

# Background Information

Today is Tuesday 205-1115 and you have each been given orders to be at the Imperial Intelligence Service (IIS) headquarters on Sylea to be briefed on a classified assignment. You don't know anything about the mission, you don't even know what it will be or who will be giving the briefing – so it's business as usual in the spy game.

The members of this team have not worked together as a team before but the team structure is familiar to all operatives. Each person is on the team because they bring some expertise to the team that is potentially going to be of some use during the mission; because of this structure, there is no specific person in charge but rather authority is granted to the person whose speciality is in effect with, of course, careful regard to relative social and military standings.

## Operations Specialist Role

The role of the Operations Specialist is to manage the day to day administration of a mission, handling of reports, dealing with the bureaucracy and other operational issues. When it comes to mission scope, this specialist takes charge.

## Tactical Specialist Role

The role of the Tactical Specialist is mostly a desk job providing threat analysis but on a mission there are times when the “shit is about to go down” – then the Tactical Specialist takes charge.

## Intrusion Specialist Role

The role of the Intrusion Specialist is to get the team to where it needs to be – from breaking and entering, to bribing guards, the Intrusion Specialist can get you past the most determined of defences.

## Deep Cover Specialist Role

The role of the Deep Cover Specialist is to take on a persona (real or fictitious) to meet any occasion. Usually the role is used as a “plant” for investigations and sometimes they are used as doubles for important people.

## Logistics Specialist Role

The role of the Logistics Specialist is to solve any logistics problems that may arise during a mission, whether it is a transport, equipment or information flow problem, the Logistics Specialist is there to help.

## Vilani Culture

The Vilani have an ancient and well-established culture. When mankind on Earth was first thinking that agriculture might be a good idea, the Vilani had already formed a vast interstellar empire.

The Vilani see themselves as superior to all other species because they were the first to reach the stars and form an empire and also because their culture has survived relatively unchanged for over 10,000 years. Their culture is very conservative, depending on consensus and stability to survive the thousands of years that their culture has dominated the known galaxy. Their society does not produce many inspired artists or visionaries but neither does it produce many discontents or revolutionaries. They see themselves as “proper”, “fair” and “civilised” whereas other races sometimes see them as “slow moving”, “cautious” and “stifling”. The Vilani on the edges of the Imperium interact more with other species and are more tolerant of others but near the centre of the Imperium there is not much interaction between species – this means the Vilani culture is still strong and undiluted.

## Vilani Social Order (or, the Importance of Caste)

A major part of Vilani society is the strict caste structure. Every child's talents and predispositions are assessed while they turn 16 and sometimes they are then moved to families with a more appropriate caste or social standing to be child's natural talents. People of different social standings do not interact very often – the Vilani tend to look down on those of lower social standing and they try to curry favour with those of higher social status. In the military there are people from all the social strata who have to interact but instead rank is used to establish the pecking order. It is, however, unusual for a person of lower social standing to have a higher rank than someone of higher social status does.

## Other Major Galactic Races:

### Solomani

Homo-Sapiens. They generally think they are superior since most of the species in the Galaxy are descended from species on Earth (seeded by aliens unimaginatively called The Ancients). Hundreds of years ago they tried to secede from the Third Imperium but were beaten by the Imperial Navy and there is still a lot of resentment on both sides.

### Vargr

A violent, warlike species genetically modified from the canine species from Earth tens of thousands of years ago.

### Zhodani

Humanoid species who are mostly telepathic. They are spartan in a lot of respects compared to life in the Imperium. The 5<sup>th</sup> Frontier War against the Imperium ended 5 years ago, which did not result in any great advances for either race.

## **The Third Imperium (“The Imperium”)**

The Imperium has been around for 1115 years and is based on a feudal caste system, ruled at the top by its 43<sup>rd</sup> Emperor: Strephon I, and then in descending order there are the Arch-Dukes (who rule large areas of space called Domains), then there are the Dukes (who typically rule an entire Sector), Counts (who rule Subsectors, or important planets), and finally the Barons (who rule planets, or important cities). Citizens can be knighted as a reward for long or exceptional service to the Imperium, which may or may not come with land or other responsibility. The Vilani make up the majority of the citizenry although since the Rule of Man there are very few Vilani who can say their blood has no Solomani blood in it.

### **A Brief History of Time**

The Vilani ruled the First Imperium for thousands of years, until the Solomani discovered space travel. The energy and youthful vigour and ambition of the Solomani propelled them into a position of control over the First Imperium. The Solomani conquered the First Imperium, and it was called the Second Imperium (or Rule of Man) – this collapsed as the Solomani were not equipped to rule an empire of over 10,000 worlds.

After the Rule of Man, there was a period of anarchy called the Long Night. The Long Night ended when the Third Imperium was established by a cartel of merchants. The Third Imperium has been running for over 1,100 years and the ruling class is made up largely of Vilani and is styled more in the model of the First Imperium. The Imperial dating system is the day number in the year, then the year since the Third Imperium was founded.

### **Universal Personality Profile (UPP)**

On their 16th birthday every citizen in the Imperium is taken to an Imperial Testing Office and put through a series of physical and mental tests. The result of these tests is the Universality Personal Profile. This is a 7-digit number that describes fully the characteristics of the tested person. This is used to aid identification and classification of the Imperium citizenry. The average for a citizen of the Imperium is 777777-0.

The UPP in hexadecimal and each number represents an attribute, in the following order:  
Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Intelligence, Education, Social Standing, and Psi

### **Psychics in the Imperium**

Public opinion of psychic talents is very negative – the talents are poorly understood and the general populace has been trained to loathe them. Psychics are almost always mistrusted and in some places they openly attacked. The negative image comes from the importance of a citizen's privacy and the perception that psychics can readily violate that privacy.

Psychics are not technically criminals but any use of psychic abilities is illegal, except for psychics working for the IIS Sanctioned Activities Bureau. Psychics can register with the Imperial Psychic Register and be immune from Imperial prosecution, provided they live their lives under a series of restrictions as deemed by that register (typically this means they cannot hold any Imperial office but they may still hold a Noble title and occasionally they are even forbidden from breeding). Unregistered psychics are liable to be prosecuted for use of psychic talents for the slightest thing, even winning small at the races is enough to turn a crowd against a known psychic.

Most psychics don't register and try to hide their talents – which tend to fade with time unless used frequently – in order to have some kind of normal life. There is a psychic underground movement where psychics can go and be with those who are similarly gifted (or at least tolerant) and receive training and support; so called Psychic Institutes are banned and are actively sought out and destroyed where they occur.

### **Technology**

The average level of technology in Traveller makes fusion power, anti-gravity cars and powerful computers commonplace. Travel between the stars is to the Imperial citizenry as going on an ocean cruise is to us. Communication is however limited to radio waves – so the fastest way to get news from another planet is to actually visit that planet which takes much less than the years it would take for radio waves to travel between the closest of stars.

There are laser guns but they are a bit bulky, most people still prefer to use good old fashioned slug-throwers like we have on Earth today. Swords and other melee weapons are still in common use, especially in space, where one wrong bullet could kill everyone on board.

### **Robots**

Robots are in common use in the Imperium – they do a lot of labour intensive jobs. There are also androids that are used in more domestic situations, their humanoid shape makes people comfortable. There was an experiment a couple of decades ago that made a new type of android that looked exactly like a person. This was very unpopular with people – they didn't like having androids walking around that can easily be mistaken for a person. There was a very negative public backlash that resulted in the outlawing and extermination of all of these new androids.