

Royal Bone Jam

It is unfortunate for the Candy-Cow of Altair 7 that it is, from nose to tail, a thrifty confectioner's dream. The ecology of Altair 7 runs heavily -- even absurdly -- towards sugars, and the Candy-Cow is aptly named; every part of it is deliciously sweet, with flavors that tantalize the human palate. Additionally, the flavors of Candy-Cow meat change **amazingly** when roasted. There are a lot of arguments over whether Candy-Cows taste better raw or cooked, but very few humans will refuse a plate of Candy-Cow flesh that's been prepared in either style.

It's probably not too surprising them that the jam made from Candy-Cow bone marrow is considered an *insanely* tasty delicacy. It's so exclusive, in fact, that for a while Royal Bone Jam meant exactly that; only kings could afford it. Even in today's more egalitarian times, well, there's only one planet where Candy-Cows can thrive, and there are a lot of rich people who can afford to buy up the entire production run for decades to come. **You** do the math.

But! Somebody from the Survey Guild has found an uninhabited planet close enough to identical to Altair 7 in

terms of temperature, climate, gravity, atmospheric mix, and hydrosphere to be worth transplanting Altair 7's ecosystem. Better still: what life exists on that new planet is both very primitive, and not particularly interesting. Terraforming projects typically take a while to show a profit, of course -- but in this one particular case getting enough venture capital should be laughably easy. The corporation setting up the project (RBJ Unlimited) already has enough firm commitments to fully fund the first three or so offerings. There's a lot of money in the RBJ Unlimited project, in other words. The kind of money that can spawn shenanigans in its own right, and not just as a proxy for some other kind of dispute.

The possibilities in this for freelance troubleshooting teams are naturally myriad. There'll be all sorts of missions, ranging from the reasonably moral to the moderately appalling, and from the subtle to the energetic, provided that the energetic missions are done somewhere that too many people won't notice. The general rule to elite shenanigans like these is that one has to keep it all out of the various newsfeeds, which actually does limit the really outrageous behaviors. Also: while it is permissible to *die* for a taste of Royal Bone Jam, it is simply not appropriate to *kill* for one.

Everything promises to be quite madcap, really (which itself appeals to the people bankrolling the shenanigans, honestly). But is Royal Bone Jam *really* worth the fuss? Well... yes? Very much so, really.

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