Transcendence  
Developers Guide

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Introduction

Welcome to the Transcendence universe! This guide is designed to give you all the background information needed to create stories and extensions that fit into the Transcendence game universe.

History & Legends

Four billion years ago, the war between Core and Halo ended with a truce. But to guarantee Galactic Peace, the Halo Races sent Oracus and Domina to inhabit the binary black holes at the galactic core and watch over the Core Races.

The peace lasted for billions of years, and Oracus and Domina grew powerful in the super-gravity fields of the core. Both were revered as gods by the Core and the Halo and their works helped all of the Races of the Galaxy.

But Oracus was not perfect, and a small flaw in his pattern grew into a madness. With his hierodules turned into destroyers, he annihilated billions. After many thousands of years, the combined forces of the Ancient Races (with Domina’s help) subdued Oracus.

The galactic core is now devoid of life and guarded by the Cenotropes to make sure that Oracus will not threaten the Galaxy.

The emergence of humans has changed everything. As a newly evolved race (the first since Oracus’s madness), humans do not have the neural defense mechanisms that keep the Ancient Races safe from Oracus’s direct power.

A few thousand years ago, Oracus began influencing human thought, and directing human technological development. Now that humans are space-travelers and wielders of nuclear and anti-matter weapons, Oracus wants to build an army that will defeat the Ancient Races and free him from his prison in the Galactic Core.

The Ancient Races, have recently discovered Oracus’s influence on humans and have quarantined the entire sector. The Iocrym, defenders of the galactic periphery, have decided that the only way to save the galaxy is to exterminate humanity. Their plan is to cause near-by Gamma Crucis to go supernova, and thus sterilize all of human space.

Domina saw the danger that humans, if controlled by Oracus, would pose. But she also believes that humans may possess the ability to destroy Oracus once and for all. Domina can also influence human consciousness (though not as completely as Oracus) and she has been summoning humans to journey to the Core. But Domina also knows that time is running out, and she is willing to let the Iocrym complete their extermination plan if no other option is available.

In 2363 (fifty-six years ago) Iocrym scouts reached St. Katharine’s Star. The Iocrym stayed for less than a year and mostly studied humanity. They promised that they would return, but they never did.

In 2369, the Commonwealth formed a secret group called Expedition 17, which is tasked with regaining contact with the Iocrym. Karl Gnomon is the leader of the group.

In the last few years, the Ares have guessed the Iocrym’s plans at Gamma Crucis and have begun making overtures to cease hostilities with the Commonwealth. They attempted to send an emissary to St. Katharine’s in 2417, but she was intercepted and killed by the Fleet.

Star Systems

# The Galaxy

The Halo Races traditionally divide the Galaxy into six distinct regions.

The *Core* is the crowded nucleus of the Galaxy. The twin black holes of Oracus and Domina lie at the center. The Core is also the ancestral home of most of the Ancient Races.

The disk of the Galaxy is subdivided into four arms. The *Ordered Arm* is the major galactic arm opposite the Solar System. The *Chaotic Arm* is the major galactic arm that contains the Solar System. The *Creation Arm* is spinward of the Chaotic Arm. The *Annihilation Arm* is spinward of the Ordered Arm.

The sixth region, the *Halo* is the spherical area around the Galaxy containing mostly globular clusters.

# Stargates

Although there are hundreds of billions of star systems in the Galaxy, only those hundreds of thousands connected by the ancient network of stargates are ever visited.

In the game, the network of stargates is pseudo-random. The general topology is more or less constant, but specific nodes in that topology may have different star systems from one game to the next. For example, a node (say, *C5*) may have two stargates, each leading to a different node. The actual star system represented by node C5 maybe random. Sometimes it is the Humboldt system, other times it is the Draconis system.

In general, each system is assigned to a single node. That is, the Humboldt system will only appear (if it appears at all) in node C5. It will never appear in a different node.

# Human Space

# Artwork for Planets and Stars

The artwork for stars, planets, and asteroids is an important component of the game. Part of the fun of Transcendence is exploring new star systems and the different kinds of planets and stars add much needed variety to the journey.

The size of a image representing a planet or asteroid is proportional to the log of the size of the object in real life. Use the following table to determine the image size:

## Planetary Artwork

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Object** | **Size (Km)** | **Image Size (pixels)** | **Notes** |
| Ringed planet | 300,000 | 512 × 256 | About the size of Saturn, including ring diameter |
| Large gas giant | 150,000 | 430 × 430 | About the size of Jupiter |
| Medium gas giant | 50,000 | 330 × 330 | About the size of Neptune |
| Large rocky planet | 13,000 | 240 × 240 | About the size of Earth |
| Medium rocky planet | 7,000 | 200 × 200 | About the size of Mars |
| Small rocky planet | 5,000 | 180 × 180 | About the size of Mercury |
| Large dwarf planet | 3,500 | 170 × 170 | About the size of Earth’s Moon |
| Medium dwarf planet | 2,250 | 150 × 150 | About the size of Pluto |
| Small dwarf planet | 1,000 | 128 × 128 | About the size of Ceres; smallest spherical object. |
| Giant asteroid | 500 | 105 × 105 | About the size of Vesta |
| Large asteroid | 250 | 90 × 90 | About the size of Hyperion |
| Medium asteroid | 100 | 64 × 64 | About the size of Prometheus |
| Small asteroid | 50 | 50 × 50 | About the size of Eros |
| Tiny asteroid | 10 | 32 × 32 | About the size of Deimos |

Sovereigns

# Charon Pirates

## Visual Style

### Post Processing

Adjust Hue/Saturation

Hue: +33

Saturation: -30

# Commonwealth Fleet

Deep in the Outer Realm, and ignored by the ungrateful citizens of the Commonwealth, the remnants of the Commonwealth Fleet battle against the neo-human Ares Orthodoxy.

## CSC Carriers

The backbone of the fleet once consisted of twelve Commonwealth Star Carriers and their associated task forces. Only eight carriers remain and the player may encounter them in systems of level VI through IX.

Every carrier is uniquely named and the player may only encounter one carrier of each name.

The player may dock with the carrier and take on missions if she has a military ID (otherwise, she will be turned away).

## Levels

The player accumulates experience points when she completes missions or otherwise accomplishes tasks for the Commonwealth Fleet. Whenever the player talks to the captain of a Star Carrier, she may be promoted to the next level.

## Commonwealth Fleet Levels

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **XP** | **Notes** |
| 1. Mercenary | – | Player starts out at this level just by having a military ID. |
| 2. Privateer | 200 | Player gains a service medal for participating in the Ares campaign. |
| 3. Master Sergeant | 600 | Player gets free refueling services at any Commonwealth carrier. |
| 4. Fleet Lieutenant | 1,500 | Player gets free dock services. Player allowed to participate in Point Juno mission. |
| 5. Fleet Commander | 3,000 | Player gets henchmen. |
| 6. Fleet Captain | 10,000 | – |

## Culture & Dialogue

The Commonwealth Fleet blends cultural elements of both the British Royal Navy and the Ancient Roman Army (although elements of the latter are a conscious affectation on the part of Fleet commanders).

### Slang and Expression

*All fair and above board:* A common expression meaning that everything is honest and open.

*Ackers:* Slang name for any foreign currency, including rin. “Have you got any Ringer ackers on you?”

*Adrift:* Anything lost of missing. “My wingman is adrift”

*Bangers:* Common slang for sausages.

*Battle Wagons:* Common slang for battleships (e.g., anything of the size of the *Aquila*-class or large, excluding carriers).

See: http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/conWebDoc.1257

Characters

# Admiral Conrad Decker

*Genotype* Human male; European/Asian

*Age* 85 (looks 50)

*Physical* 6’ tall; 200 lbs; Brown eyes; Short, graying hair (thin, but not balding)

*Appearance* Attractive (but not overly so) and with a confident demeanor; Stands tall, and is often remembered as being taller than he really is.

*Gestures* [TBD]

*Health* Healthy; seriously injured early in his Fleet career but recovered.

Admiral Conrad Decker commands the Commonwealth Fleet aboard the flagship *CSC Terra*. He is smart, just, and brave, and has led the Fleet with distinction, especially through the last, difficult decade. Decker is admired throughout the Fleet by both officers and enlisted, and though there is much dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war, most of the anger is directed at the Commonwealth leadership in St. Katharine’s. Admiral Decker demands loyalty most of all from his Fleet—mistakes and other weaknesses can be forgiven and corrected, but he will not forget treachery. His greatest fear is that the Commonwealth leadership will tire of the war and abandon the Outer Realm and the Fleet to the mercy of the Ares.

## Biography

Conrad Decker was born in 2334 in the Cairn star system. His parents were moderately successful Corporate citizens. As a boy, Decker spent a few months every year in Starton Eridani, accompanying his father on business. His love of space travel probably started in those days and he always refers fondly to the “peaceful days in Starton.”

In 2351, Decker’s father lost his job and the family was financially ruined. They sold most of their possessions and were unable to purchase Corporate citizenship for Conrad. That year, Decker joined the Commonwealth Militia in the Lacaille system. The Lacaille system was known at that time for its pirate activity, and Decker quickly advanced to fly a *Ronin-*class gunship.

In 2358, he joined the Commonwealth Fleet as a lieutenant and flew CAP missions aboard the cruiser *Elizabeth Orgdon*. That same year, Decker’s father died in space, most likely by suicide. His mother retired to a community home in Cairn.

[To be continued]

## Sample Dialogue

# Juan Carlos Uribe y Vázquez

*Genotype* Human male; mixed European

*Age* 38

*Physical* 5’ 9” tall; 160 lbs; Brown eyes; shaved head; strong, stocky build.

*Appearance* [TBD]

*Gestures* [TBD]

*Health* [TBD]

Juan Carlos is the captain of the *Forking Paths*, a modified EI500 freighter.

## Game Notes

The player will encounter Juan Carlos in the Commonwealth Fleet mission to retrieve a ROM from a freighter.

# General Maureen Verner

*Genotype* Human female; Dutch/Jovian

*Age* 93 (looks 70)

*Physical* 5’ 4” tall; 130 lbs; Blue eyes; Shoulder-length, gray hair (originally pale blonde); short and squat

*Appearance* Old but alert and active; her face is wrinkled and worn, but her eyes are piercing and alive. Her distinguishing characteristic is her prosthetic left arm, which is worn and somewhat primitive.

*Gestures* [TBD]

*Health* Her left arm was amputated at the shoulder many years ago; She has arthritis, a history of cancer (now in remission), and minor hearing loss compensated by prosthetics.

General Maureen Verner is the commanding officer of Point Juno—the last remaining stronghold in the war against the Ares Orthodoxy.

## Sample Dialogue

“My men tell me that you're one of those pilgrims, heading off to the Core on a personal invitation from the Gods or whatever. Well, on your way to Heaven, how about helping us mortals who are not so eager to meet our makers?”

“Good, we can use all the help we can get. I'm General Verner and Point Juno is my stronghold. The Ares have hit us hard in the last few months. We lost the CSC Europa in the last battle and now I'm left with no carrier and precious few gunships.”

“We've tracked a large Ares battle fleet on the other side of the system and we know that it's going to hit us soon. But what worries me is that there is a second battle fleet somewhere around the asteroid field nearest Point Juno. I want you to scour the system looking for that second fleet. And if you find it, I want you to destroy it. I can give you eight Centurions—no more. Got it?”

“Good hunting, then! And may the Gods take us all when we're ready—but not before!”

“Nice work! If I had a few more pilots like you, maybe we could end this war and all go home.”

“Brace for impact! Deploy damage control teams and seal all sectors!”

“Looks like we're not out of this yet. Find the Cometfalls and destroy them! Go now!”

“Perhaps I had the wrong impression about you...”

“If you've come to help, stop standing around and staring. Make yourself useful!”

“What are you doing here? Go find and destroy that Ares fleet!”

“We're a little busy right now...”

“Well done! I knew I could count on you. With the damage that we've inflicted, I doubt that the Ares will be back anytime soon! May the Gods give you peace when you reach the Core!”

“I'm glad you're in no hurry to go to the Core. Take your rest here with us and seek Domina later.”