

The Captain's View Hotel

Picture a bustling spaceport, as close to the commercial hub of the galaxy as seems convenient. It is, of course, filled with the most startling array of beings from all corners of the galaxy, on there way to who-or-what-knows-where, doing who-or-what-knows-what business. This spaceport, bearing the rather unglamorous designation Delta-5, should be, and indeed is, spoken of in tales on every world, told by every race. To the Hedonist Cults of Frequala, it is known for its rather tame but serviceable pleasure domes. To the Darmoks of Darmok, it is the favoured place to wheel, deal and, where politeness permits, assassinate. To the Terran High Command, it is a hive of filth and traitors, and to the New Byzantine Republic, it is a recruiting ground for daring, dashing and fairly cheap mercenaries. The Chouserian see it as a way-station on their pilgrimage to Canterbury VII, whereas the BEMs of BEMspace regard it with awed fear. The Meaderites regard it as a commercially important spaceport, as, in fact, do the Darmoks, the Terran High Command, the New Byzantine Republic, and most other powers in this sector.

In all the tales that are told of Spaceport Delta-5, few mention the Captain's View Hotel, which is a shame, because to certain ways of thinking this Hotel is one of the more remarkable aspects of the station. Not for the view, which is certainly, to certain tastes, remarkable, as the Hotel is situated on the upper decks, along the outer rim, so that every room has an enviable view of the majesty of deep space, with just enough nearby planetary bodies to keep it interesting. And not for the clientele, which is no more diverse, though generally more affluent, than can be seen on the rest of the station.

No, The Captain's View is remarkable for a peculiar custom – a game, in fact.

The game has fairly elaborate rules, though they do not concern us here. Any sentient may initiate the game, by announcing that it, she or he wishes to play. It is popular among humans, though they do not always, or indeed often, win. To win the game, a tale must be told that is considered most entertaining by a vote of all participants, weighted according to their own storytelling skills. Side bets are taken by the hotel's patrons as to the eventual winner, or to the likelihood of fisticuffs (or psuedopodicuffs, if a being should be so designed) or such things, and votes are often taken on the most amusing digression, the most comely being, and the most unbelievable tale.

The game has been called tonight by a strange-looking human in synthepace, a veteran of the Byzantine Secession Wars, now a free trader and occasional mercenary. He now stares casually into the abyss of space, awaiting challengers.

Games

1. [Stardate 000001](#)

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