Creating A Faction

If you thinking about making a faction, please be mindful that there are a number of minor played factions short on players, and a new played faction might further divide the site's player base. For this reason, we recommend that, if you wish to create a new faction, you start out by making them a background faction. You can always upgrade them later to a played faction if you can recruit people to join in an RP.

At the same time, there's a need of more diverse (more alien) background ones because existing factions are fairly similar. The easiest way to make a new species obviously inhuman is to give them non-human heads. If they have a human head, there should be some plausible reason why the look like humans.

Creating Played Factions

Be willing to work hard. Respect the process. Ideas formulate easily. Making those ideas into a reality is a long, arduous process which is largely thankless. You need to look inward and seriously ask yourself if you have the determination to work at something for months or even years before it picks up enough steam to run on its own.

- Unrealistic expectations are the death of a creation. Expect to start at the bottom of the ladder and *slowly* work your way up. There are no shortcuts.
- Understand that you will have to run a plotship, so you're going to do double duty as FM/GM. Can you handle this workload?

Fill A Niche

Your faction/race should work to benefit the setting, to fit as a piece in the grander puzzle, not to act against it. What does your faction/race contribute to the community that fills a need? Your ideas are important, but remember that when you submit something for approval, it isn't only about you but how your creation serves the whole.

- Many factions/species fall by the wayside because they don't appeal to the player base at large. Usually, a faction/species is created by one person and this results in a narrowing of perspective.
- While you're making your creation, step back several times and ask yourself these questions: How is my creation going to get players? What interesting things can I highlight that make the casual observer stand back and go "Wow. That's something I can really sink my teeth into."?
- Think of what you can do with your creation after they're approved. What exactly are they going to do? What roleplay stories can you tell?

Balance Originality and Familiarity

As more and more species/factions are created, they tend to bleed together and there's a greater need to have your creation stand out. But if your species is too foreign, players will have difficulty relating to

and identifying with them.

Take comments from the NTSE community, admins and players. Pitch ideas. Find out what gets their interest and what is a little too far out there. Work within these boundaries as you craft your creation.

Worldbuilding

Here's some things to consider when making your faction:

Questions:

1. Who hates who and why?
2. Who are the outsiders in your society and who are the insiders?
3. Where is the friction? **This will be where stories and RP opportunities can flourish.**
4. What makes people care about this faction?
5. What's life like for everyday people?

Suggestions:

1. Put plot hooks and "kegs of dynamite" everywhere
2. Humanize your faction enough that players can relate to its people.
3. Start small and build outward.
4. Start with a change and think about what other things would change to make that work.
5. Star Army is a vast and mysterious universe. Revealing a mystery should open more mysteries.

Adversaries

When writing up enemy factions, be sure to include:

- Group Leaders
- Personalities and motivations.
- Stats for a sample member.
- Stats for a tough member
- Notes about different weapons and armor.
- Range of Damage Capacity (HP).
- A list of typical names for their members

Species Submission Rules

The Golden Rule of race creation is *race approval is a privilege, not a right*. Just because you spent a lot of time on writing your species, worked hard on it, and you *want* to change it so it's approvable *that doesn't mean it will be approved*. If a reviewer dubs your creation unsuitable for SARP and you cause a

large amount of drama over it you may be prohibited from submitting new additions in the future. However, if you take it in stride and carefully listen to their advice, there's always hope your submission can be revised and resubmitted at a future date.

You should have some experience roleplaying in the community

The staff is only willing to accept submissions for major setting additions if you have been on SARP for at least 3 months, and shown you are consistently active as well as a competent roleplayer.

If you intend to run the race as a faction manager, you should have at least one other person with the time and inclination to Co-GM with you.==

In the event you have to take a hiatus and you have no GMs to take over for you it's very likely your player base may fall apart in your absence. Always have a backup GM.

Unless the race is for GM use only, you must create a race-specific Character Creation Guide

This is to help potential players understand and play your race in the future. See the CCG section for an example.

You should have at least one player-character for every additional planet your faction owns.

Sorry, no major empires run by one or two players.

Order

Adding a new culture should generally be submitted for approval in this order:

1. Start with art! **Concept art is required**.
2. Initial Submissions (try to submit these at the same time):
    1. Species biology and basic culture
        1. Cultural quirks
    2. Star System
        1. Planet (species' homeworld)
3. Any relevant new core technologies
4. Detailed cultural stuff
5. Character creation guide, if applicable
6. Everything else, like guns and tech

Don't be more powerful than existing factions

Starting at a lower technology level is okay. If you start as an advanced species it may make it harder to explain the lack of encounters with your race so far in the IC timeline, as well as make the staff wary of potential power gaming.

A civilization should start with average resources.

We frown on so many species starting with heavily industrialized nations on very resource rich homeworlds, or those that have some miraculous new wonder fuel/substance totally unique to them that exponentially increases their power.

Cliches to Avoid

These are less important than the above. Breaking the one or two is pretty common for most approved races, but breaking several at once may mean your race is quite cliche.

Avoid being pseudohuman.

That means you shouldn't call yourselves a separate race if you're really just humans with special powers, minor cosmetic changes (ears, etc), or an extra organ or two. This alone may be grounds for the denial of a submission because the setting already has more than enough pseudohuman species.

If you can't easily interchange the word "alien" with "creature" consider upping the strangeness.

Avoid physiologically unbalanced species.

This is a big one. This means avoid making your species stronger, faster, smarter, and longer-lived than humans with bonus powers to boot (such as telepathy, heightened senses, etc), while at the same time having absolutely no weaknesses, or negligible weaknesses that don't really bother them too much. Emphasis on the "negligible weakness" part; trying to pass of a weakness as being vulnerable to bullets, poison, or gamma radiation just won't cut it. Also consider that making the race too powerful may lead to potential power gaming issues on behalf of future players, so keep any racial abilities at a reasonable level.

Telepathy should be avoided. In the past so many species were submitted with telepathy that it became very, very cliche in SARP. In addition, there is also the potential powergaming/metagaming in regards to potential players of telepathic races which have caused trouble in SARP's past. For this reason it is strongly recommended you avoid any sort of extrasensory perceptions along the lines of mind-reading.

Avoid the big bad mysterious foe cliche.

The mysterious evil alien attackers and/or overlords and/or monsters has been done to death. Having an

antagonist species rule over yours is fine, but make sure you give it depth to avoid the aforementioned cliche.

Avoid the "we're perfect" cliche.

Try not to make your race one that has a perfect corruption free government, and whose entire citizenship is always extremely virtuous to the point of dying for righteousness, and so on. Just about every race should have its flaws, scumbags, criminals, and dissidents. If your race doesn't have these types, make sure you also consider the negative impacts.

For example, a race without crime or corruption may be that way because they are religious zealots who exile nonbelievers and criminals from their cities. Another example might be a police state carries extremely heavy punishments for criminals, such as torture and execution.

Avoid the "we're totally badass" cliche.

What is meant by this is having your race possess a unique martial art, swordfighting technique, or mastery over Ki that allows a single person to decimate an entire squad of infantry. Having unique fighting arts is fine; just be sure to keep the power levels reasonable given their technology level. Also keep in mind your race's society; a pacifistic free society shouldn't have very many citizens well-versed in the art of fighting.

Examples of what to avoid: An ancient sword technique that allows your race's swordfighters to block bullets, or a traditional martial art that gives your fighters the ability to punch through battle armor.

Avoid the "monopoly material" cliche.

Try to avoid having any materials totally unique to this race or planet that totally compensates for their lack of technology. This is essentially attempting to exploit or avoid the technology limitations of starting races, and is generally frowned upon. It's also considered quite cliche to have a special resource that naturally occurs on your planet, but nowhere else in the entire galaxy.

Examples of what to avoid: Ancient alien artifacts that give you a totally unique and copyrighted weapon that no one else has. A natural super-potent power source that allows your predominantly low-tech race to match the weapons technology of interstellar empires. An ore unique to your planet that allows knights with plate armor to withstand laser fire.

Nurturing New Played Factions

The three keys here are: finding players, generating momentum and keeping things together.

Find a cause to rally behind.

Now that your faction/race is created, you need to work on getting players. One of the biggest things you can do is create something that binds the elements of your creation together. It could be a war, it could be a critical cultural event or something else entirely, but make it something that all players can get behind. If nothing else, it serves as a critical reference point to bring everyone back to.

Create a strong, unifying figurehead

All causes need leaders to put a face on them. For your faction or species, make someone who represents the cause and pushes it forward. If not one person, make several notable PC/NPCs who represent the 'essence' of the species/faction. And make them visible. Very visible. Leaders need to be seen.

Honor Your First Few Players

1. The first few players who join your faction will make or break it. Goodwill, as well as negativity, is contagious. Work hard to make them happy.
2. One of the easiest ways to do this is to let them in on the process of managing the faction/species. Give them power, little by little at first. (This becomes important later on). Make them feel like they have a say in matters. Nobody likes being yanked on a leash.
3. Run your plot. Show that you're active and dedicated enough to see things through.

Emphasize fun first. The rest will follow

Players come up with wild ideas. Aethersperm, Admiral Davis's Fishsticks, national holidays celebrating gun exchange. These little touches add so much to a faction/species. Some will be a bit messy. Just run with them. Throw them against the wall and see what sticks. Your players will appreciate your flexibility. Give your faction character and a sense of humor.

Now that your faction/species has wings of its own, it's time for the endgame. These are two of the hardest steps, but they are two of the most essential ones.

Democratize the process

If and when you've reached a point where your creation no longer needs you tending to it so closely. It's time to respect what your creation has become and step into the role of adviser instead of leader. Advise, do not demand.

Tom: *What I did with Nepleslia was form a group of trusted players who I treated as equals. These were players who were with me from the early days of Nepleslia and who I worked closely with. Because I had treated them so well in the past, let them in on the process, they respected my opinions when I brought*

them up. I only stepped in directly when there were disagreements and an 'official' ruling had to be made. And because a foundation of goodwill had been built over the years, everyone respected the decisions made. If you've made it to this point, you've done a great job.

When it's time, walk away

You can't be by your creation's side forever. There comes a point when the community takes over and your faction becomes something greater than what you originally imagined. It'll move in directions you hadn't anticipated. The worst thing you can do is cling to your creation. It's hard to do, but be willing to let go and step away.

- Place the faction/species in the hands of your trusted players with the understanding that they too, will have to do this same thing some day. That way, the faction/species will continue to grow years after you've left and become a self-sustaining force in the community.
- This isn't saying that you can't come back. Just don't feel entitled. You know your community will welcome you back if you've done a good job.

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