

FEMME FATALE

BY MARTIN TURNER

The Sequel to the Frozen Heart
For Escape Velocity Nova

Waiting...

**Once you have read this document,
start EV Nova and start a new pilot file.**

Read ALL of the new pilot text.

Land on Yëni Istanbul.

ALERT

**This plug-in takes the character of Jasta Hela
rescued in space during the Frozen Heart.**

It requires a FEMALE pilot file.

FAQ

Hints, tips and FAQs for Femme Fatale

The only real tip I can give you is: if things are behaving strangely, read the Read Me file again.

I suppose I ought also to say that this plug-in is very different from the Frozen Heart. If you go around expecting to find the same kinds of things, you will get confused. Think about what you're trying to achieve. Remember every piece of information you get. It's all vital.

Email me if you love it or hate it

At the time of writing, I have received and answered about 650 emails on the Frozen Heart, from I guess around four or five hundred different people. 90% of them — be they bug-reports, praise, criticism, requests for information, back-ground or strategy tips — I really enjoy getting and responding to. Please keep sending them.

Some of the ones I enjoy most are suggestions for new twists and strategies. Some of these have been incorporated into Femme Fatale. I have enjoyed reading about all of them.

On occasion, I get emailed with an idea which is huge, and hugely good. The really big ideas are just too big for me to use, but I usually encourage their proposers to develop them as their own plug-ins. I would love to play more new EVO universes — and so, it seems, would about a thousand other people. Making a plug-in isn't so hard. And if you are making one, and need some advice I'll be very willing to offer what I can.

But don't email me for these three reasons:

There are three kinds of emails, though, which I don't really enjoy, and these usually run along the lines of:

- i) "Your plug-in/ graphics/ story/ sounds/ grasp of physical science stinks, but I can help you, just email me and I will tell you where you're going wrong." For some reason, I react badly to these.
- ii) "Your plug-in is full of bugs — I couldn't land on Geneva, so I edited the plug-in with EV-Edit and found you'd made the stupid mistake of putting Geneva right where Earth is. Please correct this and upload a new version." Again, this doesn't really thrill me.
- iii) "I have released a cheat/new plug-in for Frozen Heart/made a plug-in using your graphics, and have posted it to the EV Board. I hope this is ok." It isn't, please don't.

Languages in E3

People occasionally ask me about the languages. I am English, but I lived eight years in Belgium, and speak Flemish (or Dutch) and French. My wife is Dutch (in fact, we speak Dutch at home), and additionally speaks German, Turkish and Frisian. I took Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon at university, but it was a long time ago, and somebody actually pointed out an error in my Icelandic (and what's more, they were right) in the Frozen Heart. I guess I wasn't a very good student. Beyond that, I read Latin and Greek, though by no means fluently, and my wife reads Hebrew. The reason for all the bits of languages in the Frozen Heart and Femme Fatale is that I really believe that that's how the future is going to be: English may or may not become the 'world' or even the 'galactic' language, but it's never going to become the only language. If human beings eventually populate space, they will take their own languages and culture — for good and for bad — to new worlds with them.

How real is real?

Both Frozen Heart and Femme Fatale are as true to life as I can make them. Most of the events have happened (albeit not in the situations in which they are set) either to me, or to my friends, or to people I've known, or in some other way. The major exception is the murder mystery, which you will come to when you get to it. That part of the plot is entirely fictitious.

Both Frozen Heart and Femme Fatale are quite political — but the politics is the politics of the 28th century, and doesn't have much application to today's world. I wrote the novel of the Frozen Heart when I was 21. I'm now (as of the time of writing) in the process of becoming a politician, some eleven years later. I don't know if I will succeed, but, in any case, none of the characters in either of the games is me, and so none of the views expressed are necessarily mine. I've tried to let the characters speak their own minds, without let or hindrance, as much as possible. You must decide for yourself which of them — if any — is right.

How was it done?

And now for the boring stuff:

All the graphics were made in a combination of:

StrataVision 5

Bryce 2

Poser 3

Pixels 3d

Photoshop 4

Illustrator 7

The sounds were made in:

SoundEffects 0.9.2

ProTools

Musicshop

I should add that, aside from Photoshop and Illustrator, I got all of these programs for free from the cover CDs of magazines or from the internet. I paid for the upgrade from StrataVision 4 to 5 — but it wasn't much, and it was money well spent. The same for Poser, where I originally got version 1 for free and paid for the upgrades. What I'm saying is that all the tools to make these things are out there for nothing. If you can't get Photoshop, then Color-it is a great program. I also got Painter 3 for free from a magazine, and could have used that if I didn't have Photoshop. If you don't have Illustrator, then Clarisworks version 2 (another freebie) will do just as well for this kind of thing.

The intro music was composed in Musicshop, and the guitar was recorded with a Yamaha SG 1000 and a Zoom Multi-effector, using ProTools as the recording deck through a trusty Fostex four-track as mixer.

The EV stuff was principally done with SchmeltaV and Pontus Ilbring's utilities. As usual, Plugin-checker and ResEdit were the main correction tools.

So can I use this universe for my own plug-ins?

Well, not without asking first. Basically, E3 was written with this in mind, but you have to stay 'true' to the original ethos. Email the author at martin.turner@unforgettable.com to discuss it. You'll also need some of the extended background information which was used to plan E3, including the history of the Great Expansion, the World Development Kit, and some other stuff. Please don't use any of the elements in your own plug-ins if they are not for the E3 universe.

How long did it take to make?

The original Frozen Heart plug-in took 14 months from first conception to final version. The E3 world took about thirteen years, and began life as a short-story, then as a novel, and finally as a game. Femme Fatale began life as a novel, and was substantially rewritten as the first sequel to The Frozen Heart in two weeks at the end of 1998.

FEMME FATALE

BY MARTIN TURNER

THE ESCAPE

This article appeared in the January 2778 edition of Galaxy, the interstellar news-magazine, and is reproduced with permission. It is based on a partial hyper-memory dump obtained by the Museum of Human Rights of a fugitive war-criminal. Although such evidence is not admissable in court, the Museum believes that this is clear evidence of substantive guilt, and represents the events leading up to the detonation of a thermonuclear device on the planet Alba.



The great guns continued to boom, but the fighting was essentially over. The greedy red and black of Alba lay in tatters in a pool of rusty mud at the base of the flagpole. The tired grey and green of the resistance fluttered in the dead breeze a few metres above.

It began to drizzle. Regular army units were filling the front courtyard. For the prisoners: a dazed limbo. They were free, but they were still in heavy leg irons as they waited for their turn with the blacksmith. They were no longer under the starvation-diet, but there was not enough food in hundreds of miles to nourish them any better. They were at liberty to leave, but everyone who was still in a state to know or remember anything knew that there was nowhere to go. Some were perhaps aware that fairly soon they would be herded into trucks to be taken to a refugee camp not much different from the concentration camp from which they were liberated. There would be no more killings, but many were already wounded beyond recovery. There would be no more torture, but first the pain, and then the memory of the pain of burns, wounds, gouges, multiple fractures would remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Now that rescue had arrived, and could therefore no longer be an object of hope, a general air of despondency settled across the survivors.

Except in one hut, sitting amid piles of worthless banknotes, six Alban officers were at work – cleaning guns, loading ammunition, preparing for a desperate break out once the attention of the invaders subsided.

The door swung open, framing the silhouette of a young woman.

"You're all wasting your time." She said. "Help me with this." She dragged in a long, faintly quivering plasta-seal bag.

"Who's that?" Asked one of the others, a blunt-faced, grey haired man with a scar across his right cheek.

The woman scowled.

"One of the last batch. It was brought in yesterday. Looks as good as any of you. I terminated it five minutes ago."

"Couldn't resist one last opportunity, huh?" Said another.

"Couldn't resist saving all our lives." Said the woman. "Now get him out of there and put your uniform on him."

"What?" Said the first man.

"Just do it, will you?"

A few minutes.

"Now." Said the woman. She drew a knife. "Who's first—come on, we haven't got much time."

Some winced as she made shallow, messy cuts across their hands, arms and faces. The blunt face man only swallowed and set his chin as steady as a rock. Then she handcuffed them together, leaving only the blunt faced man free.

"Now, break my arm."

He swallowed again, and then, with practised skill, he twisted her left arm behind her back and snapped the bone. She clenched her teeth. The pain was more than she remembered pain could be. Almost blacking out, she handcuffed him to the others and emptied a revolver into the now uniformed body.

It wasn't very convincing: a medic would see immediately that the shots had been fired into a corpse. But, then, no-one was going to take the time to check.

The sound of the shots had attracted attention. The sound of running feet, and then the door opened.

She fell into the arms of the Resistance officer who opened it. He took one look around the hut and swore softly. She noticed that there was moisture in his eyes. He saw the corpse, the row of apparent prisoners, the young girl collapsed around him. Her face was finely chiselled, skin smooth, green eyes set against white skin and jet black hair.

"Did you kill him?" he said.

She nodded, then, chokingly:

"He left the gun on the table while he was heating the knife. Something distracted his attention – and – " she burst into tears on his shoulder. Shaking his head, he half supported, half carried her to a medical tent.

There was an old man in front of her, covered from head to foot in open sores and fresh burns. He began to blubber and howl as soon as he saw her, moving his lips as he tried to shape words. She breathed in relief when the medic sedated him with chloroform.

Her pretty face stood her in good stead with the medic, who used his last plasma-heal on her arm and sent her away with the first truck-load of refugees. Nobody had searched her or tried to identify her. Why should they? She had left the percussion revolver with the resistance officer, but she still had an energy pistol – a treasured possession from when such things could still be obtained on the black market – and a high-frequency radio buried in her ankle pocket.

The truck jumped and kicked interminably over the broken road. After a couple of hundred miles – almost five hours with people who might have identified her if they had been alive enough to understand what they were seeing – the truck stopped at a bridge where a bomb crater on the far side had made the way impassable. While the driver and his mate argued about what to do, she cut a slit in the canvas sides, jumped onto the road, walked calmly up to the cab, and shot them both. Then, pushing herself behind the bridge's broken wall, slipping and sliding in the wet clay, she fired a bolt into the truck's fuel tanks and hid herself while it gently blossomed into a fireball and faded away.

She began to laugh.

There was still the camp. Four thousand inmates. A good proportion of them knew her very personally. Of those – she counted on her fingers – at least a hundred had lost the use of their voices. Perhaps a hundred more were critically ill and could not survive the night. Many more would not survive the winter. But the others. She herself knew the bitter-sweetness of longed for revenge. Those others would not forget.

It was time to act quickly. The Resistance advance had taken them all by surprise. That meant that Alba Republic's forward columns were either captured or destroyed. The end must be very close. There was one final sanction which the commanders could use if they dared. But they would not dare. That was why they were losing the war – maybe had already lost it – because the commanders did not dare. So it was up to her. She had taken the code-word from a wing-commander who had changed sides at the wrong moment. He had given it in exchange for the use of his remaining eye.

So it was up to her.

She scrambled further into the muddy water-course. There was a piece of corrugated aluminium wedged into the bank where the bridge stuck out. She wrenched it free and scooped out a shallow shelter of mud and clay. Pressing herself into it she drew the high frequency radio from her pocket. Her fingers trembled as she punched in the numbers. Then, burying her head in her hands, she waited.

FEMME FATALE

BY MARTIN TURNER

Space Rescue Report O-AX-99247-OJP-20-11-12

Report on Rescue of person identified as **Jasta Hela**, human female, age 20 to 26, from Orion class starship, 21 March 2776, Gamma Sector.

1 Pilot Profile compiled by Vorsha Glen, Department of Interstellar accidents and recovery.

1. Name: Lars Sørensson
2. Profession: Archaeologist
3. Starship: Type 12 Fighter (Old series) modified for deep space activity under licence 2784587#GRQBARN. Earth Registry Damacles IPN #456OQ1
4. Comments: Dr Lars Sørensson is a prominent archaeologist, credited with the decyphering of Rift B language. He has wide-ranging contacts within the Earth Diplomatic corps, and currently enjoys a high clearance rating. It is recommended that this report be retained in full and be made available to interstellar agencies, as it has a possible bearing on the aftermath of the Alban war.

2 Pilot Report

I, Lars Sørensson, employee of the University of Earth Institute of Archaeology, Beaumont Street, Oxford, Earth, do solemnly swear that this report represents all the substantive information which I can bring to bear as at the time of writing to the rescue of the person known as Jasta Hela, currently undergoing hypo-amnesic therapy at the Yeni Türkiye medical complex.

Report commences:

I was on a routine flight through gamma sector when my instruments picked up a broad band distress signal from a space-ship identifying itself as "Jasta Hela", as follows:

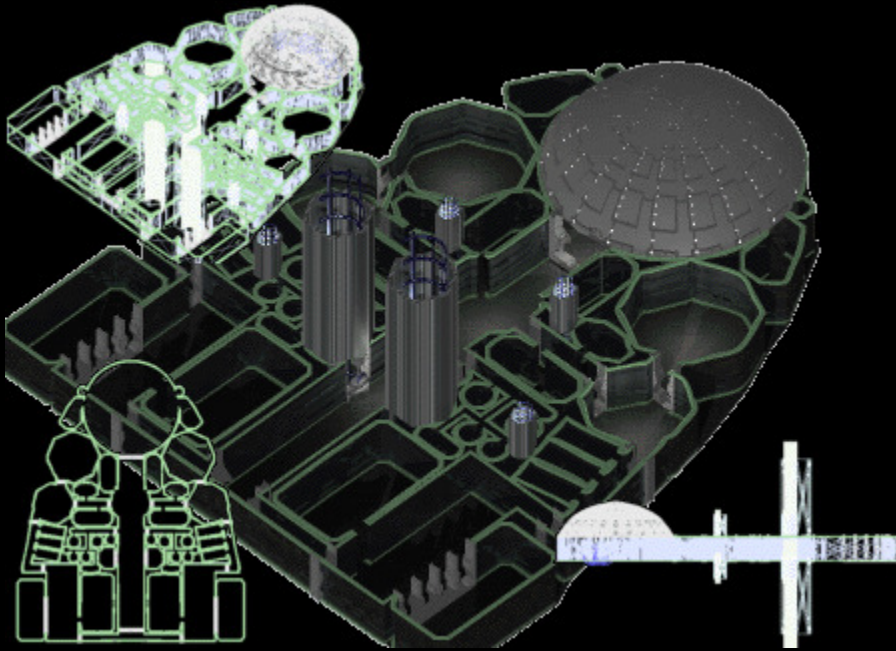
Please, please help. I am Jasta Hela, held captive by pirates on my own ship, please rescue me, please, plea—

The visuals were of poor quality and the signal kept breaking up, giving the impression that the ship's power and therefore its life-support were almost exhausted.

I noted that the ship was an Orion Class, and that no other vessels were answering the distress signal, and therefore docked with the ship in accordance with interstellar law on Rescue-Obligation.

A hyper-atropic scan revealed something which disturbed me greatly. The Orion was intact, but had been picked clean: furnishings, fittings, everything which was not literally welded to the walls was missing.

There were some signs of damage above air-lock one, as if an entry had been previously forced, and I settled into a contact-dock at that point on the fusilage.



My ship's fusion cutter made short work of the weakened fusilage above the air-lock, and I burst through, weapons ready, in the light of the reported presence of pirates on the ship (see message above).

There was a strange silence.

Then I heard, or rather felt, the shudder of life-capsules launching rocking the ship.



I made my way down the main corridor and into the main cabin.



The video message was still playing on the main screen, except that a subsidiary screen was playing a wire-frame model. With a sense of mounting panic, I realised that the whole message was in fact a virtual-reality construct.



A slight young woman lolled unconscious, handcuffed to a rail near the flight computer. I severed the handcuffs and let her gently down onto the floor. Her face was bruised, and her lip was bleeding slightly. Clearly she had been unconscious for some hours, which brought me back to the question of who made the distress call.

I then noticed a disk next to the holo-player. By the fact that the casing was open, I concluded that it had recently been uploaded and was, in fact, the message which was playing.

The disk was marked “fresh bait”.

Now certain that I had walked into a trap, I lifted the girl over my shoulder and, heart heaving, raced back down the corridor for the Damacles, thankful that the auto-gravity had already switched into emergency low-power mode.

One word escaped the woman's lips. “Alba.”

I severed my molecular connection to the Orion as quickly as I dared, noting already that a number of vessels had appeared on my short range scanner. Sensors indicated that their weapons were on-line, and my attempts to gain access to their registry information for identity exchange were rebuffed. By some fluke of chance, and a result partially of the relative agility of my small craft, I was able to elude my attackers for some time. However, the Orion class ship was destroyed by a stray missile, and, given the state of my passenger, I felt it wise to exit the system.

Having nothing else to go on, I made my way to the Alban System, hoping to discover my passenger's identity, since she was still in a semi-conscious state and unable to talk coherently.

I landed on the war-torn world of Alba. My geiger counter was giving some impossible reading, and, in the night air, I could still make out the after glow of what must have been a huge thermonuclear detonation. There were no port authorities and no police to report to. Every question I asked at the makeshift space-port was answered with “Nobody knows.”

With an unconscious passenger still aboard, night drawing on, and a growing hostility which I sensed from the planets inhabitants, I was becoming desperate. At this point, an aid truck rumbled up. A young man in his shirt sleeves with a red-cross arm band half stepped, or rather, half fell out of it. He looked dead beat. Even so, he was your best hope. “Come on friend” I said, leading him to a nearby shack which was serving as a bar, “Let me give you some coffee.”

The bartender smiled a toothless smile at my off-world currency, and charged one hundred credits for two cups of coffee, for which I still have the receipt (attached).

We sit down at a rickety table.

“Thanks” he said, and then added. “Not that I should be drinking black market coffee, but thanks anyway. So who are you? You’re not Red Cross.”

“I’m not with an agency.” I said, still unsure of my welcome. “Actually, I just rescued a kidnap victim. She’s on my ship now — hasn’t come around. The only word I could get out of her was ‘Alba’. What else could I do but bring her here? Except nobody seems to know anything. What’s going on here, anyway?”

He smiled, a tired, quick smile. “This is probably the place she was trying to get away from.” He said. “We’ve just finished a civil war, with a sting in the tail.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“A retributive strike of an atomic detonation. There’s nothing here now. The only thing you can do would be to take her to Yëni Türkiye. At least it's hospitalisation.”

The aid-worker gave me his name, Alex Setocki, and gave me instructions for reaching Yëni. Twelve days later, I touched down at Yëni Türkiye MediPort.

It seemed to take the medics an age to get her into their treatment centre.

Eventually, one came back to speak with me.

“We'll do our best” he said. “But don't hold your breath. Family?”

I shook my head.

“Well, we'll be in touch” he said.

This concludes my report on the rescue of the individual known as Jasta Hela.

Med-lab Report

Subject:
Identity
unconfirmed

given name:
Jasta Hela

Summary:
Major
psychotropic
damage

indications of
healed fracture
non-relevant to
psychotropic
state

Recommendation:
Intensive hypo-amnesia



The subject was given with intensive hypo-amnesia therapy for one year following arrival at Med-Lab Seven. Non-narrative memory was fully intact, but narrative memory remains entirely absent.

It is the view of this medical board that the lost memories are simply not present in the subjects neuro-sphere.

Recommendation: DISCHARGE.

FEMME FATALE

BY MARTIN TURNER

How Femme Fatale came to be

Femme Fatale owes its existence to the following people:

First, to Abraham, my next door neighbour for many years, Auschwitz survivor.

Then, to Vasilie, Romanian pastor, murdered by the Securitate only months before the downfall of Ceaucescu.

And then to femmes fatales, various, whose adventures have coincided briefly with my own.

And finally to Emma Campbell, Julia Bernd, Shig, and all the others who emailed me and said 'when is the plug-in for a female character going to happen?'

Femme Fatale owes its quality to the beta-team:

1of4
Ryan Ballantyne
Blazer
Brain
Max Dyckhoff
Christopher Eppig
Jim
RatttNest
Adam Reeves
Bob Robinson
Smoked34

Jim, Brain and Blazer created the window for me to write Femme Fatale by fielding all the questions on the EVO Board about Frozen Heart. They know more about it than I do now, and I'm very grateful.

David Dunham at Ambrosia and Jos Delbar at the EVO site were incredibly helpful. Everyone who emailed me ideas or just encouragement about the Frozen Heart has had an impact on this plug-in.

Finally, two planets bear the stamp of the people who created them. You'll see for yourself when you get there.