

STAR FRONTIERS™ Game

A STAR FRONTIERS Game Review

by Steve Winter

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Hey, science fiction fans! Tired of traveling? Sick of the opera? Looking for a game that doesn't require the patience of the universe to play? Have I got a deal for you!

If you haven't checked out STAR FRONTIERS Science Fiction Role Playing Game from TSR, you owe yourself a favor. Before you even open the box, Larry Elmore's cover painting will knock your eyes out. Your gray matter is in for an even bigger treat when you check out what's inside. Your \$12 gets:

- 16 page Basic Game rule book
- 64 page Expanded Game rule book
- 16 page adventure module, "Crash on Voltarnus," with 2 full-color maps
 - 1 22 1/2" x 35" mapsheet with full color maps printed on both sides
- 285 die-cut color counters
- 2 10-sided dice

In the few months since its release at the GEN CON® XV Game Show, over 49,500 copies of the STAR FRONTIERS game have been sold. If you're not impressed, consider that according to a survey in GAME MERCHANDISING Magazine, SPACE OPERA* has sold 20,000 copies since its publication in 1980, and TRAVELLER** has sold 250,000 copies since its publication in 1977.***

The game was designed to be played by people who had no experience with role playing games. It has several pages of tips for referees, and very complete hints on designing adventures. This shouldn't discourage experienced gamers, however. The STAR FRONTIERS game offers a good compromise between simplicity and detail, and is fun for all types of role players.

Readers who are not among the 50,000 people already trying the game will find some of its interesting highlights following. People who are already have a copy should be glad to hear that TSR has several new STAR FRONTIERS products coming up.

The Races

STAR FRONTIERS game players can have characters from any of four races: Human, Dralasite, Vrusk or Yazirian.

Humans are the "standard" characters. They have no outstanding strengths, but they have no particular weaknesses, either. They are just like Earthlings, except they developed on a planet closer to the center of the galaxy.

Dralasites are short, soft, malleable aliens, sometimes called "blobs." They can change their shape at will, growing as many pseudo-limbs as needed. They are stronger than Humans, but also slower. Dralasites society is philosophical and thoughtful, but Dralasites also have a very strange sense of humor; they love retelling old jokes and bad puns they hear from Humans.

Vrusk look like large, 10-legged insects, and are sometimes called "bugs." Their society is structured around huge corporations, which serve as the individual's employer, family and government. They are excellent businessmen and merchants, and tend to be serious and humorless.

Yazirians are tall, light-boned humanoids with furry manes around their necks. Humans nicknamed them "monkeys" because they resemble chimpanzees. Thin membranes stretch between their arms, torso and legs which allowed them to glide from tree to tree on their native planet. Originally nocturnal, they wear dark goggles to protect their very sensitive eyes. Yazirian tribes were very warlike in the past, thus, other races still consider Yazirians to be pushy and aggressive.

There is also a fifth character race: the Sathar, a race of evil, worm-like aliens. Very little is known about them, other than their ferocious attacks on the colonies and cities of other races. No Sathar have ever been captured alive, and intercepted transmissions have proved impossible to translate.

The Frontier

STAR FRONTIERS game action is set in the Frontier Sector, a huge, largely unexplored area of space where the four races met. The Frontier contains 23 inhabited planets spread across 17 star systems. In addition to these are another 21 unexplored stars that could have planets. The area is ripe for bold adventures itching for riches or fame, or just itching for adventure. Interstellar corporations compete for control of the most profitable markets and trade lanes, and race to open new routes to unexplored worlds. Governments fight to control piracy and predatory corporations, and to protect their citizens from the fury of the Sathar.

Adventures

The first adventure, "Crash on Volturnus," is a typical "Golden Age of Science Fiction" scenario. A group of explorers on their way to a newly opened star system is attacked by pirates and marooned on the surface. The characters must fight their way across hostile terrain, battle strange creatures and befriend the natives in order to survive. If they can pick up the trail of the first survey team along the way, so much the better. Module SF 1, "Volturnus: Planet of Mystery", picks up where SF 0 left off. The characters have learned where the surviving members of the first survey are and, as those survivors are the key to leaving the planet, the characters must journey to find them. Along the way, they discover that Volturnus is actually inhabited by several intelligent races who are all being exploited by the pirates who marooned the characters. The destruction of the pirate outpost leads directly to . . .

Module SF 2, "Starspawn of Volturnus;" the characters learn of a sinister Sathar plot to crush and enslave the inhabitants of Volturnus and devastate the planet. The characters must unite the feuding races and revitalize lost technology to turn back the Sathar onslaught.

"Crash on Volturnus" is included in the STAR FRONTIERS boxed set. SF 1, "Volturnus: Planet of Mystery," is scheduled for release sometime early in 1983, and SF 2, "Starspawn of Volturnus," should be available by mid 1983.

Besides these and other adventure modules, a second boxed set will be finished in 1983. This will feature the much-requested starship rules, including a complete starship boardgame, starship design rules, deck plans, new character skills and equipment, guidelines for interstellar economics and trade, and a history of the first and second Sathar wars.

A separate book on frontier worlds, star system and planet creation, and adventures is also being planned.

**SPACE OPERA is a trademark owned by Fantasy Games, Unlimited.*

***TRAVELLER is a trademark owned by GDW, Inc.*

****Survey results published June, 1982*
