

Greedy, profiteering, cunning—the Ferengi are a powerful new player in the never-ending game of galactic coexistence.

# Ferengi

By James P. Gee

**T**he Federation's first recorded meeting with the Ferengi Empire occurred sometime around stardate 2/9033, when the exploration vessel USS *Stargazer* engaged and destroyed a hostile alien craft in the Maxia Zeta star system (it would be over nine years later before the identity of the ship was confirmed as Ferengi). About a year later rumors of a new economic entity operating along the Federation's spinward border began to circulate through the trade routes of the known galaxy, and the name Ferengi first appeared. Soon after, many independent merchants in that area began to report a surplus of otherwise rare technologies and products showing up in the local markets. Also many planets belligerent to the Federation and its new Klingon allies began to receive shipments of highly sophisticated weaponry from an unknown source.

The first formal, face-to-face contact with the Ferengi occurred only three years ago when the new USS *Enterprise* intercepted a large Ferengi craft (code named "Marauder") which had stolen a T-9 energy conversion unit from a Federation-held planet. Circumstances that developed, which remain classified at this time, forced the crews of the two vessels to work together; since this incident, the Ferengi have had more open contact with the races of the Federation, finding it to be a lucrative new market.

## FERENGI CULTURE

Very little is known about the Ferengi culture and social structure other than scant information from brief encounters. These meetings are probably not good sources of objective data as the Ferengi, for the most part, believe that the free giving of anything, including information, is unprofitable, and thus undesirable. In Ferengi society, wealth equates directly with social status, so greed is the underlying force among these people. Rumors have it that almost all services in the Ferengi-dominated sphere are paid for (that is, the individual with the largest amount of money has the best medical care, best schooling, best protection and highest quality goods). This is a stark contrast to the Federation, where material needs have been all but eliminated.

Ferengi have in some encounters spoken highly of honor, but Ferengi do not fight honorably. They are an embodiment of the human phrase "the ends justify the means." They will do anything ranging from literal back-stabbing to mind control to double-crossing as long as they can gain from it. The only possible honor a Ferengi would be concerned about might be economic clout. After all, the prestige of being a good, or successful, merchant is no doubt foremost on a Ferengi's mind.

Everything in the eyes of a Ferengi is property—its purpose





is to gain its owner the most money in the most profitable way. The term "property" is also used to describe the Ferengi female. Some researchers speculate that problems in propagating the species have made healthy female Ferengi a valued commodity. Ferengi females are kept unclothed by their mates because it is believed that this state makes them less provocative to potential thieves. Also, many Ferengi males believe that females are not worth the expense of clothing.

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### MERCHANT NAVY

A little more is known about the nature of the Ferengi space fleet. According to many sources, the Ferengi Navy is not so much a single, unified force but a loose confederation of vessels joined together for a greater economic good. Star Fleet Intelligence Command's new Ferengi Contacts Branch has reported that a starship "daemon" must turn over a large percentage of his ship's profit to the Ferengi Naval Command in return for the use of the vessel. In this way, the naval command keeps relatively tight control over its various ships, especially since a daemon who is acting in an unprofitable manner usually will be relieved of command by another aboard who desires his position. Positions aboard Ferengi vessels seem to be somewhat the same as positions on Federation and KDF starships. Security responsibilities usually fall to the first or second officer. Also, unconfirmed reports show that the ship's doctor acts as a direct informant of the daemon's actions to the naval command, much along the same lines as the Imperial Security and Imperial Intelligence organizations in the Klingon sphere.

The daemon is the highest ranking official in the Ferengi fleet encountered by Star Fleet personnel, although intelligence operatives report the existence of other ranks which translate as "merchant first class" and "archtrader." A daemon seems to be assigned roughly to each sector and subsector in the Ferengi sphere of influence and thus acts in the position of a coordinator for all the Ferengi mercantile ventures in his area. It is believed that the large *Marauder*-class starships are used as mobile bases for this. Along those lines, daemons may be called upon by the Ferengi Naval Command to enforce an aspect of Ferengi policy or acquire special goods, properties, treaties, etc., much in the same way a starship captain acts as a representative of the Federation in some instances. Daemons may also have direct, or perhaps indirect, control over the smaller Ferengi vessels in their areas (These small vessels have been confirmed on long-range sensor sweeps, although they tend to avoid alien craft as much as possible.)

### SCOPE OF THE EMPIRE

The term "Ferengi Empire" may be somewhat of an incorrect statement. The Ferengi do control a few planets within the Federation Exploration Treaty Zone, and they use them chiefly as bases for the navy and also as merchant outposts. They do not, however, seem to colonize worlds on the mass scale as humans have. As of yet, there is no defined border for Ferengi territory, and even most Ferengi-controlled worlds have not been recognized as such by the UFP. Rather, the Ferengi Empire is an empire of trade. The reason the Ferengi are not that concerned with territorial gain is simple—bigger borders



mean bigger costs. If Ferengi society as a whole reflects the structure of the navy, there is no central body that will pay for the construction, maintenance, defense, and administration of vastly spread colony worlds. It is just not profitable enough. More to the point, several large Ferengi centers of trade are not needed as similar facilities are abundant in Federation-controlled space. Already, Ferengi vessels frequent many of the larger ports of call on the outer edge of the UFP.

The exact size of the Ferengi sphere of influence is not known. Ferengi ships seem to be spreading as fast as possible through the newfound Federation frontier with the hopes of greater profit. Already the trade empire has extended itself along the spinward border of known space even as far as Betazed, nearing Tholian territory. Also, Ferengi ships have been sighted in the sectors along the now-defunct Organian Treaty Zone, although the Klingon Defense Force has done an adequate job of preventing them from penetrating the main Komerex Klingon. As a whole, the Ferengi Empire is a nation of great wealth, so much so that smaller independent societies, such as the Orions, have been crushed under the Ferengi economic machine.

While they have referred to their homeworld as Ferengal, its location remains a mystery, although it undoubtedly lies somewhere along the Federation's spinward border. Evidence points to it as a class-M planet, with possibly a thin atmosphere (which the acute hearing of the Ferengi is attributed to).

### FERENGI PHYSIOLOGY

The Ferengi are a semihumanoid species. They have large, oversized ears extending out from a bridge along the forehead and enjoy atypically acute hearing. The forehead and back of the head both seem to be lobed into two separate halves. Ferengi have sharply pointed, small teeth and a ridged, flat nose. Most Ferengis stand somewhat erect, although they do tend to move hunched, especially in situations of extreme

stress. Average stature is about 1.5 meters, but Ferengi are exceptionally strong for their size.

The Ferengi brain has a unique structure. Unlike the dual-lobed nature of most humanoid stock, the Ferengi mind is broken into four separate lobes. This is a rare structure among humanoid species, although not entirely unheard of. A benefit is that all telepaths of the Federation, including Betazoids, cannot read Ferengi thoughts whatsoever. Indeed, to a Betazoid, a Ferengi person seems to be "just not there." It is unknown whether or not Ferengis are immune to, say, Vulcan mind melds.

### FERENGI AS NPCs

The following are the formulas given in FASA's *Next Generation First Year Sourcebook* for deriving attributes for Ferengi (male) NPCs. While the PSI skill is listed here, remember that the Ferengi are "mind-blind" in the eyes of most Federation telepaths: STR 50+4D10, CHA 3D10, END 1D100, LUC 1D100, INT 1D100, PSI 2D10, DEX 40+5D10.

While the *First Year Sourcebook* claims that the Ferengi energy whip is the standard side-arm of the Ferengi Navy, episodes from *The Next Generation's* third season have shown that they also utilize what appear to be phaser-like weapons. Since this weapon is undoubtedly a copy of the Federation version, use the statistics for the Phaser I-B as its operating parameters as well.

The Ferengi offer a unique opportunity to a referee. Here is an adversary to the Federation with no recognized borders. Their exploits so far are centered within the recognized boundaries of the Federation Exploration Zone, and they have visited many of the outer Federation worlds, including Betazed. When used with finesse, Ferengi NPCs can add a new twist to any adventure. Bewary, however, of using them simply as "heavies," a blatant waste of their true potential. While Ferengi motives may be simple, their methods are complex. Above all, the Ferengi are a mysterious race who roam the galaxy for profit.  $\Sigma$