

HAINISH CYCLE

Stories by Ursula K. Leguin. Jump by Aehriman

Welcome, traveler, to the exciting worlds of the Hainish Universe! The plane Hain, 140 light-years from Sol, is where humanity first developed with a recorded history going back some three million years. A million years ago, they began colonizing the stars, seeding many systems with human and possibly some other HILF (High-Intelligence Lifeform) life, such as their lost colony on Terra. They also undertook many experiments in genetics and created many variations on the human theme in pursuit of social experiments.

The various novels and short stories of this universe mostly explore the radically different societies that arise if, say, humans are androgynous until they assume a random gender as part of the mating cycle, or females largely outnumber males. The tales themselves are far-flung in both space and time, covering over a thousand years and the rise and fall of multiple interstellar civilizations in the background.

This is a setting without faster-than-light travel, except in a couple of short stories taking place in the very distant future. NAFAL ships (Nearly As Fast As Light) exploit relativistic time-dilation to *seem* to allow voyages in hours to months for the crew and passengers, while generations pass at both their port of origin & destination. Interstellar civilization is possible through the miracle of the ansible (LeGuin came up with it first) which allows real-time conversations over any distance.

There is no grand space opera epic here. No evil empire to thwart (well, like two at the most) and not even really a unifying theme or arc. Just people, doing the best they can to cope with some rather extreme cultural gaps. Have **1,000 cosmos points** (cp) to get you started.

ERA

When you start can make a universe of difference.

Hainish Expansion - Period from one million to half a million years ago. We know very little about this time, besides that the Hainish were exploring and colonizing the universe, and tinkering expansively with what it means to be human.

Before the League - The period of modernity, from approximately 1500-2350 AD in the Sol Calendar. Earth's population reaches 9 billion, before crashing to half a billion. The universe is explored and the ansible developed and with it hope for an interstellar state. (*The Day before the Revolution, The Dispossessed: an Ambiguous Utopia*)

League of All Worlds - League Year 1 to 1405 (2350-3755 AD) The League of All Worlds unites most of the Hainish diaspora, under the largely benevolent guidance of the Hain (who have reformed extensively) but human nature remains human nature. Having depleted Earth's wood, a massive timber operation is begun on New Tahiti (Asthe) to the disgruntlement of the primitive locals. Rocannon eventually learns telepathic mindspeech as a skill that can be taught, and New South Georgia is renamed Rocannon's World in his honor. Eventually the League gears up for an existential war against the Shing, and loses due to extensive infiltration. (*The Word for World is Forest, Dowry of the Angyar, Rocannon's World, Vaster Than Empires And More Slow, Planet of Exile, the Matter of Seggri* start)

Age of the Enemy - (3755-??? AD) The League is destroyed by the Shing, a species of Hainish-looking aliens with advanced telepathic abilities (most prominently, the only ones capable of lying with mindspeech) and driven by a pathological fear of death. On Earth, as other worlds, they practice divide-and-rule, keeping humanity in isolated rural communities and nomadic tribes, largely keeping to their own city of *Es Toch*. Eventually an amnesiac Werelian crashes on Earth and must assemble his own self-identity from scratch, & penetrate their lies. He learns his own people have been breeding the ability to identify Shing deception and are preparing to end their dominion. (*City of Illusions*)

Ekumen Era - After whatever fate befell the Shing off-page, the League is brought back together, more-or-less, in a more decentralized, philanthropic and telepathic society, the Ekumen, which allows for entirely hostile member states. In Ekumenical Year 1491, the planet Winter is being considered for membership as the 84th system. At some point around the 1600s, Earth has another bout of isolationism and religious fanaticism, the Unists, which lasts a couple generations. (*The Left Hand of Darkness, Winter's King, Coming of Age in Karhide, The Matter of Seggri, The Telling, Unchosen Love, The Shobie's Story, Dancing to Ganam, Another Story of a Fisherman of the Inland Sea, Solitude, Five Ways to Forgiveness, Mountain Ways*)

STARTING WORLD

Pick one, or roll a random for +100 cp

Gethen/Winter - A world in the grips of an ice age during the Ekumen era. Here, the locals only develop sexual traits and appetites for a week or so a month, in kemmering, and can take the traits of either sex. They largely think the rest of humanity are horny deviants.

Hain - The world where it all began. Hain is where humanity first evolved, and seeded human life about a million years ago. They have since had a massive crash of technological progress, and focus more on wisdom than satisfying curiosity. The Hain can control their own fertility, and are culturally defined by a sort of amused serenity. Whatever your situation, they've seen weirder. Also called Hain-Davenat in some later stories.

Seggri - A world where only one in 67 births is male, leading to a matriarchal culture where the few men lead pampered lives of embroidery and domesticity when not competing in an arena for mating privileges. Men are too emotional for academia or government or any serious work.

Terra - A lost colony of the Hain, the relatively benign social experiment was faking a fossil record and letting the Earthlings think they evolved here, and were the only ones. Odo is one of the most famous Terrans, having led a revolution to benevolent anarchy. By the early League Era, trees are a distant memory on Terra, which suffered a climate crisis that crashed the populace from 9 billion to half a billion. Terra was instrumental in forming the League of All Worlds. In the Age of the Enemy, Terrans existed as nomadic tribes and feuding city states. In the distant future of the Ekumen era, Terra pulls out of the Ekumen due to a religious revival that would much rather purge the unbelievers at home than fuss over the stars.

Aka - A world with only one ethnic group. In the Ekumen era, they experienced a massive leap of technological and social progress, leading to an autocratic government based on a sort of scientific theism and driven to mold the populace into ideal 'producer-consumers' while a religious counterculture sprung up about preserving their oral traditions. (the Telling)

Athshe/New Tahiti/World 41 - A beautiful world with a wide tropical belt, the locals are one meter tall and covered with green fur. In the League Era, Terrans were aggressively logging for precious timber (the last tree on Earth having fallen long ago) until a native uprising. (The Word for World is Forest)

Beldane - A garden world famous for its sexual liberation and lack of technology.

Chiffewar - A famously lucky planet that has never known war and avoided all disaster and catastrophe for centuries. A safe, if largely unknown, place to spend your stay.

Faraday - A latecomer to the interstellar scene in the League Era, Faraday underwent a massive program of rapid improvement that mirrored that of Meiji Japan, and was building

a secret fleet to invade Rocannon's World when it was discovered and destroyed. (Rocannon's World)

Eleven-Soro - A world that had a highly technological civilization, which crashed hard. Today most people live almost totally alone, interacting sometimes with small communities called auntrings.

Gde - a desert world, regularly subject to temperatures that can melt glass. Once a thriving technological civilization lived here, but as of the Ekumen era, they effectively destroyed themselves through environmental negligence.

O - A world of not just two sexes, but two moeities, Morning & Evening. Four way marriages are the norm, Morning and Evening males with Morning & Evening Females.

Werel II - A world with a long history of slavery, until a revolt of assets when they colonized the moon of Yeowe, who applied for Ecumen membership. (Four Ways to Forgiveness)

AGE, RACE, SEX, ETC.

*On some planets, an afterthought. On others, the crux of everything.
Keep yours, or change them if you like.*

FRIENDS

Who says you have to go it alone? All options free.

We Want You: Recruit anyone you please from this 'verse.

An Excellent Crew: Import all your Companions with 700 cp of their own to spend. Companions cannot gain points from drawbacks.

SKILLS

Unless otherwise specified, all Skills are 100 cp.

Colonist: Much time is spent exploring what Hainish-derived societies exist, but they had to settle in the first place for that to happen. You have all the knowledge of wilderness survival and terraforming to make it on your own on practically any rock with water and a breathable atmosphere.

Dothe: On Gethen, the monks of the Handdara train for years both in oracular practices, and to summon the *dothe*, a kind of hysterical strength that lets a man casually lift another with one arm and carry him miles through a blizzard, flip over a truck, etc. However, the *dothe* strength lasts only a few hours and is followed by four or five days of extreme torpor, almost a light coma. Whatever your beginning level of physical might, it can be greatly enhanced with the *dothe* if you don't mind the inactivity after.

Economist: Wood is plentiful on New Tahiti, worth a fortune on Terra. Through the limited interstellar trade, communists do business with anarcho-capitalists and people who use seashells for currency. It takes many economists to place a fair value on things and keep the whole system running, but you've put in the time and get how to arrange trade in such a complex and dynamic system.

Face the Facts: Many cultures have elaborate honor systems which revolve around never disrespecting another. You are a master of these games, never giving unintentional offense, and easily arranging matters so no one involved loses face.

Farfetching: Natural instinct, sharpened by training to the point of near-prescience. Your hunches are eerily accurate, you can tell when you're being watched. You often understand the shape of events even without evidence.

Find A Way: No means no, the king's word is final. As long as it's the decision you want, anyways. Otherwise it's a temporary setback. You have a way of coming back with a persuasive argument or a clever technique to bypass any red tape or rule that proves inconvenient to you.

The Horse May Sing: The problem with elaborate plans by chessmasters is they require absolute control of a huge number of factors. You aren't a chessmaster, you're better, because you adapt rapidly to changing circumstances, charting the ideal path to survival and your goals on a moment to moment basis, discarding or altering your plans as needed.

Mental Map: You have an impeccable sense of direction, and can keep track of distances so well, you may as well have a mini-map on your eye.

Mindspeech: The language of the League and Ekumen, telepathy. You can't read minds, not without consent, but you can share everything you think and feel with perfect accuracy, bypassing language barriers. No one can lie using mindspeech, except for the Shing, and this is understood by anyone who hears you. Better, anyone can learn mindspeech, and you are a skilled teacher, able to share the skill in a couple weeks at most.

Mobile: You have the priceless skill of observing an alien culture, and in record time seamlessly blending in, picking up the language and culture almost as if born to them.

Old Music: You are a skilled smuggler, able to sneak huge amounts of goods or people through any checkpoint or blockade, through skillful use of disguise, diversion, and an encyclopedic knowledge of relevant laws and regulations. In a pinch, you can tell which inspectors or officials are open to a bribe.

Pilot: You have all the skills needed to fly any starship or aircraft, and do so exceptionally well. Aerial maneuvers and complex vector calculations are all old hat to you.

Reference Point: You aren't alone in your head. There's another person, distinct but highly similar to you, who exists to check your assumptions and understanding of reality. Illusions may ensnare your senses, but not those of this second consciousness.

Technician: You know all about the Ekumen's technology, how to build and repair it, even to jury-rig it with inferior materials when desperate. This extends to any technology you understand the workings of and generally use.

Telling: You are a masterful story-teller, with a seemingly infinite variety of voices and effects, a flair for the dramatic, and a perfect memory for tales.

Timekeeping: You are very good at measuring the span of time. Not only can you calculate what time it is, but what time in a given city on another world. You automatically factor in time-dilation such as is experienced on a NAFAL ship so you are at least never surprised that you were gone eighteen years.

Envoy: -200 cp. The Ekumen's preferred way of handling first contact, a single person lands, one voice to carry the message of the interstellar community out there. You are one such person, or qualified to be. Strange people are all but literally an open book for how easily you understand them. Every action and word expresses infinitely more than its surface meaning. You know exactly how to communicate even the most complex and nuanced of ideas, getting people excited over any old thing. You are functionally immune to misunderstandings or miscommunication unless practicing deliberate deceit.

Magnificent Liar: -200 cp. Like the Shing, you have transcended mere deception to the point you can create telepathic illusions. You cannot be compelled to speak the truth, not by mindspeech or any other effect.

Churtening: -300 cp. Not introduced until the very end of the series, churtening is the art of folding space to teleport to distant planets. Normally it involves a huge group of people working in concert, spiritually, but you can do it on your own and in an instant. However, you may be disoriented, discombobulated and a little drunk/high for several hours afterwards.

EQUIPMENT

Unless otherwise specified, each costs 100 cp.

Ansible: The name comes from a corrupted form of 'answerable.' This miracle of technology allows people to keep in touch in real time across the cosmos. It is text-based; you type and the appropriate script appears on the targeted machine's screen the moment you hit enter. About the size and shape of a briefcase, with plans for more.

Bare Necessities: A collapsible tent and survival rations. It may not be the Do-Hain Ritz, but it will keep you alive indefinitely.

Impermasuit: An invulnerable spacesuit for when you need to not touch anything. Good for anything from -300 to 1500 C, acid-resistant and lightweight. So comfortable you can almost forget it's there, and never runs out of oxygen.

NAFAL Ship: A starship that can travel *Nearly As Fast As Light*. It may take decades to reach your destination, but from your perspective it will take hours to days. Room for a crew of a dozen.

Ekumen Archive: -200 cp. Everything the Ekumen has learned of science and engineering by the end of the series, information that may be way ahead of your starting point. Updates in each subsequent Jump with information and schematics about a thousand years more advanced than the most impressive in-universe tech.

PERILS

Complicate your life. Unless otherwise specified, each gives +200 cp.

Just Passing Through: +0 cp. You can leave when you've brought the story to a conclusion. When the "canon plot" of the book ends or is made completely impossible, you can go.

Strange New Worlds: +0 cp. You can choose to use this as a Jump-Doc or supplement to any other mostly hard sci-fi story, or any other Ursula K. Leguin books. You can figure for yourself how the worlds fit together.

Moving Slowly: You'll spend 10 more years here. This may be taken twice.

Power Lockout: You can't use powers from previous Jumps in this jump. You retain knowledge and skills however.

Dimensional Interference: You can't access your Warehouse or the Items within.

All Alone: Your companions can be imported and buy things, but they can't enter the jump with you, remaining in stasis.

END

What now? Will you go home, remain here, move on?