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Art: Danger in Deep Space Free Clip Art

Thanks to Marc Miller for a fantastic game.

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Chris Kubasik's wonderful blog about Classic Traveller is recommended reading, and can be found here:

<https://talestoastound.wordpress.com/traveller-out-of-the-box/>

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THE ELEVATOR PITCH

A few years ago I wrote SOLO, a solitaire gamebook for the Cepheus Engine, which allows a solo player to run a group of characters through a number of different sci-fi solo campaigns, from explorer scouts to navy patrols and from merchants to world-hopping travelers. SOLO has proven to be Zoyer Games' biggest seller - by a wide margin. People want to play solo and this booklet takes some of the mechanics pioneered in SOLO to power the Classic Traveller rules.

No players? No problem.

<https://www.paulelliottbooks.com/solo.html>

See also **Rules Companion for Classic Traveller**, written by Paul Elliott at Zoyer Games. This set of quick-play rules for use with Classic Traveller is the perfect companion for use with **Playing Solo Classic Traveller**.

INTRODUCTION TO SOLO TRAVELLER

There are few roleplaying games that lend themselves so well to solitaire or 'solo' roleplaying as much as Traveller. Its emphasis on tool-kit style rule systems creates a game that can be enjoyed alone for hours and hours on end. Of course the referees of other RPGs could always draw maps, design castles and monsters and plot out schemes and bad-guys, but very few other RPGS come with any in-built mechanisms for this, other than character creation itself.

These guidelines are aimed at the referee or player who either has a copy of The Traveller Book or the three Little Black Books (numbers one to three, if we are counting, although I find Supplement 5, Citizens of the Imperium, a godsend). But saying that, any version of Traveller will probably do. The aim is to create a roadmap for solo play; rolling dice, creating and recording with a purpose. With an added table or two, this can involve running a group of characters through some daring heist or fighting with alien pirates over a lost treasure long sought, and is an incredibly enjoyable, imagination-stimulating pastime. Of course whatever is created also provides a ready-made setting with adventure hooks for a group of Traveller players at the table top.

Some of the advice here includes fantastic ideas first put forward in Traveller Book 0, which was first released with the Deluxe Traveller boxed set in 1981. I read the chapter entitled *Getting To Know The Territory*, and was instantly hooked – particularly because this was my

very first RPG and I had to practice with this game before I unleashed it (and my untried refereeing skills) on my friends. The chapter explained that solo activities such as creating characters, building a starship and creating worlds introduced the concepts of the game itself and also created elements that could later be used within my table-top game. We shall be doing this, of course, but we will also be going further to stretch our imaginations and indulge in full-blown world-building as a legitimate form of solo entertainment.

Book 0 recommended that a prospective referee, or solo player, first create a few characters to familiarize himself with those rules. He was encouraged to use the process to 'read between the lines' and to create some kind of narrative or backstory for each character. Next, the player gave himself a stake of million credits and practiced with the trading rules in Book 2. He was to imagine himself on a rich world, surrounded by each of the other five types (industrial, non-agricultural, agricultural, non-industrial and poor), and could buy and sell cargoes without any of the annoying operating costs of a starship.



Once he was familiar with the process, the player was encouraged to take up a free trader from Book 2 and crew it with the characters he created earlier. Now the game could move up a notch, with real crew-members and real operating costs for fuel, wages, and so on, all played out against the backdrop of a trade and commerce game using the same cluster of six worlds. The player took on the role of the ship's captain. This activity proved to be the lifeblood of any Traveller game, whether solo or table-top, and could prove remarkably long-lived!

Going further, Book 0 asked the player to have a group of characters try to hijack the character's ship in an effort to gain some experience with the combat rules. Next came a spell of starship construction, building a merchant ship to replace the characters' free trader. Finally, the six worlds could be replaced with completely new, randomly generated worlds created using the rules provided in Book 3. In this way the player became familiarized, step-by-step, with all of the different rules of Traveller whilst providing a lot of fun along the way!

This booklet takes the simple approach pioneered by Book 0 and pushes it much further, into the realm of world or setting building and beyond. It will allow the solo player to make decisions for his characters and help them navigate through a dangerous universe, where set-backs, prison sentences or even death may be waiting for them!

The reader is encouraged to move methodically through all of the steps, in order, rather than skip forward to a later section that sounds more exciting. The game is the process itself and the enjoyment and satisfaction comes from building up the many layers of imagination: the characters, the decisions, the worlds, the starships and so on. It makes the later stages of the solo game so much rewarding, since you are effectively living and operating within an entire universe of your own creation.

A SUMMARY

Lets run through the various stages of playing **Playing Solo Classic Traveller**. Rather than first engage in several weeks of world building, creating a subsector and its worlds, along with a host of patrons and important NPCs, we world build as we go along, in small chunks between periods of roleplaying. In this way you get to create characters and start playing immediately. One of the stages (creating the subsector) can be skipped if you intend to use a published map from GDW or elsewhere. But the individual worlds themselves will need to be fleshed out when the time comes. Personally, I recommend creating your own

subsector from scratch, it is all part of the game – building up and playing within your very own setting. But I do understand that some players are not a fan of world creation. Have fun – use these rules your own way! I will provide a brief description of each phase of the game:

The Character – Here we create your character, and we try to add a little backstory using the cues from the characteristic values, the dice rolls and skill gains. We will be following the ‘in-depth’ method used to create the sample character Alexander Lascelles Jamison from Book 1.

Friends – Next we create two or three comrades or adventuring buddies for our hero using the same ‘in-depth’ method. How did they meet, what are their plans?

Starting World – The adventurers must begin their adventure somewhere and so the player must create the world that they are currently based on. This will be the location of their first adventure.

The Patron – The adventure will be triggered by a job offer; create the patron and the job offer in this section.

The Mission – Rules are provided in this phase which will enable the player to find out how the first mission was resolved. Was it completed? Did anything go wrong? Were any of our characters hurt or killed?

The Big NPC – Next, create an NPC individual or organisation that has interests on the starting world. It might be a corporate official, a law enforcement agent, a noble, a naval officer or a crime lord. This individual is not a patron but an influential part of the setting whose plots and plans will intersect the activities of the player characters.

More Missions – The previous patron, or perhaps one or two new patrons, offer more jobs for the characters on the worlds that have so far been created.

The Subsector – It’s time to finish the rest of the subsector using the world generation rules in Book 3. This expands the scale of the game.

The Capital – Flesh out the capital of the subsector, add another major NPC individual or organisation – perhaps a rival of the first major NPC that you created earlier.