

# STARGRAVE

## THE LAST PROSPECTOR



JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH



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SCIENCE FICTION WARGAMES IN THE RAVAGED GALAXY

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**Joseph A. McCullough** is the author of several non-fiction books including *A Pocket History of Ireland*, *Zombies: A Hunter's Guide*, and *Dragonslayers: From Beowulf to St. George*. In addition, his fantasy short stories have appeared in various books and magazines such as *Black Gate*, *Lords of Swords*, and *Adventure Mystery Tales*. He is also the creator of *Frostgrave* and *Frostgrave: Ghost Archipelago*, and co-wrote *The Grey Mountains*, a supplement for the *Middle-Earth Role-Playing Game*. His continued ramblings can be read at: [therenaissancetroll.blogspot.co.uk](http://therenaissancetroll.blogspot.co.uk)

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Last Prospector, the second supplement for *Stargrave: Science-Fiction Wargames in the Ravaged Galaxy*. In this book, I wanted to explore the connection between the genres of science fiction and westerns. At first glance, the two seem to have little in common, but actually they have a long history of overlap. George Lucas obviously drew upon westerns for *Star Wars*, even going so far as to set the first part of the film on a sandy, lawless planet full of pistol-packing outlaws. Similar ideas can be found underlying the short-lived television series, *Firefly*. Perhaps the best example of a ‘space western’, however, can be found in the British film, *Outland*. Set in a rough mining operation on Jupiter’s moon Io, the film stars Sean Connery as the newly arrived marshal. He quickly uncovers corruption at the highest level and is forced to fight, nearly alone, against a gang of hired killers. Many have noted the similarities between the film and the classic western film, *High Noon*.

As it turns out, it’s not the specific trappings of Winchester rifles and horses that really makes a western, but the underlying themes of the frontier. It is a genre about life on the edges of society, where everything is a bit rougher, where the law and the government – if they exist at all – cannot be counted upon for protection. It’s a genre that prizes independence, self-reliance, and rough justice, where fortunes can be made or won by those bold enough to take risks, but where they can be lost in an instant by those without the wits or strength to protect them. In truth, it all sounds a lot like *Stargrave*.

So, playing with those themes and tropes, I created a new campaign featuring ten scenarios, but utilized a different format to anything I had previously done. Most of the campaigns I have worked on, for this game and others, have been based on a focused narrative, where one scenario follows on straight from the previous. This works well when the crews are part of some epic story, but doesn’t mesh with the ideas of independence and freedom inherent in the genre. So, instead of a focused narrative, this campaign is based around a mystery and a location. The mystery is the disappearance of an old friend, the Prospector, who has discovered a ‘big score’. The location is a run-down star system mainly devoted to asteroid mining.

To solve the mystery, the crews must travel all over the system, searching for clues, with each location providing its own scenario. So, instead of playing the scenarios sequentially, one of the players gets to decide which scenario to play next. Depending on circumstances, some scenarios may be more beneficial to one crew than the others at a given time. Additionally, as the scenarios are played, the crews will interact with the various factions at work within the system. These factions can potentially become allies to the crews, providing additional resources or information, but becoming too friendly with one faction may provoke the enmity of others.

So, the players are really in the pilot's seat this time, getting to chart their own path through the campaign. There is a bit more to keep track of than normal, so I have created a campaign sheet that each player can use to note down important stuff.

Beyond the campaign, this book also includes a couple of new backgrounds that players can try out if they are looking to run a new captain or first mate, and a few new powers they can add if they want to mix up their strategies and tactics. Of course, there is also a table full of new gear that can be found or purchased, and a bestiary of new creatures to fight and spice up the scenarios.

While I have had fun delving into the idea of the space western, I leave it up to the players to fit my work into their own imaginative framework. If part of the fun for you is recreating everything as I've described it, then great, go for it. But, never let my words discourage your own creativity, or keep you from giving the campaign a try. If your terrain collection consists of shiny, neon-bedecked buildings and sleek hovercars, that's fine. Maybe the system isn't quite so run-down as I imagined it. If you want more scenarios featuring lush vegetation, just change a few of the asteroid locations to temperate moons and go for it. This campaign is for you to use, in whatever way is the most fun.

I hope you enjoy these new adventures and get to spend many hours rolling dice with friends. If 2020 taught us anything, it is that any time we get to spend having fun with others is precious and should not be taken for granted. Many thanks for picking up this book and supporting my game design endeavours. As always, if you get the chance, hop onto the Facebook group, or one of the other online *Stargrave* communities, and share your own adventures with the rest of us. Seeing a nicely painted crew or reading an exciting battle report is the next best thing to playing!

If you want to follow my own hobby activities and keep up with all my writing and game design work, check out my blog: [www.therenaissancetroll.blogspot.com](http://www.therenaissancetroll.blogspot.com).

Joseph A. McCullough  
Kent, England, 2021



# CHAPTER TWO

# NEW BACKGROUNDS AND POWERS

This chapter includes two new backgrounds and eight new powers for captains and first mates. These work the same as the backgrounds and powers presented in the main rulebook. The backgrounds can be selected anytime you create a captain or first mate. Some of the Core Powers for these backgrounds are ones found in the main rulebook, others are new and presented here. All the new powers can be selected by figures of any background, either during creation or when gaining a new power due to gaining levels, following the standard rules.

## NEW BACKGROUNDS

These two backgrounds follow the exact same rules as those found in the main rulebook (see *Stargrave*, page 12).

### INVESTIGATOR

In the broken remains of the Ravaged Galaxy, information is often hard to come by. Those interstellar communications hubs that still exist are jealously guarded and only accessible by the most powerful. Thus, for the most part, news travels slowly, and for those desiring specific information, their best move is to consult an investigator. These independent contractors make their living moving from system to system, gathering information they think will be valuable elsewhere. They also take on jobs for wealthy clients, most often searching for specific people or objects, or even just discovering the fate of a planet or settlement in the far reaches of the galaxy. In this way, investigators are part news reporter, part detective, and part information broker.

While investigators come in all shapes and sizes, most like to obtain their information with as little violence and danger as possible. Thus, they rarely wear heavier armour or carry large, threatening weapons. Why risk a gunfight when a smile and a few well-placed credits can get what is needed? That said, investigators know they are often walking a dangerous line and would never go unarmed. Thus, they tend to wear clothes that help keep things hidden, such as large coats and cloaks. These non-descript outfits also help an investigator blend into the shadows when following a potential information source.

## INVESTIGATOR

**STAT MODIFICATIONS** Choose two of the following: +2 Will, +2 Health, +1 Move, +1 Fight, +1 Shoot

**CORE POWERS** Bait and Switch, Camouflage, Contacts, Indifference, Information Broker, Pistol Expert, Smash and Grab, Suggestion





# FATEWINDER

Fatewinders can glimpse into parallel dimensions to see all the possible outcomes of an action. Some unlock this ability through deep meditation or mystic arts, others use advanced, or even alien, technology to achieve the same results. Despite rumours, fatewinders cannot see the future. They never know for certain what will happen. They just have a greater understanding of probable outcomes which they can often use to their advantage. These unique abilities help them succeed in almost any task or profession they pursue.

Many people see fatewinders as oracles, or fortune-tellers, and will pay large sums for their advice. This is a double-edged sword, as many a fatewinder has made powerful enemies and gone on the run after a prediction proved wrong (or even not just to the client's liking). Thus, it is not uncommon for fatewinders to form their own independent crews, exploiting their gifts, but never staying in one place for too long.

Fatewinders usually fall into one of two categories. Those fatewinders that want people to know about their abilities generally dress in flamboyant, colourful outfits. Those that do not, adopt plain, utilitarian clothing. Because heavy armour sometimes interferes with their abilities, they generally go unarmoured.

## FATEWINDER

<b>STAT MODIFICATIONS</b>	+1 Will, +1 Health, choose one of the following: +1 Will or +1 Health, and one of the following: +1 Move, +1 Fight, +1 Shoot
<b>CORE POWERS</b>	Adrenaline Surge, Command, Fortune, Mystic Trance, Probability Curve, Saving Grace, Seize the Initiative, Treasure Seeker



# NEW POWERS

## CONTACTS

### **Activation: 12 / Strain: 0 / Out of Game (A)**

This figure has numerous contacts, especially when looking to buy specific items. The crew may select one item from any Advanced Technology table. The crew may buy this item at any point before the start of their next game.

## INDIFFERENCE

### **Activation: 12 / Strain: 1 / Self Only**

This figure can compartmentalize pain and shock so that it doesn't slow them down. For the rest of the game, this figure never counts as wounded. In addition, whenever the figure suffers damage that would normally stun it, the player may choose whether or not the figure is stunned.

## INFORMATION BROKER

### **Activation: 12 / Strain: 0 / Out of Game (A)**

A figure may use this power whenever their crew is selling Information or Secrets. If the roll is successful, the crew receives the full value of the Information or Secret but does not cross it off their crew list. Instead, they keep it, but halve the value. This Information or Secret can then be sold again after the next game, and this power potentially applied to it again. This power cannot be used on Information or Secrets worth less than 100cr.

So, for example, if a crew had Information (200cr), and successfully used this power while selling it, the crew would gain 200cr and still have Information (100cr). After the next game they could again sell the information again, use this power, and gain 100cr and have Information (50cr). They could sell that information after the next game but could no longer use this power as the Information is worth less than 100cr.

This power may only be used on one Information or Secret after each game, though both the captain and first mate may attempt to use the power if they both have the power, just not on the same Information or Secret.

Use of this power does not affect the other uses of Information and Secrets. They can still be used in their other ways regardless of the previous use of this power.