE PERKS

The Out-Culture background selects 2 x 100CP, 1 x 200CP, 1 x 400CP and 1 x 600CP from the perks below to apply their discounts to.

PEACE OF MIND – 100CP

The nigh-sacred principle of the Culture: A being's mind is inviolable. A little redundant to have this around Minds, but perhaps you'd like an assurance of privacy from out-Culture groups and into the future. Attempts to directly read, copy, or control your mind without your prior, expressed consent, return only the message [You Are A Meatfucker] to the would-be violator.

ODD DUCK – 100CP

There are far too many beings in this galaxy for everyone to agree on what civilized behavior actually is, so most species are extremely tolerant of others. Your harmless quirks and peculiarities are often overlooked and always forgiven when they don't meddle with others, even when they might otherwise be a gross breach of protocol or public decency.

SIMULATION – 100CP

Virtual environments in this galaxy are completely convincing in every detail. Just so you know you're not in danger, in any instance where you are sent into a simulation or virtual reality, the word SIMULATION is visible at the bottom of your field of vision, until you dismiss it. Even when it's dismissed, you have continuous awareness that what you're experiencing isn't real.

MAKE-WORK – 100CP

"A job" is a terribly unfashionable concept for the Culture to consider. Having to do just one thing, and for money? Practically a prison, if you ask them. Nonetheless, most other non-Culture Involved civs and un-Contacted societies rely on their people doing a job.

Select a career, such as (but not limited to) musician, soldier, Inter-Cultural Interpretation Liaison, signals officer, surgeon. You are gainfully employed in this particular role, and have about 10 years of total training and on the job experience in this role (ie: a doctor might have 5 years training and 5 on the job, or a soldier with a year of total training and 9 years on the job).

This exact role may vary with your civilization – a Gzilt soldier being rather different to a soldier from an uncontacted feudal world – but your experience and any related qualifications seem to follow you between universes. You could easily make a comfortable living in any setting just by signing up to a place that needs your skills and doing your job.

You can purchase this perk multiple times; each time granting either a new career with 10 years of combined training and/or experience, or adding a further decade of experience to a career you already hold.

LONG-TIMER – 200CP

Artificial minds last a long, long time, and bio's aren't without the means to achieve agelessness either. Your existence is extraordinarily persistent even by Culture standards (where 300 years around the average for humans and a lot longer for drones). Your body is biologically immortal, in the sense it never stops replacing lost cells and there are no detrimental effects of aging.

If you have a background, you've been alive for at least 5000 years, maybe more. This has given you great patience, appreciation for less temporal gifts, some little wisdom, and a million trivial experiences that could help you in the future. Almost nothing can faze you; you've seen it all. You can take in your stride things that would shock and alarm younger beings and just go with the flow.

MENTORED – 200CP

Many of the higher civilizations of the galaxy consider it their duty to raise the ones who come after them. Beings of more advanced civs have a tendency to view you as worth their attention and effort to tutor, guide or simply advise on occasion, instead of treating you to be targets for invasion or assimilation. This attitude also prevails toward anything under your leadership - your nation, your world, your corporation, your family.

HITCHHIKER – 200CP

You're one of those perpetual galactic hitchhikers, the sort that never find a place to settle down. You've got a great amount of experience when it comes to travelling the galaxy, selecting the routes that will take you safely - or, if you prefer, with a little bit more excitement and danger - to the next destination. You also seem to have no small amount of luck in finding a ship (or Ship) going the right way and haggle a low price for stowage and a cabin.

INTAGLIATE - 200CP

The Intagliate are living works of art, beings whose genetics and development were custom-modified to produce fractal markings and patterns in gold and black. As one of these beings, you are patterned with mandelbrot sets that permeate your entire body, from the shape of your pupils to the patterning of your skin pores, bone surfaces, internal organs, down to the layout of your tiniest capillaries and nervous system. These patterns, known as Intaglia, mark you as singularly unique in appearance, an appearance that cannot be replicated exactly by other beings.

PIVOT – 400CP

The Minds of the galaxy command the lion's share of power, but it's strange how frequently the direction of that power is affected by the actions of relatively few and feeble individual humans and aliens. The direction of large events around you – the wars, the first contact scenarios, the changes of government – all seem to be disproportionately affected by your personal action. You're not likely to win a galactic war all by yourself, but you'll probably find yourself in the right place and the right time to sway the course of events toward one side or the other.

GENOMIST – 400CP

Taking a leaf out of Zakalwe's book, are we? Feel like passing on your fancy genetics to someone else – or selling them? You can reverse-engineer your own genetics and organs, the various biological traits you might have picked up here and there during your travels. You can install such upgrades in others through both subtle genetic modifications, and through grafting or Sculption. You're also quite capable making research into the genetics and biochemistry of other species, and likewise transplanting them into yourself or others.

MOST EXALTED – 600CP

In a concept alien to the Culture, you are sitting at the top of your society's class pyramid, with a great many of your kind below you by right. This isn't necessarily being a 'king' in the sense of a feudal hereditary monarchy; you could be a warlord, synapse-leader, emperor, hive-queen, president, executive or any other position at the top of your society with all of the fame, wealth, social status, favors and influence that comes with it. In future jumps, you are assured of being a similarly-elevated individual, unless that conflicts with your chosen backgrounds.

DISPLACER - 600CP

Designed as a weapon delivery system, it takes more than just installing a displacer in your head to use it. You've undergone the training to be a living Displacer Machine. You can translocate a small object, about the size of a baseball, from one place to another near you. You target this device using a modified version of skein-sense, which allows you to feel the mass of matter and objects around you, and allows you to locate and Displace objects to and from specific positions behind and inside those objects around you. The actual machinery of the Displacer itself is disguised as a cranial implant; not too unusual for someone outside of the Culture.

A side effect of the Displacer training is the ability to maintain an extraordinarily intense focus and concentration.

ELDER LINK – 600CP

In a highly unusual move, your species only partially Sublimed in centuries past, and those who enfolded themselves in the higher dimensions of reality maintain a link back to you.

You are, on rare occasion, guided by the images of the Sublimed; appearing either as indistinct silhouettes, or perhaps partially transparent ghosts. They will not directly intervene in reality or physically interfere with the world, but you may receive visions of them guiding you towards certain landmarks or converse with them in your sleep through Delphic riddles. Occasionally, they may communicate with others around you, or to other similarly-enlightened beings on your travels, if it serves them.

The Gone-Before have an enigmatic interest in your continued survival as well as their own inscrutable objectives, and any advice they impart on you serves to further these goals.

AMENDMENTS

It's not unusual in the slightest for citizens of any galactic civilization to modify themselves when the need or the fancy strikes them. Those of the Culture and many other civs might choose to modify themselves for whatever passes for a "job", their hobbies, even passing fads and fashion.

Cybernetic Option: Any of **Touch-Up**, **Upgrade**, **Swap**, or **Bioware Addition** can also be cybernetic, but mimic the function of the biological version exactly. Eg: If you want a cybernetic hand, it's got the same sensation as a biological hand - and yes, you can burn your hand on something hot. If you want cybernetic wings instead of biologically plausible wings, they work the same way by flapping and lift.

While it's no problem for the Optimae to outright swap a pan-human's body to an alien, drone or android body, that option is not offered here – instead, just re-select your species from the Genotype section of this jump.

NEURAL LACE – 100CP, One Free to SC

A Neural Lace is a powerful brain-computer interface, like a net woven throughout the brain. It can control almost any aspect of your body, from sending you into full sensory VR, to medical monitoring, to dream programming, memory storage and editing, to network communication, entertainment, data processing and translation.

During this jump, if you die while having an undamaged neural lace, your mind-state will be sent to a nearby Mind or Ship that can restore you to life. This does not end your chain.

TOUCH-UP – Up to 5 Touch-ups for 0cp, 50cp each thereafter

A minor change that doesn't add any new features to your body, just tweaks something you've already got to provide a minor quality of life improvement or removes a flaw, but doesn't have a noticeable performance improvement beyond your species' ability.

Examples: No longer grow body hair; inner ear tweaked for no motion sickness; change your hair eye or skin colour; fixes your eyes if you're short-sighted; more erogenous sensation in different areas; slight adjustments to height; alter distribution of body fat for thermal or aesthetic reasons; hormonal, metabolic, or immunogenic tweaks.

UPGRADE – 100cp for two

A minor change that significantly improves something pan-humans can already do.

Examples: Higher density muscle, double-jointed flexibility, tolerance for low oxygen, faster digestion or toxin processing, broad spectrum eyesight, webbed fingers and toes, half your brain can sleep while the other half is awake.

SWAP – 100cp each

Swaps out one part of the body for something more useful, but the new part should be a biological feature of an animal or feasible alien. Includes some remodeling to mesh the new with your existing body.

Examples: Swap your regular feet for another pair of hands, your lungs for gills, skin for a carapace or scales, your legs for a dolphin-like or snake-like lower body, your teeth for hollow venom-producing fangs.

BIOWARE ADDITION – 200cp, one purchase covers multiple identical features

Adds a new body part or feature that can plausibly be found in animals, plants or physiologically reasonable aliens. It includes significant remodeling of your musculature and skeletal structure to support it.

You want gills plus the lungs you have already? Easy. You want sonar? OK. Two wings? Fine, but they're going to be huge and might only work in low gravity if you don't also reduce your mass. You want an extra four arms? No problem. You want 20 dicks? Not even the first time I've had this request.

CYBERWARE ADDITION – 400cp each

Adds an artificial system to yours. This can be any sort of device that fits in the body and doesn't have to be biologically plausible.

However, these cybernetics are limited in power consumption to run off the energy your body produces – that is, if you want an A-grav unit, you need to eat enough to have the power for it.

You can get around this by buying this option for a dedicated small power source.

Examples: Drone-scale effectors, memory recording systems, concealed weaponry, internal a-grav or force field projector.

OVERHAUL – 800cp

This option is for completely extreme and outlandish body modifications compared to the norm. You want to be a fractal Aciculate with thousands of hair-fine manipulation and sensory tendrils, or perhaps a fully shapeless, liquid metal form? A cloud of Smart Dust, perhaps.

It is likely nobody would realize you're actually a person and not some kind of environmental feature or art fixture.

COMPANIONS

SENTIENT ITEMS - FREE

Any **ITEM** described as having an AI or electronic brain can be upgraded to a Sentient (1.0 mind rating) for free and becomes a companion.

IMPORT – 100CP EACH

You may import up to 8 companions into this jump, granting them a background and history in the setting. They gain 800cp to spend on options from this jump.

NEW ACQUAINTANCE – 100CP EACH

As above, you may create a new companion, with a background and 800cp to spend.

INVESTMENT – 50CP EACH

Alternatively, instead of designing new companions from the outset, you may invest CP in this option in 50CP increments.

At the end of the jump, for each 50CP you invested, you may take one Bioscale person (alien, drone, pan-human) you've met and who agrees to join you. They don't get to buy anything from the jump, but their characteristics, training, amendments, and personal equipment will become backed by your Benefactor.

OC COMPANIONS – 100CP EACH

Purchasing any of the OC Companions below guarantees that you'll encounter them early into the jump and they'll see reason to travel with you.

Keor-Nizpet

Full name: Lhirot- Labon Keor-Nizpet Tamb're Jasuel

A new offensive drone so fresh out of the creche that they don't even affect a Chosen name. Surprisingly talkative and hot-blooded for someone who doesn't have blood. Despite their nature as a fully-loaded offensive drone, Keor-Nizpet is highly reluctant to kill anyone, prioritizing intact capture and restraint. Their shell is teardrop-shaped and pure silver, when they aren't using their field array to gush emotional highlights into the conversation. Keor-Nizpet tends to use a feminine voice and personality. They intend to make their Chosen Name after their first successful mission, and have been asked to assist you. **Drone** and **Offensive Designation, SC** Background, **However & Troublemaker.**

Rafe Vistet

Full Name: Sonteume Raphelie Rafe Vistet Ysbior

If there was ever a man who could fall in love with a planet, it would be Rafe. New vistas and sights to see are his wine; he'll try anything at least once, diving in head-first when sampling new cuisine and culture...sometimes when a little more caution is deserved. More than anything, he loves to walk around cities he's never visited before; the more populated and busier, the better. He's endearingly boyish in both appearance and mannerisms, no matter what sex he has at the moment. **Contact** Background, **Culture Pan-human, Neural Lace, Drinking Up The Scenery, Old Acquaintances, The Social Animal, Cultural Preparation, Contacting, Hitchhiker, A Clean Table, & But What A Night!**

Leiala Nilvisi-Joca

Full Name: Zatlanteri-Hypadiema Itoni Leiala Nilvisi-Joca dam Artreivier

Leiala is best described as an exuberant and vibrant soul. Fully representative of the pan-human youth of the Culture, she loves nothing more than to spend the evening partying out on the town, late-night entertaining at the after-party, taking a couple of hours to dream-game, the morning chilling out and the afternoon warming up for the next evening.

Nonetheless, she's starting to wonder what kind of impact she might leave behind, and is making more and more efforts to become informed about the state of the rest of the galaxy, a sure sign she might be interested in joining Contact, or if not, just going for an adventure. **Citizen** Background, **Culture Pan-human, A Clean Table, But What A Night!, Born Bon Vivant, The Social Animal, Troublemaker, Hitchhiker.**

Kk'rrc

Full Name: Kk'rrc R'ekK (best pronounced without moving your lips)

On a backwater planet, a village was saved by the inadvertent actions of a member of Contact. In Kk'rrc's culture, the village repays the act by having one of its members volunteer to a Life-Bond. This bond was first made to the Contact member, but then transferred to the Contact section and the Culture in general, and somehow the Life-Bond ended up as a shared resource that was re-allocated to you.

It took a while for Kk'rrc to get used to the Culture, but they remain devoted to their task of protecting and serving you in order to repay the Culture for saving their village and family.

A few members of Contact suspect that the Life-Bond should have been paid off in full by now (as Kk'rrc has died more than once in service to Contact), and Kk'rrc is staying because they enjoy being a part of Contact and getting to work with its members. For their part, nobody else really has the heart to bring it up with Kk'rrc.

They have the Involved Alien, **Out-Culture** Background, **Make-Work (Soldier), Odd Duck, However, Troublemaker, A Piece of Night, Life Task (Bodyguard).**

Jazzie

Full Name: Beiler-Fausmea Lulthor Jazziel Usen Bosaluut

Something of an eccentric even among the Culture, Jazzie has taken to Sculpture and body modification to a degree even other citizens find a bit excessive. They've sported a rapid succession of tails, tentacles, gliding membranes, extra limbs and body segments, adaptation for exotic planets or complete redesigns of human anatomy at various times. They frequently alter their appearance from mythical figures to animals to occasionally perverse monstrous forms. Between two different visits, there's no telling what they might have had grafted or grown from their body in the meantime; changes are made on an almost weekly basis. Strangely enough, they've always turned down offers to give them actual shape-changing capability.

Culture Pan-human, Citizen background, **A Clean Table, But What A Night!, Neural Lace**, and 700CP of assorted Amendments.

Orasreh-Skarred Xato

Full Name: Virtaneur-606 Orasreh-Skarred Hazard Xato T'Rirc

The drone Orasreh-Skarred Xato has been all across the galaxy, and "somehow" kept finding themselves in all kinds of awful situations. This kind of misfortune takes its toll on a drone, and after being pretty much scrapped, they decided to settle down and now run a shipping business on a Culture outreach planet.

They are a cylindrical drone about the size of a shoebox but is frequently surrounded by a small cluster of aux modules of varying purpose that they carry around in a suspension field.

The truth, of course, is that Orasreh-Skarred is a de-militarized Special Circumstances drone, now unarmed but very capable of using what tools they have left, and is very well connected with people, drones, Ships and Minds in "the limited edition club".

And yes, Hazard *is* their middle name.

SC Background, **Drone, However, Troublemaker, A Piece of Night, Use of Weapons.**

Warmind

Full Name: Acrier-Relvesta Joyl Saerkys Anisonte dam Ursra

Saerkys is a Referer whose chosen life-task is the mastery of grand military strategy and command. They have become known as "Warmind" among the other people and Minds who know of them.

They spend almost their entire time deep in strategic military simulations, running endless scenarios from full-scale galactic wars to conflicts that cover small areas on a single planet. Warmind's friends are always trying to push them to get out a bit more, maybe to go travelling with someone else who has a bright military mind. So far, unsuccessfully.

They have **Culture Pan-human, Citizen** background, **A Clean Table, But What A Night!, Life Task (Military Strategist), Referer, Troublemaker, Neural Lace.**

Innocent Spark

Full name: Innocent Spark

Innocent is the sole remaining Avatar of a Culture GCU Ship killed in the early Culture-Idiran war, an infinitely cut-down sliver of the Ship's mind which it had sent off on an unrelated matter beyond the warzone. Innocent Spark diligently changes their appearance to match the local population, but is wandering the galaxy without a particular goal. A vaguely forlorn attitude follows it wherever it goes.

Despite being no more sophisticated than any other independent drone or avatar, they are widely respected among those who know their history; human, drone and Ship alike.

They have **Avatar, Contact** background, **Drinking Up The Scenery, Old Acquaintances, Long-Timer** and **Hitchhiker.**

Clasp

Full Name: [An excessively long string of machine code]

This drone prefers to be referred to as “Clasp”, and might charitably be described as an Absconded Drone of unknown, but non-Culture provenance. If pressed, it may admit that its own species probably regard it as a traitor. Its overall shape is that of a horseshoe crab without a tail spike. Its body consist of an inverted armored dish shape, about big enough for an adult panhuman to put their arms around, under which are housed many pairs of physical manipulator arms and probe-mounted sensors. It's no war drone, but the upper armor plate is tough to crack.

Clasp's main hobby is the collection and cultivation of rare plant species; the more exotic, the better. If left to its own devices, it would happily spend its entire time in a large garden, watering, pruning, pollinating and planting, leaving only to acquire new specimens.

Drone, Out-Culture background, **Life-Task (Horticulture)**, **Odd Duck, Make-Work (Gardener)**.

ITEMS

Discounts 50% to marked backgrounds, 100CP Items become free if discounted.

If you are a Sentient 1.0, you can integrate most other purchased items into your form. A drone could integrate an LPP 91, for example, but some combinations won't work – a Sentient 1.0 House could use a drone as one of its remotes, but a drone obviously can't integrate a House.

TERMINAL – ONE FREE ALL BACKGROUNDS

The cell phone of the future, a terminal is a general-purpose communications device with various utility features, like being able to record information or take photos.

A pen terminal is most common, but other models are popular – terminals in the form of jewelry or even piercings aren't unheard of. Non-Culture citizens go for a more practical wrist com, belt unit, or a handheld communicator. Most function simply by voice query.

The basic functions of a Terminal are already integrated into Sentient 1.0 items, drones and androids.

BIRTHDAY SUIT – 100CP, CITIZEN

Many citizens do not burden themselves with clothing, wearing only these: a selection of jewelry. In addition to their aesthetic value, these assorted bangles, necklaces, anklets, rings, chains, piercings etc. incorporate compact processing substrate and function as a terminal as described above, and an air-field emitter which regulates the wind chill and temperature around you to comfortable levels while still allowing you to show off as much of your body as you please.

There's a lot of processing power left over in the core of the metal adornments, though, and you can import up to five other handheld technological devices into them for free. Repeated purchases of this item (Discounted to Citizen) allow a further five items to be imported.

FLIGHT GEAR – 200CP, CITIZEN

Flying and swimming are some of the activities the citizens of GSVs and Orbitals most enjoy, and when it's this easy, why not? This unit consists of a force-field flight pack – which, yes, will work on Orbitals and indeed zero gravity – and a pair of similar impeller motors that are worn strapped to your ankles.

WAREHOUSE TRAPDOOR COVERAGE – 400CP, CITIZEN

A safety system that comes standard on all Culture vessels, Trapdoor Coverage allows a Ship to automatically shunt any dangerous explosion that happens on the vessel into hyperspace. It seems a little concerning that you don't have this system, so it's offered here.

Any dangerous explosions, whether accidental or deliberate, including gunfire and nuclear blasts, that occur within your Cosmic Warehouse or any one property you own are automatically neutralized by this system. You can enable or disable this effect at will, selecting areas where explosions are allowed or disallowed.

HOME ON THE RING – 600CP, CITIZEN

The typical home of an average Culture citizen has all the facilities one could hope for. The House itself is large and spacious, with an abundance of recreational and entertainment areas, which includes the amply-sized bedrooms. They are always aesthetically and uniquely designed to suit their surrounding landscape, a vast section of which is included with this purchase. The House is managed by a sub-sentient AI, with. Food, drink, and recreational drugs are provided from dispensers by voice anywhere inside, delivered by a handful of menial drones which will also tidy up after the residents. The dispenser is quite capable of making fanciful clothing, bedding, and other household goods. It has its own fusion power supply, water capture and waste recycling systems.

This house has been upgraded to a somewhat paranoid degree, and is fully capable of surviving a catastrophe that might destroy the Orbital's Hub by sealing and pressurizing itself against vacuum and then jettisoning itself into space.

The House, and the large expanse of recreational "wilderness" around it, will follow you in future jumps. If given a sentient AI, it proactively arranges things for your enjoyment.

CULTURE GELSUIT CONTACT/PROTECTION SUIT, MK 11. – 100CP, CONTACT

The basic Culture space suit for enduring vacuum or the atmospheres of other planets which are not compatible with pan-human biochemistry. This semi-liquid suit can be worn almost continuously in comfort, if needed, and provides a basic range of analytical sensors, health monitors, recycling systems, comms, and a sub-sentient AI to assist the wearer. A touch behind the state of the art, so you'll still need your Terminal for translation purposes. It does provide a small degree of strength augmentation and armoring, but more to preserve its integrity and for knock protection, than serious combat.

If given a sentient AI, it becomes equivalent to the Mark 12 and includes full language translation, cultural interaction coaching, proactive sensor analysis, love life advice, and sarcasm.

ESCORT – 200CP, CONTACT

Perhaps you don't feel like having a fully sentient drone accompanying you, but still urgently need a serious bit of extra protection? This is a knife missile, a sub-unit of an offensive drone. It has monofilament outboard warps, a cutting field, a small laser, propulsion fields, a kiloton of antimatter for emergencies and enough of a mind to recognize any physical threat, but not enough for stimulating conversation, unless you really like to hear about range-to-target or threat-contact probabilities.

Unlike a proper offensive drone, the knife missile is considered single-use expendable. This means it has a brain most drones would consider "simple", has no redundancy or self-repair ability, and will eagerly throw itself in harm's way if it serves to protect you.

If given a fully sentient mind, it has an almost depressed and miserable personality.

MELTING POT – 400CP, CONTACT

A bar-cum-restaurant-cum-lounge situated in a convenient location nearby. Everyone will tell you it's undeniably the most friendly and welcoming place in the area, whether you want a nice meal with company or to get blitzed on drug mist and dance until you fall over.

It provides meals, libations and almost every other kind of recreational lubrications, while its many rooms can be fitted for any social event. Payment is completely voluntary – the only staff to speak of are some service drones, and anyone who feels like serving drinks for the fun of it.

The patronage is diverse in the extreme, and it pulls in newly-arrived spacefarers and important locals alike. In fantasy terms this is that one tavern new adventuring parties are formed in, or the first stop for a freshly-isekai'd hero wandering into town.

You don't really own the place, but it keeps showing up here and there in future worlds, usually with a different outward appearance.

MODULE – 600CP, CONTACT

The Module is the Culture's version of a shuttle, and for many in Contact and Special Circumstances one becomes their home away from home. It speaks miles for a Module's safety standard that most Culture citizens would rather take the time to have a module transport them, than arrive in a fraction of a second and risk experiencing the 1:30,000,000 chance of Displacer malfunction. Given its defensive fields, armor, and active countermeasure systems, it can take a pretty big direct hit and crash-land from orbit, and still have a good chance of saving its passengers.

They can cloak themselves almost perfectly, travel from ground to orbit or vice versa in minutes, and leave no sign of atmospheric disturbance while flying at supersonic speeds.

The interior is designed for 12 people and easily doubles as a small, single room house, with its own dispenser for food, drink, and goods. Most out-culture citizens would be happy to live out of one of these for the rest of their lives. Most Culture citizens would find it unbearably cramped.

If given a sentient mind, it is almost always fussy and motherly in nature.

MEMORYFORM - 100CP, SC

A means of using metamaterials to covertly disguise one item - such as a plasma pistol - as another time - such as a necklace.

You can choose one weapon or tool you have and apply this upgrade to it, giving it an alternate form of about the same mass that is usually innocuous or decorative. The Memoryform in its disguised state will pass even the most stringent scans.

BODY DOUBLE – 200CP, SC

All too often you might wish to be in two places at once – well here's one solution. You have a copy of your body, controlled by an AI summary of your mind-state. In effect, something with your physical appearance and the next best thing to your mind, but not actually "you".

It hasn't got any weird powers, but is a perfect copy of you down to your genes, micro-expressions and personality tics. If body double is destroyed, a new one is restocked in your warehouse or other property.

FYT SUIT – 400CP, SC

A serious "Fuck You, Too!" combat suit. This is what you really want when the kinetics and knife missiles start flying around. An armored space suit with A-grav flight, autopilot, ablative and reflective armor layers, full life support, medical packages, hyperband sensors, full strength and mobility assist. May come with a sub-sentient AI of its own to control the suit in millisecond-reaction combat. A trained pan-human or alien in a suit like this, with a few weapons of their own, has a decent chance against an older model combat drone. However, it's still behind the times when it comes to SC gear, so it shouldn't matter too much if the other civs see you running around in this. You can get a version that runs on neural command, or one that needs voice commands.

If given a sentient AI, it's curt and efficient but very sentimental about continuing to adventure with you.

CONTACT FOUNDATION – 600CP, SC

In worlds that remain un-Contacted, the Culture sometimes covertly sets up businesses and foundations *in perpetuity*, just in case they have to come back and meddle and an agent needs some resources on the ground. You have access to one of these Foundations.

In all future worlds, on your starting planet, is a business, foundation, trust fund, charity or some other organization - sometimes established decades to hundreds of years ago - that you can call on for assistance and funds.

It really only has a handful of accounting and legal staff, but they're very capable at legalities, networking and pulling strings, while the available 'slush fund' for you to call on is...not exactly bottomless, but in contemporary Earth terms, maybe a trillion US dollars and designed for economic longevity. Because the Contact Foundation (or whatever you want to call it) is established prior to your arrival, there's always legitimate paper trails, investment records & tax receipts for where all this money comes from.

OUT-CULTURE ITEMS

The Out-Culture background selects one item at each price tier (100CP, 200CP, 400CP, 600CP) from the items below to apply their discounts to.

POP-GUN – 100CP

A handheld weapon, or a system with equivalent firepower. It could be a CREW – a Coherent Radiation Energy Weapon, ie: a laser; Zakalwe's favorite plasma rifle; a microhowitzer; a projectile rifle with mags of explosive bullets, or rocket seeker pistol.

In any case, this weapon is more than enough for personal protection against anyone not equipped with a professional combat suit. A good shot can take out a light vehicle in one hit, like an aircraft.

PERSONAL WARP UNIT – 100CP

A backpack-sized personal warp unit and emergency warp transponder. Very, very slow by starship speeds, it is generally used as an emergency lifepod to escape a ship about to explode. Its capabilities are exceptionally simple and dumb - don't even think about trying to warp into a gravity well or through a solid object. The transponder can be picked up by any FTL comm system.

SPACEFARER'S BENEVOLENT FUND - 200CP

The SBF is a charitable group with the goal of ensuring that needy travelers have ready aid throughout wide areas of the galaxy. They will be present in future jumps to ensure that you, and others, have the bare necessities for travel: cash or vouchers for food, sets of clothes and toiletries, valid identification and travel documents, and advocacy or legal representation in matters related to travel. They can provide replacements if lost.

They are, however, a strictly law-abiding group, so while they may assist you with legal aid in related matters, once you are declared a criminal they cannot be relied upon, and attempts to use them to bypass local laws will be met with stern displeasure.

ENABLER MACHINE – 200CP

A large device which can rapidly teach an alien or newly-born AI how to communicate and loads it with cultural and linguistic data. It can stream almost any format of data into a sentient computer system. This particular Enabler System has some...let's say "subtly generous" interpretations where you and your works are concerned. The system delivers this favorable propaganda to the target AI, and may well cause it to treat you with more respect than maybe it would if it were given the cold hard facts.

POCKET NUKE – 200CP

A small fission warhead, the size of a brick. The blast radius is fairly small, when it comes to thermonukes, but if you've got it on a deadman switch there's no question it'll take out whichever bastard killed you. Of course, it doesn't have to be used as an expensive "fuck you" note.

AOISH CREDITS – 400CP

Ten Aoish Credits, split between various denominations as physical coins. Not really useful in the Culture, but highly regarded in the wider Involved community. One credit is worth a computer of a given processing power, or a small, basic starship, which makes a Tenth or a Hundredth still a lot of money in everyday terms. This cash is accepted in any relatively widespread interstellar society you might encounter going forward.

BIO-MYCELICAL SUBSTRATE – 400CP

A genetically-engineered computation substrate, based on biological matter. With extremely low power consumption but high power efficiency, it feeds on organic soil matter to be self-growing and self-repairing. If you let this grow over several square kilometers, it makes up for its low processing speed with sheer size, and can host full-immersion virtualities for millions, if not billions of stored users. It can be easily connected to existing data networks or other transceiver technology.

You can choose whether you want this item as a huge chunk of fully-grown substrate in a property you own, or if you want this item as a seed or sample that can be buried and grown at some point in the future.

SCULPTION MACHINE – 400CP

A “surgical device” which uses cutting fields and displacer technology to easily and painlessly open, detach, or re-attach body parts, even from one person to another while they are awake, almost as casually as one takes a photograph. Just take an arm or other part off one person, and stick it on someone else. No mess, no fuss.

This one is rather more useful and hardened than the device Doctor Stap uses. It has a fully autonomous surgery function, overseen by a sub-sentient AI, and can deal with anomalous biology and tough materials – like you might be made of.

If given a sentient AI, it's polite, gentle and has a wonderfully calming bedside manner.

NATION – 100CP to 600CP

You might be a ruler, or perhaps you'd just like to bring your home along with you. You may select the specifics of a small micro-state (at least, by the standards of the galactic Involved), including species, industrial level, government type, economic policies, societal progression, etcetera.

Sadly, this nation is still well below the Culture in technological and societal progress, no more than Cultural Level 5 on the common scale (today's Earth is CL3, the Culture is CL8), and does not yet have FTL travel.

The Nation retains advancements in technology and infrastructure, but remains the same size.

In future jumps, the Nation either squeezes into the world where it can, or inserts into a new planetary system.

This purchase scales by price:

100cp – The size of an Earth nation or smaller; unlikely to even control an entire continent.

200cp – A continent-spanning nation with a proud capital city and many regional ones, linked together by road and rail networks.

400cp – Planet-wide control, with many cities and sophisticated high-speed global transport networks.

600cp – A solar-system controlling polity with multiple inhabited worlds, moons, space stations and the like.

SHIP (with a small "s") – 600CP

A starship capable of both in-atmosphere operations and warp-skein drive. Probably at least 200 years old and second- or third-hand. It's AI is normally rated at 0.5, but has some decent automatic systems. It's got a bow laser, a plasma cannon, a low-grade effector and smart missiles as armament, and makes for an adequate mobile operations center and fire support platform for a band of a dozen Out-Culture mercenaries. Its comfort and system sophistication are well below that of a Culture Module (or even some Culture drones), but a Module or drone can't warp along the of the skein of hyperspace at FTL speeds.

If given a fully sentient AI, it craves the brush of the skein across its hull and the thrill of speed that comes with FTL travel.

LPP 91 – 600CP

A Light Plasma Projector, Model 91. A tiny, almost comically small and toylike Culture handgun; rated for peacetime operations with a little 0.1 Sentience mind to make sure it isn't used without authorization. However.

The LPP 91 is fully capable of bringing down a large starship from several kilometers away with a blinding beam of white plasma, has a faster firing rate than a submachine gun, and its antimatter power source is rated for indefinite use. Its shots can arc beyond visual range, and it only needs to be pointed in the right direction while the holo-targeting systems take care of the finer aiming details by steering your arm and controlling the beam emission.

Naturally, it's also capable of a far more restrained firing mode, suitable for anti-infantry and *not* blowing through the side of a ship you might be inside of, but where's the fun in that?

This weapon is keyed to your genes by skin contact but can be used through gloves or a spacesuit, but may be disabled by EM warfare.

If given a sentient AI, it seems a little too keen on being used.

DRAWBACKS

You may choose up to +1000CP worth of drawbacks.

CONTINUITY +0CP

Been here before? If you spent time in Culture: Minds before now, you have continuity with the events of that jump. However, you can still choose to start any amount of time after that jump, subject to the timeline selection.

ARE YOU CALLING THIS AN UPGRADE? +0cp

Go directly from the end of this jump to Culture: Minds - only if you have not already taken that jump.

WITH A DARK BACKGROUND +0CP

It's a big galaxy: anything could be out there. The standalone sci-fi novel by Banks, *Against A Dark Background*, now takes place in a remote corner of the Culture setting. You gain access to the perks and items in the optional section.

LIFETIME WARRANTY +0CP

Thanks to medical technology and wholly artificial bodies, there is technically no limit to how long someone might live in a galaxy like this. You may extend your stay in this jump beyond 10 years and end the jump at any point after that.

OFFENSIVE LITTLE DRONE +100CP, Mandatory For 'Drone, Offensive' For No CP

Combat drones aren't known for mixing well with polite society. There's just something...wrong with you, from the Culture's point of view, but is basically necessary for your duties. You might have a predilection for violence, deep-seated anger issues that burst out rather easily, an almost phobic rejection of company, or a fascination for weaponry and military hardware that borders on the sexual and disturbing. Either way, your behavior will be problematic for those around you, since not only are you *not* polite company, but most people will treat you as extremely armed and extremely dangerous.

MORAL HIGH GROUND +100cp (not compatible with Defanged)

You belong to a Pacifist Faction.

You do not believe in harming others through physical resistance, armed or unarmed, even in situations of self-defense. You genuinely believe that it's better for you to not resist any violent assault, even if it results in your death, rather than take up a morally reprehensible act of inflicting harm on another being. I hope the view is worth it from up there.

DISPLACEMENT PHOBIA +100CP

You're terrified of being displaced. You will never willingly use a displacer, even if your life is on the line. You may still be displaced by someone else – but you will consider this act to be tantamount to attempted murder and therefore treat any such entities to be your enemy.

MISPLACED BACKUPS +100CP

Your Benefactor doesn't completely trust the Minds when it comes to that whole mind-reading thing, so they've taken the liberty of compartmentalizing your memories and out of jump knowledge. These memories are stored in a kind of off-line backup and left somewhere safe in the galaxy.

You'll still know that you're you, that you're a jumper and have been other places, with most of your skills intact, but the specific memories of those places and the knowledge you gained in them is no longer plugged into your mind.

At some point before you leave, you have to travel to the secure data repository where these memories are kept and retrieve them.

DEFANGED (Those with built-in weaponry only/incompatible with MORAL HIGH GROUND) +200CP

Your enhanced combat abilities, anything much above standard human ability, have been locked. Your full combat capabilities can only be released with the permission of a specific person, who mustn't be one of your companions. You are banned from using excessive force, and the permission is rescinded immediately after any danger is gone.

THE BIOLOGICAL PREJUDICE +200CP

You think all AIs are inferior to organic life. Even if you can begrudgingly admit that they think faster, you maintain they don't have a soul or "real" emotions, or that it's natural beings who made them to serve organic life, so of course, you're inherently the superior being.

This is guaranteed to result in many occasions of disappointment, embarrassment and failure as you always treat them with derision and underestimate what every kind of AI can do, whether it's a food dispenser AI, a knife missile, or a Mind.

SLAP-DRONED +200CP

You've committed an act of such severity that even the nominally lawless Culture had to punish you. You've been slap-droned, assigned a drone who will monitor your actions and has the power to restrain you and slap you around if you're acting out.

That's not the worst part, though, because this turns you into a social pariah, monitored at all times. Even your companions will shun you, and many out-Culture groups will treat you as being under sanctions. If you somehow manage to destroy or evade the slap-drone, a new one will arrive shortly.

STRINGS ATTACHED +200CP

You find yourself to be managed and controlled by a group of Minds. They have important work to do, you see, and they need you, specifically, to go visit an old friend of yours a quarter way around the galaxy and do a few other errands along the way.

Nothing that by itself is dangerous, of course, but the problem is the opposition.

These Minds are trying to slip one by a civilizationally-equal opponent, and you're valued as a playing piece between these groups of titanic intellect and power.

If you feel like resisting, the Minds are perfectly capable of making you do just what they want you to "of your own accord", so you might as well go along with it.

Look on the bright side – you'll get to travel the galaxy, you'll have their full support. It'll be an adventure.

THE JINMOTI OF BOZLEN TWO +300CP

Do tell me exactly who you pissed off so badly. You have been given a death sentence by an out-Culture civilization which demands vengeance. A series of attempts on your life will be made by professional assassins during your stay here. These freelancers are from a variety of species, including modified pan-humans and Changers, but have access to technology not far below the Culture.

The only way to get these assassins called off, is to somehow make an exchange of appropriate value with the people who want you dead.

NOT-SO EXCESSIVE +300CP

Your out-of-context abilities are now very much in context. That is, all your crazy powers and items are still with you, but now work by the same principles everything else here works on. Your telekinesis might feel like it works the same, but you're unconsciously generating force fields. Spells take energy from the E-Grid or use solid holograms and e-dust. Shapeshifting is just tweaked biology or nanotech.

This is less than idea, because it means that the local drones, Minds, Ships can detect what you're doing, how you're doing it, and meddle in the process.

DAMAGE ADDICT +400CP

You've got a thrill-seeking streak a mile wide. You can't get enough of the thrill that comes when your life is in danger, and are constantly seeking out new extreme sports. Lava rafting? That's for pussies. You'd sign up for out-Culture mercenary work or something equally as dangerous just for the kick.

Most of all, however, you're addicted to the game of Damage, a game of luck, skill and bluffing where vast sums of cash are wagered, and running out of Lives is as bad as it sounds. Most dangerous of all is the way emotional states are broadcast between the players, and there's a little poison-filled button you can push at any time.

ESCAPE FROM HELL +800CP

So, bad news: you're dead. Wait, it gets worse: You're in a Hell. You see, some species have decided that their religion demands a frankly awful afterlife as the price for acts of the flesh, or just getting to be alive.

When they got awesome technology and hyperspace physics and couldn't *find* hell, they decided to *make one* like a fucking psychopath. They build virtual sim worlds into which the saved mind-states of their deceased people are poured, populated by AI "demons" and religious figures.

Getting back to you. As you died, someone scanned your mind and placed your virtual self in such a simulated world, designed to satisfy particular religious beliefs and facilitate the punishment of all your life's sins.

You can't die, because that would be an easy way out – you just get restored again. Your goal is to escape, somehow, any way you can. The imperceptibly tiny sliver of good news is that escape *is* possible, and there are people on the outside – in the real world – that are trying to get those trapped in the Hell out.

Because the "you" that's trapped in the digital hell doesn't have your physical body and your captors are in complete control of the virtual environment, you will find many of your previous perks and powers either don't work or can be ignored by the "demons" who are sent to torture you, and forget about trying to access your Cosmic Warehouse or items.

If you don't escape, there is no penalty. It's bad enough you had to be there for ten years.

If you do escape, your rescuers will re-install you in a new body and you're free to enjoy the rest of the jump without restrictions. Probably start with therapy.

END

Once your ten years are over any drawbacks are lifted and you must choose one of the following options:

STAY in this universe, and end your chain with everything you've received so far.

RETURN HOME to your universe of origin, again ending your chain with everything you've received so far.

MOVE ON to the next jump, keeping your acquisitions.

This selection is not canon to The Culture novels, but the Galterian System might be, could be, found in a remote corner of the Culture's universe, if you selected the **WITH A DARK BACKGROUND** drawback.

PERKS

The Perks in this section are valid for the discounts provided by the Out-Culture background.

ANTIQUITY HUNTER – 100CP

The life of an antiquity hunter is never dull, but behind every thrilling tale of robbery and mischief are hours and hours of research to track the damn things down. You have a meticulous talent for researching and tracing objects many others would consider long-lost and beyond hope of ever recovering, especially filling in histories from different sources.

PERSONALITY-ATTUNED COMBAT TEAM – 200CP

Select up to eight companions - they can be companions bought prior to this jump, or during this jump, and do not need to have been imported.

These companions will have their personalities slightly adjusted and tuned so that, as a group, they function better alongside you, with you as their leader. They've still got any snarky banter, but their banter is more encouraging than disparaging. They might still have rivalries, but they are more competitive and constructive instead of distracting and destructive. They might still prank each other, but they're pranks that bring the team together rather than drive it apart.

In general, they will work as a group more efficiently and effectively, with an increased level of intuition and communication between each other.

SHARROW'S SMILE – 400CP

Civilizations without philosophical objections to body modification tend to have citizens who are almost universally attractive, but then there are those whose looks are above and beyond stunning. Needless to say, you are one of them. A casual glance from you can start daydreams, break hearts or accidentally seduce someone. Your smile is almost a stun weapon, distracting enough for unsuspecting passersby to trip and fall over. Among your enemies you might be a target of infatuation rather than death wishes, instilling a desire to capture you instead of kill you...assuming your enemies both have those kinds of urges and are weak-willed enough to let a potential enemy live.

LAZY LUCK – 600CP

It's a huge galaxy, so even if there's no karma, fate or destiny, someone's going to benefit from being at the far end of the probability bell-curve. Someone like you.

There are two benefits. Firstly, you can disable any luck-based effects that you might be benefitting from. Why is that a good thing? Because your luck is now retributive. Any time you suffer from the misfortune of a harsh and uncaring galaxy, the scales of fortune will tip back into your favor ten times over.

Stubbing your toe and tripping could land you right in the embrace of a gorgeous (and single) stranger. Take a bullet to a non-vital area during a war, and the injury means you're sent to a medical site well away from the front lines when the trenches are shelled with nerve gas. Taken prisoner? Not only can you escape, but on your way out you can set the place on fire as you make off with their battle plans and some valuable, irreplaceable equipment.

ITEMS

The Items in this section are valid for the discounts provided by the Out-Culture background.

HAND CANNON – 100CP

A big-bore chemically-propelled projectile handgun. Old, obsolete tech that still puts nice big holes in people. When you need it, it's got one more round in the chamber.

BLOOD-FEALTY VIRUS - 200CP

A means of encoding information and controlling people, this small vial of virus in saline solution infects people and alters their neurological pathways, and enforces a behavioral compulsion to obey you. The Blood-Fealty Virus can be delivered clinically, such as by a needle or a dart gun, or delivered by exchanging bodily fluids. It can be used to program people, so that under specific circumstances they act in a particular way. There is enough viral compound to infect around a dozen people.

MONOWHEEL TANK HUNTER – 400CP

An armored bike used by the Vrosal Moguls in recreational hunts against robo-tanks in days long gone, this monowheel bike is well suited to the role. It's fast, all-terrain (including able to ride over water), actively camouflaged, armored against light weapons, packed with as many sensors and auto-pilot systems as it can fit, and heavily armed with a repeating AT cannon.

A LAZY GUN – 600CP

A bulky weapon of lost technology, only eight were ever made. How exactly the feared and legendary Lazy Guns work is a puzzle for the ages; they appear to have only lenses at the dangerous end. They are used much like any gun - point it at something you want destroyed, pause for the lock-on, and squeeze the trigger.

What happens next might be a bit absurd - ridiculous, even. The Lazy Gun unpredictably destroys the target in a different way each time. Aim it at a person, and the person might fall apart, sliced into pieces. Or a piano might fall on them. Or they are turned into solid glass. Or pancaked by thousands of g-forces. Or explode. Or are teleported hundreds of meters up into the air, where they fall to their death.

The Lazy Gun can be used against anything from individuals to whole cities and mountains, and can somehow evaluate whether the chosen method of destruction will kill the target or not.

It is suspected that the means of the target's death is pulled from an alternate reality or timeline, but since the art of their construction is long lost, nobody knows for sure.

The range seems only to be limited by the magnification and resolution of the sights, which can clearly target a man on the horizon.

HUNTING PASSPORT – 600CP

A legal document that allows for the pursuing of a bounty across political borders. The main feature is that it is valid for lethal use against one target, and for one year and a day; however, the fine print allows for the same lethal force to be used against anyone suspected to be harboring or aiding the target, and for the search and seizure of materials that might be used in aiding the target.

Political and private corporate entities alike are subject to this document's power, and naturally those who don't care for laws won't give a shit, so backing up this piece of paper with some firepower comes recommended.

NOTES

V0.86, Jump by Myrmidont. In Memory of Iain M. Banks, author of The Culture novels and others. With thanks to the Anons, IRC and Discord members for their feedback and contributions to the jump.

Freebie options are voluntary.

Companions cannot purchase other companions or take drawbacks, although those who select baseline pan-human still get an extra 200cp.

If you select **WITH A DARK BACKGROUND** as a drawback, you may choose the Galterian System as your starting location.

Cultural Preparation

You should, however, still be cautious in your interactions - knowing a language doesn't make you a native speaker, and idioms may escape you, and the knowledge base can be flawed or made out-of-date. Languages granted by this perk don't have to be spoken languages (ie: can be sign languages, braille).

Hair color, shifting of your facial features to match the local ethnicity, making sure you have the right number of fingers and toes, altering your posture and gait slightly, and subtly tinting or bleaching your skin tone are the usual sorts of changes.

Major changes to your physiology and musculature or skeletal structure – such as changing your height by more than a couple of inches or adding an extra set of arms or wings – are not feasible, nor is making your appearance obviously non-human.

Genomist

Does apply to any of your genetic or biological features from out of jump, too.

Escape From Hell

To clarify – perks or powers that affect the virtual world around you, including your own digital body, are rendered moot. A perk that only affects you, and doesn't rely on your physical body, may still be in effect. Like a perk that says “you are a good leader” or “you are smart and know stuff” etc. would probably still work.

Importing Items

If you have an existing item that is very similar to an Item or Amendment purchase in this jump, you can import your existing item for no additional cost. The imported item adds the qualities of the new item to its existing features.

Memoryform & Item Imports

Has to be a weapon or tool. The memoryform's disguised mode has the same mass as the imported item. Does not apply to items that aren't weapons or tools. Eg: Warehouse Trapdoor Coverage, or the Melting Pot location.

Sentient 1.0 Companion/Object choices & Irregular “Items”

Sentient 1.0 Object as a genotype, or a Sentient 1.0 Item companion option, cannot be applied to an “item” or “object” that doesn't have a material form. Eg: you cannot choose to be a sentient Warehouse Trapdoor Coverage or choose a sentient AI companion to be the trapdoor system.

SUBLIMATION

The act of transcending the physical limits of the universe by entangling your mind-state into higher dimensions. Deliberately seeking and attaining Sublimation during your stay is counted as choosing to **STAY** and end your chain.

However, another option is not without precedent.

Upon Subliming out of the physical universe, there are the rare cases of those who return.

To continue your chain, a Sublimed Jumper may take **THE CULTURE: MINDS** as the next jump, and must choose the **RETURNED** background, to represent you attaining the state of Sublimation, and then pruning your multi-dimensional Sublimed-Self back down into a mere lower-dimensional being to interact with the universe once more. This resumes your chain as standard.

Changelog

0.5 – WIP Release

0.6 – OC Companions. Clarification on Genomist, Nation.

0.7 – Item import. Defanged not compatible with Moral High Ground

0.8 – Added Bio-Mycelium item & Item Import note

0.85 – Change starting locations, add Make-Work, elaborated on Referer, minor changes to companions, section header font size improved.

0.86 – Typo corrections, age & gender selection added, couple of notes on item import, further text on Birthday Suit.