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Traveller: Spinward Marches (The Third Imperium) (Traveller Sci-Fi Roleplaying)



Synopsis

The Spinward Marches is one of the most volatile sectors with the Zhodani Consulate and Third Empire frequently clashing over frontier worlds, both militarily and through more subtle means via proxies and espionage. This book details the sector, with descriptions of many of the worlds, their governments, the vast corporations active there and the alien species that inhabit many of the systems. Besides basic planetary statistics detailing government types, population, atmosphere and much more there are short descriptions and multiple plot hooks spread throughout the book making it an invaluable aid to any Traveller campaign.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm new to Traveller and when my game master introduced our new game, I wanted to learn about the setting of the Spinward Marches. This book gives all kinds of background information for the game (but does not include character-building information). I now do really have a feel for the Spinward Marches and how the cultures, philosophies, and economics work in this setting. My GM helped with the character building so I'm off and running,

Decent book, but the Traveller wiki tends to have more information and is easier accessed around the table with a tablet than this book is.

This edition of the Spinward Marches contains valuable information of the system and politics of this era of human history. There is sufficient detail to enable a competent GM to run a smooth game without having to fill in yawning gaps in knowledge.

'The Spinward Marches lie on the edge of Imperial space, an area that borders rival interstellar governments that directly oppose any further expansion. Far from the major centres of power the local rulers have more practical power than the Emperor himself. It is here that bands of daring individuals can take advantage of the hostile factions in order to carve out a fortune for themselves. The Spinward Marches offer untold adventure for those willing to seek it out.' This is a complete campaign sourcebook for The Spinward Marches and the general idea is that it's an area of space where pretty much anything goes... you can keep your political wrangling, your feuding houses and your squabbling feudal worlds; out here, on the edges of 'civilisation', is where the money and the adventure is.

THE BOOK To be used in conjunction with Mongoose's 'Traveller' core rulebook, *The Third Imperium - The Spinward Marches* is a 142 page softback book with full colour covers and a black and white interior, with greyscale artwork and an easy to read font. The presentation is very good but the one area that lets it down is the artwork; there are some nice images in here but some of the art simply doesn't suit the setting at all. There's one thing that pulls me into a game world and that's the artwork as it gives a visual representation of what the world is like. It's easy enough to ignore the art - and heaven knows I've done that with a lot of books - but incompatible art can affect how a work is perceived. The full colour cover, a mixed race crew standing around a starport as a starship touches down behind them, is excellent and is much more in keeping with the style of the setting.

THE CONTENTS The book is laid in several chapters. First of all there's the Introduction, which covers the concepts of the book and how it can be used with existing game worlds. There's a nice section on the different Traveller Universes; Official Traveller Universe (OUT), My Traveller Universe (MTU) and Your Traveller Universe (YTU). It's basically telling the reader not to worry about canon or continuity. Once you get this book, it's yours and nobody can tell you how to run the game, which also means this book can be used with any previously compatible Traveller games or settings and you shouldn't worry about contradiction or inaccuracies. It goes on to talk about space and how to navigate it, travel, trade and the standard Traveller intelligent species. This is all a primer to set you up for the next chapter. The next section, *The Third Imperium*, covers the history of the galaxy and explains the rise and fall of the first two Imperiums, all the way up to how the Imperium stands today, the law, the worlds, and the megacorporations. It also goes into detail about the noble families, the houses, the military and religion, which is a great source of ideas for characters and adventures. The *Spinward Marches* chapter goes into detail about the area of space where the games will take place in, and gives you a rough outline about the area and its history and the states that rule there. There's a lot of useful information here, especially on how the Imperium

interacts with the Spinward Marches and the attitudes of the races that live there. If you've been GMing games nearer the heart of the Imperium and fancy a change of scenery, pace and attitude then this is the place to go. The chapter on Subsectors of the Spinward Marches is 66 pages of details on the sectors of the Marches and their worlds, with hexagonal charts to position and map the locations. There are 16 subsectors in total, each with its own history and averaging about 20 systems each, two of which are detailed; that's a lot of exploring to do! The worlds are given very brief statistics and it's up to the GM to fill in the details, but there's plenty of places to visit. The next chapter *Adventuring in the Spinward Marches* gives you plenty of ideas on types of games you can run; how to use locations as adventure settings, hazards and problems the adventurers might face, current events that might spark adventure hooks, and possible jumping-off points; war, trade, intrigue, mysteries, exploration, colonisation... there are no definitive hooks or story ideas, but there are plenty of pointers. The book is rounded out with a much-needed index.

CONCLUSION This is a fine book with plenty of information on the pages to fill out an existing Third Imperium campaign or begin an entire new campaign from scratch. The text gives plenty of inspiration and although the writing doesn't specifically detail adventure hooks, ideas or stories, it does contain a lot of flavour and will no doubt spark the imagination of a Traveller GM. The book itself needn't be used just for the Traveller system; although it is geared towards the core rulebook there are no definitive statistics in here that would stop you from using it with another gaming system, other than the finer details of the sector maps. Something I would have liked to see is an adventure. A campaign book like this is great for explaining how the setting works but it's also nice to be shown, and as the Traveller core rulebook had no adventure included it would have been nice to have had one in here; after all, one of the first things a group purchases after buying core rules is a campaign setting and this would have been the perfect place for an introductory adventure. In spite of the unsuitable artwork and the lack of definitive adventure ideas, this is good book with great ideas and I can see a gaming group getting many sessions of use out of it. Recommended.

I've been a roleplayer since the start of D&D, but never tried Traveller until now. Well, the Spinward Marches is a high level view of this famous area of space. It's not massively detailed, but well worth a read as a source of some ideas.

So I got the book at my local game shop (they special ordered it for me) and I instantly began reading up on the Spinward Marches. Now I'm a new fan to Traveller and *Mongoose* is the only edition I've bought so far (though *GURPS* is at my local store and I might start collecting it). So far I

love the OTU and the Spinward Marches is considered the starting point for any new player. Now the book itself is well written and set up nicely. The intro gives you a strong idea of key elements within the Traveller Universe (TU). Within the first 10 pages you will learn a lot and most of the book is subsector maps mixed in with world descriptions and history of the region, a lot of what you'd expect. So the writing gets all five stars in my opinion. Now why then did I put it up for four stars? Because sadly the artwork isn't up to par with what you'd expect from a \$30.00+ RPG book. Honestly some parts of the artwork, though good are just plain amateur. I went to art school myself for a year and a half and I learned many of the basic elements of drawing. Some of the art towards the back of the book looks like a first year art student's work. It's not bad it's just underdeveloped. However no RPG pen and paper fan should judge a book by its art but rather by its content and Mongoose Traveller is packed with good content. If you have a strong imagination then the art shouldn't hold you back and I only subtracted a star because older editions of the Traveller series have had some truly wonderful artwork in them. Overall if you're a new Traveller fan then pick up Spinward Marches. It's a solid and well-written section of the OTU for you and your friends to play around in.

Mongoose's Spinward Marches is a worthy addition to the Canon of the Traveller Universe. No new info for the long-time fans, but a wealth of info none the less. For those new to the universe, this is a wealth of data and essays to start off a campaign. Thanks Mongoose!

This was sold as a hardback book. It is a soft back book and not what was ordered or wanted.

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