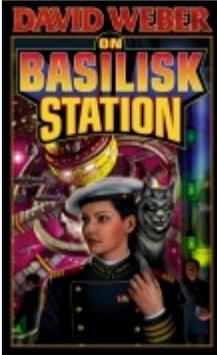


BAEN BOOKS

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO *ON BASILISK STATION* BY DAVID WEBER



Contents:

- recommended reading levels
- biographical material and links
- background of the book and plot summary
- character sketches
- guides for segments of the book which include plot summaries of each chapter and may also include some of the following:
 - Prepare to Read. . .
 - vocabulary
 - focus questions or initiating activity
 - quiz/reading comprehension questions – multiple choice/short answer questions to testing reading comprehension
 - reflection and discussion questions – may be used to initiate classroom discussion, as short writing assignments, or as test questions
 - suggested activities/inquiry-based exploration – suggestions for activities and projects

Recommended reading levels: *On Basilisk Station* is appropriate for a young adult audience. Classroom use of the book is probably most appropriate for high school students.

Biographical information on David Weber:

David Weber is a popular, best-selling author of science fiction and fantasy. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1952. He graduated from Hillcrest High School in Simpsonville, South Carolina in 1970 and received a bachelor's degree from Warren Wilson College. Weber also did graduate work in history at Appalachian State University. He started writing poetry and short fiction when he was in the fifth grade. His mother was an advertising copywriter and trained him in that craft. Before becoming a full time writer of fiction, he worked in advertising, public relations and war-game design. His first novel, *Insurrection*, was published in 1990. This book was a collaboration with Steve White that grew out of Weber's experience as a game designer. Since then, as author and co-author,

he has written over fifty solo and collaborative novels and contributed to numerous anthologies of short fiction. He is best known as an author of science fiction with military themes, but he has also written fantasy, “space operas,” and alternate history. Weber and his wife Sharon, along with their children, cats and dogs, live in Greenville, South Carolina.¹

Biographical resources on the web:

- Weber has provided an interesting biographical sketch on his website, *David Weber*, <http://www.davidweber.net/biography>.
- “David Weber,” *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Weber.

Suggested class activity: Have your students read the autobiographical information on Weber’s website before they begin the book. Ask them to make notes as they read. Have the class discuss the several different influences that led Weber to become a writer. They also might want to explore some of the interviews available on YouTube and Baen’s website (<http://baen.com/interview.asp>) in which Weber discusses his development and interests as an author.

For further information on David Weber and his work:

- Weber’s website contains a wealth of material that students may enjoy exploring in addition to his biographical details: photos, a bibliography, discussion forums (including one dedicated to the “Honorverse”), FAQs, downloads, and information about upcoming appearances (<http://www.davidweber.net>).
- David Weber’s page at Amazon.com contains a brief biographical note, a list of books available, and a forum for reader comments (http://www.amazon.com/David-Weber/e/B000APBAFE/ref=sr_tc_ep?qid=1308078796).
- There are several interesting interviews with Weber available at Baen’s website (<http://baen.com/interview.asp>) and on YouTube.

Bibliographies:

You can find bibliographies of Weber’s work at his own website (<http://www.davidweber.net/books>), at the website *Internet Speculative Fiction Database* (isfdb.org) (http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?David_Weber), at the website *Fantastic*

¹ The sources for the information contained in this biographical sketch are David Weber, “Biography,” *David Weber*, <http://www.davidweber.net/biography> (accessed June 13, 2011) and “David Weber,” *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Weber (accessed June 13, 2011).

Fiction (<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/w/david-weber>), at the website *SFBookcase* (<http://www.sfbookcase.com/author.asp?author=David+Weber>), and on *Wikipedia* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Weber).

On *Basilisk Station* background:

This is the first book of a popular, long-running series of novels and short stories focused on the exploits of Honor Harrington, an officer in the Royal Manticoran Navy, the space navy of the Star Kingdom of Manticore. Baen Books first published the novel in 1993. Weber has referred to the Honor Harrington series as “Horatio Hornblower in space,” a reference to the novels of C.S. Forester that follow the adventures of a fictional nineteenth century British naval officer. Weber further acknowledges this relationship by dedicating *Basilisk Station* to Forester. Students may be interested in delving into the wikis for the book (http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/On_Basilisk_Station), for Honor Harrington (http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/Honor_Harrington), and for what has come to be known as the “Honorverse” (http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page).

Suggested class activity: Watch Weber’s interview “Honor Harrington & Sci-Fi Feminism” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvgzfbfD6eE>). Have them discuss or write short papers on Weber’s embrace of the title “post-feminist sci-fi writer.”

Plot Summary: Honor Harrington, an officer in the Royal Manticoran Navy, assumes command of her first cruiser, *HMS Fearless*. Much to Honor’s dismay, her ship is stripped of most of its weapons and turned into a test ship for a new grav lance technology. During war games, she has some success with the new weapon, disabling the flagship of the opposing side in a brilliant maneuver. Once the other commanders involved in the war games realize what the grav lance is, they are able to quickly counter it and sideline Honor and the new technology. Influential fleet officers decide to sweep the whole incident under the rug by exiling Honor and her ship to the Basilisk star system. The other officer on picket duty there is an old nemesis from days at the fleet Naval Academy. On the pretext that his heavy cruiser needs a refit, he leaves Honor with the only ship responsible for an entire system’s security, hoping she will fail. She is supposed to police an entire, out-of-the-way star system with one over-age, under-gunned light cruiser. Her crew is demoralized; the local system is rife with smugglers, homicidal drug users, and greedy merchant cartels. To make matters worse, the up-and-coming Republic of Haven has its hungry eyes on the system’s resources. Against all odds, Honor, her crew, and her ship prove their worth and manage to defeat all the threats to the system. Honor is promoted to Captain and given command of a new ship.

Major Characters:

- Commander Honor Harrington is the new commander of the *HMS Fearless*.
- Nimitz is the treecat who adopted Honor. Treecats are sentient inhabitants of the planet Sphinx. They are empaths, fiercely loyal to the humans with whom they choose to bond.
- President Harris is Hereditary President of the People’s Republic of Haven.

- Sir Edward Janacek is First Lord of the Admiralty of the Star Kingdom of Manticore.
- Lieutenant Commander Alistair McKeon is Honor's second-in-command, the executive officer on the *Fearless*.
- Admiral "Red Lady" Sonja Hemphill is the leading proponent of one of the two major schools of tactical thought in the Royal Manticoran Navy (RMN). She and her followers believe that forces can rely on technology, properly used, instead of a knowledge and practice of historical military tactics.
- Captain Lord Pavel Young is the senior officer on Basilisk Station. He is eldest son and heir to the Earl of North Hollow. He and Honor were at the Academy together and hate each other's guts.
- Lieutenant Andreas Venizelos is the member of Honor's crew who takes over as customs and security officer at Basilisk Control.
- Captain Michel Reynaud is head of the Astro-Control Service at Basilisk Control.
- Countess Marisa is Manticore's Minister for Medusan Affairs.
- Dame Estelle Matsuko is the Resident Commissioner for Planetary Affairs on the planet Medusa.
- Lieutenant Max Stromboli is the astrogator on the *Fearless* who is assigned as commander of the ground forces on Medusa.
- Ensign Scotty Tremaine is the young officer in charge of a customs detail.
- Petty Officer Harkness, assigned to Tremaine's custom detail, is a seasoned missile tech who keeps getting busted down in rank because of his propensity for fighting and smuggling.
- Lord Hamish Alexander is admiral of the Greens for RMN and a Conservative.
- The Honorable William MacLeish Alexander is Lord Hamish's brother and Prime Minister of the Queen's government.
- Fleet Admiral Sir James Bowie Webster is the First Space Lord of Manticore.
- Denver Summervale, a former captain in the Royal Manticoran Marine Corps, is now head of the illegal *mekoha* operation on Medusa.
- Wallace Canning is consul for the People's Republic of Haven on the planet Medusa.
- Klaus Hauptman is the rich and powerful head of the Hauptman merchant cartel.
- Lieutenant Samuel Houston Webster is communications officer on the *Fearless*.

The Honorverse wiki (http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page) contains a helpful link with short descriptions of most of the characters in the "Honorverse" (<http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/Category:Characters>) as well as links for geography, political groups, and star nations that students might find useful as they navigate the book.

GUIDE TO prologue and chapters 1–6

Prepare to Read . . .

- Familiarize yourself with the following vocabulary and terms:

- dole (noun) and the idiomatic term “on the dole,” and “Dolist”
 - armament
 - wormhole
 - robbing Peter to pay Paul
 - *jeune ecole*
 - technophile
 - super dreadnought
 - enigma
- Focus question/initiating activity: Have your students research the name “Nimitz” in naval history so they will understand where Honor’s treecat got its name (chap. 1). (Note: This article by David White and Daniel P. Murphy gives a succinct description of Admiral Chester Nimitz, his significant role in World War II, and some of the characteristics as a commander that might have led Honor Harrington to admire him. David White and Daniel P. Murphy, Ph.D., “Chester Nimitz,” *Netplaces: World War II*, <http://www.netplaces.com/world-war-ii/the-military-leaders/chester-nimitz.htm>. Nimitz is also the name of a class of supercarriers, the largest of the current U.S. navy warships.)

Chapter Summaries:

- Prologue: The People’s Republic of Haven is in economic difficulties. They must expand in order to keep up the Basic Living Stipend for their people and support a military sufficient to hold onto the planetary empire they’ve built. The President of the Republic and his advisors decide their best solution is to attack the Kingdom of Manticore. It is wealthy, it is strategically located, and it is in possession of an important trading junction, the Manticore Wormhole Junction. Defeating Manticore will greatly improve their economic and military position.
- Chapter 1: Honor Harrington assumes command of her first cruiser, the light cruiser *HMS Fearless*. The brass at headquarters has told her that the ship is undergoing a major refit, but their deliberate lack of detail has her worried. Alistair McKeon, the executive officer, resents Honor because she is younger than he is but already a commander who has taken the position he wanted. Her earlier worries prove well-founded when she finds that the ship’s refit involves taking out much of her traditional armament to install a grav lance, a powerful but limited weapon.
- Chapter 2: Honor realizes that she and the *Fearless* are the victims of political maneuvering. Factions in the government who oppose military spending have allied with a group of military leaders, Admiral “Red Lady” Sonja Hemphill and her coterie. Hemphill is the leading proponent of one of the two major schools of tactical thought in the Royal Manticoran Navy (RMN). She and her followers believe that forces can rely on technology, properly used, instead of relying on the knowledge and practice of historical military tactics. Hemphill is also the up-and-coming cousin of Sir Edward Janacek, First Lord of the Admiralty. Janacek used his influence to give her *Fearless* as a test ship to try to justify her tactical theories. It will be Hemphill’s secret weapon in the upcoming fleet tactical

- maneuvers. In spite of the problems Honor sees with using the grav lance, she decides she must do her best to make it work. Her best chance is in Hemphill's secrecy. Since the "enemy" ships won't know that a light cruiser is equipped with a grav lance, she may be able to slip in while the enemy ships are dealing with larger vessels and get in one shot.
- Chapter 3: Manticoran naval forces engage in live-fire war games. Honor is able to detach her ship from her side's main attacking force and sneak within firing distance of the super dreadnought commanded by Admiral D'Orville of the opposing forces. She smashes his protective sidewall with her grav lance and torpedoes his hull, managing to "kill" the flagship of the opposing forces with her tiny cruiser.
 - Chapter 4: As Honor expected, D'Orville's captains are intent on exacting revenge on the *Fearless* and pummel her during subsequent parts of the exercise. Once they know about Hemphill's "secret" weapon, they are easily able to counter it. Hemphill blames Honor for these defeats. Honor's new crew becomes demoralized and loses confidence in her. Lt. Commander McKeon lets his resentment of Honor undermine his ability to do an effective job. He wants to turn the situation around, but that would involve admitting that Honor deserves her command. To punish Honor for not doing the impossible, Admiral Hemphill arranges to send her and her ship to a new station, Basilisk. Honor considers this assignment exile and oblivion. The Basilisk system is important to the Kingdom both economically and strategically, but it has become a bone of contention among the various factions of Manticore's government. The First Lord of the Admiralty looks on it as a liability instead of an asset, so he doesn't want to waste any useful ships on it. Basilisk has become the punishment station of the RMN.
 - Chapter 5: Honor and the *Fearless* arrive at Basilisk junction. Honor notices some inefficiencies in Basilisk Control's procedures that don't bode well for the future. She is disturbed when she finds out that Captain Lord Pavel Young is the commander of the station. Her reaction indicates some past history that has Commander McKeon worried.
 - Chapter 6: Honor meets with Captain Lord Young on his flagship, the *Warlock*. Young is the eldest son and heir of the Earl of North Hollow, and Honor wonders what he has done to get sent to a backwater like Basilisk. He tells Honor that the arrival of the *Fearless* will allow him to take the *Warlock* back to Manticore for a badly needed refit. He is leaving Honor as the senior officer of the system for the two or three months the refit will require. He is leaving her in charge of an entire system with only one over-age cruiser for defense instead of the flotilla the job calls for. The enmity between Honor and Young went back to a reprimand he had been given for sexual harassment at the Academy when both were midshipmen and she had rebuffed his advances. The truth, which Honor thought no one would believe, was that later he had assaulted and attempted to rape her, but she settled for the lesser charge, even though she had beat him almost senseless during the attack. Young has left her with an impossible job, knowing that her inevitable failure will go on her record.

Quiz/Reading Comprehension Questions—multiple choice/short answer questions to test reading comprehension:

1. Who are the “Dolists” and what problem do they pose for the Republic of Haven? (chap. 1)
2. Why is gaining control over the Junction important to Haven? (prologue)
3. Why does Honor look so much younger than her forty “T-years”? (chap. 1)
4. What static tactical situation do Hemphill and her followers hope the grav lance will break?
5. How does the Manticore Wormhole Junction explain the Kingdom’s wealth?
6. Describe the planet Medusa. (chap.6)
7. How does Honor begin to solve the problem of doing several jobs with one ship? (chap. 7)
8. Which one of the following does the Republic of Haven decide to attack first in their quest to improve the economic and strategic position of their empire? (prologue)
 - a. Erewhon
 - b. The Solarian League
 - c. Manticore
 - d. Silesia
9. What is Honor’s pet? (chap. 1)
 - a. treecat
 - b. ferret
 - c. p’siltrig
 - d. trick question – pets aren’t allowed on spaceships
10. What is the problem Honor sees with use of the grav lance? (chap. 2)
 - a. It hasn’t been tested, so Honor doesn’t think it will actually fire.
 - b. There is a high risk of gravity perturbations in the ship’s own field.
 - c. It will result in massive loss of life on the attacked ship.
 - d. A ship has to close to point-blank range to use it, and a light cruiser couldn’t survive the hostile fire of the enemy ship long enough to get that close.
11. What is the outcome of the first battle in the war games? (chap. 3)
 - a. Honor’s little ship is blown to smithereens
 - b. She manages to sneak in and “kill” the flagship of the opposing forces using the grav lance.
 - c. The grav lance blows up when she tries to use it and damages her ship.
 - d. She can’t get in range of the enemy ships because of heavy fire, so she is useless in the battle.
12. The Junction can instantaneously transfer massive ships from one point to another light-years away. What is the Junction? (chap. 5)
 - a. a giant gravity wave powered by the systems largest sun
 - b. an anomaly created by a blue star
 - c. a focused funnel of hyper space, like the eye of a hurricane
 - d. a black hole
13. What is the name of Basilisk’s single habitable planet? (chap. 5)

- a. Medusa
 - b. Indra
 - c. Farside
 - d. Azreal
14. What is the root cause of the enmity between Honor and Captain Lord Pavel Young? (chap. 6)
- a. She got better grades at the Academy than he did.
 - b. He cheated on the final exam and she revealed it.
 - c. He tried to rape her and she beat him up.
 - d. She was given a posting right out of the Academy that he wanted.

Answers:

1. The Dolists are the “mob,” the people who have supported Haven’s wars in order to have a better standard of living. They are “on the dole,” dependent on government support to live. They are “useless drones” who are sucking up resources without contributing. Their demands contribute to Haven’s need to conquer new territory in order to keep their economy viable.
2. Manticore could use it to strangle Haven’s trade and as an avenue into the middle of the Republic for military purposes.
3. “T-years” stands for Terran (earth standard) years. Honor is a second-generation prolong, a person who has benefited from the latest anti-aging treatment available.
4. The fact the ships are shielded on their sides by gravity sidewalls. Given current technology, it is difficult to get a clean hit without exposing the attacking ship to the same sort of hit.
5. The junction allows ships to “skip” from one place in the galaxy to another with virtually no lapse of time, saving merchant freighters months of travel time a lot of money. All the ‘termini’ became magnets for trade, all of which has to pass through Manticoran territory to take advantage of them. The tolls they charge generate enormous revenue. Because of its unique position at the end of numerous termini, Manticore had also become a central warehousing and commercial node for hundreds of worlds.
6. Medusa, the only habitable planet in the Basilisk system, has massive polar ice caps, has an extreme axial tilt and a cool primary star. These characteristics are responsible for its brutal climate. Millions of different types of moss are the only plant life that will grow on this inhospitable world.
7. Honor splits her forces, giving a lieutenant command of two of the ship’s smaller boats so that he and a small crew can take over responsibility for terminus traffic and customs. She also comes up with a plan to equip drones to do some of the security policing on the perimeter.
8. c
9. a
10. d
11. b
12. c
13. a

14. c

Suggested Activities/Inquiry-Based Exploration—suggestions for class activities and projects:

- Weber opens his book with an empire in crisis. Explore the reasons the Republic of Haven is in trouble. What are the causes of instability? Investigate some historical empires. Why did they fall? Do you see any parallels with Haven?
- Split the class into groups. Have each group assume that they are Haven's leaders and discuss the economic and political problems raised by the Dolists. Each group is responsible for doing a presentation justifying the solution Haven chooses or coming up with an alternate political/economic strategy for solving the problem.

GUIDE TO chapters 7-13

Prepare to Read. . .

- Familiarize yourself with the following vocabulary and terms:
 - patronage
 - pinnacle
 - astrogation
 - drone aircraft
 - aborigines
 - liaison
 - parameters
 - telemetry
 - *esprit de corps*
 - binary star system
 - jury-rigged
 - hexapedal
- Focus question/initiating activity: Ask students to consider whether they would prefer to be a biped or a hexaped and be prepared to discuss the reasons for their preference in class.

Chapter Summaries:

- Chapter 7: Honor and her crew are left with a difficult problem. The *Fearless* can't be in two places at once, but all the responsibilities they are left with require it. Honor decides to detach a detail on the pinnaces, the ship's small boats, to assume the duties of customs and security for terminus traffic. She also has all the recon drones refitted as station-keeping devices to help police their perimeter. *Fearless* will take up customs duty for the orbital traffic around Medusa.
- Chapter 8: Honor drops the pinnaces off at Basilisk control and sets off to deploy the drones. Some of Honor's crewmembers stop blaming her for their situation and start rising to meet the heavy demands she is placing on them. By the time

- they finish refitting and dropping the drones, the crew is finally working together as a team. Honor is worried about the Republic of Haven's presence in the system. They have a consulate and trade legation on Medusa. Since the Medusans don't really have anything much to trade, she thinks the Republic is up to something. She is especially concerned when she spots a Republic courier craft, since it has diplomatic immunity and is immune to examination regardless of anything it might be doing.
- Chapter 9: Honor meets with Dame Estelle Matsuko, the Resident Commissioner for Planetary Affairs on Medusa. Honor is hoping to get more information about her support and security duties on Medusa. Dame Estelle makes it clear that Medusa hasn't gotten the support it needed from the Navy for the last three years that Janacek had been Lord of the Admiralty. When the Kingdom claimed the star system, it specifically renounced sovereignty over Medusa. It established a protectorate over the Medusans, but made the entire planet into a reservation for the natives with the exception of specific sites designated as off-worlder enclaves. Since it is a protectorate without sovereignty, Dame Estelle can regulate enclave locations and foreign trade, but she can't deny planetary access to other governments. There is a growing problem of exploitation of the indigenous people by interstellar merchants who have set up offices on Medusa to manage their terminus trade. Dame Estelle has several concerns: her suspicions that some sort of illicit trade is taking place on Medusa, the growing influence and ambitions of the Republic of Haven, and increased use of *mekoha*, a local drug, by the Medusans. Honor and Dame Estelle decide that *Fearless* will take over the inspection of ship-to-surface shuttles as well as general traffic control around Medusa.
 - Chapter 10: Honor arranges for personnel to man the customs and inspections parties. Lt. Andreas Venizelos has his first confrontation with a Havenite merchant skipper who is outraged that the lieutenant intends to inspect his cargo, since the required inspections have never been done before.
 - Chapter 11: Lt. Max Stromboli, on detached duty from *Fearless* as commander on Medusa, examines the natives. Medusa has no birds and all the mammals are hexapedal. Off-worlders call the dominant life form Stilties. They are tall, slender, and walk on four legs, leaving the other two free for manipulation. It looks something like an extremely large praying mantis. The customs inspectors find smuggled, contraband goods in a Manticoran cargo ship. The shipment was bound for the Hauptman cartel, and the discovery is going to cause significant repercussions. McKeon tries to talk Honor out of pursuing the matter, since Hauptman has friends in high places. Honor makes it clear that she will do her duty no matter what.
 - Chapter 12: Fleet Admiral Sir James Bowie Webster, the First Space Lord of Manticore, has called Lord Hamish Alexander in for a meeting about Basilisk Station. Webster has received numerous official protests from the Havenite ambassador, the Havenite consul, and various Manticoran and out-kingdom merchant cartels alleging harassment and illegal searches of vessels. Webster and Alexander realize that Honor has been deliberately put in a no-win situation, but because of Young's position and other political considerations they are looking at

a possible diplomatic incident. They decide to back Honor and use the situation as the occasion to rethink the whole Basilisk situation.

- Chapter 13: A month into their time at Basilisk, Honor and her crew are successfully catching smugglers and reducing contraband traffic in the system. Most of the crew has now become proud of themselves, their captain, and their ship. They are also piling up prize money from all the contraband seized. Dame Estelle calls Honor, concerned about unidentified flights in restricted areas by ships that refuse to identify themselves. She suspects they may be involved in the manufacture of a processed, highly addictive form of *mekoha* that they are selling to the indigenous people. The situation is complicated by the fact that the drug is an important part of the Medusan religion. The NPA is reluctant to interfere in local religious practices.

Quiz/Reading Comprehension Questions – multiple choice/short answer questions to test reading comprehension:

1. How does Honor finally get her crew to work together? (chaps. 7 and 8)
2. Why does the courier craft that belongs to the Republic of Haven concern Honor? (chap. 8)
3. What are Stilties? Describe them. (chap. 11)
4. How are their successes in the Basilisk system making Honor and her crew richer? (chap. 13)
5. What are three of the possible effects of *mekoha*? (chap. 9)
6. What is the status of Medusa in regard to the Kingdom of Manticore? (chap. 9)
 - a. Manticore made it a protectorate, a sort of reservation for the Medusan natives.
 - b. Manticore took it over and is exploiting its resources.
 - c. Manticore ignored it – all they want is Basilisk Station.
 - d. Manticore took over and shipped the natives out to neighboring planets.
7. What does *mekoha* mean? (chap. 9)
 - a. It is the term for a priest among the Medusan people.
 - b. It is a weapon.
 - c. It is a drug used by the Medusans.
 - d. It is the Medusan word for treecat.
8. What contraband goods do Ensign Tremaine and PO Harkness find in the first ship they inspect? (chap. 11)
 - a. Gryphon kodiak max pelts
 - b. Silesian guara fruit
 - c. outlawed blasters
 - d. drugs
9. What do the First Space Lord and Lord Hamish Alexander decide to do about all the complaints about Honor's actions? (chap. 12)
 - a. Relieve her of command.
 - b. Bring her in to Manticore for a briefing.
 - c. Send Young back to Basilisk immediately to take over customs duties.
 - d. Support her and let her continue her present course of action.

Answers:

1. She places very heavy demands on them and lets them know that she expects them to succeed.
2. It implies more than the trade mission the Republic is claiming. It has diplomatic immunity, so it can't be examined regardless of what it might be up to.
3. The Stilties are the dominant life form on Medusa. They are mammals that are tall, slender, and have six legs. They walk on four legs, leaving the other two free for manipulation. They look sort of like a mammalian version of earth's praying mantis.
4. They get prize money, a percentage of any contraband seized from smugglers. A ship engaged in illegal activities can itself be seized and may become part of the prize as well.
5. Any three of the following: it is extremely addictive, provides a short term sense of euphoria and exhilaration, and can cause hallucinations, severe respiratory and motor control damage, gradual loss of neural function, decrease in attention span and measurable IQ, adrenaline high, the shutdown of pain receptors, and psychosis.
6. a
7. c
8. a
9. d

Suggested Activities/Inquiry-Based Exploration—suggestions for class activities and projects:

- Look into the history of prize money in England's Royal Navy. What parallels do you see with the Royal Manticoran Navy?
- Creating interesting and believable aliens is not an easy task for an author. Assign your students to groups and have them come up with a plausible alien life form. Before their groups meet, watch some of the clips from The Discovery Channel's documentary by Stephen Hawking, *Into the Universe with Stephen Hawking: Aliens*. These short clips offer an appealing and effective introduction to the question of how alien life forms might evolve in response to different planetary conditions (<http://dsc.discovery.com/videos/stephen-hawking-aliens/>). Each group should prepare a graphic representation of their alien as well as present to the class the justification for its biological characteristics (why those characteristics evolved on its particular planet). Some further resources for alien creation are:
 - Lee Masterson, "Creating New Alien Species," at *Sci-Fi Factor* (<http://scifi.fictionfactor.com/articles/creatingaliens.html>)
 - Tina Morgan, "Creating Believable Aliens," at *Sci-Fi Factor* (<http://scifi.fictionfactor.com/articles/creatingaliens.html>)
 - Craig Freudenrich, Ph.D., "How Aliens Work," at *howstuffworks* (<http://science.howstuffworks.com/space/aliens-ufos/alien-physiology4.htm>)

GUIDE TO chapters 14-20

Prepare to Read . . .

- Familiarize yourself with the following vocabulary and terms:
 - alchemist
 - epaulet
 - dualist
 - dossier
 - ramifications
 - shaman
 - automaton
 - clicks
 - flintlock

Chapter Summaries:

- Chapter 14: Denver Summervale, head of the illegal *mekoha* operation on Medusa, receives a call from his employers warning him that the NPA and Honor are probably aware of the operation. Summervale is suspicious of his own employers, since several things have never added up. Why has the Organization gone to such lengths to sell drugs to the primitive Medusans in the first place? Why sell *mekoha* instead of one of many other possible drugs that don't cause violence as a side effect? Summervale is a former captain in the Royal Manticoran Marines who was court-martialed and has a grudge against the navy and against his distant cousin, the Duke of Comarty, Lord of the Exchequer. Cromarty did nothing to help him during his court-martial.
- Chapter 15: Wallace Canning, consul for the People's Republic of Haven on Medusa, and a Manticoran admiral of the naval intelligence branch discuss a cover operation, Operation Odysseus. Honor's actions at Basilisk have put this operation in jeopardy. Her unexpected vigilance wasn't part of their plan, which relied in part on the customary naval inefficiency in the system. They have been tapping into Dame Estelle's backup power collector to run the *mekoha* labs as part of this larger operation. Although they have backing from powerful people in both Haven and Manticore, the admiral is afraid the presence of the *Fearless* in Medusa orbit may be enough to derail Odysseus. They decide to distract Honor by threatening her parents' livelihood. The Hauptman cartel owns majority interest in Duvalier Medical Associates, the medical partnership to which they belong.
- Chapter 16: The crew of *Fearless* tries to spot unusual power flows on Medusa to pinpoint the *mekoha* lab. The situation between Honor and McKeon remains chilly, and Lt. Commander Santos, third in command, speaks to Honor about the problem. She assures Honor that, whatever the problem is, McKeon won't let her down in a crunch.
- Chapter 17: Tremaine and his crew find what they've been looking for: unexplainably high power readings on the planet that might indicate the location of the drug lab. Dame Estelle sends out a raiding party from the NPA to

investigate. As the raiding party closes in, they are met by deadly fire from the lab and many of the NPA personnel are killed. It is apparent that Dame Estelle's forces walked into a trap designed to kill as many of them as possible. Later investigators find a primitive weapon at the site – a single-shot, breech-loading flintlock rifle. Someone is arming the Medusans with weapons about 1,500 years beyond their natural capacity. One of the NPA officers was killed by a Medusan wielding that weapon and hopped up on *mekoha*. Estelle and Honor can think of nothing on the planet worth the investment in guns and drugs that someone has made.

- Chapter 18: Summervale escaped from the drug lab before he blew it up. He realizes that he and the lab personnel had been set up by their real employers—and why. Klaus Hauptman, head of the Hauptman cartel, is on a Crown courier boat heading toward Basilisk. Honor tries to prepare for the possibility of a mass uprising among the Stilties.
- Chapter 19: Ensign Tremaine and his crew track the rogue power feed back to Manticore's power collector on the planet. Dame Estelle realizes that some of her own people must be involved. The levels of secrecy involved in the scheme they have just penetrated, the apparent scale of drug production, and the introduction of breech-loading rifles to the natives all indicate a massive covert operation. For what purpose? Klaus Hauptman arrives and arranges to come aboard the *Fearless*. McKeon warns Honor of his reputation for ruthlessness and advises her to have a witness to whatever is said in their meeting. He volunteers. Honor appreciates the potential trouble this may cause him, but she accepts his offer.
- Chapter 20: Hauptman, immensely rich and powerful, is a self-made man and the descendant of self-made men. He objects to Honor's harassing of his interests in Basilisk. He tells her that he wants it stopped. Honor makes it clear to him that she has simply been doing her duty and that all commerce in the system has been subject to inspection and enforcement. She points out that the incidence of contraband on Hauptman's shipments is significantly above that of other firms trading with Medusa, so they are the subject of extra attention and will continue to be until they cease illegal activities. Hauptman is furious and threatens her with reprisals against her parents through his ownership interest in their medical firm. McKeon responds by threatening Hauptman with charges of treason and murder for possible collusion in the killing of NPA personnel in the raid on the drug lab. The power to that unauthorized lab was made through a shunt installed when the collector was manufactured by the Hauptman Cartel. Hauptman is forced to back down. As she escorts him off her ship, Honor tells Hauptman that if he harms her parents in any way she will challenge him to a duel and kill him.

Quiz/Reading Comprehension Questions—multiple choice/short answer questions to test reading comprehension:

1. Denver Summervale was court-martialed for (chap. 14)
 - a. smuggling
 - b. cowardice
 - c. killing a fellow officer

- d. rape
2. What is Operation Odysseus? (chap. 15)
 - a. Honor's operation to stop the smugglers
 - b. a covert operation led by powerful people in both Haven and Manticore
 - c. Dame Estelle's operation to find the truth about drug production on Medusa
 - d. McKeon's plan to take over the *Fearless* from Honor
3. When Dame Estelle's NPA forces find the hidden drug lab (chap. 17)
 - a. they capture the lab's personnel
 - b. they leave things as they are and report back without making their presence known
 - c. they destroy the lab
 - d. they suffer devastating losses because they were lured into a trap
4. What weapon does the NPA forces find at the lab site that causes Dame Estelle the most concern? (chap. 17)
 - a. a flintlock rifle
 - b. a bronze sword
 - c. a pulsar blaster
 - d. a taser gun
5. What threat does Klaus Hauptman use to try to get Honor to back away from enforcing the anti-smuggling laws against his shipping interests? (chap. 20)
6. How do McKeon and Honor force Hauptman to back down? (chap. 20)

Answers:

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. a
5. He threatens to ruin her parents through the interest his company holds in Duvalier Medical Association, their medical firm.
6. McKeon reveals that the illegal energy tap had to have taken place in one of Hauptman's factories. If Hauptman pursued his vendetta against Honor, McKeon will accuse him of treason based on this fact. Honor further tells Hauptman that if he harms her parents, she will challenge him to a duel and kill him.

GUIDE TO chapters 21-26

Prepare to Read. . .

- Familiarize yourself with the following vocabulary and terms:
 - adrenaline
 - manipulation
 - prestige
 - nefarious
 - holo
 - sacrosanct

- Focus question/Initiating activity: Have the class watch the short clip “Fear the Aliens” from *Steven Hawking’s Universe* at the Discovery Channel web site (<http://dsc.discovery.com/videos/stephen-hawkings-universe-fear-the-aliens.html>). Discuss whether you think Hawking’s fears about the probable motivations of aliens are justified. Ask them to keep Hawking’s points in mind as they read this section.

Chapter Summaries:

- Chapter 21: McKeon acknowledges that he hasn’t been much of an exec to Honor. Although she is deeply grateful for his intervention with Hauptman, she has to agree. He admits he let his personal feelings get in the way of his duty because he wanted the ship for himself. He apologizes, and they are able to go on from there on a new footing.
- Chapter 22: William Alexander, Prime Minister of the Queen’s Government, calls his brother Hamish to see if he can secretly delay Pavel Young’s return to the Basilisk System. As part of Her Majesty’s government, he wants to thwart the desires of the Opposition to use the Navy’s mishandling of the Basilisk system as an excuse to end Manticore’s annexation. Unfortunately for them, Honor’s decisive improvement in Navy operations isn’t going along with that narrative, so they are trying to get Young back to Basilisk to take over and end Honor’s command. Hamish pays a visit to a friend of his, Vice Admiral Craig Warner, who happens to be in charge of Young’s ship refit. Warner figures out a way to delay the refit long enough to keep Young away from Basilisk at the crucial time.
- Chapter 23: Countess Marissa, head of Manticore’s Medusan Affairs office, is putting pressure on Dame Estelle to cave in to the wishes of the Liberal Opposition and their merchant allies. Dame Estelle is furious with the interference, especially in light of the attack on her NPA troopers. Both Dame Estelle and Honor are encouraged by apparent support from at least some of their superiors in the Kingdom. They are aware, however, that in order to keep that support they have to deliver the parties responsible for the drug lab or at least stop the criminal activity in the system. The situation on Medusa doesn’t make sense to Honor, and she suspects some sort of covert operation. The Marines brief Honor on their plans to deploy troops planetside. She points out that the raid on the drug lab revealed that the opposition has informants within the NPA. Therefore, they come up with another deployment plan together that enables them to link all their forces in a single assault drop without tipping their hand to possible informants.
- Chapter 24: Honor is delighted to learn that Lord Pavel’s refit and return to Basilisk has been delayed by eight or more weeks. Dame Estelle calls Honor in the middle of the night to inform her of warnings from a friendly Medusan clan chief of rumors he has heard that the Delta region of Medusa is going to turn dangerous. The NPA also found a tribesman in the last stages of *mekoha* poisoning who was armed with bullets and a powder horn. Before he died, he said something about new weapons and a nomad shaman whose “hands overflow with

- holy *mekoha*.” This shaman has had a vision from the gods that tell him it’s time for the natives to drive the accursed off-worlders from the soil of Medusa, using the new, magical weapons. Honor and her colleagues realize that the covert operation they’ve been trying to understand isn’t a criminal enterprise but a deliberate attempt by someone to engineer a major native uprising and push the Kingdom off the planet.
- Chapter 25: Honor and her officers hold a council of war on how to deal with the threat of some offworld power arranging an uprising among the natives. They think the logical culprit is the Republic of Haven. Ensign Tremaine points out that there hasn’t been any Havenite space-to-surface traffic at all in almost a week. They also notice that the Havenites have had one large freighter, the *Sirius*, in orbit for weeks. The Havenite story is that the ship is in orbit awaiting repairs, but their story doesn’t add up. They figure out a way to scan the ship to get further information on what she may be up to.
 - Chapter 26: On examination they find out that the *Sirius*’s nodes are much larger than typical for a freighter. They seem to be military-grade impeller nodes, and they are powered up on stand-by. It seems that the *Sirius* is a warship disguised as a freighter.

Quiz/Reading Comprehension Questions—multiple choice/short answer questions to test reading comprehension:

1. How does the Opposition party plan to end Manticore’s annexation of Basilisk? (chap. 21)
 - a. by a vote of Manticore’s populace
 - b. by taking over the government
 - c. by appealing to the Queen’s conscience
 - d. by pointing to the Navy’s mishandling of the system
2. Hamish Alexander keeps Pavel Young from going back to Manticore by (chap. 22)
 - a. talking a friend into delaying his ship’s refit
 - b. bribing him
 - c. getting him involved in an illegal duel and thrown in jail
 - d. threatening him
3. Why does Honor change the Marines’ deployment plan for Medusa? (chap. 23)
 - a. because she knows there is an informant in the NPA
 - b. to avoid killing any of the Medusans
 - c. to space the drops so that fewer soldiers will be exposed to danger at any one time
 - d. because she wants to go in with them
4. Honor receives the news that a native shaman has had a vision from the gods. What does this vision tell him? (chap. 24)
 - a. that the gods wish them to live in peace with the off-worlders
 - b. that the planet will suffer massive earthquakes that will kill millions
 - c. that it is time for the natives to drive the accursed off-worlders from the soil of Medusa

- d. that the gods will kill all off-worlders with a plague, but they will spare the Medusans
5. Honor and her crew suspect that one of the following powers is responsible for trying to arrange a native rebellion. Which one? (chap. 25)
 - a. Silesia
 - b. the Hauptman Cartel
 - c. the Republic of Haven
 - d. the Solarian League
6. Why do Honor and her crew suspect that the Havenite ship Sirius is not a typical freighter?

Answers:

1. d
2. a
3. a
4. c
5. c
6. They have military-grade impeller nodes, and they are powered up on stand-by.

Suggested Activity/Inquiry-Based Exploration: Have your students research the history of the Ghost Dance among Native Americans. Discuss in class or have them write short papers on any parallels they see between this movement and the emerging situation with the Stilties in this section. Additional viewing: *Zulu*, starring Michael Caine, which is based on a historical battle in Africa between forces with uneven levels of technology.

GUIDE TO chapters 27-32

Prepare to Read. . .

- Familiarize yourself with the following vocabulary and terms:
 - frag jackets
 - turret
 - cumbersome
 - vector
 - deceleration
 - jettison
 - chronometer

Chapter Summaries:

- Chapter 27: An NPA patrol skimmer, scanning the Delta, finds an aircar camouflaged and hidden inside a cave opening. Suddenly, Stilties run out of the cave and start firing on the skimmer with eighteen-millimeter shells. The skimmer returns fire, but too late. They send out a message to headquarters of the attack before they go down. They manage to land, but hundreds of Medusans attack and overcome them on the ground. Informed of this attack and the fact that the

Havenite ship *Sirius* has started to move out of orbit, Honor thinks she now understands the situation. She calls her crew to battle stations and sends a message to Fleet HQ that an invasion is imminent. Honor manages to disable a Havenite courier on its way out of the system and heads after *Sirius*. She realizes that they must be heading out to rendezvous with a Havenite battle squadron or task force. She assumes that the Republic intends to use the uprising, which they secretly engineered, as an excuse to come in with a large force to take over the planet to “save civilian lives.” They will use Manticore’s alleged inability to maintain order and public safety on the planet as the excuse for their takeover. The only way to stop a potential war is to stop *Sirius*.

- Chapter 28: A contingent of Marines lands at the site where the Stilties attacked the NPA skimmer. They find that the interior of the skimmer has been splashed and daubed with blood. The natives wrecked the instruments inside and hacked up the crew. There were no survivors. The Marines then go to investigate the energy source that lured the skimmer. Thousand of drug-crazed Stilties head toward the off-worlder enclaves. Even though the Marines kill hundreds of them, they are charging so fast and so suicidally that the Marines can’t stop them. The Navy pinnaces have to kill them all from the air.
- Chapter 29: The *Sirius* is headed toward the Tellerman wave, one of the most powerful gravity waves ever charted. If *Sirius* makes it to the wave, it will carry them directly toward the People’s Republic of Haven. They will reach any Havenite battle squadron standing by at almost three thousands times the speed of light. John Coglin, captain of the *Sirius*, realizes that Honor has fully grasped Operation Odysseus and has taken action to neutralize Haven’s courier and the native attacks on the ground. That only leaves him to carry out his own part of the operation, which is now probably pointless. He has to carry through, however, because he can’t allow Honor to board his vessel. That would prove Haven was involved in the Stiltie uprising. Honor realizes that the *Sirius* is actually a Q-ship, a heavily armed vessel much larger than *Fearless*, but doggedly pursues her anyway.
- Chapter 30: *Sirius* commences firing on the badly out-gunned *Fearless*. Honor’s crew is able to evade or disable the missiles and land the first hit on *Sirius*, but *Sirius* takes out her forward impellers.
- Chapter 31: *Fearless* takes heavy damage and casualties, but the crew manages to get the impellers back on line. Coglin is amazed at the damage Honor inflicts on his ship in her single, over-aged, undersized light cruiser. Coglin is determined to utterly destroy the *Fearless* because the two ships are the only witnesses to the fact that Coglin fired the first shot, an act of war on the part of the People’s Republic. Honor allows Coglin to close on her, then brings up her grav lance and destroys his ship.
- Chapter 32: Everyone on board *Sirius* dies. Honor loses over a hundred of her own crew, more than a third of those aboard. Because of her warning, the Manticoran Navy conducts “unscheduled war games” in the Basilisk system and is there to greet the three Havenite battle squadrons who arrive on a “routine visit” six days after the uprising on Medusa. The Havenites leave Basilisk with their tails between their legs. Although *Fearless* sustained too much damage in the

battle to be repaired, the navy passes her name on to Honor's new command, the *Star Knight*-class heavy cruiser *HMS Fearless*. In recognition of her exemplary service, Honor is bumped up two full grades to Captain.

Quiz/Reading Comprehension Questions—multiple choice/short answer questions to test reading comprehension:

1. What finally sets off the native uprising? (chap. 27)
 - a. a signal from the Havenites
 - b. an NPA skimmer patrol gets too close to a cave where many of them are hidden
 - c. an unintended insult from Dame Estelle
 - d. a Manticoran officer kills a shaman
2. Honor must stop the *Sirius* at all costs because (chap. 27)
 - a. its Captain has evidence that Manticore fired the first shot and is starting a war
 - b. the ship is headed toward Medusa with thermo-nuclear warheads to destroy the planet
 - c. the ship is headed out of orbit to rendezvous with a Havenite task force to bring them back to invade the system
 - d. the ship has a company of trained fighters it plans to land on Medusa
3. When the native uprising finally starts (chap. 28)
 - a. they overrun the off-worlder enclaves and kill all foreigners
 - b. the Marines are able to stop them
 - c. the shaman is killed immediately and the natives are leaderless
 - d. the Navy pinnacles kill them all from the air before they can reach the enclaves
4. How does Honor finally defeat the *Sirius*? (chap. 31)

Answers:

1. b
2. c
3. d
4. She blows it up with her grav lance.

Suggested Activities/Inquiry Based Exploration:

- *On Basilisk Station* makes the horrors of battle clear. In the last section of the book, Honor makes the difficult decision to go up against almost impossible odds and ends up causing the deaths of over 1,600 people on both the *Sirius* and her own ship. Have your class discuss the moral implications of her decision. Do they think it was the right course of action? Why or why not?
- Weber portrays Honor Harrington as an exemplary leader. Have your students discuss or write papers on the qualities that make her such an excellent leader.

- What are her virtues? How does she win over her crew? How does she make decisions? How does her background play into her leadership qualities?
- Have your students research the genre called “military science fiction” and develop a list of its most common characteristics. Have them discuss or write a paper that deals with the following questions: What themes are typical of the genre? What characters and values are typical? How well does *On Basilisk Station* fit into this sub-genre? Why? Give specific examples to support your argument.