

Samantha Beatrice Swift



Outwardly shy and spare, unassuming in appearance Samantha Beatrice Swift (often known as 'Sam') hides a keen intellect determined to do her best. She can usually be found wearing a dark, old jumpsuit festooned with tools hunched over a computer screen or some malfunctioning piece of electronics.

Born in 2275 Samantha grew up in the sprawl of the Eastern seaboard of America, moved about repeatedly by her ambitious father Abe, an independent writer, political activist and journalist. In spite of the frequent moves Samantha grew up in an active house with a wide spectrum of family friends constantly dropping by and many lively discussions about politics and the human condition. Throughout that time Samantha suffered many small ailments which were largely alleviated by visits from anyone of a number of her father's friends who seemed to be well versed in medicine. Possessing an intelligent, well order-mind Sam frequently helped her more people orientated father research and organize his projects. As such she probably would have been destined for a life in academia or the bureaucracy had rumors and police questions not started catching up with the Swifts in the early 2290s. It seems that during his student days her father had volunteered himself and his young family to more radical friends of his who promised to bring them into "...the next stage in human evolution ..". These may have been some of the early experiments in intelligence enhancement undertaken by blacklisted researchers that led to the development of the NeoGaucher DNAM of the infamous Ekstein Affair on Triane in the late 2280s. Anyways, it was obvious to Sam that it was best to disappear for a while and her father was able to use his contacts to arrange get her a job on an outbound ship as an engineers mate.

Joining the crew of the *Rotterdam*, a Shenyang class freighter plying the Chinese Arm, Samantha was determined to make the best of the situation. She spent the next 8 years as an engineers mate where she was responsible for maintaining and fixing many of the smaller systems and equipment. To that end she spent much of her time in the workshops learning as much as she could about how things really worked. In the largely lawless and empty frontier that is the Chinese Arm the *Rotterdam* was boarded (and in some repo/rescue operations boarded others!) several times and Sam has found herself in tight scrapes both shipboard and dirtside.

Life took a fairly big turn for Samantha when soon after the destruction of Hochbaden in 2301 she was contacted by her brother and cousin who were part of the crew of the '*la Perle Noire*', an Exeter class SDB owned by Indonesian interests that had been contracted by elements of the French government for '...independent supply and scouting activities in the war zone', in short, blockade running and privateering. Outraged at the massacre at Hochbaden and thrilled at the chance for new challenges Samantha agreed to join the crew. Now as a fixer/information specialist/drive hand/spare gun Samantha saw action several times against the Kafers but she spent most of her time maintaining the ships computer systems and information databases. Fun for her, yet by 2304 lucrative opportunities fighting the Kafer threat were receding and the Indonesian masters of '*la Perle Noire*' increasingly sent the ship out on missions that more rather took advantage of the chaos that resulted from the Kafer threat. A subtle but important distinction. It is not like Samantha has an insurmountable problem with living on the grey edges of society as the turns of her life has made her unconcerned with following the letter of the law, but she is not happy about the prospects of being an actual outlaw. Now she has learned of the arrival of her father on board as a crewmember, something she finds uncomfortable. Maybe it is time to find something different to do?

It is an open question as to whether or not the medical procedures done on the Swift family actually worked, it is not as if such ...'independent researchers' had the resources for proper follow-ups and double blind tests and her parents are of high intelligence and thin stature anyways. Sam does have some of the symptoms associated with a lysosomal storage disorder, a well known side-effect of the NeoGaucher DNAM, but they are much less severe than those with than those with the full treatment. She does inject herself with small doses of enzyme replacement treatment with glucocerebrosidases about once every week or else she gets increasing muscle spasms and nausea. Exactly what is behind her medical condition is has never been documented, Samantha knows better than to let people close enough to her to ask such questions and is adept at taking care of herself. She is helped in that endeavor by a wide circle of friends and associates with similar problems that rely upon each other for help. Some of these friends are gifted in unusual ways; all have medical needs that for various reasons they would rather not go through official channels. These medicines and services are somewhat rare and sometimes valuable but Samantha is NOT a drug smuggler, most everything is legal, she and her friends just have their reasons to circumvent the usual paperwork and questions.

It is a legacy of all those long philosophical discussions with family friends while growing up is Sam's interest in new and creative solutions. That is not to say she does

not love order, indeed after the unsettled nature of her youth she craves order, but she sees the real purpose of understanding ordered systems as being to find those key focal points about which a system can be pivoted to better serve you. Sam's solution to aligning the faces on the ancient spatial-mechanical puzzle known as a 'Rubick's Cube' is to physically dismantle the cube and then rebuild it. While Sam is more than competent at computers she is just not up to the standards of being called a hacker so her expertise, and solutions, tend to be more hardware based, and creative. Once, when the hacker *h4x* tried to crack her Contacts database she installed a recursive diffracting capacitor in her system, giving the hapless rouge a massive headache, confusing and stalling him long enough for Samantha to forge some incriminating documents and call up some of her friends on the local Police force. Similarly, while Sam has never thought of herself as a frontline warrior the turns of her life have made it clear the prudence of being a steady hand when things get rough, a well placed pistol shot and a slippery opponent on the wrestling mat who long ago learned to compensate for her lack of raw physical strength with joint locks and using an opponent's momentum against them. Samantha has seen blood and shed blood, and knows the value of keeping a cool head in a crisis if only to think your way out of trouble.

Like many people she has secret fantasies about fighting off hoards of faceless Provolution abominations. On the other hand Sam is part of a quiet network people who are gifted in many ways but do have unusual medical conditions that are not readily met through traditional channels. And it is another legacy of all those long philosophical discussions with family friends that Sam also deeply believes that progress, real HUMAN PROGRESS is measured not by the number of our colony worlds nor the stutterwarp speed of our starships but rather by the changes, if need be paradigm busting changes, humanity is willing to undertake. The idea that this makes her part of the Provolution movement, at least in the eyes of many security agencies, is not one she has arrived at yet and would she vehemently reject anyways, calling such a label '...typical narrow-minded fear mongering from corrupt bureaucrats'.