

This page is blank.

Sample file



2300

BEANSTALK

Introduction...	2
The Stage.....	4
The Actors.....	15
The Technical Data.....	20
The Drama..	27
Afterword.....	45

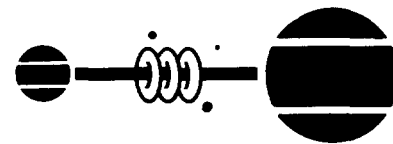
Design..... Lester W. Smith
Development.. Timothy B Brown
Art Direction..... Barbie Pratt
Art Assistant..... Laretta Oblinger
and Dana Reischauer
Cover Art..... Steve Venters
Interior Art..... Tim Bradstreet
Bryan Gibson
and Richard Hentz

Copyright ©1987 Game Designers' Workshop, Inc. All rights reserved.
Printed in USA. Made in USA. ISBN 0-943580-26-9.

Traveller: 2300™ is GDW's trademark for its science fiction
role-playing game set in the 24th century.

Traveller® is a registered trademark of Game Designers' Workshop.

PO Box 1646, Bloomington, Illinois 61702-1646 USA



Introduction

We humans are a strange breed. From our earliest beginnings we have looked with envy on birds in flight, and we have striven over the ages to fly ourselves, with varying degrees of success. That urge to fly, along with the urge to explore, quickly led us beyond the limits of atmospheric flight to the very stars. But we are still land animals; we still like the feel of something solid beneath our feet.

That's why most everyone on this beanstalk capsule spent the last day and a half shut in their cabins: once the novelty wears off, few people really enjoy the sensation of near-zero G. Only now are the other passengers beginning to show their faces—now that they can feel the effects of gravity increasing hour by hour, and they can walk the corridors instead of floating along them.

Now they begin to mingle with each other. They gather in the Rec Room and stare out the transparent dome of its ceiling in awe at the magnificent vista of star-bejeweled space above them. They feel no terror at the sight of the emptiness because they have a solid floor beneath them. They can ignore the fact that we hang suspended by two tiny magnetic couples more than twenty thousand kilometers above the planet.

No, they don't want to be reminded of that. And that's why I have the solitude of the lower observation deck to myself. None of the others wishes to stand on a large, transparent vision port in the floor and watch the world approaching from thousands of kilometers away—but I do. I pass the hours here, gazing down at the swirl of white and blue and dirty green, and I wonder what Rebo has in store for me on Beta Canum this time.

But I have to admit that the view of empty kilometers beneath me makes even my pulse race just a bit.

Beanstalk is an adventure module for **Traveller: 2300**, Game Designers' Workshop's science-fiction role-playing game of life in the 24th century. It is intended to be enjoyed by a referee and any number of players; the size of the group depends only upon what the referee feels comfortable with. The scenarios included are intended to be solved mainly by thinking and role playing rather than by violence. Ideally, then, as more players are involved, there will be a greater diversity of suggested courses of action for the party to choose from. Also, the more player characters there are, the greater the range of talents available for solving the scenarios.

Materials needed are a copy of the **Traveller: 2300** rules, pencils, paper, and several 6- and 10-sided dice. Access to a copying machine for the photocopying of character sheets and supplementary material for the players can be a great help.

SUBJECT

A beanstalk is, in the simplest sense, a cable stretching from a planet's surface to a space station at geostationary orbit (an orbit at which the station always remains above the same spot on the planet), and beyond. Instead of sending rockets or spaceplanes (both of which are very expensive and very damaging to the planetary ecology) to and from the space station, the beanstalk serves as a rail along which capsules travel. This method of travel is much cheaper than others (barring the initial outlay of money for the beanstalk's construction) and less violent in takeoff, but requires much more time for the trip (page 34 of the **Traveller: 2300 Referee's Manual**, states that time to orbit for a beanstalk is approximately two hours—it is actually more like five days).

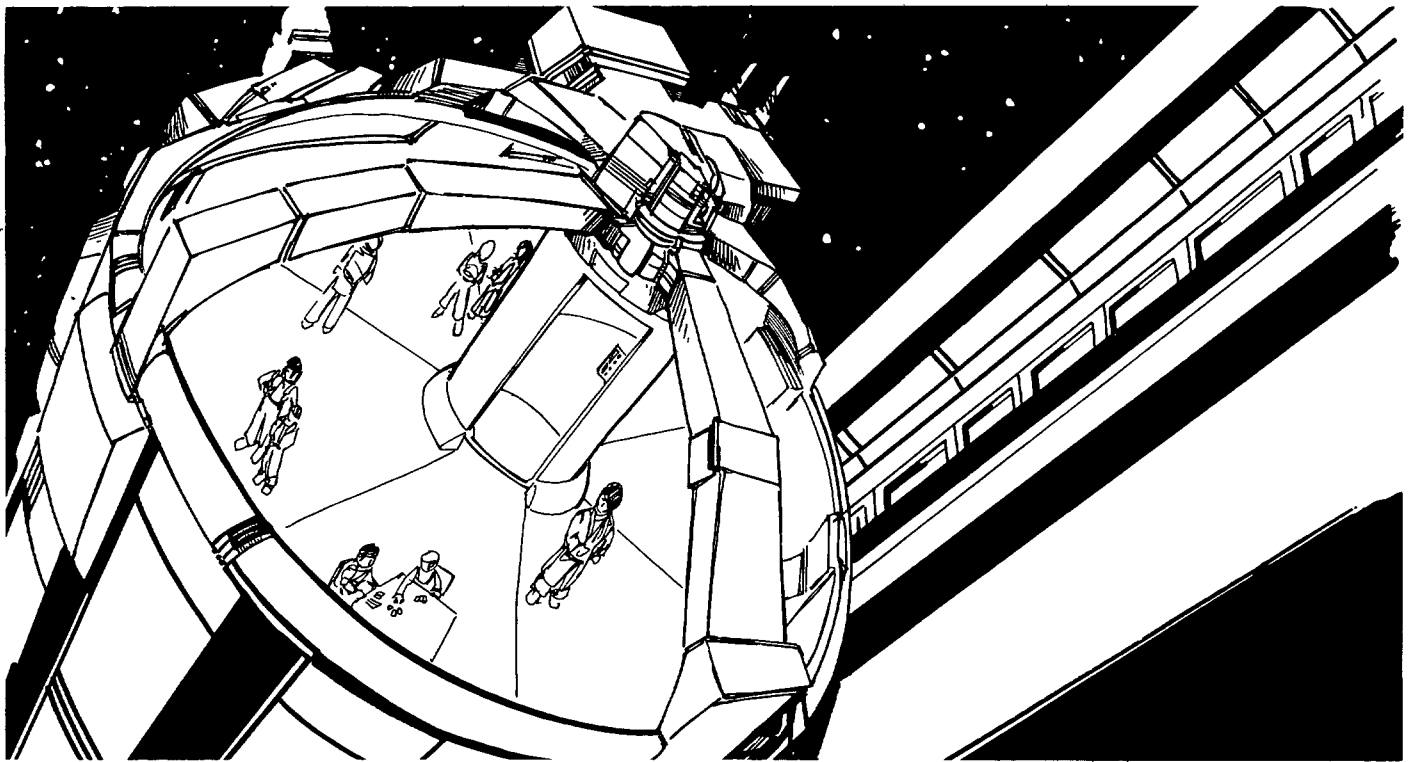
Beanstalk describes Beta Canum Venaticorum-4, the world on which the first beanstalk in human history was built. The book covers the history of the human colonies on the planet, technical data on the beanstalk (including some material on the beanstalk later built on Earth), non-player characters (NPCs) likely to be encountered by the players, three suggested scenarios, and a general discussion of the stellar system of Beta Canum Venaticorum to prepare the referee for future adventures there.

CONTENTS

The material in this book is divided into chapters, each of which covers a different topic. It is recommended that, after reading this introduction, the referee read *The Stage*, *The Actors*, and *The Technical Data* before running any of the adventure scenarios. It is not necessary for the referee to read *The Drama*, which includes the three scenarios, and the *Afterword* in their entirety before running one of the adventures, but they do contain material which will lend a broader understanding of Beta Canum Venaticorum-4.

The Stage: This chapter begins with a discussion of the overall history of Beta Canum, including a timeline of important events on the planet. The bulk of the chapter is then divided into four subheadings, one for each of the world's continents, *The French Continent*, *The British Continent*, *The German Continent*, and *The Southern Continent*. These sections detail the development of each of the continents from first colonization to the year 2300. A thorough familiarity with this chapter will serve the referee well in bringing the world of Beta Canum to life for his or her players.

The Actors: This chapter introduces the referee to the major NPCs which the players are likely to meet on Beta Canum. The NPCs are presented in the order in which they will be encountered



if the adventure scenarios are played through in the order in which they are listed. Physical appearance and personality descriptions are included for each NPC, as well as illustrations of the most important or most commonly encountered NPCs. Each NPC is mentioned again in the scenarios in which he or she appears, with an explanation of what part the NPC will play in that scenario, as well as how the NPC's reaction to the players may have changed because of previous scenarios. In this way, the referee can read *The Actors* for basic knowledge of any NPC, then simply update that knowledge as each scenario is played. It is hoped that this will make the referee's job easier.

The Technical Data: This chapter explains the world map, charts and diagrams, and the pamphlet included in the pullout section. The referee should read this chapter before running the adventure, but need not commit it to memory, as the map, charts, and diagrams can be referred to as needed during play. It is suggested that photocopies of the world map, charts and diagrams, and pamphlet be given to the players before play, as these contain information which their characters are likely to know.

The Drama: This chapter includes three separate scenarios (*Acts*) for the referee to run. They are presented in the order in which they are intended to be played, but none of the scenarios actually relies upon the others, so the referee is free to present any or all of them in whatever order he or she chooses. There is no need for the referee to read through all of this chapter before beginning play; the chapter's introduction gives a synopsis of all of the adventures, and as the scenarios are designed to be able to stand alone, familiarity with any one of them is sufficient to run it.

Afterword: The *Afterword* contains supplementary material, such as a description of the planetary system of the star Beta Canum Venaticorum, and its military importance to the French arm. Also included are further scenario suggestions for the referee who is running a campaign which will be centered in, or close to, the Beta Canum system. Knowledge of this chapter is not necessary in order to run any of the scenarios in *The Drama*.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

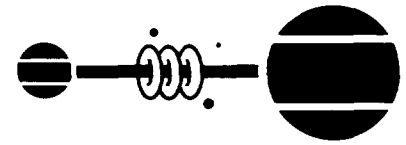
As in *The Tricolor's Shadow*, the introductory adventure

included in the **Traveller: 2300** rules, Rebco is again hiring trouble-shooters on Beta Canum. Therefore, troubleshooting is the most likely occupation for player characters in *Beanstalk*, but this is not to say that characters of other occupations will not be useful. It is left up to the referee to determine what types of characters will be appropriate for the adventures as that referee runs them. It should be noted that political tensions have run high on Beta Canum since the War of German Reunification. As a consequence, the nationality of each player character may play an important part in determining how certain NPCs will react to that character. The referee will want to keep this in mind, as well as occupation, in determining what player characters should be used.

A FINAL NOTE

As aids to the referee, each chapter includes sections of narrative in italics, and tasks are separated from the text for visibility, just as in previous **Traveller: 2300** materials. At the referee's option, the italicized narrative may be read aloud to the players to set the scene, or alternatively, photocopies of the narrative may be given to the players.

WARNING: IN ORDER TO PRESERVE SUSPENSE, PLAYERS SHOULD READ NO FURTHER IN THIS BOOK. REFEREE'S MATERIAL FOLLOWS.



The Stage

As soon as the beanstalk capsule came to rest and my safety webbing folded back into the wall, I rolled off of the bed and gathered up my bags. By hurrying, I beat the other passengers out of their rooms, so I didn't have to wait for the elevator. Within minutes I had exited the capsule and was out into spring sunshine and the smell of greenery. A fresh breeze nuzzled my ear as I hailed a cab (bypassing a crowded shuttle bus)—the breeze carried the city sounds of traffic and voices, and the city smells of humanity and warm concrete, but underneath them I caught an alien scent, the tang of a planet which did not spawn Man.

That mixture of mutually exclusive sensations reminded me of something I've noticed before in my wanderings. Most people on Earth visualize the extraterrestrial colonies as groups of clapboard houses gathered together in the midst of fields, or pastures, or mountains and mining equipment. To them, the frontier means a primitive lifestyle. But actually, each colony world is a collection of contradictions. Beta Canum, for example, contains modern cities such as Premiere (between whose gleaming office buildings my taxi was now winding its way; within whose businesses and factories could be found the very latest in technology) and primitive sites such as the fishing village of New Woking.

Actually, New Woking itself is an even better example of that disparity. As a fairly new community in which the economic feasibility of fishing Beta Canum's seas is being tested, it boasts a fleet of fishing boats which use electromagnetically enhanced nets to collect their catch; but at home the people carry water from a central purifying well in the village square and must walk a hundred meters to an outhouse to relieve themselves. On a colony world, you either have a piece of equipment or you make do with what you can. If you have it, it's probably a very advanced design; if you're making do, it's most likely very primitive.

The taxi pulled to the curb outside the airfilm train terminal. I paid the driver his fare and tipped him well for luck, then walked to the entrance. An electric eye opened the door for me; a voice-activated computer took my money and dispensed a ticket for Adrian, the international city on the upflung peninsula of the southern continent. Later, as the train left Premiere's city limits, I microwaved a packaged meal and ate. Outside my window, kilometer after kilometer of primitive, unexplored wilderness fled by.

THE WORLD OF BETA CANUM

Although the Beta Canum Venaticorum system was first visited by a French exploratory squadron in 2181 (which staked a French claim on the garden world discovered in the fourth orbit), a detailed

mapping of the system was not begun until 2182, when the Astronomischen Rechen-Institut sent a survey team there. Over the next twenty years, the team collected data concerning all eight worlds in the system, but concentrated most heavily on the fourth planet in order to prepare for colonization by three ESA nations: France, Britain, and Bavaria. As the only habitable planet in the Beta Canum Venaticorum system, Beta Canum Venaticorum-4 is commonly referred to as Beta Canum (or occasionally as BC at some of the planet's more primitive sites).

To the early explorers, the world appeared to be so similar to Earth as to be ideal for colonization. Its star is very similar to Earth's sun, and the planet orbits it at exactly 1.13 au, precisely the optimal life zone. It orbits the star once every 407.9 local days, each of which is 20.4 Terran hours long, which translates into an orbital period of 346.8 Terran days, or just under one Terran year. The planet's axis is tilted 18°, 56', compared to Earth's axial tilt of 23°, 27'. Consequently, the Torrid and Temperate Zones of Beta Canum are narrower than on Earth, and the Frigid Zones are wider, but the seasonal temperature changes within each zone are somewhat less noticeable, and overall weather patterns on the planet are less violent than upon Earth.

Beta Canum is 12,000 km in diameter, as compared to Earth's 12,750 km. Its mass is 0.82 times Earth's; its gravity is 0.94 Gs. The planet's atmospheric pressure is 0.92 atmospheres, with 19 percent oxygen, resulting in an oxygen pressure of 0.18 atmospheres, compared to Earth's 21 percent oxygen and 0.21 atmospheres. There are a number of types of trace metallic ions in the mesosphere (an approximately 40km thick layer of atmosphere just above the stratosphere) which are not present in Earth's atmosphere, but they are not present in the lower levels of atmosphere and seem to have no effect upon the planetary ecology, nor are they dangerous to Terran life forms.

Sixty percent of the planet's surface is covered by water; the remaining 40 percent is divided into four continents and a few large islands (see the world map on page 23). The smallest of these continents covers the southern pole and is largely uninhabitable. The other three were claimed as sites for colonies: the French settled upon the westernmost, the Bavarians upon the easternmost, and the British upon the middle continent.

All things considered, Beta Canum has been very successful as a site for Terran colonization. The only major problem which has been encountered is that the majority of the plant and animal life native to Beta Canum contains a mixture of amino acids which were not designed to support Terran life-forms. That is to say, most

contain amino acids which are either mildly or severely poisonous to humans and the plants and animals they raise. Those which do not contain these poisonous amino acids are almost always lacking in others which are essential to human life. Consequently, there has been a great emphasis by all three colonies on the importation of Terran plants and animals, and vast tracts of land have been cleared of all life native to Beta Canum and reseeded with Terran life-forms. This has involved a stupendous amount of effort, but has been viewed as necessary if human colonization of the world is to succeed. On the positive side, once a spot of land has been reseeded there has (with one exception which will be explained later) been little incidence of Beta Canum life-forms reentering it, as Terran life-forms are as noxious to Beta Canum's as Beta Canum's are to Terra's.

Beta Canum as Breadbasket: Beta Canum has served as a major source of food for much of the French Arm since the world was first colonized. Since the construction of its beanstalk, its market area has expanded to cover all of the French arm, competing even for those worlds which are actually closer to Earth. With France (a nation of business monopolies since 2289) working to gain nearly complete control of the French Arm, many nations of Earth have found it easier to sell their products along the other Arms.

There are several standards for food products to be shipped within the French Arm. Feed for livestock need only successfully pass inspection by the government of the colony from which it is being shipped and by the government of the colony which is receiving it. Food for humans, however, falls under more universal standards. The two standards which are accepted in the French Arm are ZFR 1.7 Bulk (Zapamoga Food Relief Standard, current version 1.7, bulk supplies) and the French Approv e standard. The Zapamoga standard is for bulk quantities of foodstuffs, such as would be used in institutionalized preparation of meals on military ships, large outposts, or very new colonies. The Approv e standard concerns the preparing and packaging of individual meals, such as would be issued to the crews of small starships or outposts, to passengers on commercial transportation (whether on a world's surface or in space), to soldiers and explorers, or to anyone else who wishes the convenience of a meal which can be both stored and prepared with a minimum of bother. Zapamoga approval is fairly easy to receive. French Approv e status is another story.

Beta Canum as Gateway: Having a beanstalk makes it much easier to maintain excellent orbital facilities for the maintenance, repair, refueling, and resupplying of starships. It also provides a very natural location for the maintenance of a military base in space. These two facts have made Beta Canum a hub of space travel for the French Arm. This makes the world of tantamount importance to France, and Beta Canum has consequently become an arena of fierce political competition for the nations and corporations which have established outposts and colonies along the French Arm.

TIMELINE

The following timeline gives an overall view of the history of Beta Canum Venaticorum-4. It includes events which do not necessarily take place on Beta Canum, but which have a bearing on the development of the world, such as the establishment of colonies and outposts beyond Beta Canum which rely on Beta Canum for supplies. Further explanation of many of the events included in this timeline is given in the individual sections for each of the colonies.

2181 A French exploratory Squadron working for ESA first visits

the Beta Canum Venaticorum system.

2182-2202 Exploration and mapping is performed by das Astronomischen Rechen-Institut. Their headquarters on Beta Canum forms the center for the future city of Adrian.

2205 The French colony begins.

2207 The British and Bavarian colonies begin.

2211 The Bavarians begin mining rich deposits of metal ores in the Ludwigberge Mountains. France establishes an outpost at DM+36 2219, to be supplied by the French colony on Beta Canum.

2217 Branching out from Beta Canum, Britain establishes a new colony at Henry's Star.

2222 The British on Beta Canum officially open their transcontinental air film train lines.

2240 The Bavarians discover tantalum deposits in the far north. Beta Canum experiences a boom in immigration from Earth.

2244 France establishes a colony beyond Beta Canum at Vogelheim.

2248 France establishes a colony at 61 Ursae Majoris.

2251 France has first contact with the Pentapods at DM+27 28217.

2260 The Trilon Corporation establishes a colony at Xi Ursae Majoris.

2261 A Pentapod request to build an enclave on the western shore of the French continent is approved.

2267 Construction of the Pentapod enclave is completed.

2269 The French experience Year I of the Beta Grain Blight.

2269 Year II of the Beta Grain Blight affects all three continents.

The cause is discovered to be a worm native to Beta Canum which has adapted to consume the hair roots of many Terran grains.

2270 Beta Canum suffers Year III of the Beta Grain Blight. The French begin using "Terraban," a fast-growing lichen which the Pentapods devised by combining a fungus native to Beta Canum and a Terran algae. Terraban serves as a barrier to the blight worm, allowing fields to be cleared of the pest and put back into production.

2271 The British and the Bavarians import Terraban. A Bavarian rancher discovers "Drahtgras," a long grass native to the Bavarian continent, which, with the addition of certain missing amino acids, can support livestock.

2272 France begins construction of Beta Canum's beanstalk. The Bavarian engineering firm of *Folie, Lysander, et Geiger* is hired to direct the work.

2274 France establishes an outpost at DM+27 28217.

2276 "Brindle-fish," a creature native to the shoals just off of the island to the southwest of the British Continent, is found to be edible by Terran life-forms. It gains particular importance as a product to be dried and ground into a meal which is added to Drahtgras to make up the missing amino acids in the cattle feed. The village of New Woking is begun by the British firm of *Merriweather Products, Ltd.* to harvest the brindle-fish.

2282 The Central Asian War begins on Earth. With France's efforts directed toward the war, work on Beta Canum's beanstalk slows to a near halt.

2285 The French colony at 61 Ursae Majoris begins a war for independence from France.

2287 The Central Asian War ends.

2289 Weakened in spirit by her poor performance in the Central Asian War, France suffers a military coup on Earth, followed by a rise to power by business monopolies. Control of Beta Canum is viewed as a means for France to regain its former preeminence among the nations of Earth—the work on Beta Canum's beanstalk returns to full swing, funded by a group of French businesses.