

THE LAST PARSEC ERIS BETA-V

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CHAPTER ONE: JUMPCORP WANTS YOU!

RECEIVING: *JumpCorp internal memo #24589*

CONTENT: *Transcript of JumpCorp recruitment vidblast, series B-23, Hyaergos system, Eris Beta-V subsector. Disseminate freely by order of Subsector Admin Chanx Oblios.*

BEGIN TRANSMISSION:

Skim above clashing asteroid rings in the cockpit of a deflector-shielded ringsweeper! Plunge into those rings safely ensconced in a mining pod, to reclaim riches beyond your wildest imagination! Investigate the remnants of the long-extinct Voidsman culture, and reclaim its technology to fortify the future! Storm the corridors of a pirate frigate and enforce JumpCorp regulations!

Where can a space jockey, miner, or scientist do all these things and more? Wealth, adventure, and knowledge all await you amid the rings of gas giant Eris—the Pearl—circling in its orbit around Hyaergos Beta-V. Whether you're a vested JumpCorp employee in search of a transfer or want to join the JumpCorp family, Eris Beta-V holds endless opportunities.

BORN OF CHAOS

Reverse 46 years, spacer! The Hyaergos system is claimed by JumpCorp agents under the direction of Senior Surveyor Bolsorg Hyaergos, when he recognizes the sheer amount of raw wealth ripe for the taking on the planet's rings and moons.

Since then, the *Hyaergos Code* has regulated legal commerce in the system, while JumpCorp Security agents work tirelessly to root out criminal elements and pirate gangs. So far so good, citizen! But what made this period of great good fortune possible, you might ask? As Hyaergos observed so early on, the answer was simple: chaos.

To understand the same thing he did, reverse your mindcore more than two *million* years. The theoretical alien race JumpCorp scientists call "Voidsmen" piloted their supermassive craft—easily the size of a small moon—out of the void

for some unfathomable reason. Perhaps they had miscalculated their course, or maybe their ship was damaged and flying out of control. Either way, the result was an interplanetary disaster.

Their vessel entered the Eris system at high velocity and collided with one of the gas giant's moons. Both were obliterated. Some of the resulting debris was flung off into space, some was sucked into Eris' atmosphere and incinerated, and a great deal of it settled within the planet's Roche zone—there to create a pair of turbulent rings, filled with the Voidsmen's artifacts and the occasional giant, drifting chunk of their lost vessel.

AWE-INSPIRING STARSCAPES

Just beyond the edge of civilized space is the sun designated Hyaergos Beta-V. The third planet from Hyaergos is Eris, a warm gas giant upon which the universe saw fit to bestow an amazing gift—a system of eight moons and two rings. What's so special about Eris' rings?

The rings are relatively young, astronomically speaking—2.1 million years, by JumpCorp scientists' estimates—so millennia of impacts haven't yet pounded them into flat disks of glittering stardust. These rings are made up of many meteoroids, planetoids, planetesimals, and millions of asteroids, some as big as spacecraft, constantly tumbling and colliding. They're also enriched with more silicon, heavy metals, and precious elements than anywhere else in the sector. And let's not forget the Voidsmen's lost artifacts!

The Hyaergos Beta-V system provides sights and experiences beyond the ken of those whose feet have been planted on terra firma all their lives. Discerning adventurers who seek novel places and exotic new species need look no farther than Eris—and its extensive system of moons and rings—for all the escapades and discoveries their hearts desire.

HARMONIA STATION

For most travelers, your visit to Eris' environs likely begins at Harmonia Station, in stable orbit around the moon Dysnomia. The large, circular JumpCorp space station spins gently to simulate normal gravity all along its three habitation loops, and supports a permanent population of about 250,000. Starships—roughly 55 per daycycle—of all descriptions and ports of call cluster around the middle loop. The lower loop is known as the Public Walk.

Thousands of spacers of diverse races pass through Harmonia every day, and you could be one of them. Be sure to visit the Holo Playhouse for an evening's entertainment, capped off with a few drinks and a show at the Kallisti Apple nightclub. For all you business travelers, JumpCorp executive officers—ably led by Subsector Administrator Chanx Oblios—are on hand to meet your every need. Let us help you get a *jump* on the competition!

GOLDPOINT

Ore freighters and JumpCorp Security ships are more likely to stop in at Goldpoint, and there take on cargo bound for every corner of the galaxy, or deposit loads of ore and silicon collected in the asteroid rings. Up to 100 ringsweepers and freighters visit Goldpoint each day, supporting its population of almost 500,000. Even if Goldpoint seems a bit more sodium-of-the-stars than Harmonia, repeat visitors avow it has a charm all its own. Certainly its establishments can be an acquired taste for some. But among miners, exporters, ships' crewmen, and mercenaries, Goldpoint's taverns are rated among the best in the subsector.

A BRIEF TOUR OF THE MOONS

Eris' moons from inner- to outermost are Algos, Dysnomia, Aite, Neikea, Phonoi, Horkos, Ponos, and Lethe. Inside the rings, Algos' acid atmosphere is rumored to hide volcanic wastes, but such claims have never been verified—yet! Dysnomia is Algos' opposite, covered with warm oceans, lush jungles, and entire regions of impenetrable swampland.

Aite is the innermost of Eris' shepherd moons—the satellites that keep the edges of Eris' rings well defined with their constant pruning of errant rock and ice fragments. All the shepherd moons are pocked with craters from thousands of impacts, their atmospheres all but stripped away. When the four shepherd moons—Aite, Neikea,

Phonoi, and Horkos—pass, they obliterate everything in their path, or send it careening off into space. And in their wake they leave lethal “ringstorms,” waves of destructive collisions sent through the rings.

Beyond the outermost ring, the Kallisti Reach, orbit Ponos and Lethe, each encased in ice. Some hardy souls make these places their homes—willingly or unwillingly—but life there isn't easy.

ERIS' RINGS

The rings of Eris are composed primarily of rock and ice. According to JumpCorp scientists, much of the rings' circumference contains scattered remnants of an enormous, spherical spacecraft that emerged from the void 2.1 million years ago. It collided with one of Eris' moons, and the impact destroyed them both.

Yet tantalizing clues of the Voidsmen's culture remain: Shattered fragments of their vessel drift among the asteroids, blending in, waiting for mining crews to stumble upon them and explore their darkened corridors. And some lucky spacers have discovered the aliens' artifacts—small crystalline brooches of varying shapes and colors that grant the wearer psionic talents.

The smaller of Eris' orbital asteroid fields is the Inner Ring, the more turbulent of the two. Despite the protection afforded by modern ringsweepers, mining crews and pilots continue to suffer catastrophes in the chaos. But with great risk comes the greatest reward—the Inner Ring has been shown to contain more Voidsmen artifacts and exotic elements per cubic kilometer than its outer counterpart.

The Kallisti Reach is wider and far more stable, so it lends itself to long-term mining operations. But with safety comes a decided lack of one-time windfalls. Still, everyone needs silicon, heavy metals, copper, and other staples. The wares are in constant demand, but such work is unlikely to make more than a few space jockeys rich. If you get into the outer ring salvage business, make sure you're the spacer who owns the ship—or controls the expense account.

OPPORTUNITY RINGS

Transferred employee or new recruit, novice or veteran—JumpCorp's your ticket to a once in a lifetime opportunity in the Eris Beta-V subsector. Ever since the *Hyaergos Code* was put in place to

regulate commerce, the brave and hardy have been earning credits hand over fist!

SALVAGE

Of the trillions of rock and ice fragments orbiting Eris, the next could be your ticket to riches. And who knows which one it will be? That's why salvagers pursue their noble and perilous trade: to discover what lies hidden in that next rock, and inside the one after that.

While you supply fellow citizens with sorely needed ore and exotic elements, and reclaim lost artifacts on behalf of JumpCorp researchers, you could be purchasing your ticket to greatness. As-yet-unimagined technologies lie in store. What did the Voidsmen leave behind...for you?

SECURITY

Where commerce thrives, illicit activity festers. Smugglers, pirates, interstellar criminal syndicates, and everyday thieves all want a piece of Eris' bounty—what unites them is their desire to take it from honest spacers rather than earn it for themselves.

Only JumpCorp's crack security forces stand between upstanding Erisian citizens and hordes of wrongdoers lusting after their lives and wealth. Whether you patrol the Public Walk on Harmonia Station or undertake hazardous boarding actions among the rings, your value to JumpCorp—and the entire subsector—cannot be overstated!

SCIENTIFIC SURVEYS

For all we know about Eris, her eight moons, and her rings, yet more remains to be discovered. Planetary surveyors, pure researchers, and applied-science engineers are all in great demand—and generously compensated by JumpCorp for their efforts.

Surveys of Eris' moons are ongoing. We need intrepid investigators to flush out new species lurking in Dysnomia's jungles and swamp-covered lowlands. Who will devise a means to safely navigate Algos' acidic atmosphere and volcanic landscape, so the ancient ruins rumored to lie there might be explored? And technicians are always in demand to keep the heat modules in good repair at the ice-locked penal colony on Lethe.

Most important is the work being done to survey Eris' rings, making the region safer for salvagers and miners alike. But this situation is complicated by the shepherd moons and the

ringstorms that accompany their passage. Keen minds are needed to map the course of these destructive trends, improving the lives of all Eris' myriad citizens!

MINING

Countless miners lost their lives amid Eris' violent and clashing rings in the early years of settlement. Luckily, JumpCorp senior engineer Horst Tappelkhirre decided there *had to be* a better way. Tappelkhirre bent his prodigious intellect to designing a new type of mining vessel—the ringsweeper—based on secret Voidsmen technology retrieved years earlier.

Tragically, Tappelkhirre died six years ago, when he and five other JumpCorp scientists were trapped in a disabled survey craft in the path of Aite, Eris' innermost shepherd moon. Aite's gravity well drew in the approaching vessel and annihilated it—all hands were lost. Although we mourn his loss, we thank him for the Tappelkhirre Method he left us to keep miners safe.

You—the next generation of Eris' brave miners—will pilot state-of-the-art ringsweepers into the asteroids, shielded and armored against unintended collisions, carrying loads of mining pods. Those mining pods will whisk your colleagues into the heart of rock and ice, to hollow out the riches secreted there. And when the job is done the sweeper returns, using state-of-the-art tractor beams to retrieve pods crammed full of riches and smiling miners.

Thankfully, advanced astrogation techniques allow miners to complete this process in less time than it takes for the shepherd moons to return, bringing destruction and leaving violent ringstorms in their wake. You'll observe that chaos from the safety of your ringsweeper's underbelly.

MEET THE CHALLENGE

For the steel-willed and hot-blooded, Eris offers more than mere commerce—she also holds the potential for *adventure*. Dilettantes, explorers, and treasure hunters visit Eris by the score, and they're rarely disappointed!

INTERSTELLAR PIRACY

Life on the galactic frontier can be harsh and unforgiving, given the recent rise of piratical activity along the fringes of the Kallisti Reach. Although JumpCorp employs a pair of Subsector