

# ROGUE TRADER™

## LURE OF THE EXPANSE™



GRIM ADVENTURES OF  
PROFIT AND PERIL

WARHAMMER  
40,000  
ROLEPLAY

# ROGUE TRADER™

## LURE OF THE EXPANSE™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM  
DARKNESS OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> MILLENNIUM

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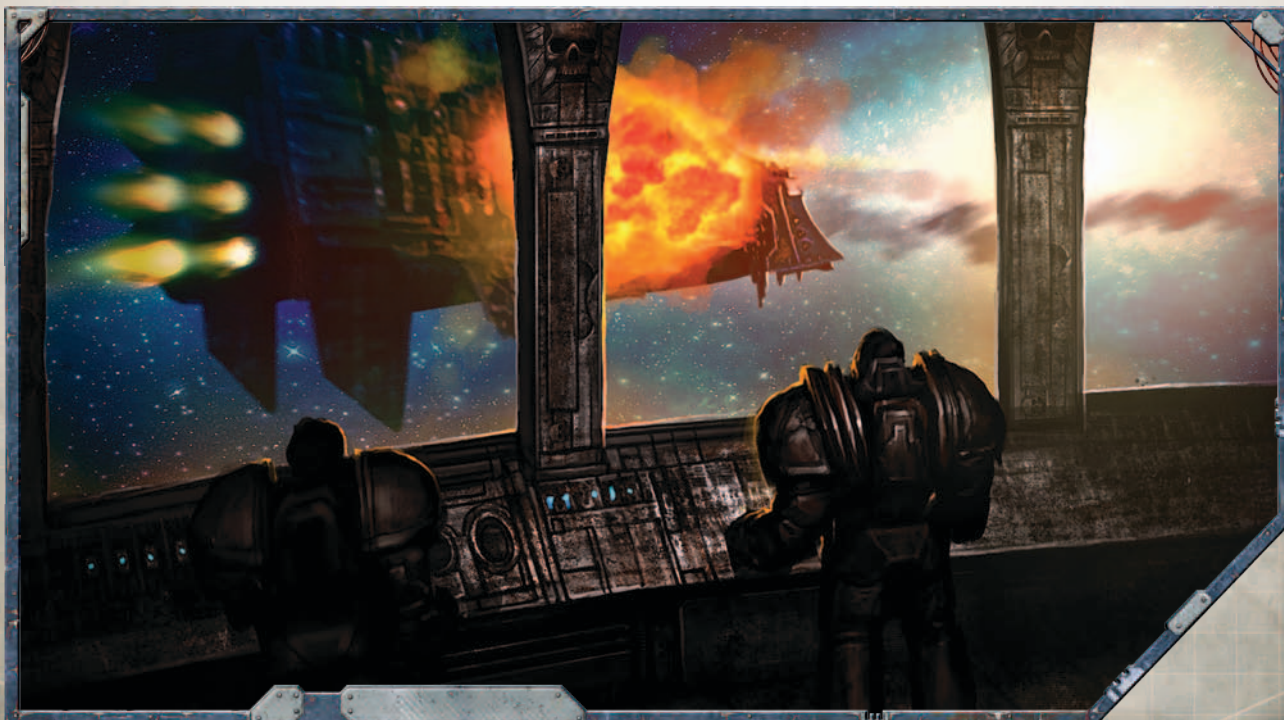
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# LURE OF THE EXPANSE

*“Rogue Traders have a thousand weapons, but the single most deadly weapon in their arsenal is their sheer, unadulterated ambition.”*

—Crew Chief Kusta Vak of the *Voidmaiden*

Welcome to **LURE OF THE EXPANSE**, a three-part adventure book that sees those who play it embroiled in a bitter competition with their rivals to be the first to reach—and take possession of—one of the greatest treasures the Koronus Expanse has to offer.

## GAME MASTER’S BRIEFING

**LURE OF THE EXPANSE** takes the form of three adventures, each linked together by a common story arc. The adventures can be played through sequentially (the conclusion of one leading straight into the opening of the next), or the action can be broken up and rearranged in any manner desired.

The adventures are set in the Koronus Expanse, an untamed region of space amongst the Halo Stars. The Explorers have come to Footfall, the first (and often the last) port of call for adventurers heading out into the Expanse. They are following a report, sent to them by a dedicated agent of their Rogue Trader House, that an opportunity of undreamed-of riches await those bold enough to seek them out.

**LURE OF THE EXPANSE** explores a range of subjects and play styles, from competition to exploration, and diplomacy to exploitation. As befits the Explorers’ role and position as the scions of a Rogue Trader House, each of these must be mastered if they are to survive—let alone profit.

At the beginning of each of the three adventures, Game Masters will find advice on how to use the adventure on its own, or integrating its events into their own campaign.

The three adventures are also linked together by an overarching Endeavour, a framework by which the GM can measure the players’ successes (and failures) and determine how adequately they should be rewarded at the end of the adventure. The Endeavour can, however, be discarded or broken into several smaller Endeavours if preferred.

## BACKGROUND SYNOPSIS

At the heart of the Lure of the Expanse story arc is the search for a long-lost, nigh-mythical world known to superstitious void-farers as the “Dread Pearl.” Unbeknownst to the Explorers, this planet is in fact a Maiden world of the Eldar, isolated by a raging warp storm ten thousand years ago. Although lost to the Eldar, a human colony now resides on their world, cast upon its shores whilst traversing the void in ages past.

However, the Dread Pearl will soon be accessible as the warp storm around it finally lifts. The details of this portentous event are

to be foretold by the much-feared ‘Seven Witches of Footfall’ in a ritual prophecy—attended only by those who can bid highly enough to earn a place at the Foretelling.

After witnessing the Fortelling, the Explorers race for the Dread Pearl and the riches it is said to harbour. But all is not as it seems, as the Explorers’ quest takes them to the distant Heathen Stars, where they must piece together the disparate parts in a puzzle, gleaned the coordinates of the planet they seek.

But claiming the treasures of the Dread Pearl will prove far from simple. The Eldar of Craftworld Kaelor and the Twilight Swords Corsairs have foreseen and prepared for the lifting of the warp storm that has enshrouded their lost Maiden world. They will seek at every opportunity to keep both the Explorers and their rivals at bay.

## Adventure One: Eye of the Needle

In the first adventure—Eye of the Needle—the Explorers arrive at Footfall and set about earning themselves a place at the Foretelling of the Seven Witches. They stake all for a chance to be one party amongst several who will learn the coordinates of the Dread Pearl, and then embark on the race to claim their treasure. Eye of the Needle focuses on greed and competition, offering the Explorers many chances to make allies and enemies amongst those who bore witness to the Fortelling. At the climax of the adventure, it is revealed that the subject of their quest is not so easily located, but by piecing together the clues left on an ancient Eldar star map at the heart of a ruined temple, the true location of the Dread Pearl might be ascertained.

Playing through Eye of the Needle takes at least two gaming sessions, but as there are a number of optional encounters provided, it could take three or more sessions, depending the GM and players.

## Adventure Two: The Heathen Trail

The second of the three adventures presents events not as a linear plot, but as five separate adventures. Each is accompanied by a detailed location gazetteer providing all the details needed to run events through to their conclusion and win a piece of the puzzle that, when added to the others, will add up to the coordinates of the Dread Pearl.

Completing the Heathen Trail is likely to take at least one gaming session per adventure.

## Adventure Three: The World Beyond

Having pieced together the location of the object of their quest, the Explorers, along with their competitors, arrive at the planet at the very moment the ten-thousand-year warp storm finally lifts. However, there is scant time to explore the mythical world before encountering the lost colonists, who believe their home is a promised afterlife. Then, the war comes to paradise, as the Eldar return to their lost Maiden World and seek to expel all of the intruders. Only the strongest and most cunning will survive. Only the boldest and most shrewd will prosper!

Completing The World Beyond will take at least two gaming sessions, but should the Explorers wish to explore, undertake diplomatic talks with their allies and rivals, or engage in protracted starship battles at the beginning of the adventure, the adventure might take three or more sessions to play through completely.



# EYE OF THE NEEDLE

EYE OF THE NEEDLE

•  
GAZETTEER:  
FOOTFALL

•  
ARRIVAL AT  
FOOTFALL

•  
THE FORTELLING  
OF THE SEVEN  
WITCHES

•  
VOYAGE TO THE  
DREAD PEARL

•  
QUPPA-PSI-12

•  
AFTERMATH

# EYE OF THE NEEDLE

*"The Expanse is a fine place to turn a profit, but a bad place to make a living, if you know what I mean..."*

—Kaldros, Writmaster of the Halos Docks

Welcome to the first of the adventures presented in **LURE OF THE EXPANSE**. This adventure is all about competition and rivalry, risking it all for a chance at glory, and then striving to hold on to that chance even as your enemies take every opportunity they can to steal it away from you!

## OVERVIEW

This adventure sees the Explorers arriving at Footfall, a den of scum that nonetheless forms the gateway to the Koronus Expanse. Footfall is introduced in **ROGUE TRADER**, and is provided in this book as a closer look at one particular area in this incredibly engaging and dangerous location. The Explorers have come to Footfall following up on a report by an agent of their dynasty—a report of an opportunity too good to miss, thus revealing the location of a legendary world strewn with riches for the taking, a world known to void-farers as the Dread Pearl.

Having settled in at Footfall (and perhaps having met one or two of its less salubrious denizens), the Explorers will have to earn the right to learn the location of the Dread Pearl. To do this, they must take their place in an auction, offering whatever they are prepared to risk in order to earn one of the few seats at the Foretelling of the Seven Witches, at which the location of the Dread Pearl will be revealed.

Once the location of the Dread Pearl is revealed to them (and to their competitors), the race is on! The Explorers set out across the Koronus Expanse in search of their fortune, facing its dangers head-on in pursuit of their hearts' desire.

But when they reach the location revealed to them by the Seven Witches, they discover not a world littered with treasure, but one teeming with lethal insect life. Hidden in the dark heart of the world's fern-forests they eventually find the Temple of Farseeing, an impossibly ancient structure housing a platform atop its crumbling form, containing a star map charting nearby worlds and the strands of fate and probability connecting them.

The Eldar, however, seek to protect the Dread Pearl from the grasping hands of Men, although the reason for this will not be revealed until the third adventure—World Beyond the Warp. Racing ahead of the Explorers and their competitors, the Eldar have reached the Temple of Farseeing, and a cadre of Warlocks are even now enacting a ritual that will remove the structure, and the star map, from time and space, placing it beyond the reach of even the most ambitious Rogue Trader. The Warlocks must be stopped at all costs, and the star

map read, with or without the aid of the competitors.

At the conclusion of Eye of the Needle, the Explorers will have discovered that the star map is incomplete, having sustained terrible damage when the Eldar civilisation collapsed. But all is not lost—although the coordinates of the Dread Pearl are unreadable, it is obvious that certain worlds are linked to the Dread Pearl by the strands of celestial fate. To discover the final position of the Dread Pearl, the Explorers will have to follow each of these strands.

## WHY ARE THEY HERE?

There are a number of ways in which the Explorers could have heard about the forthcoming Foretelling of the Seven Witches. Perhaps the best way is to have an agent of their dynasty contact them under sealed cipher and report the matter to them, suggesting in no uncertain terms that the opportunity is too good to miss. Alternatively, they could have already been inbound to Footfall (perhaps completing a hazardous trip through the Maw) and learned of the Foretelling via vox-broadcast when they arrive in-system. The broadcast could transmit rumours, or again be an agent of their dynasty stationed on Footfall.

The adventure starts off with the Explorers actually arriving at Footfall, so the decision is already made and the action can get started straight away. If the group has already played "*Into the Maw*," the introductory adventure presented in **ROGUE TRADER**, then the GM might like to use the agent of the Explorers' dynasty, Orbest Dray, or one of his compatriots as the author of the message.

If the group has played **FORSAKEN BOUNTY**, the introductory adventure booklet which can also be downloaded from the Fantasy Flight Games website, then the Explorers may well arrive at Footfall having completed the salvage operation of the *Emperor's Bounty*, and can jump straight into Eye of the Needle.

In either case, the GM needs to determine what the Explorers already know about the Foretelling and the Dread Pearl before the game begins. Page 16 covers what the Explorers already know—which isn't much, simply that there is a Foretelling by powerful psykers that will reveal the location of a valuable treasure in the Expanse. When and where this takes place (and how the Explorers can get into it), is something the players must discover.

## USING EYE OF THE NEEDLE AS A STANDALONE ADVENTURE

The focus and ultimate goal of this scenario is for the Explorers to locate the path to the Dread Pearl, as foretold during the encounter with the Seven Witches, and plunder its riches. Of course, this adventure is only the first part in a greater quest that is continued in the second adventure and concluding in third adventure later in this book. However, that is not to say that this adventure cannot be played as a standalone scenario or slightly altered to allow the GM to insert his own adventures between those detailed in this book.

The easiest way to make Eye of the Needle a standalone adventure is to replace the star map and the Dread Pearl with another kind of reward. Perhaps the foretelling points to the



## THE GRAND ENDEAVOUR: CONQUERING THE DREAD PEARL

These adventures are presented in the form of an Endeavour (ROGUE TRADER page 276). There are two different styles of Endeavour. The first is as a background effort undertaken by the players' hirelings to maintain their monetary status, while the players pursue more exciting adventures. The second is the Endeavour as an overarching meta-plot the players are actively working to complete. In this type of Endeavour, individual adventures are undertaken as facets of the Endeavour, and completing them helps the players complete the Endeavour as a whole.

**Conquering the Dread Pearl** is the second type of Endeavour. Throughout the three adventures in LURE OF THE EXPANSE, the players will be given objectives and awarded Achievement Points for taking steps that bring them closer to completing the Endeavour. They will also be given multi-part side objectives. Although these may not tie directly into the goal of finding the Dread Pearl, completing them will earn more wealth and resources.

At the end of the three adventures, the combined total of Achievement Points is totalled (see page 122). Although the initial reward for completing the Endeavour is not very high, this is intentional. If the players want to make a great deal of Profit Factor (as any Rogue Trader should), they will need to grasp as many opportunities to profit along the way as they can. According to page 279 of ROGUE TRADER, for every full 100 Achievement Points over the threshold, the players receive an additional 1 Profit Factor. Conquering the Dread Pearl was designed with this aspect of Endeavours in mind, and if the players put their minds to it they should be able to greatly exceed the Achievement Point Threshold.

On page 143, the GM has an Achievement Point tracker that measures how many Achievement Points the Explorers earned (or lost) in the course of their adventures. Though by no means mandatory, this can prove an interesting tool, especially if the players want to look back over the course of their adventures and see where they succeeded and where they failed.

### CONQUERING THE DREAD PEARL

Grand Endeavour, 3,000 Achievement Points Required, +3 Profit Factor

**Themes:** All

Once the players begin Eye of the Needle, they will be considered to be actively taking part in an Endeavour, until they either reach the Dread Pearl or fail in the attempt. There are certain aspects of the game that come into play when the players are embarked on an Endeavour, such as the ability to discard Achievement Points to raise starship Morale.

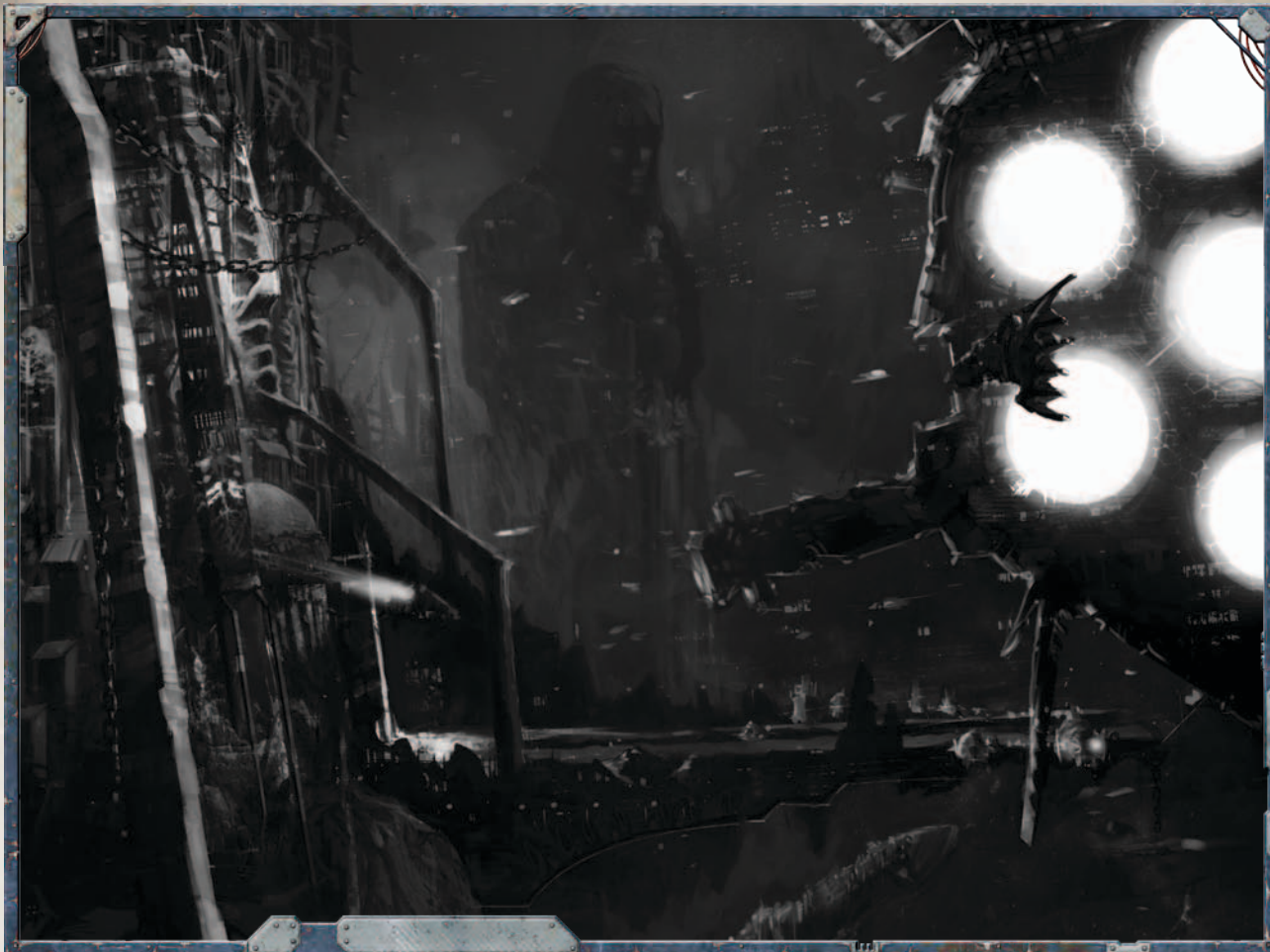
If the GM does not intend to use all three of these Adventures, he can modify this Endeavour with a simpler goal (A goal for The Heathen Trail, for example, might be: "Establish a lasting presence on several worlds in the Heathen Stars"). In this case, he should lower the amount of Achievement Points required to complete it according to any combination of the following: Eye of the Needle—750 Achievement Points required, The Heathen Trail—1500 Achievement Points required, World Beyond the Warp—750 Achievement Points required. Also lower the amount of Profit Factor to one per Adventure completed—again, the Explorers will have to seize additional opportunity to wrest Profit Factor from these adventures.



wreck of an ancient vessel, a lost Eldar artefact of great value, or even simply a world of vast natural wealth. It could also be that the world mentioned in the foretelling is in fact a long lost Imperial colony or the forgotten resting place of an ancient Imperial saint. Whatever the case, the GM can easily change the parameters of the scenario by altering the information from the foretelling and changing the star map into the treasure in and of itself. In all other respects the scenario can then be played out as normal with only very minor alterations to the plot.

Alternatively, if the GM wishes to string out the adventure or insert his own encounters and Endeavours into the plot, this can be achieved by using the rivals as plot devices. Simply have important information, artefacts or key NPCs fall into the hands of one of the Explorers' rivals from the foretelling. While the explorers chase these important pieces of the plot the GM can lead them into his own adventures.





## GAZETTEER: FOOTFALL

*“Footfall is a fine place to do business and conduct trade—far from the pointless rules and needless taxes of more ‘civilised’ ports.”*

—Hadarak Fel, Lord Captain of the *Fel Hand*

**E**stablished in 410.M41 by the Rogue Trader Parsimus Dewain, Footfall is a void-port located on the far end of the Maw, the vast warp-passage linking the Calixis Sector with the Koronus Expanse. It orbits the immense star Furibundus, a collection of haphazard structures built into a clutch of asteroids, and protected from the star’s fury by layers of void shields. It is a rough and uncivilized locale, where the mighty rule by force of arms and the weak scabble to survive. However, it is also the beginning of uncountable adventures into the Expanse.

Footfall is a big place, and much larger than the scope of this adventure. Regardless, the GM should feel free to flesh out the Explorers’ time here if he so desires or introduce them to the variety of nefarious characters and organisations that call this remote, forsaken waypoint home. Presented here is a brief overview of the major locales and

inhabitants of Footfall—though far from exhaustive, it should provide the players with a sense of the squalor and grandeur of this most unusual of ports.

### THE LAY OF THE LAND

Footfall is an irregular growth of towers, domes and docking gantries that hangs in the void like a lump of jagged stone. From its founding, Footfall has grown by the unplanned accumulation of structures built by the various groups and cults that have made it their home. As further structures are grafted on, the previous structures may be partially rebuilt or repurposed and so the internal and external layout of Footfall shifts and changes with the decades. Some structures have endured for long enough that they remain firm features that define this strange place even as Footfall grows and changes, and the means by which irregular visitors may gain some sense of permanence between visits.

### THE PIT OF VOICES

Claimed by the outcast astropaths of Footfall, the exterior structure of the Pit of Voices looks as much like a collapsed dome as anything else. The interior is a steep tiered arena and maze of cells beneath, gravity plated at an unsettling angle, and set with gargoyles pillaged from the frozen exterior stonework. Incense burns constantly, and a litter of occult devices is strewn about the floors.

## THE BONEYARD

The waste of Footfall—along with quite a few unlucky murder victims—all end up in the Boneyard, an open, frozen midden in the void beyond the structures. The Bonepickers of Footfall, clad in paltry or improvised voidsuits, pick through the debris and corpses in search of what little value remains. Useless waste is propelled away from Footfall by human effort, drifting slowly to pass through the weak void-shields and away into Furibundus's embrace.

## THE CHAPEL OF THE THIRD CONGREGANTS

The Chapel of the Third Congregants is an imposing, void-pitted structure of spreading bastions and leering gargoyles that floats unconnected to the rest of Footfall. Within, every surface is crowded with statues, sepulchres, and saints' shrines. Worshippers come and go in a procession of gigs, cramped passenger craft that are little more than a seal-gate and gas expeller for propulsion.

## HAB-FANES

The largest hab-structures in Footfall look like ornate temples, their crenelated exteriors encrusted with crystal mosaics of Imperial saints and grimacing gargoyles. Open spaces within are divided haphazardly by cloth and metalwork, uncounted masses packed close in an ever-changing three-dimensional maze. Here are the poor, the menials, and the lesser outcast factions.

## LIEGE'S COURT

One of the oldest structures in Footfall, these regal transepts and pillared, ornate halls are where the Liege receives those of sufficient importance to warrant a formal welcome. The Liege's throne is beauteous alabaster, an ancient masterwork engraved with a hundred scenes of the God-Emperor's victories, said to have been looted from the wreck of a warship during a long-ago war, and equipped with embedded field generators to shield its delicate surface.

## MACROSTATUE OF THE GOD-EMPEROR

The stern visage of the God-Emperor watches over Footfall. His vast statue floats at the very centre of the community, close to the size of the greatest vessel of Battlefleet Calixis, linked to twenty structures by massive void-steel chains. The statue and its plinth are hollowed by chambers, but no-one dares dwell within. The macrostatue is a point of pilgrimage for the faithful who yearn to see the God-Emperor stare out across unclaimed voids that will one day be His.

## THE RED SCHOLA

A monolithic slab without decoration, the Red Schola is the slave-hold of the Tutors, a cabal of mysterious slave masters who have made Footfall their base of operations. Within their sealed edifice, the Tutors create slave servants using a variety of cruel and esoteric methods: noetic induction, the breaking of self, torture, ritual branding and hypno-conditioning. Few know what horrors lie behind its void-steel portals, but few who can afford them question the quality of the slaves produced by the Red Schola. Whether one requires a delicate courtesan assassin sculpted in the image of an Imperial Saint or a cohort of mute, slab-muscled stranglers, the Red Schola can provide.

## SHIELD SHRINES

The void shields that protect Footfall are projected from three Shield Shrines. Each is a cubic, metal Machine Temple marked with the raised cog of the Mechanicus upon each face and linked to Footfall by a coiling umbilical passage. The Shrines are well-defended inside and out by servitor-crewed weapon systems.

## THE SPIRE OF INTOXICANTS

The Spire is the only location in Footfall where narco-tribe gangers are willing to trade their drugs and allow outsiders to participate in their rituals. It is a trade-space, laden with chemical fumes and strange artefacts, some carried from the far reaches of the Koronus Expanse and given to the narco-tribesmen in payment.

## THE XENOSIUM

Considered accursed by many, the Xenosium is a dwelling place intended for the alien. Great upheaval attended the construction of the Xenosium, built at the order of Parsimus Dewain near the end of his life. It is made in the fashion of a prison-fortress—thick-walled and psy-warded. Void-weathered statues with stern faces look inwards at each corner. Often is said that no human has set foot inside for centuries, but on several occasions, Rogue Traders have brought xenos representatives to Footfall—sentient alien beings, not the beast-traffic intended for circuses and xenosepts—and housed them within the Xenosium. No one seems certain whether or not the Xenosium is presently empty.

## THE BALANCE OF POWER IN FOOTFALL

No one rules Footfall, not truly. The masters of the most successful of Footfall's concerns nominate an individual who is referred to as the Liege. By tradition the Liege disburses offerings of stone and supplies brought by Rogue Traders. However, traditionally a Liege is subservient to any who bears

a Warrant of Trade. This makes even the least Rogue Trader higher on the pecking order than the Liege of Footfall, though in practice, this can prove difficult to enforce. However, a Liege is only Liege for so long as he can defend his position, and many have been leaders of murderous scum, employing cruel guards and ruthless enforcers to make their will known. Each was the latest criminal to have killed his way to what he thought is the top of the heap, realising too late just how wrong he was.

The true powers of Footfall are shadowy organisations, any one of which will murder a Liege who strays beyond his traditional role. Prime amongst these are the owners of Footfall's gambling dens, bordellos, and the wealthiest traders and smugglers whose wealth and position is created by the traffic of explorers and the treasures they return with. Beside these are other, more secretive powers such as Crew Brotherhoods who spy and who report back to the Administratum, Navis Nobilite, Ministorum, or Battlefleet paymasters. Others include agents of the Drusus Marches, crime barons, and gossip mongers. Their trade is information, and they are largely the reason that Footfall still exists.

A hundred groups and individuals make their home in Footfall there, each with its own goals and purposes. If there is one constant in Footfall, it is that power is fragile and can be quickly overturned. The wise of Footfall remember that the victors of today are the slaves of tomorrow and the vengeful assassins of the day after: memories are long, and misdeeds repaid in kind.

## THE BLACK BROTHERHOOD

The disparate members of the Black Brotherhood live from day to day as hired thugs and violent thieves, its members identified by crude black tattoos made using the traditional, painful low-decks method. Collectively the Black Brotherhood knows much about the movements of vessels in the Koronus Expanse, but Thrones must change hands to hear any of it.

Due to their trade as thugs, the Black Brotherhood is most closely tied to the workings of the Kasballica Mission on Footfall, though they are open to hire and manipulation by any with coin or cunning enough. Proud as sin, but with little effective leadership, the Black Brotherhood sometimes find themselves the tool of more cunning players.

## THE KASBALLICA MISSION

The Kasballica, a great shadow-conclave of Drusus Marches crime barons, watches the exploration of the Halo Stars with interest. The Cold Trade in xenos artefacts (such as rainbow-sheen materials from dead worlds of the Egarian Dominion) spreads from the Koronus Passage to run throughout the Calixis Sector and is a fountain of wealth for Kasballica factions. The crime barons send trusted retainers into the Maw to cultivate Rogue Traders and ensure that a sufficient cut of the Cold Trade flows into their coffers. The Kasballica Mission in Footfall consists of skilled negotiators, ruthless enforcers, and merchants of forbidden goods and services. If the price is right they can provide, purchase, or arrange transport for almost anything.

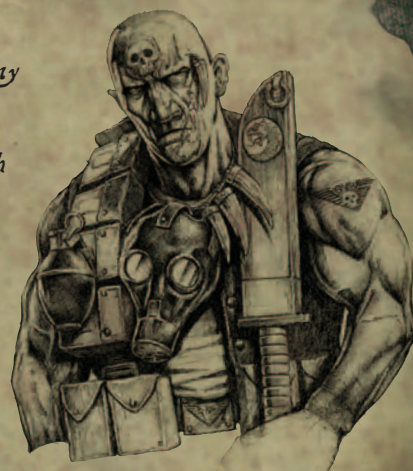
## OBSIDIAN EMPORIAL

The Obsidian Emporial is a bidding house of some fame in Footfall and the greater Expanse. Run by the mysterious and quite discerning Intercessors, the Obsidian Emporial provides a select few individuals with a place to sell items or information too rare and valuable for a trade-deck stall. The Intercessors organise auctions and manage deals, payments, and collections. Often, unless they wish otherwise, neither the buyer nor the seller will even know whom the other are.

### *The Narco-tribes*

*The Narco-tribes of Footfall are blood descendants of men and woman brought back from worlds within the Koronus Expanse, mingled with the blood of those who have come to Footfall from the Calixis Sector. The culture and traditions of the narco-tribes are a feral melting pot of strange drugs, heathen rituals, and violent contests of fighting skill.*

*Narco-tribe drugs affect perception and memory; many narco-tribesmen live all their life in a world removed from reality, and are dangerously unpredictable. Each narco-tribe is distinguished by the patterns of scars made of hot brands on the faces of tribesmen. There is great rivalry between narco-tribes of different skin-brands, and violence and bloody vendetta are common between them.*



## THE SEVEN WITCHES

Few things scare the hardened scum of Footfall like the Seven Witches: hidden psykers who curse the fates of all that cross them. Few know anything more of the Seven Witches and their servants, but some powerful Rogue Traders have sought them out for council, or so that they will augur what awaits them in the Expanse.

The witches never leave their inner Sanctum. However, on occasion their silent and implacable guards appear at the Liege's Court bearing scraps of soiled parchment. These missives contain demands and cryptic warnings of doom the powers of Footfall treat with great seriousness.

The Obsidian Emporial does not wield any obvious power in Footfall. However, none of the other factions are willing to cross it, and those few whom have failed to pay their debts to the Intercessors eventually and inevitably vanish.

## THE TUTORS

The Tutors are a cabal of slavers and probable heretics who fled to Footfall long ago and have made it their primary centre for their business—the acquisition, re-moulding, and selling of the finest and most specialised slaves available. Cruel and methodical slavers, the Tutors use a variety of methods within their fastness of the Red Schola to break and then educate slaves to be sold as tongueless savants, spies, bodyguards, and ritual torturers.

## THE ASTRAL KNIVES

A small clan of this secretive void-born death cult came to Footfall in 795.M41, in the wake of their persecution by the Inquisition in the Calixis Sector. As well as serving as killers-for-hire, the Astral Knives' doctrine is to ritually assassinate those whom omens and the tarot indicate to be corrupt, so as to preserve the God-Emperor's protection on those who must brave the warp. Since coming to Footfall, the cult has quietly flourished, and has gained a shadowed reputation as a faction both dangerous and powerful. As such, the Astral Knives are cultivated as contacts by many of those who know of their existence, often in the hopes that a steady stream of rich murder-compacts will prevent a sacrificial fate befalling them in turn.

## THE DRUSIANS

Especially fervent members of the sanctioned Drusian cult whose origins lay within the Calixis Sector, this extremist orthodox Imperial faction believes that the crusade of Saint Drusus is eternally taken up by the faithful, and to stop at the present boundaries of the Drusus Marches is an unforgivable heresy. Fiery preachers in black sackcloth robes, the Drusians are a common sight in parts of Footfall, extolling the masses to press ever onwards and even going so far as to petition Rogue Traders to carry colonists and missionaries out to

found new worlds in the Koronus Expanse. The iron nature of the Drusian creed is unbending and draws them into conflicts with many of Footfall's other factions, including the Tutors—who have in the past culled the Drusian Missionary flock to stock the Red Schola with fresh slaves.

## THE TRUE PATH

Heretics who reject orthodox Ministorum teachings sometimes seek out xenos beings, believing them messengers of the God-Emperor, keepers of lost Imperial legacies, or potential converts to the True Faith. Visionaries of this ilk have made their way to Footfall over the centuries, establishing small and short-lived sects that eventually merged to become the True Path of xenos-worshippers. The theology of these adherents is fractured and ever-changing, and few will ever have the chance to meet with the objects of their worship, as the True Path is much reviled and often persecuted.

## DISCIPLES OF THE DARK GODS

Servant of the Ruinous Powers and desperate cultists who pray to the Dark Gods are also hidden amongst the faithful on Footfall, often remnants of the past when renegade vessels sometimes came to Footfall, either openly flaunting their dark allegiances or hiding their true colours. These festering groups and malign cells all have their own despicable agendas and many hold a fierce loathing and murderous spite for Rogue Trader crews, those who hold to the Imperial Creed, and even those who simply do not follow their own dark causes.

## LEADERS, ROGUES, FOOLS, AND PROPHETS

When a Rogue Trader holds court in Footfall, some faces naturally stand out from the crowd: the agents of powerful factions, providers of goods and services unavailable within the Imperium, and representatives of rival Rogue Traders.

## LIEGE TANTHUS MOROSS

Moross was an ill-tempered, machine-enhanced recidivist until he abruptly murdered the last Liege during a confrontation between factions in 808.M41. As Footfall's Liege, Moross has lasted longer than most, perhaps because his horizons are narrow. He has shown little interest in attempting to control the port, and far greater regard for collecting bribes from factions who enjoy this state of affairs. He uses this wealth to purchase concubines from the Tutors and increasingly ornate augmentations.

Moross is now almost a vehicle in human form, a strange sight indeed amidst the silks of his audience bedchamber, surrounded by fearful slaves. Suspicious minds wonder what is hidden behind this brute of a figurehead—and whether he is truly as simple as he seems.

## VLADAYM TOCARA

A senior negotiator for the Kasballica, Tocara dresses severely—grey bodysuit, small silver Aquila, thin data-slate, shaven head—and never smiles. Attended by armoured Kasballica enforcers, Tocara is always present at the Liege's Court to pay his respects to a newly arrived Rogue Trader, his adherence to the forms of tradition precise and efficient.

Vladaym Tocara is the gateway to a vast array of illegal services, hidden information, and dangerous goods secreted in caches upon Footfall, but the price is always high. In particular, Tocara seeks greater formal ties between Rogue Traders and his masters, and influence upon the flow of xenos technology and Halo Artefacts into the Cold Trade. He actively seeks out newly arrived Rogue Traders, introducing himself and cautiously exploring their potential interest in less-than-legal enterprises.

In all of the adventures in *Lure of the Expanse*, Tocara can prove to be a very useful character. During *Eye of the Needle* he can be a potential source of information about the Fortelling or Obsidian Emporial. In *The Heathen Trail*, his connections can aid in setting up smuggling routes from Vaporius into the Calixis Sector, and in the conclusion of *World Beyond the Warp*, he can aid in selling Eldar artefacts through the Cold Trade—the proscribed trade of xenos items in the Calixis Sector.



## CALCUS CALINNICUS

Calcus Calinnicus is a vat-muscled thug with a taste for narco-tribe drugs and whose word is considered unbreakable. Calinnicus is the nearest thing the Black Brotherhood have to a leader—a bully on the surface but possessed of a core of iron. Calinnicus is a murderer fifty times over, a number that would be much higher if he didn't prefer to leave his victims crippled but alive, "So the scum can think over their mistakes." He reserves his worst for those who break their word, no matter what the circumstances.

## ATTAR SOLOKET

A burnt out astropath, Attar Soloket has become a soothsayer and cult leader who has drawn around her a small coven of wyrdlings and madmen with whom she claims to share great secrets of events yet to come to pass. Her nerves damaged by telepathic strain, Soloket obsessively orders every aspect of her life by the Emperor's Tarot, refusing to deal with those marked as bearing ill. Soloket dwells in a cramped, candlelit hold of Footfall with her disciples. Despite the strangeness of her claims, many come in secret to the prophetess soothsayer and leave again with answers and the offering plate held in Soloket's hands filled with gold.

## PREACHER YWANE

Preacher Ywane is in fact not a true priest of the Ecclesiarchy but a weak-willed fool, driven by a surfeit of opinions but lacking in the stomach or true conviction to follow them through. Years ago, Ywane went by another name, and it is said fled from some debt or misfortune and came to Footfall, where

he found the Light of the Emperor and ordained himself as a "preacher of the Emperor's Truth." He has subsequently tried to build himself a position of political and moral authority in Footfall but has so far failed to achieve anything beyond becoming the spineless tool of others. He is also an ally of the Kasballica Mission, a fact that he believes is a complete secret but is in fact widely known, and acts as their mouthpiece in the Liege's Court. This cowardly alliance has in no small way kept the false preacher alive through years of foolery and mischance.

## THE PROVISOR

The Provisor is a member of the sinister slavers known as the Tutors. The Provisor is the intermediary through which most that have dealings with the masters of the Red Schola come to an arrangement. A disturbing figure, the features of the Provisor's face are pushed out of place by the tubing of life-preserving bionics which snake all around his body, swathed in dark grey robes hemmed with deepest red.

The Provisor is calculating, scrupulous to a fault in business dealings, and utterly ruthless when the opportunity arises to exploit the oversights of others. More than one potential slave owner has failed to carefully plan his transaction with the Tutors and been enslaved and broken for his carelessness.

# ARRIVAL AT FOOTFALL

*“Every Imperial port has its own special charm and appeal—  
Footfall’s seems to be its complete lack of either.”*

—Hress Gort, Deckmaster on the *Emperor’s Truth*

The adventure begins with the Explorers arriving at Footfall. The GM can start the action at any point, from the Explorers’ vessel arriving in-system to the docking itself, drawing on the skills of various Explorers engaging in activities from convincing Footfall’s corrupt and trigger-happy gunnery crews not to fire upon their vessel to the tricky docking manoeuvre itself. However, the most cinematic introduction to Footfall (and the most engaging way to kick off the adventure) is to describe the sight the Explorers are greeted with as they haul open the airlock and step onto the docking plates. If the GM wants to start things off like this, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*With an angry burst of venting gases, the armoured airlock portal swings outwards. As the swirling miasma clears, a thousand sights, sounds and smells assault your senses simultaneously. Stepping through, you find yourself in a huge, vaulted space, the walls made of roughly-hewn stone dripping with the corruption of ages. This is the Footfall longshore, and it is crowded with hundreds of void-farers, labourers, servitors, merchants, and scum—all swearing, grunting or calling out the values of their wares. If you expected a welcoming party, you’re disappointed—this is Footfall, where money and blood are the only currency. Are you ready to make your fortune?*

## ENCOUNTERS AND LOCATIONS

Having described the sights, sounds and indeed smells that greet the Explorers, the GM can allow them to explore Footfall at their leisure, using the gazetteer presented on pages 8-12. There are plenty of places for them to visit, many of which can be used to set the scene and provide an introduction to this lawless, outlandish place. Provided in the next few pages are a number of sample encounters that can be used to further events, and no doubt more will suggest themselves as the gaming session proceeds. There is no need to use all of these encounters if they are not all needed, but the last one is designed to provide a subtle foreshadowing of events yet to come to pass.

## EATERS OF THE DEAD (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Footfall is far removed from the rigid laws that govern the Imperium’s domains. One of the most jarring differences that will confront the Explorers is the fact that various alien races appear to be tolerated, even integrated, into what passes as society here. At some point in their visit to Footfall, just such a group will approach the Explorers.

A **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** will reveal that the aliens are Kroot. Passing the test by one degree of success will establish that the aliens are mercenaries from a far distant region of the galaxy, while two degrees of success will also dredge up rumours of their disturbing habit of eating the flesh of defeated enemies.

The profiles for Kroot Mercenaries are found on page 377 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook. There are four Kroot.

The Kroot, being mercenaries, are seeking employment, offering their services to those who would pay the highest price. The best time and place for this encounter to occur is therefore soon after the Explorers’ arrival, and in the vicinity of the docks, as the Kroot take the opportunity to approach the newly arrived voidfarers. The Kroot will approach the Explorers, and one will attempt to address them.

How the GM chooses to game the encounter is up to them, and it could certainly prove entertaining to roleplay. The Kroot speak only rudimentary Low Gothic, their speech punctuated by all manner of bizarre hoots and whistles that betray their avian ancestry. The Explorers need to decipher what the



aliens are saying, by way of a **Ordinary (+10) Speak (Low Gothic) Test**. Feel free to award positive modifiers to any players that attempt to mimic a Kroot accent!

Assuming both parties can make themselves understood, it will transpire that the Kroot are offering their services as bodyguards for the duration that the Explorers are on Footfall. They can also fulfil the role of guides, but only to a limited degree. There will follow a bartering session, in which the Kroot will request various items of equipment in return for their services, including weapons and ammunition. Either roleplay this exchange, resolve it by way of an Opposed Commerce Test, or combine the two, awarding bonuses for good roleplaying (and convincing Kroot accents!). The Explorers should not have any problem with the cost, as they will have most of the items stashed in the weapons lockers of their vessel. If the GM likes of course, this can be used as an excuse to get the party exploring, sending them off in search of the items the Kroot request.

At some point during, or perhaps soon after the negotiation, a group of six drunken Voidfarers (page 371 of **ROGUE TRADER**) will decide to pick a fight with the Explorers (or integrate this with the next encounter—Longshore Bullies—if preferred). If the Kroot have been hired on, they will attack the drunkards with ruthless savagery, slaying them in short order, with or without the Explorers' aid. If the Kroot have not been hired, they soon get dragged into the fight as the entire area erupts in an anarchic brawl. When eventually the dust clears, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As the last of the drunken voidfarers is put down, the Kroot leap forward. A great commotion goes up amongst the crowd that had gathered to watch the brief combat, with many stalking off while filling the air with disgusted curses, and others drawing in with morbid fascination. In a moment, you find out why. The Kroot are now squatted over those they have slain, and each is butchering his victim with a wickedly curved knife. Someone in the crowd vomits loudly, while others cheer as if watching some twisted bloodsport. As one, the Kroot let out a warbling cry, plunging their claws into the wounds they have cut. With the terrible sound of rending meat, the Kroot draw out the dripping organs of the defeated, and each takes a single bite of the still pulsing meat.*

The Kroot are oblivious to the crowd's reaction. If the Explorers hired, or go on to hire them, the aliens will simply take up positions behind them. If their services were not engaged, the Kroot simply nod to the Explorers, and wander off through the crowd, who mutter angrily but part before them nonetheless. In a disgusted tone, a member of the crowd spits out, "Welcome to the Expanse."

## HOW MUCH DO THEY ALREADY KNOW?

Upon their arrival at Footfall, the Explorers know very little about the opportunity that has been communicated to them. They have been told that the coordinates of a legendary treasure planet, known to superstitious void-farers as the 'Dread Pearl' are soon to be revealed. Word has further reached them that the location of the treasure planet will be prophesied by the much-feared Seven Witches of Footfall, in a ritual referred to by the Explorers' agent (the identity of the agent is left up for the GM to determine) as the Foretelling. The Foretelling promises to be an exclusive event, and very few will be able to witness it. The rest, the Explorers will have to discover for themselves. High on the list of things to learn is when the Foretelling is taking place, and what they have to do to get into it. They may also want to know whom these Seven Witches are.

## LONGSHORE BULLIES (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Footfall's docks are served by a staggering range of assorted scum, mind-slaved labourers, h-gauge servitors and those just plain down on their luck and out of options. As the Explorers make their way through the bustling longshore, they will be confronted with many such individuals. Most will recognise the Explorers' obvious pedigree, for Rogue Traders and their companions generally comport themselves in such a manner that dock-scum give them a respectfully wide berth. There are always some, however, who will try their luck.

As the Explorers are negotiating a particularly crowded stretch of longshore, an area strewn with cargo containers and bustling with labourers, they are noticed by the leaders of the local 'underground.' These are recidivist scum, nominally overseers and supervisors of the other longshoremen, but in reality they boss the others around rather than do any work themselves. Instead, they keep an eye out for the main chance, skimming what they see as their fair share of cargoes passing through, imposing their own brand of taxation on other dock users, and generally extorting goods and funds wherever they can. The Explorers are clearly new in Footfall, and therefore ripe for the picking.

Have the party make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** as they pass along the crowded longshore. A success means they become aware that they are being watched, while a failure means they will be taken by surprise when the scum make their move. There are three of the bullies in total; two have the profile given for Scum on page 371 of **ROGUE TRADER**. The leader is a mountain of a man and has the same profile, but with 12 Wounds.

As the Explorers draw near, the leader, who is leaning nonchalantly against a battered cargo crate, will make a seemingly casual, disparaging remark regarding the heritage and personal hygiene of one of the Explorers (the GM should consider using a highborn character, or an easily offended



breasted uniform, bedecked with epaulettes, gold piping and a vast array of rank insignia. Each has the profile of a Scum—see page 371 of **ROGUE TRADER**. An Explorer passing a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** or an **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (Imperial Navy) Test** will notice that the uniforms are distinctly mismatched. Passing the test by one degree of success will reveal that the insignias each ‘officer’ wears are inconsistent. Passing the test by two or more degrees of success means that the Explorer has noticed that one of the men is wearing the epaulettes of a Grand Admiral of Battlefleet Calixis!

The bogus officials will request, politely, but firmly, that the Explorers accompany them to the offices of the “Administratum Oeconomica Imperialis.” In the unlikely event that the Explorers fall for this, the “Administratum” turns out to be a dark corner of a cargo staging area, conveniently away from any potential witnesses.

The bogus officials are used to getting their way by intimidation and trickery, so they won’t automatically resort to violence. If things don’t go their way, the fake officials will make all manner of threats, citing their contacts amongst the powers that run Footfall and threatening to make the Explorers’ lives very difficult indeed if they don’t pay their dues. Just what the fake officials demand is up to the GM, or it might be a case of seeing what the Explorers are willing to offer (if anything) and allow them to make a **Challenging (+0) Fellowship Test** to determine the officials’ response.

If the Explorers decide they aren’t having any of this, the officials will make one last, very serious threat, before making a break for it. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*“You don’t want to mess with the likes of us, Rogue Trader. Just remember who controls the gunnery turrets. You’ll have to leave sometime, and when you do, we’ll be watching!”*

With that, the bogus officials will flee. Make a note of the result of this encounter, as it will come back to haunt the Explorers when they eventually leave Footfall.

## THE WATCHER (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

This event should occur shortly after the Explorers’ arrival at Footfall and is actually less of an encounter and more of a chance sighting. Have the Explorers make a **Difficult (–10) Awareness Test**. If they pass, they see a hooded figure watching them from across the bustling thoroughfare, before slipping away into the crowd. Passing the test by one or more degrees of success will reveal that the mysterious watcher may not be human. A successful **Difficult (–10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** will further reveal that the figure is an Eldar. Whatever happens, the Explorers will not be able to pick up the watcher’s trail, though the GM could of course lead them on a merry dance through the seedy underbelly of Footfall before they find that out.

player!). The other two bullies snicker nastily, and the three wait to see what the Explorers’ reaction will be. If things go against the scum, the leader will be able to call upon a couple of nearby Servitor Drones—see page 375 of **ROGUE TRADER**. Like all bullies, however, if things start to go really wrong, the group are unlikely to stick around. If the leader is taken out, the other two will flee immediately.

Regardless of the outcome of this encounter, the GM might like to file it away for future use. Perhaps next time the Explorers pass through Footfall again, they find the longshoremen have an unreasonable dislike of them, or perhaps items of cargo go missing. Having the Explorers make a few enemies amongst Footfall’s lowborn criminal fraternity might prove useful in a future campaign, especially if the leader of the bullies later becomes a noted crime boss!

## THE ADMINISTRATUM OECONOMICA IMPERIALIS (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

Footfall is an anarchic and lawless place, with very little in the way of an organised administration. Instead, it is effectually ruled by whichever faction is the strongest at that particular moment in time. Of course, the Explorers may not know this, allowing the unscrupulous to take advantage of them.

Soon after their arrival at Footfall, the Explorers are approached by a group of five individuals who appear to be local tithe officials. Each is wearing a high-collared, double-



# FOLLOWING RUMOURS

*"Lies, slander, and more damn lies. No one wants the truth, my friend, the truth is boring, and usually turns out to be a lie anyway..."*

—Petre, Footfall Blathermonger

Having introduced the Explorers to Footfall, it will soon be time for them to go about the serious business of pursuing their fortune—that's why they're here after all! The Explorers are following up on the rumour of the Foretelling that has brought them to Footfall, an event they know has the potential to make them all very rich indeed. Hopefully, the players will know better than to simply blunder about asking unsubtle questions (if they don't know better than to simply blunder about asking unsubtle questions, have a dozen or so Scum beset them, wanting to know why they're sticking their noses in other peoples' business). After all, they know that the Foretelling is a rare opportunity, and they won't want to blab about it to potential rivals.

**Objective:** Learn the location and time of the Fortelling.

**Themes:** Criminal.

## RUMOUR- MONGERING

So, the Explorers need to find out about the Foretelling—where and when will it occur? What form will it take? They have scant information to go on, and will need some solid facts. The following presents a number of ways of providing this information, through the form of events and encounters. If the GM finds that the Explorers have all the information they need after only one or two such encounters, then feel free to proceed to the next phase—unless of course everyone's enjoying the skulduggery!

### A FORMAL OCCASION (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

Although Footfall is technically controlled by its "Liege," one of the central tenets of the station is that it is controlled by the most powerful Rogue Trader currently in residence. Of course, that control can be fairly tenuous, and a Rogue Trader attempting to issue orders to most of Footfall's established organisations will likely find himself ignored or politely redirected—or, if weak enough, quietly eliminated. Even so, most Rogue Traders are afforded a certain amount of pomp and ceremony on arrival to the station, a tribute to their theoretical power.

Soon after the Explorers arrive, they will be approached by a servo-skull buzzing slowly through the main thoroughfares. The servo-skull has been keyed to recognise the Explorers' images (though if they do anything to disguise themselves, it will not find them). When it spots them, it will approach, hover before them, and project a recording in front of them. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The static-filled image resolves into a monstrous brute, a vaguely man-shaped creature consisting almost entirely of exquisitely crafted bionic augmentations. Even his face has been re-crafted into a stylised death's head of chased silver, though the eyes remain disturbingly human. When he speaks, however, his voice is surprisingly soft.*

*"Greetings, honoured Rogue Traders. My name is Tanthus Moross, Liege of Footfall, and it gives me pleasure to welcome you here, amongst so many of your august companions. If you so desire, would you honour the nobility of Footfall with your presence at a small celebratory meal tonight?"*

If the Explorers agree, the recording terminates, and the servo-skull sends directions and other information to one of the Explorers' data-slates, and departs.

The occasion is hosted in the Liege's Court (see page 9), and should take place several hours after the Explorers receive the invitation. When they arrive,

armsmen with lasguns greet them and wave them through the large double doors to the Court. The Explorers' identities are known throughout Footfall at this point.

The Explorers find themselves in a large atrium with massive, gothic-arched viewports that provide a stunning (and properly shielded) view of Furibundus. They should be some of the last guests to arrive—the hall is full of the individuals that make up the elite of Footfall. Preacher Ywane, Vladaym Tocara, and the Provisor of the Tutors are amongst those who will be there, as will any number of criminals, merchant factors, pirates, fences, and other individuals. Any Explorer with a background in Imperial nobility will notice that most of those here attempt to mimic Imperial high fashion and finery, with varying degrees of success. In general, most are unable to disguise that they are dangerous and barbaric, though well-dressed, individuals.

There are also likely to be several Rogue Traders present at the dinner, and these may include some of the Explorer's future rivals (see pages 24-29). It is up to the GM which individuals he wants to introduce at this point, although none of them will reveal why they have come to Footfall, and will discretely deflect any queries about the Foretelling.

Tanthus Moross is holding

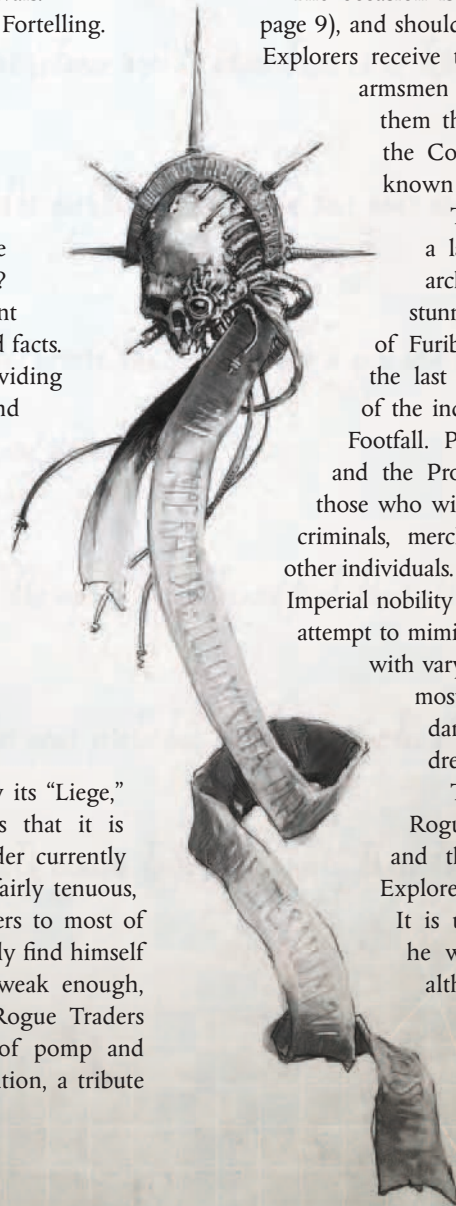


TABLE 1-1: THE ENTREES

Food Item	Inquiry Bonus	Effects of Consumption
Voidburned Winterscale Creeper with Rakken Brain Sauce (not too dangerous, just generally disgusting)	+10	<b>Challenging (+0) Toughness Test</b> or suffer cramps: -1 TB and SB for 1d5 hours
Live Dolorium Throat Crab (hard to keep down)	+20	<b>Challenging (+0) Strength Test</b> or vomit uncontrollably for 1d10 minutes and suffer 1d10 points of damage (not reduced for Toughness or Armour)
Shardspider Eggs in Promethium Soup (mind the sharp bits and try not to smoke afterwards)	+30	<b>Difficult (-10) Perception Test</b> or internal bleeding and 2d10 damage to Toughness until medical attention is received
Jerazol Brain-Fluke braised in Ork Spinal Fluid (don't let it get onto your brain stem)	+40	<b>Hard (-20) Willpower Test</b> or gain 1d5 Insanity Points
Deep Warp Eel (of unknown origins) with Egarian Mummy Extract (one look at this 'eel' will tell anyone something is not quite right about it...)	+50	<b>Very Hard (-30) Toughness Test</b> or suffer a mutation (see <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> page 368). Success indicates 1d10 points of damage (not reduced for Toughness or Armour) instead. Navigators may generate a Navigator mutation instead (see <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> page 182).

court at one end of the room, resting on a palanquin carried by four servitors and surrounded by concubines. If approached by the Explorers, he will be polite and respectful, though he will deny any knowledge of a Foretelling. Moross may know more than he lets on, but he should come off as a figurehead ruler, with little authority and less sense. Eventually, he will announce the beginning of the meal, and those present will be summoned into an adjoining banquet hall.

The meal is where the Explorers are most likely to pick up useful information. The GM can play up the inherent queasiness of this encounter as much or as little as seems appropriate, but the main reason for it is to introduce the Explorers to some of the more “highborn” (in the loosest sense of the word) inhabitants of Footfall. To demonstrate culture and refinement in a place that knows little of either, these individuals cultivate bizarre tastes; the stranger they are, the more “refined” an individual must be. The bizarre food is really just for show, and it's doubtful whether anyone actually enjoys eating it. However, during their stay (however brief) the Explorers will have the chance of overhearing various snippets of information, or coaxing information out of the

other guests. Have them make a **Very Hard (-30) Inquiry Test**, and consult Table 1-1. The test can be repeated, and is modified based on how outlandish the dish the Explorers consume. This is because their actions impress the other guests, who themselves will try to show off their own status by bragging even louder. Table 1-2 indicates the information the Explorers will learn based on the total number of successes the Explorers' Inquiry Tests earn (added amongst all the tests).

## A KNIFE IN THE DARK (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

This encounter takes place during the night, or what passes for it on Footfall. At roughly twelve-hour intervals, the already-dingy lighting gutters and fails almost entirely, leaving the stone chambers almost entirely wreathed in shadow. If the Explorers found the place threatening before, they should find Footfall crawling with the very worst kinds of scum once the lights go down. This encounter is perhaps best played as the Explorers are making their way from the banquet, perhaps slightly the worse for wear after whatever choice delicacies they indulged in.

As the Explorers pass down an especially dark and lonely thoroughfare, a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** (modified appropriately if any strong liquor has been imbibed) will reveal that the locals appear to have suddenly cleared out. It's almost as if they know something's about to happen...

A group of two Mutant Outcasts and three narco-gangers (use the profile for a Hired Gun, see page 370-372 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook) appear from a side passage, and make a very obvious show of blocking the Explorers' path. A moment later, four more narco-gangers appear from behind, and the Explorers find themselves surrounded.

The gangers have been hired to kill the

TABLE 1-2: EAVESDROPPING AT DINNER

Degrees of Success	Details Revealed
Standard Success	The Seven Witches are holding a Foretelling
One	The Foretelling is within the next day or so, at the Obsidian Emporial
Two	The Foretelling is by invitation only
Three	To earn an invite, you have to bid for a place at an auction
Four (or more)	Only the ten best bids will earn a place at the Foretelling

TABLE 1-3: INTERROGATING THE GANGER

Degrees of Success	Details Revealed
Standard Success	An auction is to take place tonight, at the Obsidian Emporial.
One	Many powerful figures are to attend.
Two	One of those figures is trying to keep rivals at bay.
Three	That figure is Krawkin Feckward, he has made a deal with the narco-gangs to attempt to kill some of his rivals.
Four	As well as being a Rogue Trader, Feckward is a notorious slaver.
Five (or more)	Feckward plans to offer ten thousand slaves at the auction.

Explorers, and have been paid quite well to do so. Since they are here on a mission of murder, the GM should consider equipping the Mutants with stub automatics or shotguns in addition to their clubs. If however, things get really nasty and the narco-gangers start dying, they are unlikely to throw their lives away for coin. If half or more are slain, the rest will need to pass a Willpower Test or flee. If the Explorers outnumber the Mutants by two to one, the Mutants automatically flee.

Having defeated the narco-gangers, the Explorers will find that one ganger is still conscious, but bleeding heavily from his wounds. As they approach, the ganger coughs up a lungful of blood and curses the name of the God-Emperor. If it occurs to the Explorers to question the ganger, have them make an Interrogation Test against the ganger, modified according to the inventiveness of any threats the Explorers can come up with. Consult the following table to find out what the Mutant gives up before expiring.

## NEVER TRUST A BLATHERMONGER (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

The Explorers are traversing a wide deck crowded with shabby market stalls. Anything can be bought here, from green corpse-starch and potent liquor brewed from the run-off that drips from the roof, to the finest psy-spice to heavy weaponry, for the right price and the understanding that nothing comes with a guarantee. The trading deck is crowded with all manner of disreputable characters, and the Explorers would do well to keep an eye out for pickpockets.

Passing a stall selling what the trader proclaims to be the most rare and luxurious spine-firs the Death worlds of the Expanse have to offer, the Explorers are approached by one of Footfall's blathermongers. The man is clothed in rags, and his body is twisted from what must have been a hideous beating at some earlier stage in his life. The man addresses the Explorers in unctuous tones—read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"Good sirs, good sirs! I've been looking for you for hours I have, been from one end of Footfall to the other. What? Yes, good sir, I was just coming to it. Yes, I have the information you're seeking, I know where its happening, and how you can get in on it, yes sirs, that I do. I'm a merchant, if you catch my drift, a seller of information..."*

If the Explorers decide to pursue the matter further, the blathermonger will bid the Explorers follow him, and then make off through the crowded trading deck. The blathermonger is setting the Explorers up, having made an educated guess as to what they are doing on Footfall and being in possession of a little knowledge about the Foretelling himself. The blathermonger, being an enterprising individual, has decided to dangle what little bait he has before the noses of the Explorers, and to see if they bite. The blathermonger heads off through the crowd and stops by a side passage, waiting for the Explorers to catch up. As they do, he addresses them once more, saying he is happy to have their business and encouraging them to follow him to his home nearby.

The blathermonger then ducks into the side passage and disappears into the shadow. The blathermonger hopes to lead the Explorers back to his abode, where he has a few friends waiting. There he hopes to either force the Explorers to pay handsomely for the little information he knows, or simply rob them. However, the blathermonger has been too free with his tongue, and some of Footfall's underworld have decided they want to pick the blathermonger's brain for information.

If the Explorers decide to follow, they will find the blathermonger being accosted by a group of ten Scum (page 371 of **ROGUE TRADER**). If the Explorers expect a trap and decide not to follow, then a gut-wrenching scream goes up from the passage, the sound of the blathermonger being grabbed by the Scum.

If the Explorers take on and defeat the Scum, the blathermonger will be profoundly grateful, though it will soon be obvious to the Explorers that he did not have anywhere near as much information as he may have led them to believe. Nevertheless, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"It's the Witches, I'm hearing good sirs, they're giving a reading of sorts. But you need to be at the Obsidian Emporial by last light tonight, that's all I know, good sirs."*

The blathermonger will also be able to give the Explorers directions to the Obsidian Emporial, though he does not know much about the auction itself.

## USING THEIR INITIATIVE

It is entirely possible of course that the players will want to go about formulating all manner of ways of finding out where and when the Foretelling is going to be held. This is to be encouraged, but don't forget that Footfall is a den of thieves and murderers, and they will have to be very subtle indeed about asking questions. In all likelihood, anyone they ask, even if they pay for silence, will be selling the Explorers out within minutes, and pretty soon the entire criminal fraternity of Footfall (i.e., everyone) will know their business. In short, allow the Explorers to find out about the Foretelling using whatever entertaining methods they can come up with, but always ensure that there are plenty of potential confrontations and consequences whatever way they go about it.

No matter what manner the Explorers go about finding out the information, here are the pertinent facts:

- The Seven Witches of Footfall, powerful and terrifying seers, are holding a Foretelling.
- This Foretelling will happen soon, and will reveal the location of the Dread Pearl.
- The Foretelling is by invitation only, and to earn an invite one must place an acceptable bid at an auction held at the Obsidian Emporial. The first ten bids to be judged acceptable by the Obsidian Emporial's authorities will earn a place at the foretelling.
- Nobody knows what bids the Obsidian Emporial will judge acceptable, but the general opinion is that if the Witches are involved, winning bids will be something very valuable, and not as boorish as mere money.

## Rewards

The following are the Achievement Points awarded for discovering the location of the Auction:

- 25 Achievement Points for discovering the Auction's location.
- 10 Achievement Points for each potential opponent discovered before the Auction occurs.
- 10 Achievement Points for eating something truly disgusting at the ceremonial banquet and impressing the other diners.



# THE AUCTION

*"Everything has a price in Footfall, but if you have to ask you probably can't afford it."*

—Wesla Graves, Curiosopher and Merchanteer

Once the Explorers have discovered that the Foretelling is an invitation-only event, they'll need to get one. This is achieved by way of an auction—but this is no ordinary sale. The stakes are much higher than mere Thrones...

There are ten places available at the Foretelling, and these will go to the ten highest bidders. Dozens of bidders are present at the auction, and each will call out their bid to a mysterious and frankly bizarre individual called the Intercessor, one of the heads of the mysterious Obsidian Emporial. As each bid is called, the Intercessor will determine its relative worth, and accept or reject the bid accordingly. An unsuccessful bidder will be escorted from the Obsidian Emporial by armed guards, while a successful bid will be indicated by the hammering of the Intercessor's gavel on his lectern. Each individual will only be able to make one bid! The ten bids the Intercessor judges most valuable will determine the ten winners awarded a place at the Foretelling.

The game mechanics for bidding are described later on in this section, on page 21.

The twist is that it is entirely up to the Intercessor to decide the value of any given bid. If the Explorers have any sense, they will sit back and watch to see what other bidders are prepared to offer before making an offer themselves. They will soon realise that some of the bids appear somewhat bizarre, and have very little in the way of monetary value. This is because the Intercessor is working on the behalf of the Seven Witches, who we will meet in the Foretelling itself. The Seven Witches judge the value of things differently than others, as the Explorers will soon discover. Passing a **Challenging (+0) Commerce Test** or a **Difficult (-10) Intelligence Test** near the beginning of proceedings will reveal this. Make the test easier if it is taken later on in proceedings, or allow it to be retaken at an easier level later on.

**Objective:** Win one of the invitations to the upcoming Foretelling

**Themes:** Criminal, Trade

## THE OBSIDIAN EMPORIAL

As already revealed, the auction is being held at the Obsidian Emporial. This is an old and decrepit chamber, used for deals and trades as long as anyone can remember. The Explorers should have little trouble finding the place, as most of the denizens of Footfall will have heard of it. The only risk in finding the Obsidian Emporial is in giving the game away to the Explorers' rivals. Particularly unsubtle inquiries should be met with attacks by assorted Scum hired to keep competitors away.

Once the Explorers have located the Obsidian Emporial, the scene is set for the auction. Coming to the entrance, they will pass through the frame of a massive arched portal that seems to be carved from black stone. The doors, which appear to be made of adamantium hull-plating, are open. At either side of the portal stands a hideous Mutant Abomination (see page 372 of **ROGUE TRADER**). The two mutants are halting people as they approach the portal, using their great weapons to block the path. They look the prospective entrant over, before nodding, raising their great weapons and letting them past. The mutants are really only looking out for anyone obviously likely to cause trouble, or those carrying really heavy weaponry. It is expected on Footfall that everyone carries at least a sidearm, but attempting to carry a lascannon into the Obsidian Emporial will result in trouble. Unless the Explorers initiate a confrontation, or are carrying especially heavy weapons and refuse to surrender them, the mutants will allow them to pass.

Once within, the Explorers will see that the Obsidian Emporial itself is a large space, its vaulted ceiling veiled in darkness. The main source of illumination is provided by a score or so of servo-skulls hovering overhead, each of which is topped by a guttering, wax-dripping candle. The hall is strewn with all manner of technological junk, none of it of any worth. **An Easy (+30) Evaluate Test** will make it clear that the myriad items of wrecked machinery are of no more use than to provide convenient seating, which is what the two hundred or so people crowded into the Obsidian Emporial are using them for.

The place is already crowded with a wide range of people, from ragged beggars to resplendent Free Captains and their retainues. There are a couple of hundred people in the Obsidian Emporial at the time the Explorers arrive, and another hundred or so will enter over the next few minutes, until finally, the mutants at the door judge the place full, and the proceedings begin.

## THE INTERCESSOR

As the Obsidian Emporial fills, a silence settles upon the crowd, and expectant faces are turned towards a decaying wooden lectern that rears five metres into the air. The lectern is as yet unoccupied, but soon the Explorers spy a large, hunched figure shuffling across the floor towards it. Reaching the base of the lectern, the figure lifts back the hood of its ragged robes, to reveal a hideous face set with all manner of sockets, its flesh shrivelled and distended as if the underlying skull were somehow bovine in form rather than human. This is the Intercessor, and his is the task to act as auctioneer and determine who will earn themselves a place at the Foretelling of the Seven Witches.

Even as the Explorers look on, a dense, writhing cluster of cables and pipes descends from the dark ceiling above the Intercessor. Each cable moves as if under its own volition, its end seeking out a corresponding socket in the Intercessor's skull, with which it couples quite obscenely. His head now haloed by a

mass of pulsating tubes, the Intercessor is lifted into the air, to be carried by the cables to the pinnacle of the lectern, where he settles in with an animal grunt.

Drawing back the ragged fabric covering his arms, the Intercessor reveals that his limbs are mechanical, constructed of rusted iron. His left arm terminates in an oversized gavel, which he brings sharply down upon the lectern. With the resounding report of hammer on worm-eaten wood, the auction begins.

## LET THE BIDDING COMMENCE!

The instant the crack of the hammer fills the Obsidian Emporial, the crowd erupts into a raucous cacophony. Over the noise, a merchant-factor standing next to the Explorers shouts, "Ten thousand thrones!" The crowd goes silent, and all look first to the factor, and then to the Intercessor. After a brief moment filled with tension, the Intercessor shakes his head slowly, and the crowd begin yelling again. A couple of armed heavies (with the profiles of Scum, see **ROGUE TRADER** page 317) barge their way through the crowd, and roughly escort the merchant from the Obsidian Emporial.



## PUTTING THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTH IS

Exactly what the Explorers decide to bid is entirely up to them, but having heard the example bids given below they should be encouraged to be inventive. They should also be aware that if they are clever and bid well with an interesting or special item they may well lose less than if they simply offer more common but valuable goods. They might bid some artefact in their possession (perhaps secreted in a stasis hold in the ship for just such an occasion—make one up!) or it could be a share in future ventures. It could be something the group has acquired in previous games, or even something they hope to acquire in the future. In game terms, the players are giving up at least 5 points of their Profit Factor (which is not negotiable) but may give up more to increase their chances of returns.

When it comes to them bidding, have one of the Explorers make a Very Hard (–30) Commerce Test, modified by the amount of Profit Factor they are prepared to stake (+10 to the roll for each point of profit beyond 5 they put up). If the Explorers have a Profit Factor of 60 or higher, then they only get a +5 bonus for every point of PF they put up for the bid. As previously stated, there is far more going on with this Auction than first appears, and in addition to seeking interesting bids, the Witches are very interested in those who are willing to risk grave losses to earn a place at the Foretelling.

The GM may award an additional bonus of +10 or +20 for a well thought out offer, rewarding creative thinking on the part of the players. If the test is passed then they will only lose half of the PF put up (representing canny bargaining skills and savvy business practices that compensate for losses). If it is failed, then their offer is still accepted, but they lose all PF put up.

For the next hour or so, dozens of similar bids are offered—currency and coinage in various forms, denominations, and values—but none are accepted, the crowd thinning as the guards eject the unsuccessful bidders. If the Explorers are tempted to make a bid during this period, have them make a **Routine (+20) Commerce Test**, or a **Challenging (+0) Logic Test**. Success will make it clear that the serious bids have yet to be made, and they should hold off making a bid themselves until the “chaff” is cleared out. If the Explorers want to make a bid at this stage, they can do so. However, it had better be a bid that is both valuable and extremely creative on their part. Unless it is truly extraordinary, the GM should have the guards eject the Explorer making the bid (though his fellows may remain in the auction).

After about an hour, the Explorers detect a change in the pace of the bidding, as the first of the really serious attendants join in with proceedings. Below is a list of the bids that will be made, and whether or not they are accepted. An accepted bid will be indicated by the Intercessor slamming his gavel down upon his lectern. The Explorers can make their bid at any stage in the proceedings. They might decide to do so late, holding back to see what sort of bid is being accepted, and also risking the ten places at the Foretelling being used up. Or, they might like to risk an early bid. Again, the GM can call upon the Explorers to make a **Challenging (+0) Commerce Test** to suggest this information to them.

- The coordinates of the legendary Thirteenth Station of Passage—Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh (accepted).
- The hereditary rank of Colonel-in-Chief of the 37th Vaxanide Militia (rejected).
- The Outer Reaches of the Linead Belt (rejected).
- A 10% stake in the fortunes of Clan Hazkari (rejected).
- The third moon of Luggnum—Hadarak Fel (accepted).
- A daemonette’s toenail—Madam Charlabelle (accepted).
- A phial of five-century-old, triple-distilled essence of Brain Leaf—Lady Sun Lee (accepted).
- 10,000 blind slaves—Krawkin Feckward (accepted).
- The long-lost thighbone of Saint Arani (rejected).
- The Palace of Moonlight—Abel Gerrit (accepted).
- 30,000 Sabre-Wolf pelts (rejected).

- The Brotherhood of Shadow—Djanko Scourge (accepted).
- The Mykys Fief on Quaddis (rejected).
- The wreck of the battle cruiser *Heart of Majesty* (rejected).
- The mummified remains of the Priest-King Jhan’tak the Immortal—Jeremiah Blitz (accepted).

Don’t forget that if a rival from a previous campaign is to be introduced, one of the above rejected bids can be ascribed to that individual, and accepted. Or, the GM could make up their own, perhaps using something of significance from a previous adventure.

Once a bid is accepted, the bidder is expected to leave their details with the Intercessor when the auction has ended (at which point the means of collecting the Explorers’ bid is hammered out. The Explorers will find that the Obsidian Emporial wants either the actual bid the Explorers’ made, or some guarantee of ownership, within the next day). At this point, the Explorers are informed of the time and the place of the Foretelling.



### OTHER WAYS OF GETTING IN

There is a chance that the players will throw a spanner in the works, whether through mischief or incompetence, and somehow fail to make a bid. If this happens, the GM will need to find a way of getting the story back on track. This could be done by engineering a ‘second chance’, whereby no more acceptable bids are forthcoming, but there is still one place at the Foretelling left to fill. In that case, have the guards call the Explorers back into the Obsidian Emporial so they can try one last time. If things go really awry, it may be necessary to think up an entirely new way of getting the Explorers into the Foretelling—the best way might be to explain the gravity of the situation to them, and have the players suggest how they will do so. If they have a good idea, work out the details with them and wing it!

# THE FORETELLING OF THE SEVEN WITCHES

*“Seven mouths with one voice—that’s the Witches. And if you are lucky enough to hear them speak—be it for good or ill—you had best be listening.”*

—Tabar, Dockshadow of the Kasballica Mission

Having successfully bid for a place at the Foretelling, the Explorers must now go before the Seven Witches and bear witness to their prophecy. But this is no simple reading of the Emperor’s Tarot, as the Explorers will soon find out.

## THE APPOINTED HOUR

The Foretelling is to take place at midnight, on the day after the auction. That means the Explorers have a little time to explore the environs if they so wish, or get straight on to the business at hand if they would rather. The Foretelling is to take place in an otherwise abandoned area of Footfall, one shunned even by the assorted lowlifes that call the station home. This particular area is run down and crumbling, in such a state of disrepair that the stonework is decayed and the gravity prone to wild fluctuations. As the Explorers approach they will hear all manner of disturbing noises as the stone construction groans, grinds, and shifts and feel sudden and disturbing drops and rises in air pressure. Any Explorers with psychic talent will feel especially ill at ease.

The actual abode of the Seven Witches is known to the locals as “the cell,” for reasons that will soon become apparent. As the Explorers reach their destination, they will hear eerie voices, punctuated by piercing screams from up ahead. They reach a barred opening, within which lurk a number of guards.

Each guard is bedecked in off-white armour, which upon closer inspection is made of a padded fabric and is heavily soiled with blood, vomit, and other fluids. The guards (stocky males with shaved heads) maintain a resolute silence through the forthcoming event (this is because they have had their tongues surgically removed, though the Explorers have no way of knowing that, and the guards aren’t telling). In a heavily-gloved hand, each guard bears a staff tipped with a copper orb, around which are coiled heavy cables attached to a power pack at the guard’s belt. The Explorers are expected, and they do not actually have to do anything to gain entrance to the cell.

Upon being granted entrance to the cell, the Explorers will feel an intense aura of “wrongness” as they cross the threshold. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As the lumbering, silent guards haul back the rusted gate, you step over the threshold and into what the locals ominously call “the cell.” You soon see why. You find yourself at one end of a long, wide corridor, the walls lined with cracked and tainted ceramic tiles. The floor is littered with detritus, including discarded, soiled bandages and broken and barely recognisable medical ephemera. The guards lead the way, and as you follow, you see a number of armoured doors to either side. Though you see nothing through the tiny peepholes set in each door, you just know that there’s someone, or something, beyond each.*

*The guards proceed down the corridor with a slow, deliberate stride. Reaching the far end, they haul open a second gate, and beckon you into the darkness within. As you step forward, you notice the guards do not enter with you.*

*With a resounding metallic clang, the last gate is closed behind you. Darkness engulfs you, and your senses become alert to all manner of out-of-place sounds. The temperature drops, and your skin feels clammy as the air takes on an unclean, moist characteristic.*

The Explorers are in the inner sanctum of the Seven Witches, a place from which none who were not invited have ever set foot and returned. The area is seething with barely-contained psychic energies, so potentially unsettling that the Explorers must all take a **Disturbing (+0) Fear Test** (should any of the Explorers lose control of themselves as a result of failing this test, they will be roughly restrained by the guards until order is restored). Eventually, their eyes will adjust to the gloom, and the Explorers will see that they are standing in a wide, low-ceilinged chamber. A cold electric light flickers on, followed by in succession by a dozen or so more, the staccato flickering casting a cold, wan light over the scene. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Even as swirling, gibbering voices chatter incoherently in your ears, you begin to make out the scene before you. The inner sanctum of the Seven Witches is wreathed in shadows so deep they appear as wells of the stuff of the outer darkness. Against the flickering light of a dozen malfunctioning electro-lumens you can just make out the silhouettes of those others who are to bear to the Foretelling. But for now, it is the spectacle at the centre of the chamber that holds your attention...*

*“Welcome,” seven voices, each of a different pitch, say at once, “to our sanctuary.”*

*The source of the voices appears at first to be a shadowed, tangled mass at the centre of the room. Upon looking closer, however, you see that the mass is actually seven separate figures, each somehow intertwined with the next. Each Witch has the stature of a child, yet the wizened features of an impossibly ancient crone. Their teeth are blackened, and their eyes are rheumy. Their skin is gnarled as old leather, and their white hair lank and intertwined.*



*“Many have heard the call,” the Witches speak as one, their thin lips moving in unison. “Yet, how few shall reach the destination.”*

*The figures crowding the chamber shuffle uncomfortably as the Witches unleash a low, gurgling, and entirely mirthless laugh. “Hush now,” they croon. “You shall have what you paid for, .”*

*At this, the Seven Witches join hands, raise their heads, look around the chamber one last time, and close their eyes. The temperature in the room drops once more, and the dampness in the air grows even more uncomfortable.*

*“We, who are more than Man, beyond the Emperor and unknown to gods, shall speak. You, who are born of flesh and beholden of dirt shall heed our words, and heed them well. We are that which stings the outstretched hand, the cry that defies love. We are known and unknown, standing before you, yet so far distant you may never reach us.”*

*And then, quite suddenly, the Seven Witches open their mouths as one. A distant moan emanates from the throat of each, a sound that does not come from them, but some terrible far-off place.*

*Cold dread engulfs you, and you see that many of the other witnesses are equally affected. One bends double and vomits across the floor, earning disgusted glares from those nearby. And then, the sound coming from the mouth of each witch reaches a discordant crescendo, each a different note forming an impossible chord, the pitch and tone of the damned as they wail and writhe in the benighted depths of the empyrean. Reality collapses, and you are cast into a world of pain.*

All of those here to witness the Foretelling now enter a dreadful state of waking nightmare, their perceptions entirely in the thrall of the Seven Witches. Needless to say, this is a disturbing event, and any Explorer that wishes to resist it may attempt to do so, by taking a **Very Hard (–30) Willpower Test**. Passing the test will cause the Explorer to snap out of it, but then of course they won’t be privy to what is about to be revealed to the other witnesses. They will, however, avoid any further risk of mental damage. However, the Explorers are here to see the Foretelling, and if they wish to, they can choose not to resist the vision—forgoing the Willpower Test and witnessing the vision automatically. For the benefit of the rest of the group, read aloud or paraphrase the following vision, presented on the next page.





*You are adrift upon the currents of a raging sea of boiling energy, liquid pain pressing in upon you and filling your mouth and lungs. The raw stuff of nightmare swirls all around, forming and reforming into nightmarish shapes suggestive of leering faces or screaming mouths. Your entire consciousness is subsumed amidst a mournful wailing so unbearably loud you cannot even form coherent thought.*

*For an indeterminate time you are sucked into eddies of despair and ejected through streams of desolation. You become slowly aware of the screaming all around taking on a new form, the voices coming together into seven separate strands to give voice to a single chord. The sound is not heard as mortal ears detect such things, but instead speaks directly to the soul, crystallising in the mind as hard, certain and terrible knowledge.*

*Into the memory of each of you is implanted a cipher, a time and a place. You see in your mind's eye a raging, incandescent nebula, a storm in the depths of the Koronus Expanse. Even as you watch, or recall, this sight, the storm recedes to reveal an oval gemstone glittering against the black veil of space. You are consumed by an all encompassing desire to own this perfect gem, for you know with utter certainty that it keeps you safe from the touch of the boiling ocean of souls that still surrounds you.*

*And then, the perfect gem fades. You know now that you must own that gem, whatever the cost.*

*Without warning, reality crashes in upon your soul, and you awake with a start.*

Those Explorers who witnessed the Foretelling now awaken to find themselves back in the presence of the Seven Witches and the other witnesses. The Witches stand in silence, looking on coldly while the witnesses compose themselves following the shock of their experience. Each Explorer who witnessed the Foretelling gains 1 Insanity Point, as their minds rebel against the warp-spawned vision. This Insanity cannot be avoided.

There is one more effect of bearing witness to the Foretelling. Firstly, each witness will feel the vision they saw coalesce into something less abstract. They know that the gem represented a world, one engulfed in a warp storm that will soon lift. They know with utter certainty that the world in question is a treasure in itself, one they must possess even should they die in the attempt. All of the witnesses feel that they need only look upon a stellar map to know the location of this planet. The location and nature of the world they have witnessed is discussed in detail on page 97 and page 102.

As the witnesses to the Foretelling gather their wits and begin to depart, the Seven Witches make one last utterance. "It's not a gem...it's a pearl...a pretty, dread pearl!"

## Rewards

The following are the Achievement Points awarded for viewing the Foretelling:

- 100 Achievement Points for witnessing the Foretelling.
- 50 Achievement Points for succeeding on the Commerce Test during the Auction (only losing half of the Profit Factor they put up).

# ALLIES AND RIVALS

*"An ally is just a rival who has yet to cross you."*

—Voidfarers' Proverb

With the Foretelling over, the Explorers may wish to take stock, and perhaps spend some time recovering from the trauma of the vision they were granted. However, The Explorers are not the only group that witnessed the Foretelling. The other witnesses shared the same vision and are therefore in the grip of the same desire to find what the Seven Witches referred to as the Dread Pearl. Worse, they are in possession of the same knowledge regarding its location.

On these next few pages are presented details of the other characters that bore witness to the Foretelling. The GM can introduce the players to these characters in any way that seems appropriate, and it is certainly worth dropping in a few chance encounters with them. Although each of these characters will at first appear as a rival to the possession of the Dread Pearl, canny players will hopefully realise that some might make better allies. Should the players express a wish to seek out any of these characters then this is to be encouraged, and could well have interesting consequences later on.

## ABEL GERRIT

*"Old Lucien would blow you clean out of the airlock for that remark, sir. I suggest you either walk away now or find an emergency vac-suit."*

Abel Gerrit is a scion of the House Arcadius, an ancient clan of Rogue Traders whose traditional area of operation has for several thousand years been the Imperium's Eastern Rim. Recently, however, the clan's head has determined it wise to branch out into other stretches of the galaxy. As a result, many branches of the clan have been tasked with expanding the fortunes of the Arcadius.

Abel Gerrit is just such a distant cousin of the rulers of the House Arcadius. Although he does not bear his clan's Warrant of Trade himself, and is far down the line of succession, Abel is nonetheless empowered to act in the interests of his House. To this end, Abel has his own vessel, the heavy raider *Maxim's Gambit*, and not-inconsiderable resources. He had been tasked with seeking out opportunities in Segmentum Obscurus, and has followed rumours of the treasure planet, arriving at Footfall along with the other witnesses to the Foretelling.

Abel is a highly capable individual, who takes enormous pride in bearing the Gerrit name and claiming membership in the House Arcadius. He is as competent as a ship's master as he is a duellist, and is known to have taken the lives of many foes in both arenas. Despite his skills, Abel is not a braggart, and prefers to deal with potentially dangerous situations as a reasonable individual, but will not shirk from conflict if the other fellow refuses to reciprocate.

## MADAM CHARLABELLE ARMELAN

*"Oh, how unsurprising. The fourth potential agri-world we've discovered in this star-cluster. One wonders where these were during the food riots in our manufactorum colonies... Oh, everything's going wonderfully. Why do you ask?"*

The Rogue Trader Madam Charlabelle is the daughter of the infamous Lord-Captain Armelan, whose fortunes were dashed when an Ork invasion overwhelmed his clan's home system of Adrianni-Spinward. Armelan threw himself and the fortunes of his house into the war effort, knowing that if he did not, the bulk of his interests would be lost and centuries of tradition and honour defiled. Armelan committed his entire fleet to the effort, rushing an endless stream of reinforcements and materiel to the defence. Unfortunately, Armelan's actions were as rash as honourable, and all save a handful of his vessels were destroyed as the Ork fleet crushed the system's defences.

House of Armelan was left with a single warp-capable transport (the *Grace of Sopha*) and a dozen or so inter-system vessels. The clan's fortunes crumbled and Armelan was forced to divest himself of what resources remained outside of Adrianni-Spinward. His health and sanity failing him, Armelan retreated to his last sanctuary, a now dilapidated manse on Malfi, where he quietly sunk into a amsec-fuelled fantasy world.

The only hope of House Armelan lies with its last remaining scion, Madam Charlabelle.

A striking and determined woman, Charlabelle seeks to maintain the deception that her clan is still strong. She does this by projecting a thoroughly convincing illusion of wealth and sophistication. However, her resources are now running dangerously low. In appearance, Madam Charlabelle is every inch the intelligent sophisticate, well versed in proper manners and tradition. Yet she is no willowy daughter of privilege, despite appearances, and long ago learned how to get things done herself. To this end, she has mastered, somewhat unusually for one of her station, the deadly Eldar weapon known as the Harlequin's Kiss. Many a rival has fallen to its deadly touch, after underestimating the wielder.

Striking out on her own aboard the *Grace of Sopha*, Madam Charlabelle has come to the Koronus Expanse to seek some remedy to the dire straits of her House. Unable to draw upon the resources other Rogues Traders can, she has employed the services of a large band of Kroot Mercenaries to aid her in whatever travails await.

Abel Gerrit prefers a stylized duelling outfit to more formal clothing. He carries a pair of matched duelling blades at all times, finely balanced and master-crafted power weapons passed down through many generations. Due to Abel's duelling, his handsome features are marred with scars. One especially vicious bout cost him an eye, but his gaze is steady and true none-the-less.

Abel is an obvious potential ally for the Explorers. Should they meet him, they will soon see that he is a man of honour who puts great store in the value of his word. However, should they cross him, the Explorers will find he is just as resolute an enemy as he is an ally. He is also a proud individual, and will not stand for insults or being treated as an inferior. Abel's profile can be found on page 123.

## HADARAK FEL

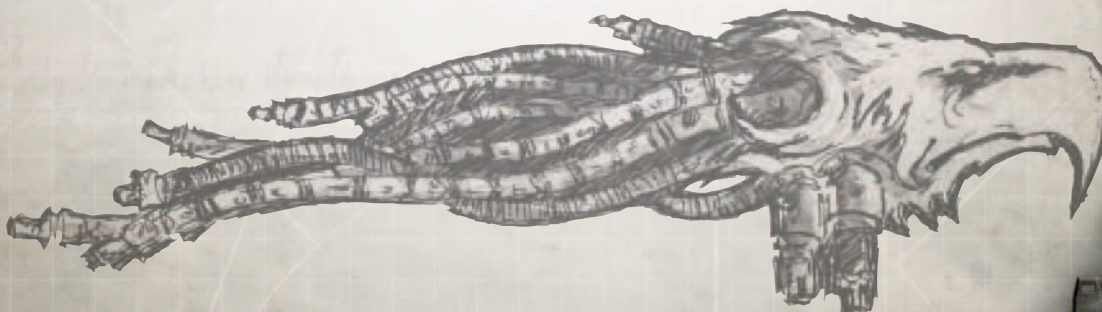
*"You again? What does it take to make you realise that out here you are nothing more than lost children? Leave now, before the Expanse makes grox-feed of you..."*

A veteran of the Koronus Expanse, Hadarak Fel is a seasoned explorer and cunning exponent of the arts of trade and exploitation. Although he maintains a foppish exterior, this is in fact a ruse to force unwary opponents to underestimate his skills. Many enemies have fallen prey to this falsehood.

Hadarak made his first appearance in the introductory adventure *Into the Maw* (see **ROGUE TRADER**, page 380). He is included here so that, if desired, he can either be re-used as a character that the Explorers have already encountered, or a new one introduced to them if he has not already featured in the campaign. It is entirely possible of course that Hadarak came to a sticky end at the conclusion of *Into the Maw*, in which case one might decide not to use him at all. However, if he did meet his end, what better way to entertain the players than to have an enemy they thought dead return to bedevil their exploits?

If Hadarak did not meet his maker at the end of *Into the Maw*, then maybe he and the Explorers have unfinished business.

Hadarak's profile can be found on page 123. This has been updated from that presented in *Into the Maw*, to reflect his own ongoing character development. This can be adjusted to reflect any events that took place in previous games, such as his being wounded at the Explorers' hands.



Lady Charlabelle will make a solid ally to any who are prepared to work alongside her, and who have the grace to avoid any remarks about the fortunes of House Armelan. As she keeps her own counsel in these matters, it will take a **Hard (-20) Common Lore (Rogue Traders) Test** to recall details of her clan's downfall. Should the Explorers mock or otherwise insult her prickly sensibilities however, they will make an enemy for life. Madam Charlabelle's profile is found on page 125.

## JEREMIAH BLITZ

*"To be honest friend, I have no idea what a Writ of Claim is. I got here first; I have the bigger gun, and it's mine. In my book, that's all the claim I need to make."*

Jeremiah Blitz is a charming rogue and a notorious scoundrel, a man not truly given to the rarefied manners of polite society, but more at home in unsavoury drinking dens and back-street bordellos. Jeremiah Blitz is only newly come to his Warrant of Trade, and is no highborn scion born into a life of nobility.

The manner in which Jeremiah earned his Warrant is entirely typical of the man—he won it in a game of chance. Most versions of the story agree that Blitz, formerly a dealer in dubious and xenos art objects, landed himself a place at a very high-stakes game attended by a Sector Lord of the Adeptus Terra. Over the course of the game, Blitz lost heavily, until he staked all on the turn of the last card and won a favour from that Sector Lord.

Blitz demanded the Lord grant him the Warrant of Trade, and reluctantly, he agreed. A year and a day later, Jeremiah Blitz was granted his warrant and the cruiser *Ordained Destiny*, and was soon set for wilderness space and whatever adventures it could offer.

In his short career to date as a Rogue Trader, Jeremiah Blitz has carved his name across a dozen regions. He has yet to settle into the serious business of establishing a dynasty, though he has no doubt sowed many illegitimate seeds throughout the courts of several ruling houses. Most of Jeremiah's adventures have been somewhat shady, often involving dubious deals with less-than-reputable characters. Where most Rogue Traders look to nurture investments and establish interests, Jeremiah is, at this stage, more interested in short-term gain. To this end, he has continued his erstwhile dealings in the Cold Trade, bringing in vast sums for alien artefacts from beyond the rim.

Jeremiah Blitz is a man of action who relies first and foremost upon his own, personal resources. His confidants are formed of an inner circle of accomplices he knows from his former life, forming a band of ragged adventurers. In addition to these trusted men and women, Jeremiah maintains a sizable force of armsmen to back him in serious situations.

It was the same rumours of the Foretelling that drew the Explorers to Footfall that brought Jeremiah Blitz there as well. Jeremiah is as gripped by the desire to possess the Dread Pearl as the Explorers are, yet will not be averse to forming a temporary alliance should the Explorers propose it. He is unlikely to propose such a course himself, however, being entirely too self-absorbed to formulate such a plan. See page 124 for Jeremiah's profile.



## LORD-ADMIRAL BASTILLE THE SEVENTH

*"This system is interdicted by the House of Bastille, pending Writ of Conquest. Any who approach within one astronomical unit will be considered hostile to said interest, and engaged without warning."*

Bastille is the scion of an ancient Rogue Trader House, yet he was never expected to bear its Warrant of Trade. In fact, he was so far from the position of patriarch that his family purchased a commission in the Imperial Navy when he came of age, assuming that such a career would hold more opportunity than the minor role he might otherwise play in the fortunes of the House Bastille.

None were prepared for the nigh-complete destruction of that ancient line, due to a cataclysmic, freak vortex torpedo malfunction during a conference of its most senior members. None, perhaps, except Lord-Admiral Bastille, who resigned his commission immediately and claimed his birthright.

For several years after this event, Bastille's rivals in the Imperial Navy spread a number of vicious rumours, though no outright accusations were made. Eventually things came to a head. Bastille came into open conflict with a number of senior navy officers. What started out as a disagreement soon escalated, and what followed was a small but vicious war between isolated elements of the Imperial Navy and the House Bastille. Thanks

to the actions of several Naval staff officers sympathetic to Bastille,

the conflict remained contained, and Segmentum Command at Cypra Mundi never learned of the particulars. However, Bastille has worn out his welcome in the Imperium.

Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh conducts the affairs of his House as if it were a private navy, which in many respects, it is. House Bastille's existing interests are maintained by naval force, and expanded in the same manner, each conquest being exploited by the sizable merchant fleet the House maintains. The Lord-Admiral leads these actions from the bridge of his flagship, the cruiser *Colossus*, and commands a sizable flotilla of lesser warships.

In coming to Footfall, Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh hopes to further his interests in the region. He fully intends to take by force whatever is to be found when the Dread Pearl is revealed, and use his sizeable mercantile assets to exploit it.

Bastille is not well disposed towards making allies, and will be especially cautious of any Explorers with a background in the Imperial Navy. Having said that, a cunning Explorer might be able to appeal to the man's martial honour, but would have to work very hard to earn his trust. The Lord Admiral's profile is found on page 124.

## LADY SUN LEE

*"Trade is war; war is trade. Either way, the House of Ma'Kao profits."*

Lady Sun Lee is the matriarch of the House of Ma'Kao, a powerful dynasty with holdings across the entire Segmentum. Those holdings include facilities on several dozen Agri-worlds providing essential foodstuffs to many prominent Hive-worlds (including Scintilla). Despite the fact that the fortunes of the House of Ma'Kao have



afforded Lady Sun Lee an unimaginably privileged lifestyle, she prefers to leave the running of her affairs to a veritable army of underlings. The bearers of the Ma’Kao Warrant of Trade prefer to hold their fortunes in their own hands, and they know that even should they fall in some benighted, uncharted backwater (as several have), their dynasty will continue. Her House’s wealth means Lady Sun Lee can pursue her own interests, which revolve around the pursuit of legendary treasures and lost xenos civilisations beyond the galactic rim.

Given her propensity for adventure, Lady Sun Lee has faced things in her lifetime even seasoned Explorators would avoid. She has trod the dusty crypts of alien catacombs, and led expeditions into the most lethal Death World jungles, returning with rare artefacts and priceless resources. She has held council with monarchs of long-lost human empires, and convinced them that she is the Goddess of Humanity, earning the adoration and fealty of uncounted millions.

Lady Sun Lee is an adept swordswoman, and carries a priceless heirloom power weapon with a gracefully curved and impossibly sharp blade. This weapon is reputed to have been crafted long ago on Ancient Terra, perhaps even before the time of the Great Crusade. Whether or not this is true, the sword has certainly claimed the lives of many rivals, earning Lady Sun Lee a fearsome reputation in Rogue Trader circles. Sun Lee is often to be found wearing ornate power armour of a striking jade hue, a colour that is repeated across the heraldry of her vessels and the uniforms of her soldiers and servants. When not expecting trouble, she wears a flowing silk gown of the same colour, lending her a stately grace. Her charm is immediately disarming to those who do not know better.

When word of the Dread Pearl reached her, Lady Sun Lee set course for Footfall without delay. Her flagship is the light cruiser *Nihontu*, and it is accompanied by three smaller escorts. Furthermore, the *Nihontu* carries an entire regiment from House Ma’Kao’s private guard. Each warrior bears weapons and armour equal to those carried by the elite of the Imperial Guard. However, Lady Sun Lee prefers that her loyal guards remain on her vessel, only to be called upon in the direst of emergencies. It is this sense of honour that defines Sun Lee, and if the Explorers can appeal to it, they may well be able to negotiate an alliance. Always bear in mind, however, that the Lady Sun Lee is a seasoned veteran of many endeavours, and will invariably come out best in any deal she enters. Lady Sun Lee’s profile can be found on page 124.

## BARON DJANKO SCOURGE

*“I claim this world and the servitude of its inhabitants. Those who submit will find me a firm but fair lord. Those who refuse my rule will find me a merciless foe. Both are equally welcome.”*

Djanko Scourge has been described by some of his many rivals and detractors as having the “psychopathic tendencies of a Fenksworld Pit Thing, but only half the charm.” Some have gone so far as to say this is a terrible slur on the Pit Thing. Djanko’s Warrant of Trade was granted to his great-great-grandfather, Lord-General Khako “the Scourge,” following the

prosecution of the highly destructive Jade Reach Suppression. During that decade-long campaign, Khako is said to have razed a dozen worlds, a record his descendent is determined to match.

Djanko has continued the family tradition of profiting from war and destruction. His particular method is to seek out lost human worlds rich in natural resources and claim them for himself (in the name of the Imperium of course). Furthermore, Djanko often takes it upon himself to “civilise” those heathen worlds he defeats in battle. Having entirely defeated a culture, he imposes his own, total rule upon it, installing his own administrators with himself as ultimate head of state.

Djanko is a bull of a man, well built if somewhat running to fat. He prides himself on the traditions established by his sire, and at all times maintains what he imagines to be a suitably martial bearing. To this end, he attires himself in full military dress uniform, adorned with all manner of medals, each of which celebrates his achievement in subjugating a world. At his belt, Djanko bears the gold-plated plasma pistol that once belonged to old Khako, a family heirloom that has seen a great deal of use over the years.

When rumours of the Dread Pearl reached Djanko Scourge, he determined that here was an opportunity to surpass even the deeds of his great-great-grandfather. If this world is truly as rich as the rumours suggest, and if it were populated, he would be able to subjugate it, exploit it, and grow rich beyond even a Rogue Trader’s dreams.

Djanko is not beyond forming alliances, but if he is to be convinced to do so, his ego will have to be groomed significantly. Djanko Scourge’s profile can be found on page 123.

## KRAWKIN FECKWARD

*“Ten thousand of the first-born of your city? Who do you think I am, a missionary? You’ll give me them all, and in return, I won’t flatten you with my ‘sky-fire devils,’ understand?”*

The name Krawkin Feckward is infamous amongst the recidivist underworld, for a fortune built upon a complex web of criminal activities. Many consider Feckward’s holding of a Warrant of Trade to be extremely dubious in and of itself, for his lineage is highly questionable, and many consider him nothing more than a criminal overlord.

The fortunes of the Feckward line are built upon the twin and equally despicable cold and slave trades. Over the decades of his rulership of the line, Krawkin Feckward has led many expeditions to locate new sources of both xenos artefacts and slaves, bringing examples of his wares into the courts of Imperial Commanders across the Calixis Sector and beyond.

Although he often moves in high circles, Feckward maintains an air of disdain for even the highest born of his customers. He truly despises them, and makes no effort to obscure it. In truth, he knows that in purchasing his goods, these customers are placing their very lives in his hands. Were they to be discovered, they would die at the hands of the Inquisition.

Feckward has broken countless laws in his dealings, and it is only his Warrant of Trade that keeps him from prosecution. Yet Feckward simply does not care, and continues to remain just distant enough from heresy to avoid the ire of the Inquisition.

Although he is perfectly capable of handling himself in the rough circles in which he frequently moves, Krawkin Feckward prefers to let others do the dirty work. A retinue of bodyguards always accompanies him, many of which he has recruited from the wildest Feral worlds.

It goes without saying that Feckward has come to the Koronus Expanse in the pursuit of his trade. The Dread Pearl promises both treasures and slaves aplenty. It is unlikely that Feckward will prove willing to share this opportunity with any of his rivals, and if the Explorers somehow do convince him to enter into some form of pact, he will ultimately betray them. Feckward's profile can be found on page 124.

## THE TWILIGHT SWORDS CORSAIRS

*"You meddle in powers too vast to comprehend. By setting foot on this path, you have sacrificed the lives of you and yours. We merely come to collect what is due."*

The Twilight Swords are a band of Corsairs who have recently arrived in the Koronus Expanse, first being reported as raiders in the Heathen Stars region in 789.M41 in an abortive battle with Rogue Trader Aspyce Chorda. Most Corsairs embrace an existence without the restrictions of the Eldar Path, becoming known as Outcasts who leave their Craftworld behind for centuries or even millennia. However, the Twilight Swords seem to have much closer ties to the Craftworld of Kaelor, and there are many stories of the Twilight Swords fighting alongside Kaelor Aspect Warriors or assisting



### THE ELДАР

The Eldar are an ancient and highly advanced alien race who voyaged across the stars long before Mankind could even dream of such a feat. An extremely long-lived people, Eldar are physically quite similar to humans, albeit with slender limbs, elegant features, pointed ears, and penetrating eyes. Eldar move with inhuman fluid grace, live with an intensity of emotion and experience many times greater than the most passionate human, and ubiquitously possess psychic potential. For more information about the Eldar, see pages 157-158 in **ROGUE TRADER**.

Kaelor Dragonships in battle amongst the void. The Twilight Swords favour crimson and gold and are often adorned with a multitude of xenos-crafted blades and close-quarter weapons. The Corsair warriors of this band seem to prefer the wild clash of melee, fighting their foes face-to-face.

The Twilight Swords seem to revel in their piratical role, and have been known to show mercy to a defeated foe only to snatch away any chance of survival on a whim. Rogue Traders who have encountered these Corsairs claim that they are bound to a complex code of honour with a labyrinthine set of rules. However, this same code often seems to have a convenient exception whenever required to better the Eldar's position.

Aspyce Chorda tells a number of stories involving her encounters with these Corsairs. According to her, the Twilight Swords are diligently searching the Heathen Stars for some unknown prize, combing through worlds and ships alike with unusual interest. Lending support to her claims, there have been numerous sightings of Corsairs wearing crimson and gold upon many of the human settlements and worlds in the Expanse, including Footfall itself.

Although the Twilight Swords and warriors of Craftworld Kaelor are not in the Expanse to protect the Dread Pearl from discovery, they have readily diverted both ships and warriors to stop humans from despoiling their world. Their resources are stretched thin, but the warriors sent will fight ferociously to protect their lost Maiden world.

### ADDITIONAL RIVALS

As previously mentioned, the GM should feel free to invent new rivals, or reintroduce a character that the players already know from previous experience. This will lend the campaign a real long-term narrative, especially if there is a plan for this character's own story arc. As well as using or inventing the character, have a think about whether they might be a potential ally or an outright rival, and whether or not this is obvious from the outset. Furthermore, don't forget to give them a vessel, using the rules in **ROGUE TRADER** to design it. The GM can really go to town assigning all manner of other resources to the character, from elite household guards to shadowy assassins in their employ, or simply make a few notes and handle the rest on the fly.

# EXIT FOOTFALL

*"A Rogue Trader never looks back, but always forward to fortune, glory and adventure."*

—Rogue Trader saying

The time has now come for the Explorers to take their leave of Footfall, and head off into the Koronus Expanse in search of their fortune. As already established, they don't know the exact coordinates of the Dread Pearl, but an abstract idea of it was seeded in their mind during the Foretelling. With rivals for that fortune all around, the Explorers must return to their ship, set sail and make good their departure from Footfall, then set course for the Dread Pearl.

**Objective:** Leave Footfall and set course for the Dread Pearl.

**Themes:** Military, Criminal

## THE ADMINISTRATUM OECONOMICA RETURNS!

Remember the bogus officials that tried to fleece the Explorers when they first arrived at Footfall? Well, depending on how the Explorers dealt with them, they are about to make good on their parting threat. The officials do have some influence in Footfall, and use this to pull in a few favours amongst the crews of the station's defence turrets.

As the Explorers reach their vessel, before they man their stations, the gunnery crews open fire. The first the Explorers will know of this is when their vessel is rocked by explosions. The lights flicker and the crew rush for emergency stations, but no one would expect the ship to be engaged whilst still berthed at one of the station's docking arms. That is, however, exactly what has happened.

Let the players find this out for themselves as they run to their bridge. Describe the scene as the Explorers desperately search their augur screens for some clue as to who is firing upon them, only to see that the sources of the attacks are the turrets mounted the length of the docking arm. As soon as the realisation hits, they receive the following transmission broadcast to the ship: "This is what you get for not paying your dues, Rogue Trader. Now leave, while you still can, and don't come back this way again until you can pay!"

The turrets will continue to fire until the Explorers' vessel is clear, but if they take much in the way of return fire they fall silent, the gunnery crews judging that their obligations fall short of dying. The vessel's escape can be run as a starship combat (see page 212 of **ROGUE TRADER**), or the events can simply be described. While docked, the Explorers' vessel is incapable of raising its shields, so whatever happens, some damage will have been caused by the attack. Only once the ship is at least 100 metres from the docking arm is it possible to raise the shields, at which point the vessel should be safe enough.

## ROGUE TURRETS

The battery of turrets is of little danger to a shielded void-ship. However, there are quite a few of them, making up in numbers what they lack in individual strength. They count as 4 Strength, 1d5+3 Damage macrobatteries with no Crit Rating, and may only target ships next to the docking arm. However, their crews are reasonably trained and have a BS of 40.

## THE RACE IS ON

Once clear of Footfall, switch to narrative time to describe the short journey to the jump point, which should take no longer than a couple of days. However, don't forget that the Explorers' rivals are racing for that point too, and some may try to interfere with the Explorers' efforts, especially if their vessel was damaged by the defence turrets and seems vulnerable.

Depending on how the GM wants to play each of the potential rivals, he can have one or more of them make an opportunistic attack against the Explorers, depending on the rivalries that may already have formed. The profiles for the rivals' vessels can be found starting on page 135.

Alternately, the GM could use this phase to have the rivals engage in a little ship-to-ship bluster. Its easy, after all, to be confident when communicating across millions of kilometres of space, and such communications can be used to build up whatever rivalries might already have begun to develop.



# INTO THE WARP

*"The Expanse calls to those who care to listen."*

—Jeremiah Blitz

After several days sublight travel, and whatever mischief the GM decides to throw their way, the Explorers' vessel will arrive at the periphery of the Footfall system, from which point it can enter the warp. Before they can do so, however, they will need to plot a course to the Dread Pearl. This is achieved by way of a Ritual of Astro-Navigation, which must be conducted by the vessel's Navigator.

## WHERE NEXT?

The Ritual of Astro-Navigation will involve all of the Explorers that witnessed the Foretelling, and will entail them entering a trance, guided by the Navigator, in order to decipher the coordinates of the planet they seek from amongst the tangled strands of memory planted in their minds by the Seven Witches. This may well prove a traumatic event, as the Navigator will know, but is essential none-the-less.

The ritual is a great way to draw upon the skills of the group's Navigator, and the imagination of the player that controls that character. If there is no player controlling a Navigator PC in the group, the GM will have to assume the role of NPC, or could have one of the players do it. The Navigator character must gather the Explorers around an astrographics orrery, which the Navigator uses to plot the vessel's course through the warp. Have the player then describe to the others just how his character perceives the warp. Each Navigator perceives the Empyrean in an entirely subjective manner, some imagining themselves as small fish darting through a predator-filled ocean, the sun above the sea representing the light of the Astronomican. Others see themselves as travellers passing along a narrow jungle path late at night, cruel eyes watching from the verges and the Astronomican taking the form of the illumination cast by a small sanctuary-shrine in a clearing up ahead. The Navigator should invite the other Explorers to join him in just such a journey, describing them setting out together, determining a heading, travelling, avoiding predators and finally arriving at their destination. Make a note of how entertaining and imaginative the player's description was, because they may well earn themselves a bonus in a subsequent test.

Next, inform the players that the Explorers are now deeply submerged in the Navigator's subjective perception of the warp, and have them each make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. Make a note of the degrees of success or failure each achieves.

Lastly, drawing on the memories of each of the other witnesses to the Foretelling, the Navigator must make a **Arduous (-40) Navigation (Warp) Test**. The result is modified by the total degrees of success or failure determined in the previous step, adding 10 for each degree of success and subtracting 10 for each degree of failure. Furthermore, award a bonus for a good performance on the part of the Navigator player in describing his perception of the journey through the warp.

If the Navigator passes, he now discerns the location of the Dread Pearl and can locate this in the ship's astrographics archives. Furthermore, the Navigator now knows the journey duration time, which will be used in the Navigation (Warp) Test to make the actual jump (see page 183 of **ROGUE TRADER**). This value is 50 days. If the test is failed, it can be attempted again, but tarrying overlong will have consequences, as the Explorers will soon find out.

## BEAT TO QUARTERS!

The Explorers will only have time to attempt the ritual once before trouble comes knocking at their door. They will be summoned to the bridge by the wail of ward-sirens and the frantic activity of deck masters as they herd their charges to battle stations. Once they arrive, the Explorers will be able to call up images of the near void onto the bridge's grand vista pict-panels. Read or paraphrase the following:

*As your ship's sensors sweep back and forth across the black they suddenly stop, the vista pict image locking onto the flash and flicker of battery fire, illuminating the void at the very edge of your sensor range. With a smooth motion, the image zooms in, giving you a clear image of an Imperial ship blazing away into the dark—at an apparently invisible enemy.*

The ship is one of their competitors (chosen by the GM) and it is under attack by a holo-field cloaked Eldar vessel known as the *Shard of Dawn* (see page 139). The competitor is also very obviously in trouble.

The competitor's vessel is 100,000 kilometres (roughly 10 Void Units) to the Explorer's port, and its attacker is currently a further 50,000 kilometres beyond (an additional 5 Void







Units), hidden for the moment from the Explorers in the lee of the vessel it is attacking.

At the Explorers' discretion, they can hail the vessel and negotiate some kind of assistance, or they can simply sail off into the void. If they choose to help, the GM can roleplay out the vox transmission between the rival (who will be none too pleased to have to ask for help) and the Explorers, giving them a chance to make a favourable deal or strike up a temporary alliance. This encounter can be made more interesting by choosing a rival that the Explorers have already had a run-in with. If the Explorers choose not to help, then they still come under attack—probably as they are preparing to make their warp transition. In this case, the GM should point out that their rival has escaped his own attacker and is moving off with obviously no intention of coming to their aid.

In either case, the *Shard* will flicker in and out of view, pounding its foes with weapons fire. Of course, it is only a raider, and its purpose is to harass the Imperials and test their strengths more than anything. Once it is apparent that the Explorers can fix its position or when it takes a hit or two that deals damage, it will withdraw.

At this point, the Explorers will be able to make the warp jump, if they have the coordinates from the ritual, with the Navigator following the procedure described in **ROGUE TRADER**. If they have not yet successfully completed the ritual, the Navigator will have to repeat his test while the vessel is under attack, at an additional level of difficulty. Or, the ship's master might decide to make an emergency jump and put the fate of his ship and all its crew in the hands of the Emperor. The choice is his.

If a hasty warp transition is ordered, ask the Rogue Trader player if he is absolutely sure he wants to take the risk. If the order

stands, the Navigator must make a **Hellish (–60) Navigation (Warp) Test**. If this is passed, the vessel translates successfully, though its Gellar Field systems report disturbing readings for the rest of the voyage. If the test is failed, then the ship successfully translates, but suffer a partial Gellar Field failure at the moment of the jump. One Ebon Geist (see page 378 of **ROGUE TRADER**) will materialise in a randomly determined section of the vessel, and a further one will appear in a different section for each degree of failure by which the test is failed. Hunting down and dealing with these horrific warp creatures might form an entire gaming session in itself.

## Rewards

The following are the Achievement Points awarded for leaving the Footfall System:

- 25 Achievement Points for leaving Footfall.
- 50 Achievement Points for completing the Ritual of Astronavigation.
- 50 Achievement Points for each rival the Explorers establish as a solid ally.
- 25 Achievement Points for crippling or destroying the *Shard of Dawn*.
- –25 Achievement Points for each rival the Explorers establish as an implacable enemy.
- –50 Achievement Points for losing at least half of their ship's Hull Integrity in any space combat.

# VOYAGE TO THE DREAD PEARL

*"Finding a new world is like turning over a stone. You can never be sure what you'll find crawling across its surface."*

—Master Explorator Hybros Kora

**H**aving determined the coordinates of the Dread Pearl and made the jump to warp, the Explorers might imagine that their fortune is guaranteed. Any who countenanced such a foolish thought are about to be taught a lesson in the true nature of the Koronus Expanse.

The journey to the Dread Pearl will see the Explorers traverse a great stretch of the Expanse, for their destination lies near the dark and mysterious Heathen Stars, beyond which lies the utter unknown. Needless to say, such a journey is not to be undertaken lightly, and is unlikely to pass without incident. **What the Explorers do not know (and the GM should not tell them) is that they are not actually headed to the Dread Pearl. Their destination is merely the first step in a larger quest that will see them travel across the Koronus Expanse.**

The voyage from Footfall to their destination is a long one, and the GM should instil this fact in the players, using narrative time and plenty of description. During such a voyage, the Explorers will not be sitting idly about playing regicide, as the demands placed on the vessel and its crew by the prevailing warp conditions will place a constant strain on all involved. On top of this background level of adversity, a number of specific events will occur, acting as high points in the long, arduous voyage.

Over the next few pages are a number of events that can be used throughout this, or indeed any warp voyage across the Koronus Expanse. If the GM wants to get the voyage done in a single gaming session, then only a couple of these might be used, but more could conceivably play out, really giving the impression that the journey is long and fraught with peril. The last event should be used however, as it describes the end of the voyage and the arrival at the Explorers' destination.

**Objective:** Reach what the Explorers think is the Dread Pearl (actually Quppa-Psi-12, see page 39).

**Themes:** Exploration (the GM may add other themes to individual events where appropriate)

## THE EVENTS

Many of these events draw on the particular specialist skills and abilities of a specific Explorer. If the group does not include a particular character type, the GM can either skip that encounter, or assume the Explorers have an NPC crewmember who can fill in.

## MUTINY AT WARP (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Rogue Trader vessels are massive ships with crews of many thousands. While a lot of the crew are loyal servants of the dynasty, following their forebears in serving the Rogue Trader House and doing so proudly, plenty more are press-ganged scum. Petty criminals represent a large, cheap, and easily accessible source of unskilled labour. Needless to say, those press-ganged into service in this manner rarely display gratitude that their sentences have been commuted from death to service, and mutiny is far from uncommon.

This event represents just such an occurrence. By taking a **Difficult (–10) Scrutiny Test**, the Explorers will discern that various elements of the crew are showing signs of unrest. A rise in instances of insubordination has been reported, and there appear to have been far more fights than normal in the areas below decks where the bridge crew rarely venture. This state of affairs has reached a point where it must be dealt with, or the performance and safety of the entire vessel may suffer.

These reports are made to the group's Arch-militant, as such characters are often seen by the crew chiefs as the master's right hand man in matters of discipline and security (or may even be serving as the ship's Master of Arms). If there is no Arch-militant, the reports are made to either the group's Seneschal or another martially-oriented character. The player may choose to pass the matter up to the captain, or formulate a plan of action himself.

The threat facing the ship is as follows. A mutinous bilge-rat by the name of Krooker has been preaching rebellion amongst the plasma conduit crews for several days, and only a few hours ago murdered a crew chief and captured one of the ship's Tech-Priests. Although this Tech-Priest is not irreplaceable, if word reached the Cult Mechanicus that one of their number had been abandoned to such as Krooker, the Explorers might find themselves bereft of the support of Adeptus Mechanicus, an extremely problematic situation. Furthermore, if the group includes an Explorator, this character may feel strongly that the captured Tech-Priest must be rescued.

Krooker demands the vessel return to Footfall immediately, and those crew wishing to depart be allowed to do so. He claims that the laws of the void have been broken in the vessel setting course for the limits of the Expanse, and that any obligations the press-ganged crew had to its master are now invalidated. Unless the mutineers' demands are met, Krooker threatens to kill the Tech-Priest. To make matters more complicated, Krooker's mutineers have also broken into a secondary arms locker, and have an assortment of weapons.

How the Explorers wish to proceed is entirely up to them and their way of doing things. They might be the type of group that will simply grab a chainsword each and steam right in to rescue the captive and face down the mutineers. This is perfectly fine, and entirely appropriate! However, they might decide to employ other members of the crew to take part in a rescue, perhaps overwhelming the mutineers with loyal armsmen. They might prefer to engage Krooker in some form of negotiation, gauging his intentions before dealing with him. They might think of something entirely different,

such as flooding the compartment in which Krooker is holed up in with roiling plasma or venting it to space (though doing so may be somewhat injurious to the Tech-Priest).

However the Explorers choose to face this problem, meet it at an appropriate level. If they choose to play the heroes and rescue the captive themselves, then they will probably be able to avoid the bulk of the mutineers and locate Krooker with a dozen or so compatriots. If they send in wave after wave of elite armsmen, then several hundred mutineers will be drawn out to face them, but the Explorers should be able to seek out Krooker amidst all the confusion and bloodshed. Whichever is the case, ensure that the final confrontation is played out between the Explorers and Krooker.

Use the Voidfarer profile from page 371 of **ROGUE TRADER** for Krooker's mutineers. For Krooker, use the same profile, adding 10 to both his Willpower and Fellowship to reflect his bilge-born charisma and strength of personality. Also add +10 to his Weapon Skill and equip him with a chainsword (taken from the murdered crew chief). The rest of the mutineers should have either pump-action shotguns, shotgun pistols, mono-swords, or shock-staffs taken from the arms locker.

### Rewards and Consequences

Should the Explorers defeat Krooker and rescue the captive, then the immediate benefit is that their vessel will run smoothly again. In the longer term, however, the Cult Mechanicus may be beholden to the Explorers in some form or another. This depends on how important the GM deems the Tech-Priest was, and he can work this into the ongoing story of the campaign, or allow the players a bonus when dealing with the Mechanicus in the future.

If Krooker somehow escapes, he will continue to foment discord amongst the crew, taking refuge in the sumps or being sheltered by sympathizers. The Explorers' vessel suffers a -5 penalty to Morale until he is dealt with.

- 25 Achievement Points if the Explorers resolve the mutiny without killing the Tech-Priest.
- -25 Achievement Points if Krooker escapes or the Tech-Priest is killed.

## A SIGNAL IN THE DARK (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

This encounter takes place during one of the periodic drops into real space that all vessels must make when undertaking long or arduous journeys. Translating back into the material universe, the ship's Navigator takes readings of nearby constellations, and more importantly, calibrates his position in the temporal sphere. Having completed this, the Explorers' vessel is ready to resume its voyage once more, when the augurs detect a faint signal.

Tracking the source of the signal requires a **Difficult (-10) Scrutiny+Detection Test**. When the source is located, it will initially be unrecognizable. Only the ship's Explorer will have any chance of identifying it, which will take a **Very Hard (-30) Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) Test**. For the results of this Test, consult Table 1-4.

The vessel is an ancient Adeptus Mechanicus probe, thrown thousands of light years off course. The probe's pattern was proscribed many millennia ago, as its builders utilised levels of automation and machine intelligence found to be anathema to the Cult Mechanicus. Those who built the probe were excommunicated from the Mechanicus, and all known examples of their work destroyed. This then, is the last example of that forbidden pattern.

Assuming he has discerned the probe's nature, the Explorer faces a conundrum. The most obvious course of action would be to attempt to destroy the probe, purge all records of it from the archives and resume the voyage. But then again, it might afford tremendous wealth, if it could be recovered. Be sure to explain this to the Explorer player, instilling an appropriate dilemma.

Should the Explorers decide to destroy the vessel, it fights back. Although the probe is only lightly armed, it is host to a machine spirit that has attained a degree of sentience entirely at odds with the mainstream dogma of the Cult Mechanicus, hence their dictates against its builders. Having got off a few shots and thus gained some measure of surprise, the probe will attempt to disengage attempting to vanish once more into the depths of interstellar space. The profile for the Probe can be found on page 134.

TABLE 1-4: LOCATING THE SIGNAL

Degrees of Success	Details Revealed
Standard Success	The source of the signal is a vessel, of Adeptus Mechanicus origin
One	The vessel is impossibly ancient, its construction predating the discovery of the Koronus Expanse by several thousand years
Two	The vessel appears to be operational
Three	The vessel is in fact a probe
Four	The pattern of the probe was proscribed by order of Mars itself
Five (or more)	The proscription is still in effect, and further investigation would incur the ire of the higher orders of Mars. However, there are those who would pay the wealth of entire worlds for this probe, were it to be delivered to them



Should the Explorers decide to attempt to recover the probe, they may have more luck, so long as they do not open fire. The probe will allow itself to be approached by the Explorers, and the Explorator will be able to communicate with it by way of a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Archeotech) Test**. If the test is failed, the probe will flee as described above, but if it is passed the Explorator will be able to order the machine spirit to hibernate. A further **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** will allow the Explorator to take control of the probe's systems, and to bring it on board, assuming the Explorers' vessel has a cargo bay.

Once brought on board, the probe will be revealed as a stunningly rare example of archeotech. In fact, a **Challenging (+0) Evaluate Test** or a **Difficult (-10) Scholastic Lore (Archeotech) Test** will reveal it to be worth a staggering amount to the right buyer. Finding such a buyer is another adventure in itself, and one the Explorers could pursue upon returning to the Calixis Sector. Bear in mind, however, that should the Adeptus Mechanicus catch wind of the affair, the Explorator may well be excommunicated and the Explorers shunned.

However, there is one last twist to the tale. Soon after resuming the voyage, the probe's machine spirit will reawaken, and enjoin itself with the systems of the Explorers' vessel. The Explorer's ship immediately gains the 'Rebellious' Machine Spirit Oddity (see page 197 of **ROGUE TRADER**). However, do not tell the players about this until the next time the vessel is engaged in a space combat. Even then, it will take a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test** to ascertain that the probe is responsible, and a **Hellish (-60) Tech-Use Test** to undo the effect. The Explorers may well decide to jettison the probe into space, and let it resume its millennia-long mission. If they do so, it will cease affecting their ship.

- 50 Achievement Points if the Explorers recover the probe (and do not jettison it later).
- -25 Achievement Points if the Mechanicus learns they possess the probe (-50 if they are excommunicated).

## PRAY FOR THOSE LOST IN THE WARP (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

No journey through the warp is entirely free from some disturbing event or another, ranging from the ever-present nightmares to the whispering voices that appear to emanate wherever the shadows gather. Although few ever become

entirely at ease with this aspect of void faring, most seasoned voyagers are at least able to function despite it. Long voyages, however, can test even the most strong-willed voidfarer.

By around about the mid point of the voyage, the crew are experiencing all manner of waking nightmares, driving many to paranoid outbursts and interfering with the ship's running. It is reported, via the crew chiefs, that should the situation continue, then the safe operation of the vessel may be compromised.

In such instances, it often falls to the representatives of the Imperial Creed to offer succour against the gibbering things of nightmare. If the group includes a Missionary, this is a job for him. The Missionary is approached by the crew chiefs of three components of the vessel (chosen by the GM, and the selections can be either Essential or Supplemental components). It is requested that the Missionary place a blessing upon the crew of each section, offering them peace and the Emperor's protection. In game terms, all Manoeuvre, Shooting, or Extended Actions suffer a -5 modifier while the crew is gripped with this malaise. This will continue until the Missionary steps in to restore the crews' spirits.

This is an opportunity for some entertaining roleplaying and an exploration of the Explorers' own vessel. As the Missionary visits each of the sections, have him make a short speech, in the form of an invocation of the Emperor's grace. Then, have him make a **Challenging (+0) Charm or Intimidate Test**, (which one depends on his approach to his pastoral responsibilities) modified as deemed appropriate if the player gives a good speech.

If the test is successful, the crew of that section are roused to a state of holy zeal and can go about their task with renewed fervour. Once all of the crews are assuaged in this manner, the -5 penalty described above will no longer apply. Furthermore, if a test is passed by two or more degrees of success, the ship will benefit from a +10 modifier when making any Manoeuvre, Shooting, or Extended Actions during the next battle it engages in. If the test is unsuccessful by two or more degrees, however, the crew are disenchanted with the Missionary's hollow words. The -5 penalty described above is increased to -10 until the end of the current adventure.

- 10 Achievement Points for successfully resolving this encounter.
- -10 Achievement Points for unsuccessfully resolving this encounter.



## DIRE STRAITS (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

The majority of the warp routes by which the Navies of the Imperium travel the voids are relatively well known, their dangers mapped so that void-farers might have some chance of traversing the perilous depths of interstellar space. Despite this, space is riven with stellar anomalies, many the remnants of the warp storms that engulfed the galaxy for thousands of years at a stretch in Mankind's distant past. Others are entirely inexplicable, owing to phenomena for which the Cult Mechanicus and the great Navigator Houses can offer no explanation. Still more may be the result of the actions of long-since-destroyed alien civilisations, marking the sites of destruction on a scale so terrible that reality itself is scarred. The Koronus Expanse is host to a great many such dangers for those who would penetrate its depths, and the Explorers have just encountered one of the very worst.

This encounter will draw primarily upon the skills of the vessel's Void-master, to whom the task will fall to traverse a perilous stellar anomaly.

It is during the third watch, that period of the vessel's artificial day/night cycle when the bulk of the crew are below decks grabbing what rest they can, that the ship cries out as if in pain, its metal structure groaning as titanic pressures are exerted upon it by the warp beyond the Gellar Field. The Navigator will know instantly that the vessel has encountered a previously undetected stellar anomaly. Thankfully, he sees that this is the warp shadow of the death of a star in real space, and not a peril born of the powers that lurk within the Empyrean. The Navigator will also know that the only way to save the vessel is to drop out of the warp immediately.

Translating to the real space in such a manner, in the grip of danger and with no prior preparation is a dangerous manoeuvre. The Navigator must make a **Very Hard (-30) Navigation (Warp) Test**, or the vessel will suffer damage to its Gellar Field—knocking it out of action (and thus prohibiting warp travel) for 1d10 hours. But the danger isn't over yet, as the Void-master must immediately wrestle control of the ship now it has entered real space.

Once in real space, the entire vessel will be shaken by titanic energies, as if the effects experienced in the warp were a mere shadow of a storm raging here. The viewing port is filled with strobing, phosphorescent ghost lights so intense

they obscure the black of the void. An **Ordinary (+10) Detection+Scrutiny Test** using the ship's sensors will reveal that the extent of the anomaly is not great, and it can be escaped, but only with some seat of the pants flying on the part of the Void-master.

In order to escape the anomaly, three **Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Tests** must be made, the first **Challenging (+0)**, the second **Difficult (-10)**, and the third **Hard (-20)**. Each time a test is passed, the Void-master will have brought the vessel that much closer to safety. The first time it is failed however, the vessel will take 1 point of damage to its Hull Integrity, the second time 1d5, and the third time 1d10. This damage is due to the severe shockwaves and gravitational fluxes, and ignores armour and void shields. Once the last test is passed (or failed), the raging energies of the dying star dissipate, and the glittering of stars on the black backdrop of the void becomes visible once more. The shaking will cease, and the Explorers will be able to breathe a sigh of relief, and get back underway.

- -10 Achievement Points if the Explorer's ship suffers 10 Hull Integrity damage or more.

## CARAVAN IN THE VOID (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

The Explorers are nearing the end of their voyage to the Dread Pearl, and a renewed sense of purpose infuses the crew. The vessel translates back to real space, an operation carried out without incident. Each of the Explorers that witnessed the Foretelling are filled with a sense of excitement, knowing that they will soon set eyes upon the object of their desires—the Dread Pearl each witnessed in their vision.

The view through the bridge viewer comes as a shock then to each of the witnesses. The Explorers are fully expecting to see a raging warp storm, behind which sits the Dread Pearl, ready for the plucking. Yet all they see is the calm void and a small stellar system in front of them. Consulting the long-range augurs, it soon becomes apparent that the vessel has arrived at the correct coordinates, yet there is no storm to be seen. This is obviously not the Dread Pearl.

At this stage, the Explorers may decide to conduct a more thorough survey of the system in which they have arrived. Passing an **Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny+Perception Test**

TABLE 1-5: THE STRYXIS

Degrees of Success	Details Revealed
Standard Success	The Stryxis are a race of aliens found in the Expanse. They are not necessarily hostile to humans.
One	They are nomads who travel in ship caravans and trade with those they come across.
Two	They delight in trading, and will make deals with almost anyone. However, they are also treacherous and untrustworthy.
Three	The Stryxis have a very different view on what is valuable and what is not. They often trade for bits and baubles.
Four (or more)	The Stryxis hate the Eldar and will slay them if they can, and flee from them if they cannot.

using the ship's augur arrays will show a planetary system with a small, unremarkable yellow star, a ragged asteroid belt, and a planet within the star's primary biosphere. The scan also detects a number of vessels, travelling in a ragged convoy, only 500,000 kilometres from the Explorers' position. The convoy is clearly making for the system's jump point, near where the Explorers have just arrived.

If the Explorers decide to investigate the convoy, play the following encounter (if they ignore it, proceed to the next chapter). The convoy is a caravan of Stryxis (see page 354 of **ROGUE TRADER**). It will take a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** to identify the aliens. Use the degrees of success by which the test is passed to impart some information based on **Table 1-5**. Should the Explorers hail the convoy, the response will be an invitation to parley, but if the Explorers do not do so, the Stryxis will hail them, and request a meeting.

The aliens ask the Explorers to come aboard their vessel, entailing a short shuttle journey (if the Explorers are fortunate enough to have access to a Teleportarium, that can also be used). If they have neither, the Stryxis dispatch a shuttle of their own to ferry the Explorers across, but they emphatically refuse to set foot upon the Explorers' own ship.

Once the Explorers arrive upon the Stryxis vessel, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Upon setting foot on the deck of the aliens' vessel, the first thing that strikes you is its dilapidated condition. The lighting is low and sporadic as lumens flicker into life, gutter for a moment and then die, to be replaced by another source. What you can see of the bulkheads suggest that the vessel is constructed by a conglomeration of materials and components, each bolted or bound to the next in a disturbingly haphazard fashion. Every surface is festooned with trinkets and fetishes hung from a variety of hooks across the walls and ceiling, ranging from coins and jewels to unidentifiable and shrivelled body parts. The deck is strewn with litter, which crunches or squelches underfoot. The next thing that hits you is the smell. If ever you were to serve penal duty on a mortuary-barque, this is what you imagine it might smell like.*

*Stepping out of the shadows ahead comes what you assume to be a Stryxis. The alien is tall, garbed in a ragged, stained cloak and hood that obscures most of its body. All you can see of its face is a vile, blunt snout, akin to that of a canine, but furless, as if its skin had been flensed to reveal the raw muscle beneath. A suggestion of rapidly blinking eyes is to be seen in the shadows of the hood, but you cannot determine just how many of the beady orbs look back at you.*

*"Greetings bipeds, greetings to my home. It is unsafe to tarry in this place, but I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to aid you. I would treat with your leader, whichever of you that is."*

The alien pauses, and reaches its bony claw towards the ceiling, grasping one of the many small trinkets that hang there from leather thongs, and begins to stroke the object in an obviously covetous manner. The Stryxis wishes to trade with the Explorers, but is in an obvious hurry to be gone from the system. It is only the race's inherent greed that has caused the Stryxis to pause and not, counter to what it will claim, any concern for the Explorers' safety. If asked for its name, the Stryxis lets loose a terrible gurgling sound as if it is choking on blood.

The Stryxis differ greatly from the bulk of humanity in what they consider valuable, as may be known to any of the Explorers with knowledge of them. They are as likely to covet a dried twig as a golden statuette, but have no interest in money or shares in ventures, only in what they can grasp in their vile claws.

Should the Explorers wish to trade, fun can be had playing out a negotiation with the alien. As mentioned, it will have no interest in abstract wealth, but subject to a successful Opposed Fellowship Test, will accept any object offered that is judged appropriate. Suitable items include charms, chronos, auto-quills, ration packs, and (for no obvious reason) filtration plugs. The alien can offer in return any items of with a rarity of Very Rare or lower that the GM deems appropriate (though it will only trade individual items, never items in 'bulk'). It will also provide information regarding the system in which the Explorers find themselves, which it will give at the conclusion of the dealings.



## WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

In this chapter, the Explorers arrive at their destination, expecting their wildest dreams of wealth to be fulfilled as the Dread Pearl is revealed to them. That, however, does not happen. The Explorers will quickly realise that this is not the Dread Pearl as they make landfall and begin to explore (or perhaps even while they are in orbit). Instead of the treasure, they will discover an ancient star map that promises to point the way to their destination, but only after facing another, terrible foe. The Eldar have their own stake in this adventure, and their goal is to ensure no one reaches the Dread Pearl.

Why did the Seven Witches send the Explorers to this planet (Quppa-Psi-12), rather than directly to the Dread Pearl? The GM is, of course, welcome to come up with his own reasons (or leave it as a mystery for his players to ponder). One possible explanation is that as powerful as the Seven Witches are, the psychic mastery of the Eldar is far stronger still. Long ago, the path to the Dread Pearl was deliberately obscured, and few human psykers have the power to pierce that veil directly.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*“Old, honoured bipeds, old this place is. As long as such as I have known, a single sphere spins around this star, with no companions save shattered stone. No paradise, it, but vile place full of the not-bipeds, with teeth and claw and oh-so-many legs. And the temple, the ancient ruins that rise from the jungle on the equator.”*

*“Such as you were never meant to tread upon its surface, and such as I would never do so. It belongs to them, the hated ones, the ones we kill when we can, and flee from when we must.”*

Before the Stryxis can continue, a harsh, electronic screech echoes throughout the bay, and the alien looks around in evident distress. At that very moment, the Rogue Trader's vox comes to life, and the watch officer informs him that a faint augur return has been logged at extreme range.

The Astropath Transcendent may make a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test** as he probes the surrounding space for familiar thought patterns. Passing this will reveal the presence of the Eldar vessel encountered previously. At the same time, the Stryxis wastes no time in urging the Explorers off its ship. “You must leave now, honoured bipeds, leave, now! Go!”

At that, the Stryxis turns and flees into the shadows. The vessel comes to life with grinding, discordant sounds as its engines are powered up to their full output. If they do not wish to be stranded, the Explorers had better take this opportunity to depart.

Once safely back on their own vessel, the Explorers will be informed by the watch officer that the Stryxis vessels have all made best speed on the exact opposite heading to the sensor return reported earlier. That return was last traced heading in system, towards what appears to be this star's only inhabitable stellar body.

## Rewards

The following are the Achievement Points awarded for arriving at Quppa-Psi-12:

- 100 Achievement Points for arriving.
- 25 Achievement Points for learning of the planet's true nature from the Stryxis.



# QUPPA-PSI-12

*"Humans have such limited vision; to them, a world is mud, rock, and sky. To the Eldar, a world is everything it once was and everything it will ever be."*

—Aldarch, Craftworld Kaelor Pathfinder

The Explorers have reached their destination, but the world around which their vessel is now orbiting is clearly not the planet they were expecting. According to the stellar archives, this star is catalogued by the abbreviated astrographical reference Quppa-Psi. The world is the twelfth of twenty-one major stellar bodies orbiting the star, and is therefore referred to as Quppa-Psi-12. The following is an overview of this planet, which the GM can refer to throughout the next phase of the adventure.

## GEOGRAPHY

Quppa-Psi-12 appears as a verdant, green planet from orbit, its surface dotted by innumerable large lakes and small, inland seas. Sufficient water is to be found in the subsoil to support the verdant plant life that covers the majority of the planet's surface, although the equatorial regions are noticeably dryer scrublands and the poles have small ice caps. The remainder of the planet's liquid reserve is to be found in a light cloud layer, which is concentrated in gentle belts around each of the tropics. Lacking as it does any major surface water features, Quppa-Psi-12's weather system is remarkably stable, with only slight variations in weather patterns across its surface.

The vegetated areas of the surface are most dense at the tropics, and consist of sub-tropical forests. These are largely dominated by a range of tall, fern-like trees, many of which reach heights in excess of twenty metres. Where these are especially thick, the forest floor is devoid of other plant life, making the going easy beneath the shade of the thick canopy above.

## ANIMAL LIFE

Quppa-Psi-12 teems with fauna, the vast majority of it insectoid. A high proportion of oxygen in the atmosphere has allowed many of these species to attain an impressive size, with the largest of their kind, a sinuous, wasp-like creature with three separate sets of wings along its thorax, so large it could pose a threat to a lightly armed shuttle. Although broadly classifiable as insects, such creatures exhibit a wide range of features; multiple sets of wings, hundreds of legs, and even more than one head.

A staggering variety of amphibious life can be found near the lakes and seas, most of which eats the insects. These range from tiny, blood-sucking frogs to gargantuan, newt-like beasts with prehensile tongues used to capture the largest flying insects.

The most common forms of animal life the Explorers will encounter are described in the following column. For their profiles, see page 130. Note that none of these beasts have been given proper names, only handy nicknames, because no one has ever been in a position to catalogue

them. This should help to instil in your players the notion that they really are on virgin territory. They might even like to name what creatures they encounter, based on their appearance, mode of attack or the name of the Explorer who first saw one.

- **Crimson Stingers:** A swarm of bright red, flying insects, each about the size of a clenched fist, with a vicious proboscis. These creatures are encountered beneath the fern canopy, and are attracted to their prey by scent.
- **Dragon Hornet:** A single, almost luminous, green flying insect the size of an Aquila shuttle. Although the beast is slow and cumbersome in its flight patterns, it has sufficient bulk to crush an Explorer caught in the open or to inflict damage on a vehicle.
- **Whippers:** Packs of fast, ground-based insects, with a dozen legs, twice as many eyes, and barbed stingers at the ends of their whip like tails. They are well-camouflaged amidst the dried leaf litter of the forest floor and will lie in wait for their prey, leaping from their hiding places in a well-coordinated ambush.

The profiles for all of Quppa-Psi-12 wildlife can be found in Appendix: NPCs on page 130.

## SIGNS OF LIFE

Largely hidden amongst the fern forests of Quppa-Psi-12 are signs that the Explorers are not the first visitors to the world. This is because the world was once, countless eons in the past, an outpost of the galaxy-spanning empire of the Eldar. The world was not what is known to scholars as a Maiden World, but was instead valued by the Eldar for its location amidst the celestial cartography of the region. To the Eldar, Quppa-Psi-12 occupied a propitious location amidst the firmament, and Farseers visited it frequently to conduct their rituals of arcane prognostication.

Dotted across the surface are several hundred structures of Eldar origin. Most are small Wraithbone constructs, long since fallen into decay and overgrown by vines. Should the Explorers encounter one of these myriad structures, a **Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**, modified appropriately if the testing Explorer has any previous experience of Eldar architecture, will identify its creator's species. The function of the structures will remain a mystery, however, and none appear to be dwellings or buildings in the conventional sense. In truth, these lesser structures were built by the Eldar to focus the celestial energies that converge on Quppa-Psi-12, directing them towards one central structure, the temple where the seers' mighty rituals were performed.

It is not entirely beyond the realms of possibility that the players might, upon encountering one of these lesser structures, look for some value in them. A **Challenging (+0) Evaluate Test** will reveal that they have no obvious value, lacking anything beyond chipped and worn Wraithbone, and the occasional lone gem still in its socket.



TABLE 1-6: LANDING ON THE PLANET

Number of Successes	Result
None	The shuttle crashes 100 kilometres from the Temple of Farseeing and becomes mired or damaged requiring at least a day before it can be used again. Furthermore, it is such a rough landing that everyone on board takes 1d10 points of damage (reduced by Toughness but not armour). If using a teleportarium, the Explorers are dropped into a deep lake 100 kilometres from the Temple and must swim to safety.
One	As above, however no one on board takes damage. If using a teleportarium, the Explorers appear in the swampy and thoroughly vile marshlands at the lake's edge.
Two	The shuttle makes a rough landing—or the Explorers teleport—50 kilometres from the Temple of Farseeing.
Three	The shuttle makes a rough landing—or the Explorers teleport—20 kilometres from the Temple of Farseeing.
Four or more	The shuttle makes a rough landing—or the Explorers teleport—10 kilometres from the Temple of Farseeing

## THE TEMPLE OF FARSEEING

Aside from the many lesser structures dotted across its surface, Quppa-Psi-12 is host to a far larger feature of Eldar construction. This is a mighty, ancient temple, largely intact, and the setting for the concluding scene of this adventure.

The temple was constructed countless millennia ago by the enigmatic Eldar as a setting for their arcane rituals. It occupies the Nexus Point at which all of the region's celestial energies converge, allowing the seers to draw upon vast power. When the Eldar civilisation collapsed, these energies were thrown wildly out of alignment, psychic feedback fusing many of the lesser structures and damaging the finely-tuned construction of the Temple of Farseeing such that it could not be repaired without significant investment of resources. As the Eldar civilisation was in turmoil, those resources were unavailable, and the structure was abandoned to its fate.

Even in its current state, the Temple of Farseeing is an impressive sight, with sail-like veins arching high into the air. These are overgrown with vines and ferns, making the temple look almost like a very large tree (and hard to identify from orbit). At the apex of the structure is a wide, round platform, its overgrown surface engraved with a myriad of complex runes and sigils. This is the site where the rituals of farseeing were performed, and the engraving represents a complex map of the surrounding area of space. It is referred to as a star map, but this is no ordinary celestial chart, for its impossibly complex features describe far more than the positions of stellar bodies. Instead, the very fates of those worlds are plotted, and the interplays of impossible dimensions predicted. Each of the worlds nearby is represented by a single gem, but unfortunately many of these are missing, the sockets in which they were once located blackened and scorched by witchfire.

At the centre of the feature is a single heavily scorched and empty socket.

## EXPLORING QUPPA-PSI-12

**H**aving reached Quppa-Psi-12, the Explorers will no doubt wish to investigate further. Although this place is evidently not the Dread Pearl, if they recheck their charts and coordinates, they are obviously in the location provided by the Fortelling. Unless they were completely misled (which is not the case), something about this planet is related to the Dread Pearl. However, a planet is a big place, and it is likely the Explorers will be unsure of where to begin their explorations. A **Difficult (-10) Detection+Scrutiny Test** using the ship's augur arrays will detect the remnants of Wraithbone buildings in a region of roughly 100 square kilometres. In addition, any psyker aboard the ship should make a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test**, with success revealing a psychic resonance in roughly the same area. The test will reveal nothing else, just that the region is psychically active.

In the first stage, the Explorers goal is to affect a safe landing, unless their vessel is blessed with a Teleportarium.

**Objective:** Reach the Temple of Farseeing, learn the true location of the Dread Pearl.

**Themes:** Exploration, Military

## LANDING ON QUPPA-PSI-12 VIA SHUTTLE

Should the Explorers descend to the planet's surface by way of a shuttle, they will find that what began as a seemingly routine atmospheric insertion will soon turn out to be a very rough ride indeed. As the shuttle descends, ancient wardings placed on the world by the long-departed Eldar will be reawakened, the formerly-serene atmosphere churning around the shuttle as it penetrates the ionosphere.

Whoever is piloting the shuttle must make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Flyers) Test**. The number of successes determines how close the pilot is able to get to the Temple before the turbulence forces him to put down (see Table 1-6). Note that this distance is presented entirely for the benefit of the GM, as the Explorers have no knowledge of it at this stage.

When the shuttle finally lands, the Explorers find themselves amidst verdant fern forests teeming with insect life and resounding with their strange calls. Allow the Explorers to explore their immediate surroundings for a short time, before they hear the sounds of a million buzzing wings.

The Explorers' shuttle has attracted the attentions of a massive Dragon Hornet, the apex predator on this planet (its profile can be found on page 130). The beast obviously sees the Explorers' shuttle as some form of prey (or perhaps a mate), and even as they arrive on the scene, they see it impale the shuttle with its massive stinger. The Explorers will have a few moments at least, before the creature realises that the shuttle is not edible and turns its attentions towards themselves. At this point, it will be up to them whether they fight the creature, or flee in the jungle.

## TELEPORTING TO THE SURFACE

In the event that the Explorers teleported down to the planet's surface, as soon as the systems activate and attempt to engage the teleportation, the augurs and readouts in the teleportarium go haywire as the planet's wardings attempt to disrupt the process. A member of the group must make an immediate **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to adjust settings and avoid a teleportation mishap. Having made the test, refer to Table 1-6 to determine the result.

## REACHING THE TEMPLE

Once the players are on the surface, they still have to reach the temple. Their success in doing so can be determined with an Exploration Challenge (page 263 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook). The difficulty of the Exploration Challenge is equal to the distance the players are from their goal. If they are 100 kilometres away, the Challenge is **Involved** (requires 12 degrees of success). If they are 50-20 kilometres away, the Challenge is **Taxing** (requires six degrees of success). If they are 10-5 kilometres away, the Challenge is **Simple** (requires three degrees of success). Of course, if they are within sight of the Temple, no Challenge is required. In the case of the Taxing or Involved Challenges, these actually occur over several days (unless the Explorers have some form of overland transport with them).

Failing these Challenges should not prove to be an insurmountable obstacle for the Explorers. However, it should penalise them, and possibly endanger their lives. If they fail the Challenge but still accumulate at least half the successes needed, they make some progress but find their way blocked by an unexpected setback. For example, the Explorers may come across a swarm of Crimson Stingers blocking their path, or simply be stymied by a swift-flowing river with no readily available ford. In this case, the Explorers are temporarily stalled, but after a night's rest can attempt the Exploration



Challenge again. This second Challenge should be one level easier than the previous one, to represent the forward progress they have already made (if the Challenge was already Simple, the new Challenge is also Simple).

If the Explorers fail the Challenge with less than half the required degrees of success, something terrible happens that completely frustrates their progress. Most likely this is an encounter with one of the planet's more dangerous inhabitants, a Cyan Choker or Dragon Hornet (see Table 1-7 on page 48). The subsequent Challenge (assuming the Explorers survive) is just as difficult as the prior one, to represent that no progress has been made.

The Explorers may want to use their ship in orbit to aid them in their travels. Unfortunately, if other shuttles are sent down they will likely crash (the Explorers are probably the best pilots on the ship) or be forced to abort their landing attempt. The Explorers may want to use their shuttle to get closer to the Temple. If they do so, they must make the same Test as above, but at a -20 penalty (the Temple's defences are more active now that it has perceived 'threats'). This may mean the Explorers end up further away than when they started. In addition, any further attempts at teleportation automatically fail for the same reason.

However, the Explorers can use their ship to guide them in the right direction. Those aboard the vessel can spot large geographic landmarks, and guide the Explorers around troublesome bogs, cliffs, and lakes. If the Explorers suggest using their

TABLE 1-7: WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

Results	Mishap
1-2	Despite the distant roar of predators, the constant drone of insects, and the ever-present feeling you are being watched by dozens of compound eyes, you are not attacked.
3-5	You come upon strange tracks in the mud along your trail. This may be a game track, and a detour may be in order. (The Explorers may subtract one success from their next Challenge, or fight 8 Whippers).
6-7	You stumble into a nest of Quppa-Psi-12's native fauna, who seem even more surprised than you are. The GM may choose 5-10 Whippers or one swarm of Crimson Stingers, which the Explorers take by Surprise.
8-9	The jungle grows silent, and you can't shake the feeling that you are being hunted. The GM may select an adversary (or set of adversaries) from the creatures of Quppa-Psi-12, who attack the Explorers.
10	With a fearful droning sound, a Dragon Hornet dives from the air and attacks the Explorers!

vessel in this way, they gain one automatic degree of success added to their total during any Exploration Challenges.

Having arrived on the surface, the Explorers will eventually encounter the first signs of the Eldar structures mentioned on page 39. At first, these will be hard to detect amidst the overgrowth, requiring a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** to locate. As their exploration continues however, more of these will be encountered, each one level of difficulty easier to detect than the last, until they become so obvious that no test is required to notice any more. Should the group include a psyker, this PC may take a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test**, a success indicating that the structures are psychically linked.

## PREDATORS

As the Explorers penetrate the fern forests of Quppa-Psi-12, they will no doubt come across some of the native fauna. The GM can treat this in one of several ways. If he likes, he can roll once randomly on Table 1-7 for every 'day' the Explorers spend travelling (assume they can travel 15-20 km in a day). In addition, if the Explorers completely fail one of their Exploration Challenges, the GM can choose to roll once on the chart and add +2 to the result to see what they encounter.

Another option is for the GM to simply add encounters when he sees fit, punctuating the narrative with bursts of action. Either way, the Explorers should not see this trek as a pleasant, peaceful experience. The jungles of Quppa-Psi-12

are dank, difficult to navigate, and thoroughly dangerous, and encounters with the local wildlife should reinforce that.

## FINDING THE TEMPLE OF FARSEEING

Once the Explorers have successfully completed an Exploration Challenge (and travelled an appropriate amount of in-game time based on their modes of transportation and their distance from the temple), they eventually come upon the Temple of Farseeing. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Just as you were beginning to think the endless tracts of dense fern forest would never end, you step into the wide clearing. Before you a gigantic alien temple rears out of the earth, multiple, delicate towers stretching gracefully into the sky. Part way up the gargantuan structure, you can see a prominent platform extending from the rest of the temple and surrounded by Wraithbone arches. You feel an immediate sense of your own mortality, as if the builders of this place were akin to gods, and your own soul utterly insignificant.*

### Wraithbone Structures

*The structures to be found across the surface of Quappa-Psi-12 are constructed of the material known as Wraithbone. This psychic material is the basis of all Eldar technology, and is unique to the Eldar. Eldar technology, from the simplest of hand tools to the largest starship, from delicate runes to temples such as that found of Quappa-Psi-12, adheres closely to natural biological shapes and structures. To the Eldar, there is no real difference between technology and nature. They are a single process by which the Eldar imbue living things with function and functional things with life. The materials the Eldar use in their engineering are complex and varied psychoplastics that can be readily formed in solid shapes under psychic pressure. In some respects they are more like living tissue than inert substances, growing and reacting to their environment in a similar way to plants. The completed device or structure is a semi-organic machine or component that works in a conventional manner, though it is often operated by psychic means.*

*The Wraithbone structures of Quappa-Psi-12 are overrun with plant life, and many are damaged and decayed. Yet, Wraithbone itself is a living thing, slowly repairing itself where a structure built by man would have crumbled to dust many millennia ago.*



I: EYE OF THE NEEDLE



## A QUESTION OF RESOURCES

ROGUE TRADER is a game with a vast range of possibilities when it comes to how the players can approach any given situation. The Game Master will often have to adjust things on the fly to provide an entertaining adventure. This might be especially evident in the way in which the Explorers approach confrontations with their competitors. If for example the players like to make use of large numbers of household troops to do the fighting for them, then the GM will have to balance this against how the competitors can act. Most of them will have some way of meeting such a response, such as Madam Charlabelle fielding her large contingent of Kroot Mercenaries to deal with the problem. Others, such as Jeremiah Blitz, will draw upon their innate cunning to avoid such a confrontation, seeking to isolate the Explorers from their support and to face them down in person. So long as the GM remains flexible in his approach to running the game, and well informed on how the players like to solve problems, he should have little trouble keeping the adventure flowing in a way that suits everyone.

### EXPEDITION VERSUS INVASION

One of the options the Explorers may have available to them is landing a massive military force of mercenaries or armsmen. However, there are several complications stemming from the runes of warding placed on the Temple of Farseeing.

Large-scale landings require massive, cumbersome assault shuttles or bulk lifters which will be especially vulnerable to the interference of the warding runes. If the lifters attempt to land closer than 100 km from the temple, they will inevitably crash (unless by an Explorer, in which case the pilot takes a -40 penalty to his piloting tests instead). The subsequent logistical nightmare of moving hundreds or thousands of men through a thick jungle devoid of roads or trails, but full of ravenous predators who will inevitably be drawn to the largest concentrations of prey, is left up to the GM to elaborate.

However, these problems work both ways, and the Explorers' rivals will be faced with the same issues. The potential shows of force by each rival presented on the page below takes this into account.

Having allowed the sight to sink in, do not allow the Explorers any time to gather their wits. Its time to remind them they are not the only ones seeking the Dread Pearl!

## COMPETITION

As the Explorers approach the Temple of Farseeing, a number of their rivals should make an appearance. Exactly which of them arrive is really up to the GM to determine, based on the relations already established. It is also worth considering the strength of the Explorers' own group and what sort of encounter it is most appropriate to play out. If the group is inclined to settle problems through the judicious use of offensive weaponry then have a rival such as Krawkin Feckward or Djanko Scourge turn up, with goons in tow, and initiate a good old-fashioned firefight. Or, Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh could arrive, with a suitably large retinue of armsmen, and demand that the Explorers leave immediately or face the consequences.

Perhaps the most entertaining option would be for one or two 'allies' to arrive at the same time as a number of more openly hostile rivals. The GM could also throw a 'neutral' or two into the mix, and allow the players to indulge in a little on the spot negotiation to sway them to their own cause. The descriptions of the competitors on pages 24-29 provide some pointers on how disposed they are to cooperating with the Explorers. Here are some examples of the forces that a few of the competitors might bring, and their potential dispositions:

**Lady Sun Lee:** Ten elite House Ma'Kao Household Guard (see Rogue Trader Household Troops on page 129), equipped with Best quality enforcer light carapace armour (Head 5 Arms 6, Body 6, Legs 6) and hellguns. Lady Sun Lee's reactions to her opposition varies according to previous interactions. She will not directly betray an alliance.

**Baron Djanko Scourge:** Ten slaver-troops (count as Scum, see page 371 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook), equipped with mesh vests (Body 4) and power mauls. Unless he has a pressing reason to do otherwise, Djanko Scourge fights his opposition directly.

**Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh:** Twenty to thirty Naval Armsmen. See Rogue Trader Household Troops on page 129. The Lord-Admiral feels in control of the situation, and will bluntly insist his opposition step aside. However, he will not resort to violence without reason.

**Madam Charlabelle:** Her personal bodyguard (counts as an Oathsworn Bodyguard, see ROGUE TRADER page 372—in addition to his standard weapons, he is equipped with a boltgun), and four Kroot mercenaries (ROGUE TRADER, page 377). Madam Charlabelle will avoid direct conflict unless forced into it, or if the Explorers have gravely insulted her previously. She recognises she is not in a position of strength, and will wisely seek cooperation in the current situation.

**Krawkin Feckward:** Twenty assorted cronies (count as Hired Guns, see ROGUE TRADER page 370). Krawkin's reactions will be entirely dictated by the strength his opponents currently possess. If he sees a rival with a 'weak' retinue he thinks he can eliminate easily, he will do so. Otherwise, he will be affable and cooperative, for now.

Whatever happens next, one point worth considering is whether or not any of the competitors will be killed off. This is entirely up to the GM, but don't forget that this adventure is only the first of three (if the group plan on playing all three as a single campaign). Having one of the Explorers' competitors die in a suitably spectacular fashion might prove highly entertaining, so long as it is at the hands of the Explorers and serves the story well. However, the GM should use discretion to engineer the scene as he sees fit. In general, he should not kill more than one or two. When the confrontation reaches its climax, proceed to the next chapter.

# THE STAR MAP

*"The galaxy is a river of stars whose waters never sleep."*

—Eldar Inscription

As the confrontation between the Explorers and their competitors reaches its climax, the entire Temple of Farseeing trembles with ancient, arcane power. A psychic shockwave explodes outwards from the platform atop the structure, striking all around it to the ground and shaking the fern forests to their core.

Have the Explorers make an **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test**. Any that fail will fall unconscious for a period of time equal to one minute for each degree the test was failed by. The competitors should make the same test, but if there are large numbers of lesser NPCs present (such as armsmen, mercenaries, goons and the like) then make a single test for each group using its average Willpower characteristic. If any Explorers see this as an opportunity to eliminate a rival, the GM can have a few trusted retainers stay conscious and protect or drag them to safety.

All those unconscious re-experience the vision of the Seven Witches. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*You are adrift in cold night, uncaring alien stars glaring malevolently from the impossible depths of interstellar space. Across the black vista sweeps a line of celestial force, a thread perhaps of the very fabric that binds the universe together. Your mind's eye follows that etheric strand as it describes the weft and weave of reality, converging on a single star lost to the depths of night.*

*The star is blazing so brightly it nigh blinds you, yet you meet its celestial gaze without blinking. Across its seething face passes a small, black orb, which in a moment more has expanded to fill your entire field of vision.*

*Upon the surface of the orb, now revealed to be a verdant world beloved of the ancients, lies a rune. It is a thing of utter beauty, yet it shatters even as you watch, shards splitting off as if in slow motion to careen across space. Each shard of the broken rune comes to rest far away, each upon the surface of a different world to lie, undiscovered, for eons.*

*With a start, you awaken.*

If no Explorers fail the Willpower Test, the GM should select one Explorer to experience the vision anyway—preferably the Explorer with the highest number of Insanity Points.

Each character that experiences the vision realises that the complex rune seen in the vision is in fact the Temple of Farseeing, as it would look when seen from orbit. Even as the Explorers look towards the temple, it trembles once more and

the platform shimmers with actinic energies.

Atop the platform now appear the ghostly forms of seven Eldar Warlocks. They have only recently come to the world, having arrived in the vessel that shadowed the Explorers' ship as it traversed the Expanse, and teleported down to the surface. They are engaged in a ritual to put the Temple of Farseeing beyond the reach of the Explorers, or any of the other intruders upon Quppa-Psi-12. They hope to do this by throwing the entire structure out of phase with the universe around it, plunging it into the shallows of the very warp itself so that none may have access to the secrets it holds. Secrets that the intruders have already been granted a glimpse off by the Seven Witches, and have just come even closer to revealing.

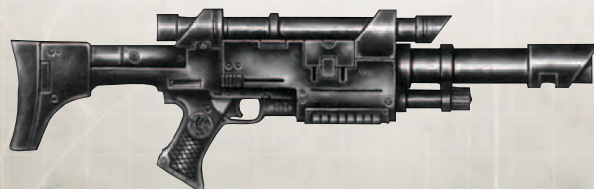
Any of those Explorers who witnessed the Foretelling and/or the vision described above may make a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Psykers or The Warp) Test** in order to work out what the Eldar are trying to achieve (or an **Ordinary (+10) Psynicience Test** if they are a psyker). Success reveals that the entire temple structure is straining the fabric of reality as it is slowly torn from this universe, to be deposited "somewhere else." Even Explorers without specialist knowledge or the psyker's gifts has some inclination that something is very wrong. Each witness to the Foretelling and/or the vision above can make a **Very Hard (-30) Perception Test**. Success reveals that should the aliens succeed in their task, the object of the Explorers' desire, the Dread Pearl will be denied them. The Temple of Farseeing must be saved, and the Eldar defeated.

Remember too that the Explorers' competitors may well have discerned the same information, and depending on their disposition towards the PCs, will react in different ways. Some may decide to take matters into their own hands, while others may attempt to deal with the Explorers before making an attempt to halt the Eldar. Others may be open to appeals to join forces, or in fact make such appeals themselves.

## STOP THE RITUAL

In order to defeat the Warlocks, the Explorers and any allies will have to halt the aliens in their ritual. To do this, they will have to climb the structure by way of the vines and creepers growing all over it, and confront them head on.

The platform is twenty metres tall, though covered in hand and foot holds as well as sturdy vines, and climbing the temple structure requires a **Simple (+40) Climb Test**. Having attained the lip, the Explorers and their allies will be confronted with the sight of the Warlocks engaged in their ritual. Read aloud or paraphrase what they see as presented on the following page:





*Hauling yourself over the lip of the platform atop the temple structure, you see before you a wide-open space, its surface inscribed with arcane sigils and runes. Standing in the centre of the space are six humanoid forms, each clad in flowing robes and wearing a graceful yet decidedly alien helmet. The aliens are poised as if entrapped in amber, their arms raised in invocation. All about them swirls a vortex of witchfire, linked, so it seems, to the runes engraved in the surface of the platform.*

*You see that the aliens are beginning to fade, their forms becoming transparent. And with them, the very temple structure on which you stand is flickering in and out of reality even as you watch.*

If the Explorers and their allies are to save the temple and have any hope of using the arcane charts engraved upon its surface, they had better act now. The Warlocks are surrounded by swirling eddies of psychic energies, through which the Explorers must battle if they wish to engage the aliens up close.

The witchfire swirling around the Warlocks will impede any attacks by the Explorers as its eldritch energies turn aside bolt shells, thwart psychic powers and even push back those trying to pass through it. It has the following effects, which will persist until the Warlocks are defeated.

Passing through the witchfire to move within melee range of any of the Warlocks requires a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**.

In addition to this effect simply standing in the witchfire inflicts 1d10 points of damage (reduced by WB, in the same manner as normal damage is reduced by TB, but not reduced by armour).

Shooting at the Warlocks through the

fire incurs a penalty of -30 to hit. Navigators also suffer a -30 when rolling to use any power against a Warlock protected by witchfire—the psychic light of the fire blinding their third eye. In addition, the witchfire amplifies the dangers of the warp. Add +20 to all rolls on the Psychic Phenomena Table made during this battle.

When the Warlocks are attacked, a portion of them break off their invocation and attack the players. Three warlocks (one with the Destructor power, two with the Enhance power), move to engage the players. The witchfire fades from around them, although it remains around the other three Warlocks. The Warlock with Destructor will not use it if engaged in melee. The three Warlocks performing the ritual will not attack the players, instead relying on the witchfire to protect them. If large number of NPCs join the Explorers, a second Warlock with Destructor will stop maintaining the ritual and attack as well.

The Eldar require at least two Warlocks to maintain the ritual in order for it to have a chance for success. If at any point, there is only one Warlock maintaining the ritual, it fails. At this point, any surviving Warlocks will flee the Temple, fading into nothingness as eldritch energies spirit them away.

The Warlocks should not be able to complete their ritual before the players stop them, as this would put a premature end to the adventure. However, to keep the tension high, the GM should not let on to this, and make it feel like the Temple could fade away at any moment. Every three rounds, all Explorers on the Temple should make an Agility Test or fall

prone as the Temple flickers in and out of reality under their feet. Begin these tests at **Ordinary (+10)** but increase the difficulty of the Test by one step each time the Explorers must make another. The Eldar are immune to this phenomenon.

Profiles for the Eldar Warlocks can be found in Appendix: NPCs on page 133. A map of the clearing around the ruins and the star map is on page 141.

## THE RITUAL HALTED

When the Explorers and their allies defeat the Warlocks, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As the last of the xenos fall, the raging witchfires vanish in the blink of an eye, and the temple structure becomes solid once more. A profound silence descends upon the scene, and you see for the first time the splendour of the sigils and patterns engraved into the surface on which you stand. You recognise it at once for what it is—a stellar chart, of sorts, but one describing not only the positions of celestial bodies, but their passage through fate itself.*

*And then, you notice that the engravings are damaged, made incomplete by terrible wounds inflicted what must have been eons ago. You are filled with dread as you realise that the position of the Dread Pearl is unreadable. Your eyes follow the sweeping patterns connecting each point in the engraving, and you see that each must correspond to a nearby world, out there, in the Koronus Expanse. . .*

## THE TRUTH REVEALED

The ritual halted, the Explorers and their allies find themselves with a vastly complex engraving that describes, among many other things, the position of nearby worlds. Although the coordinates of the Dread Pearl cannot be read with any accuracy, several other worlds in the Expanse are linked to it by unbreakable strands of fate. To discover the location of the Dread Pearl, the Explorers have no choice but to follow these strands and discover the long lost secrets found at their ends.



## ALLIES AND ENEMIES

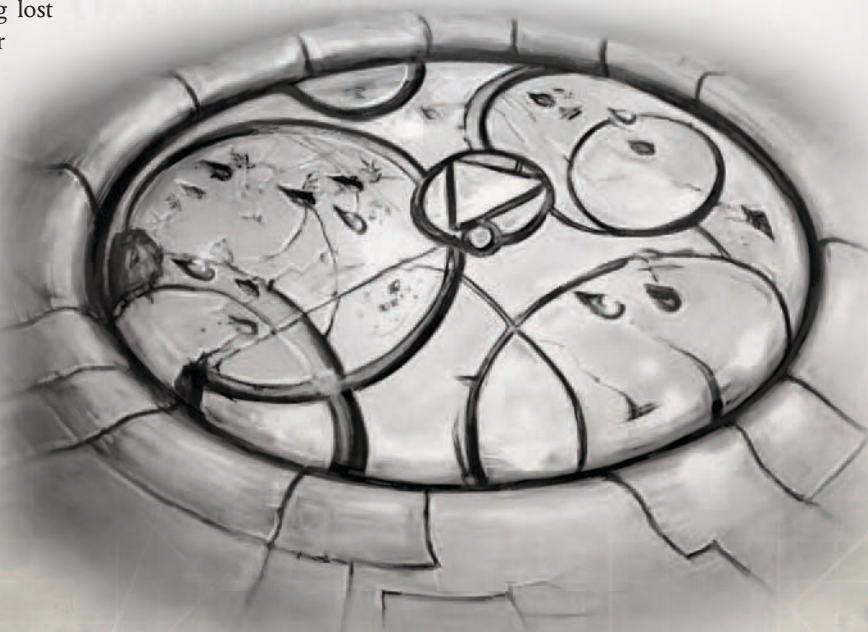
When it comes to playing out the final scene, remember to account for the Explorers' competitors. Several will witness the star map first hand, and understand immediately that they will need to follow the strands of fate to nearby worlds in order to discern the final location of the Dread Pearl. Other competitors may not be present to witness the star map for themselves. These will either come upon it later, after those present have left, or, should anyone make an effort to destroy the engravings, will follow their rivals as they head off.

## Interpreting the Star Chart

The star chart originally showed the location of the Dread Pearl in the Koronus Expanse. However, the runes and jewels marking its location have been damaged and lost. However, the chart is by no means worthless.

The Explorers should quickly realize that the Chart marks six locations within the Expanse that are intrinsically and psychically linked to the Dread Pearl. If those locations are found, it may be possible to detect the psychic link to the lost world. Should enough of these links be mapped and charted, it should be possible for an individual such as a Navigator to use his own psyker's gifts and unique link to the warp and its interactions with realspace to extrapolate the Dread Pearl's approximate location.

It promises to be a difficult task. However, in the Expanse what promises the greatest rewards is never easy.





# AFTERMATH

In the immediate aftermath of the battle at the Temple of Farseeing, the Explorers may have to fight their way clear of vengeful competitors, or broker deals with potential allies. Each of the competitors present will seek to capture an image of the star map, an easy enough task using servoskulls, ocular augmetics, or portable sensor equipment, and the Explorers would be well advised to do likewise. None of the competitors will be especially keen to tarry at the Temple however, as each will be well aware that the race to follow the strands of fate and thereby locate the Dread Pearl has already started. None know what might await them at the confluence of each strand, but each is prepared to face anything to complete their quest.

If they arrived on Quppa-Psi-12 by shuttle, there is probably little need to play out the Explorers' return to the landing site, although the GM could certainly describe it if the journey was a long one. Alternatively, the defeat of the Eldar can result in the wards protecting the site shutting down, allowing for a quick rescue by the Explorers' lander. The Explorers may find that their lander requires some repair, depending on the landing, but again, this can be affected by dispatching repair crews from the Explorers' vessel and need not be played out in any detail.

## REWARDS

The following are the Achievement Points awarded for reaching the Temple of Farseeing and learning the location of the Dread Pearl:

- 150 Achievement Points for reaching the Temple and defeating the Warlocks at least long enough to record the star map.
- 25 Achievement Points for landing within five kilometres of the Temple.
- 50 Achievement Points for each rival permanently eliminated (not necessarily killed).
- -25 Achievement Points for each new rival created by the Explorer's actions.
- -10 Achievement Points for landing or teleporting 50 or more kilometres from the Temple.
- -10 Achievement Points for losing 20 or more NPC subordinates on the planet (the rest of the crew gets leery when the Explorers keep returning alone...).

## WHAT NEXT?

What happens next really depends on whether the next adventure of the three presented in this book is to be played. The players might decide to return to civilisation and sell the coordinates of the Dread Pearl, and doing so will earn two Profit Factor. More likely, the Explorers will waste no time at all in following the lines of fate described on the star map. In this case, proceed to the next adventure.

## COMPETITORS

Whether or not there is any intention of playing the next of the three adventures presented in this book, it will certainly pay to take stock of how each of the competitors is disposed towards the Explorers at the end of the adventure. Even if the group is not intending to play the next adventure, many of these competitors will still be out there, and may be encountered again in the future. Of course, when the Explorers next encounter them, they may be unimaginably rich having located and perhaps the ransacked the Dread Pearl, a fact that should invoke all-consuming jealousy in the Explorers!

If the next adventure is to be played, then the GM should certainly make a note of what the competitors are doing next. Some may in fact be dead, but others will have seen the star map and be racing for the Dread Pearl. Others still will not have been present, but will seek to follow the Explorers, or indeed other competitors. Furthermore, make a note of whether any of the competitors were wounded or suffered damage to their forces or their vessel, as such things can be reprised later on.



## EXPERIENCE

With the adventure concluded, and the Explorers hopefully all in one piece the GM should award experience points based on their exploits. In addition to the standard rewards for surviving each play session (see page 292 in the ROGUE TRADER Rulebook) the GM can assign these additional rewards to each PC:

- Dealt with the Administratum Oeconomica Imperialis without resorting to violence—this includes the Bureau resorting to attacking the Explorers as they depart Footfall: 100 xp
- Ate something at the banquet without ill effects (the GM may wish to award more experience to Explorers brave enough to eat the more deadly dishes): 50 xp
- Made at least one alliance with a Rival: 200 xp
- Each Rival defeated (though not necessarily destroyed): 200 xp
- Each encounter successfully overcome on the journey from Footfall to Quppa-Psi-12: 100 xp
- Landed or teleported onto Quppa-Psi-12 without mishap within 10km of the temple: 50 xp
- Defeating the Warlocks without suffering any Explorer casualties: 200 xp



THE  
HEATHEN  
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# THE HEATHEN TRAIL

*Beyond the heart of Winter's dream, The ghosts of lost and damned men scream. From whence man's distant cousins hail, begins in blood the Heathen Trail.*

—Excerpt from the *Rhyme of the Ancient Pilgrim*

This adventure sees the Explorers travelling on from one location in the Expanse to the next, and engaging in a series of potentially highly profitable Endeavours at each port of call. The locations are not random, however, as each correlates to one of the 'strands of fate' engraved upon the ancient Eldar star map encountered at the end of the first adventure—Eye of the Needle. Only by following each of these celestial strands to its termination can the final location of the Dread Pearl be ascertained. Having followed a strand to the 'nexus' marked on the star map, the Explorers' Navigator will be able to take a reading of its celestial and empyreal coordinates. Once a certain number of readings have been taken, the coordinates of the Dread Pearl are revealed.

## THE STAR MAP NEXUS POINTS

**Chapter II: The Heathen Trail** is broken up into five sections, each section detailing a different Nexus Point and the perils and wonders the Explorers find there. Each of the sections also includes an optional adventure the Explorers can pursue that relates to the location where the Nexus Point is found.

The majority of the five Nexus Points are presented separately from the accompanying gazetteers and adventures. This is to allow the GM to sidestep the adventures if so desired. The GM might feel that sufficient time and effort has been spent on previous adventures, and decide to move the action on to the third adventure in this book. By presenting the details of how and where the star map reading may be conducted, and keeping this largely separate from the events described in each adventure, this is entirely possible. In many cases, however, the Nexus is a mini-encounter in its own right, just to keep the Explorers on their toes!

The Explorers do not have to read all five of the Nexus Points in order to locate the Dread Pearl. In fact, they can make do with as few as three, if the readings are all performed correctly.

However, this is not something the Explorers should be aware of. They should only know they have visited enough Nexus Points when the route to the Dread Pearl becomes clear in their minds and charts. This allows the GM to remain flexible. If his players want to move quickly to the third adventure, he can have them visit a few Nexus Points. If, however, the players want to search out all the Nexus Points, he can increase the required number. It is also possible that due to mishap, the Explorers may not successfully read some of the Nexus Points, which may drive them all the harder to track down the remainder.

If the GM wants to inject a sense of urgency or challenge, some of the Nexus Points the Explorers reach may have already been found and subsequently destroyed by the other Rogue Traders. This underhanded tactic could drive the Explorers to greater efforts, and also remind them they are not alone in this race. If this happens, the rival could even leave a calling card of some type next to the ruins, just to taunt the Explorers.

**The Explorers should receive 225 Achievement Points for each Nexus Point they read successfully.**

Once the Explorers have completed a satisfactory number of Nexus Points, move on to Chapter III (page 95).

## READING THE NEXUS POINTS

Each Nexus Point glows with psychic energy, faintly, but detectable by psykers even at long distances. At each Nexus Point, the ship's Navigator must read the starmap embedded in the Nexus's structure. Each Nexus Point takes the form of a temple, not unlike the one the Explorers travelled to in the first adventure, but smaller in size and importance.

Each temple has a starmap located on its topmost floor. This starmap looks similar to the one the Explorers encountered in the first adventure. Although the starmaps may seem like the key to discovering the location of the Dread Pearl, a **Routine (+20) Navigation, Logic, or Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) Test** reveals the map does not impart any useful information. Any psykers, however, instantly have the feeling that there is more to these maps than first appears.

Any psyker may attempt to 'read' the map with an **Arduous (-40) Psyniscience Test**. Although any psyker may attempt this, a Navigator's unique psychic powers allow him a better chance of success, and he gains a +20 bonus on any Psyniscience Test he makes to read the starmap.

An attempt, successful or not, takes roughly 10 minutes. If the attempt is failed, the psyker may try it again, and the test becomes one step easier than the previous attempt. The attempts are dangerous and taxing, however, as the psyker is trying to make sense of something fundamentally xenos. If the psyker ever fails by four or more degrees, he suffers one level of fatigue and one Insanity Point as the alien information overwhelms his brain.



## USING THE HEATHEN TRAIL AS A STANDALONE ADVENTURE

This adventure, like the one before it, has been designed to be used as part of a series following the foretelling of the Seven Witches across the Expanse in search of the fabled Dread Pearl. That said, it can also be used as a standalone adventure with minimal changes. The Heathen Trail is presented as a series of detailed locations and Endeavours, each ostensibly geared toward following the star map described in the first adventure, *Eye of the Needle*. However, it is very easy to use any or all of these locations and their associated adventures on their own. Simply substitute the references to the Nexus on each world with that of a unique treasure or goal, and then run the adventure as an Endeavour. Each adventure should only require some slight modification on the GM's part to be run as a stand-alone Endeavour. It is easy to imagine ample reasons for the Explorers to travel to such places as Zayth, the Processional of the Damned, or Vaporius in search of plunder and profit.

To modify the adventure to use as an Endeavour, simply add up the amount of potential Achievement Points received during it, round down to the nearest variable of 100, and consult page 278 of *ROGUE TRADER* for an idea of how big the Endeavour is and how much Profit Factor should be rewarded for successfully completing it. Each adventure is already broken up into Objectives, making the conversion easier.

Each of the locations in this adventure is also accompanied by a gazetteer giving a broad overview of the world: its geography, history and inhabitants. These form the perfect basis for modifying the existing Endeavours, or creating new ones, associated with these worlds. The GM can also use this information to further flesh out these worlds, creating his own NPCs, treasures and locations using the gazetteers as a foundation. In this way the Heathen Stars can become a setting in its own right, and need not be used solely in combination with the Foretelling of the Seven Witches or the quest for the Dread Pearl as detailed in *Lure of the Expanse's* scenarios.

If none of the Explorers are a Navigator or other psyker, they must bring an NPC Navigator from their ship. In this case, the GM should have the Navigator simply succeed after 1d5 tries.

## THE GAZETTEERS

The Heathen Trail presents six detailed gazetteers, each describing a location and some of the factions that populate it. These gazetteers describe the setting in which the accompanying star map reading and Endeavour take place, but they can also be used on their own. Perhaps the Explorers will want to return to these locations at some point in the future, or maybe the GM will want to use them to his own ends, with or without the accompanying events. In fact, far more ideas are presented in each gazetteer than are needed for the Endeavour to be run. This is to allow the GM plenty of scope for running events as best suits the group, or to reuse the location later on, exploring more of what it has to offer. As well as making this adventure more interesting, the gazetteers should provide plenty of information and inspiration for future adventures.

## THE ADVENTURES

Lastly, most of the locations have a related adventure the players can undertake to earn extra Achievement Points (making their rewards at the end of the adventure more substantial) These may be everything from establishing new trade routes to aiding powerful parties in exchange for a reward. In some cases, the adventure is related to the ongoing search for the Dread Pearl, others present independent adventures.

The adventures are structured so that they can be used as standalone Endeavours if the GM wishes, with a minimum of conversion. See "Using the Heathen Trail as a Standalone Adventure" for more information on this.

# HEATHEN STARS GAZETTEER

*"The edge of the universe truly exists; and I have seen it."*

—Talranna Eclipus, Navigator of House Vor'cle

The Heathen Stars are a region of space far out into the Expanse, beyond Winterscale's Realm and the more "civilised" worlds that fall within the shadow of Footfall and the Maw. It is a rarely visited part of the Expanse and one that is considered to lie even beyond what is generally considered the "frontier." This does not, of course, stop enterprising Rogue Traders and bold adventurers from making the perilous journey across the warp to its distant shores—spurred on by tales of fortune and glory.

## THE EDGE OF THE GALAXY

It is not lightly that many voidfarers refer to the region in and around the Heathen Stars as the Edge of the Galaxy, or simply the Edge. Nestled against the borders of the Rifts of Hecaton, it is as far a place as men have travelled and returned to tell the tale. Its worlds are mostly rumours and faint scratches marked on charts but its promise of wealth is unmistakable. To even reach the Heathen Stars one must have a sturdy, warp-worthy vessel and a brave Navigator; for beyond the reaches of Winterscale's realm, the Astronomican grows dim, its pure light clouded by the pervasive storms of the deep Expanse. The closer a vessel comes to the Rifts of Hecaton the more unruly the warp becomes; powerful warp storms descending in an instant, ephemeral reefs and shoals appearing and disappearing like smoke in the wind, and

creatures of the deep always circling just beyond the range of a vessel's augers. There is also no "official" Imperial presence within the Heathen Stars, forcing travellers to rely on renegade colonies and alien ports for trade and repair.

In recent times (since the Imperium's return to the Expanse), some brave travellers have tried to chart clear paths into the Heathen Stars. However, only a handful of warp routes have been found, and none of them can be reliably reused. This means that each time a traveller wishes to journey to the Heathen Stars (also known as taking the Heathen Trail), he must gather together what notes and rumours exist and plot his own course across the boiling currents of the immaterium. Usually this entails finding a path to Zayth, closest of the Heathen Worlds and most visited by the Imperium. Though most do not make planetfall when they arrive (scorning it as a backward and worthless war world), reaching Zayth allows captains to then chart a course to other nearby worlds, using the Zayth jump point as a link back to Footfall and the greater Expanse. Of course, trader captains and adventurers are not the only ones to come to the Zayth looking to explore the Heathen Stars. The Adeptus Mechanicus has tried to map the region, drawn there no doubt by the rumours of the ancient landships of Zayth and other technological wonders. Over 200 years ago, the great Piraeus Explorator Fleet began its epic tour of the Expanse, which in time led it to Zayth. There they catalogued the nature of the world, even seeding it with some of their faithful before moving on. Unfortunately for

subsequent explorers, the Piraeus Fleet has not yet returned from its expedition (though it is not uncommon for Explorator Fleets to spend centuries charting new regions of space) and what information it has sent back is patchy. One thing is clear, however: to safely enter the Heathen Stars you must first reach Zayth—the gateway to the Heathen Worlds beyond.

## HEATHEN WORLDS

The Heathen Stars are scattered and diverse, ranging from blazing yellow giants surrounded by flourishing worlds teeming with life, to cold blue sparks casting their ghostly luminescence over dry dead worlds of dust and ruin. It is as varied a place as can be imagined within the Expanse, comprised of fledgling human colonies and ancient empires of man spiralling into slow decay. It is also a region of ghosts, phantoms and unexplained phenomena. Many travellers attribute this to the alien influences that still plague the region, the remnants of civilizations and dominions far older than the age of man. The hand of the Eldar, especially, can be seen within the region, scattered ruins, abandoned orbital structures and even flickering gates drifting deep in space. This faded presence only adds to the forlorn nature of the worlds within the Heathen Stars, giving them an aura of despair and failure greater than anything man could conceive.

The following are a selection of worlds that appear within this adventure.

++ Sent by Astropathic transmission in orbit around Zayth++

*To Inquisitor Staven Arcturos, Ordo Xenos  
Concerning the Presence of the Treacherous Eldar in the Koronus Expanse*

*My lord and master,*

*Three long years have passed since you sent me hence from Port Wander to explore the boundless tracts known as the Heathen Stars. In that time, I have seen much. However, of the Eldar you asked of, I have learned little. Their presence in the region is cloaked in mystery, and concealed behind veils of half-truths, myths, and lies.*

*One story has stood out, if only for the frequency I have heard it (or some variation) told. It is a tale about the Tattered Web, the remnants of an Eldar network of star-gates created long ago for reason unknown, a "webway." The stories say travellers in the Heathen Stars sometimes find these gates, cold dead arches of stone covered in twisting runes and glyphs. A few even claim to have found functioning gates, and even claim to have witnessed aliens walking into their glowing depths. Of course, I have never spoken to one of those travellers myself. You will likely be unsurprised to learn that the lack of facts does not stop greedy fools from seeking out these gates in the hope of discovering ancient treasure beyond.*

*There are many speculations as to why the Eldar have abandoned this network, but some of the most outlandish tales concern the encroaching Hecaton Rifts. Grizzled voidfarers speak of the Rifts as if they were alive, and tell of their boundaries fluxing to imperil the worlds along its borders. It is said that whole worlds are engulfed, and if that is true, the webway gates in the Rift's path could perhaps be destroyed. These tales always conclude by saying the Rifts are slowly moving, rolling in across the Heathen Stars like a rising tide of raw warp energies and unstable space. Whether this is true or not is as yet unknown, and certainly few men have dared venture close enough to the Rifts, or stayed there long enough, to chart its movements. I, personally, have my doubts as to this matter. I do know, however, that the entire network seems to have been abandoned very suddenly, at once, and very long ago, based on similar evidence of aging found in locations X-1 and X-24. As to why this might be, I have only wild conjecture.*

*Your servant,  
Interrogator Stelos Fain*



## DROSS

Dross is a feudal world of primitive religion and feral tribes. "Discovered" by the Rogue Trader Nejo Skylax, it is among one of the harder worlds in the Heathen Star to reach. This is due in part to the inexplicable storms that rage across its surface, boiling off into space itself. The storms are not born of the warp or seemingly of any known science, but have the power to wreak terrible damage on any ship that draws too close.

Many a captain has met his end trying to make a landing on Dross, only to be lost with all hands as his ship's systems fail and it plunges down into the turbulent atmosphere. For the primitive tribes, however, such bounty from the Sky-Father (as they refer to their primitive god) is always welcomed. For more information on Dross, see page 83.

## VAPORIUS

Cursed by parched mountains and dry sea beds, Vaporius is a primitive and feudal planet ruled over by the Priest-Kings. From their cities of glass and copper, they control the precious and divine springs, granting water to their subjects and letting their foes perish of thirst. Despite its arid and desolate landscape, Vaporius is not without its treasures, and travellers to this remote world speak of ancient technological wonders buried far out amongst the sands and the rare and special properties of the precious waters themselves, blessed by the Priest-Kings. There is even tell of a special mission by the Ministorum to turn the world to the path of the Emperor, hidden somewhere under the very noses of the Kings. For more information on Vaporius, see page 66.

## ZAYTH

A bloody war world, Zayth is a ruined and battle-scarred place of radioactive storms and smoking craters. The world's remaining inhabitants live in great moving city-fortresses, veritable battle-hives, which cross the planet's blasted surface and wage never-ending war on one another. The descendants of soldiers and generals, they have never known a time without war, and fight on even though the reasons for conflict are forgotten, replaced with the simple need for survival. While visitors to Zayth speak of priceless salvage among the detritus of war, the true prize is the cities themselves, rare relics from before the Dark Age of Technology whose secrets would be worth untold thrones. For more information on Zayth, see page 57.

## OTHER PLACES

The Heathen Stars are home to more than mere worlds, and stories abound of unique celestial phenomena, rogue stars, and forgotten, treasure-laden space hulks. Rumours also persist of alien portals and stable warp conduits linking the Heathen Stars to other parts of the Expanse and beyond. One such documented portal, thought by the well-informed to be part of the Tattered Web, leads to the Processional of the Damned and has been dubbed the Damned Gateway. For more information on the Damned Gateway and the Processional of the Damned, see page 88.

For more information on a particular space hulk, see page 73.

# COMPETITION

*"A prize isn't worth anything unless at least one other captain wants it!"*

—Captain Abel Gerrit

Throughout the Heathen Trail, the Explorers' competitors are trying just as hard to locate the Dread Pearl. Each goes about doing so in a manner appropriate to their character, situation, and the resources at their disposal. Rather than impose a rigidly-scripted description of exactly what each competitor is doing as the Explorers go about their quest, a set of guidelines is provided, allowing the GM to include the competitors as and when needed. The following is a set of ideas as to what each competitor might be up to, but bear in mind that the actions of the Explorers at the end of the first adventure—Eye of the Needle—may have changed things considerably. It's entirely possible that one or more of the competitors might actually be dead, of course!

The other thing to bear in mind is that there may be other means of locating the Dread Pearl, which the Explorers do not know about. Although they are following the so-called strands of fate, other competitors might have entirely different ways of fulfilling their quest. Exactly what these other methods are isn't important, and they are certainly beyond the scope of this adventure and not something the PCs are in a position to affect, but it won't hurt for them to know that such methods exist and are actively being pursued. Still other competitors may be following the Explorers or other competitors, waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

## CROSSING PATHS

It is entirely possible, and in some cases highly desirable, that the Explorers should cross paths with at least a handful

of their competitors at some point throughout the Heathen Trail. This is really a matter of how involved the GM wants the competitors to be in the adventure, and how much interference the Explorers can take. For this reason, the six chapters that follow do not include specific guidance on how to integrate the competitors. Instead, the GM should use the competitors to add flavour and move the narrative on as and when needed. For example, if the Explorers are having an easy time of taking control of the *Light of Terra*, then why



not have a rival turn up, one who has perhaps been trailing them for some time and has chosen their moment to strike. Alternately, should the PCs find themselves up to their necks in trouble, then a competitor with whom they have made an alliance might be willing to help out.

Don't forget the Explorers can improve or worsen their relationships with the various competitors throughout the adventure. It's also possible some competitors have fallen since they were first encountered, and the GM should feel free to either ignore or alter the information given here.

## HADARAK FEL

Rogue Trader Fel is a canny veteran of many endeavours, and is quite capable of pursuing the coordinates of the Dread Pearl by way of his own ingenuity. It is possible that he may cross paths with the Explorers, and if he does, his disposition towards them depends very much upon their previous encounters, as discussed on page 25. Although Fel is someone who does not make friends easily, has a certain sense of his own superiority, and bears bitter grudges, he isn't stupid. He is a cautiously intelligent man who does not take unnecessary risks or allow himself to be diverted from his quest. Instead, he'll save his vengeance for later, striking when his own position is assured and his foes are most vulnerable.

## JEREMIAH BLITZ

Whilst the Explorers have been pursuing the star map Nexus Points, Jeremiah has been following the Heathen Trail on a very different route. Blitz encountered an Eldar vessel shadowing his own through the outer reaches of the Quppa-Psi system but, incredibly, was able to evade it, and later pick up its own trail. The Eldar vessel in question has been attempting to track the actions of the competitors, and interfere with them where and when possible. As a result, Jeremiah Blitz has been able to discern the pattern in the worlds the Eldar have visited, and along with clues gleaned from the actions of the other competitors has come to discover something of what is occurring. Towards the end of the Heathen Trail adventure, Blitz works out a rough location of the Dread Pearl.

Should Blitz and the Explorers cross paths, he will not be openly hostile towards them, unless the two groups have come to blows earlier on, in which case he is likely to shoot first and talk later. Although essentially self-centred, Blitz is unlikely to withhold his aid should the Explorers find themselves in a bind and he is on hand to help them out. Being the mercenary he is however, he will fully expect repayment, and may even demand a share in future takings, extracting an agreement from the Explorers before helping them.

## ABEL GERRIT

Abel is a capable man supported by an equally-skilled coterie of men and women who have served the Arcadius dynasty their entire lives. He therefore takes the business of locating the Dread Pearl very seriously, and has gone about the quest in a highly professional manner. Gerrit's Navigator is just as capable as the Explorers', and has read the same strands of fate in the star

map. However, Gerrit's crew has found a different method of following the strands, utilising the archeotech sub-etheric sensor vanes Gerrit's vessel is equipped with. His quest takes Abel to the same systems the Explorers visit, although the manner of his following the strands of fate results in his vessel spending most of its time in the systems' outer regions. It is up to the GM whether or not Abel Gerrit and the Explorers cross paths.

When it comes to any potential encounters, Abel Gerrit is a reasonable man, and is unlikely to instigate hostilities, unless they have occurred earlier. He will listen to any proposals, and negotiate fairly. However, remember that Abel Gerrit, being fairly low down the pecking order of his clan, does not have unlimited resources, has no desire to return to his clan empty handed, and would dearly love to be more influential within the House Arcadius than he actually is. These feelings can be used to add complexity and depth to any interactions the Explorers have with Abel Gerrit and might colour how he reacts to specific situations.

## MADAM CHARLABELLE

The last hope of the House of Armelan, Madam Charlabelle is pursuing the Dread Pearl with every possible resource she can bring to bear. She has stayed in the race through a combination of luck and sheer determination, and she obtained a fairly good description of the map from one of her Kroot mercenaries. Her Navigator now has a good idea of the coordinates of the Dread Pearl, and she is visibly energised as the chance to revitalise the fortunes of her house is almost within her grasp.

Should the Explorers cross paths with Madam Charlabelle near the beginning of the adventure, they are likely to find that she is willing to ally herself with them to a common cause—for the time being. If the two parties cross paths towards the end of the adventure, she will be less likely to enter into such pacts as she now has most of the information she needs and will become increasingly consumed with the desire to possess the Dread Pearl. However, if she has good reason to believe she will not be able to claim the prize on her own, her desperation may leave her open to a partnership. She is unlikely to react to the Explorers with overt hostility, but may take advantage of a chance to leave them behind if she has a chance of gaining an advantage over them and the other competitors.

## LADY SUN LEE

The Matriach of the House of Ma'Kao pursues the coordinates of the Dread Pearl with all the ruthless-yet-honourable professionalism for which her dynasty is known. First, she split her forces, dispatching her three raiders to keep an eye on those competitors she believed most able to contest the Dread Pearl, while she herself led her own investigations from her flagship. One of those raiders is assigned to tail the Explorers' vessel, a fact they may or may not become aware of, depending on circumstances.

Another of Sun Lee's raiders was set to monitor the progress of Lord-Admiral Bastille. This vessel was detected however, and a skirmish ensued in the outer reaches of the Delectus Nox system. The raider was badly damaged, and many



of Lady Sun Lee's servants killed and wounded. When Sun Lee protested this incident to the Lord-Admiral, he roundly insulted her 'devious and churlish tactics' and threatened to attack her in turn. Sun Lee and Bastille are now sworn enemies, and it is entirely possible that their developing feud may escalate and engulf the Explorers and others amongst the competitors.

Lady Sun Lee is willing to form alliances that further her quest, and will be especially well disposed towards pacts hindering Bastille. Such agreements may drag the Explorers into the conflict between the two Rogue Traders, something that can add a further level of complication to their quest.

## DJANKO SCOURGE

Djanko Scourge has gone about the business of locating the Dread Pearl in an entirely different manner to the rest of the competitors. Subtlety and guile are to Scourge signs of weakness and not characteristics he displays, and so his quest has seen him descend upon one world after another in search of clues to the Dread Pearl's location. Although crude, this approach has in fact paid off, to a degree at least, as the Rogue Trader's agents have clashed with those of several other competitors and gleaned from them, under torture no doubt, several pieces of the jigsaw. It stands now for Djanko Scourge to gather the final pieces, a task which he plans to set about in typically blunt style.

In the early stages of the adventure, it is unlikely that the Explorers will cross paths with Scourge, but they may well encounter his agents. These are ruthless servants of the Scourge dynasty, employed as much for their sadism as for their cunning. Djanko's agents will attempt to capture the Explorers or their own servants should they get the chance, and extract from them whatever they have so far learned of the Dread Pearl.

## LORD-ADMIRAL BASTILLE THE SEVENTH

Of all of the competitors seeking the Dread Pearl, Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh has the greatest resources immediately at hand. Bastille's cruiser flagship is accompanied by a number of other vessels, including escorts, troop transports, and merchantmen, and many of these have been dispatched to seek out the location of the Dread Pearl. One of Bastille's Navigators has come to the same conclusion as the Explorers' regarding the need to take a reading at each Nexus Point, and will do so in the same manner as them.

Therefore, it is Lord-Bastille or his agents who the Explorers are most likely to cross paths with. At first, it may be apparent that others have been present at a Nexus Point not long before the Explorers arrive, and later on, they might actually come into conflict with agents of the Lord-Admiral. Note that Bastille is unlikely to accompany his agents to the Nexus Points, as he is usually busy commanding his fleet.

Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh is engaged in conflict with Lady Sun Lee, and will not treat with the Explorers if they have aided her. Since he has such overwhelming resources, the Lord-Admiral views his position as a strong

one, and he uses the threat of military conflict as a major negotiating point. In fact, he is unlikely to see any benefit in an alliance with the Explorers, unless they are very convincing.

## KRAWKIN FECKWARD

Unlike the resources of the Lord-Admiral, Krawkin Feckward's strengths are entirely hidden. Where Bastille's advantage is overt and military, Feckward's is covert and criminal. The Rogue Trader pursues the Dread Pearl in a manner quite unlike the other competitors. Instead of hunting down leads himself, he utilises every underhand trick he knows and draws on every contact he can to gather the information covertly. This he achieves with his agents establishing contacts with the criminal underclass found amongst the crew of every vessel in every fleet, whether naval, mercantile, or Rogue Trader. By extending his influence by way of his contacts amongst the bilge-scum of his rivals' vessels, Feckward slowly pieces together a picture that leads him and his advisers to an idea of where the Dread Pearl might be located.

It is entirely possible that Krawkin Feckward's reach extends as far as the crew of the Explorers' vessel. If the mutineer Krooker (see page 33) is still alive, then he makes a re-appearance, having sold out his masters for Feckward's coin. The Explorers then have to deal with this rogue element of their own crew before the quest for the Dread Pearl can continue.

## THE ELДАР

Throughout this adventure, the Eldar make every effort to foil the Explorers' and the competitors' efforts to locate the Dread Pearl. However, the aliens have insufficient resources to stop so many enemies from locating the planet. They still take every opportunity they can to keep track of the humans' actions, and if they get the chance, they launch small ambushes and attacks.

Such actions can take place where and when the GM wants them to, and can take many forms. Some might be opportunistic attacks on the Explorers' vessel, especially if the Explorers are otherwise engaged upon the surface of a world. They might take the form of a Ranger taking a well-placed sniper shot from a great distance, before melting away into the wilderness. The Eldar might even launch more audacious assaults, a small force taking on the Explorers if they have reason to believe they have a chance of slowing or defeating them. However, the Eldar do not have many resources to spare on this, and as a race they are not willing to throw away their lives lightly. Bear this in mind when playing out any encounters.

While in space, the Explorers are most likely to encounter the class of alien vessel described on page 139. Planetside, the Eldar dispatch small bands of Pathfinders (page 131), elite trackers and assassins, to interfere with the Explorers' efforts to locate the Dread Pearl.

The Eldar have the distinct advantage of having some idea of where the Explorers are likely to be, and use this to ambush them. Knowing that the Explorers are using the star map Nexus Points to ascertain the Dread Pearl's coordinates, the Eldar can place ambushes at or near the Nexus Points, with Pathfinders lying in wait until one of the Explorers crosses their gunsights.

# WAR WITHOUT END

*"Nothing makes profit like the blood of men."*

—Sabal Eyth, Voidmaster of the *Far Horizon*

**W**ar Without End sees the Explorers arrive in orbit above the war-torn planet of Zayth. Following the strand of fate, the Explorers' Navigator soon discovers that the nexus is located upon the world's surface, and a landing party must be assembled, so that the reading can be carried out. The world of Zayth is not a place where strangers venture lightly, for its many warring factions do not welcome intruders to their world, unless those intruders can offer them some advantage in their ceaseless conflict.

The Explorers also encounter a crashed shuttle of an Imperial pattern, and within it discover the corpse of a follower of the Machine Cult, an emissary to the Gun-Masters of one of Zayth's gargantuan land-ships. Grasped in the hand of the desiccated corpse is a data-arc, containing the details of a covert meeting this emissary of the Adeptus Mechanicus was in the course of attending. An opportunity for profit is revealed, if the Explorers can turn this situation to their advantage. But there are others that do not welcome the interference of outsiders, and the Explorers must be bold to escape Zayth with their profits, and their lives.



## ZAYTH GAZETTEER

Like so many worlds across the galaxy, Zayth is a place of never-ending war and bloody, futile conflict. For centuries uncounted, its human inhabitants have been locked in a bitter struggle against their kin—warrior clans living in behemoth land-ships and fighting for reasons lost in the smoke and blood of battle. There is much to interest Rogue Traders here, however—the land-ships themselves are artefacts of a time now lost to the Imperium; dark-age technology of incalculable value. The world's blasted landscape is also a scavenger's dream, littered with the remains of millennia of warfare. However, no one just lands on Zayth and looks around—to even approach the world requires the support of at least one of the clans and more than one intrepid explorer has underestimated the power of the land-ships and had his vessel blasted from the sky.

## THE BIG WAR

Even within the vaulted halls of the city-sized land-ships, the clans of Zayth have little memory of how their world came to be the blasted wasteland of death and destruction it is today. Visitors to Zayth from the Imperium, though few and far between, have pieced together something of the history of this tragic world and its descent into endless conflict. From patchy Administratum records compared against the incomplete data of the clans—kept for the most part locked in cogitators deep within the land-ships—it seems that Zayth was once a green and verdant world, settled millennia ago during mankind's great expansion across the stars. Over time, however, the shifting tides of the warp and the waning strength of humanities' grasp on the galaxy meant Zayth was cut off and forgotten.

Alone, its inhabitants turned inwards, and what had once been a single unified colony of man became a distrustful world of suspicious city-states and secretive nations. Still in control of powerful dark age technology—city-levelling macrocannons, virulent bio-agents and mighty land-ships the size of hives—the city-states and nations created the thousand-year treaty that restricted conflict to remote regions and far out to sea. It was a treaty that lasted less than a decade. There are no solid records of what began the Big War, but its effects are plain to see for anyone visiting Zayth. Everything was laid to ruin as armies swarmed across the land, bombs dropped from the sky, and the

mighty land-ships strode across the earth like merciless gods of war. At first, there must have been some kind of plan for victory, some strategy to defeat the enemy and restore the peace. However, as the war escalated, all seemed forgotten in years of fire, blood, and death.

After a time (impossible to gauge from fractured records), only the land-ships and their crews remained, protected from their now-toxic world by thick hulls and flickering void shields. With nothing left to hope for, the crews fought on, driven by a bitter hatred of the other land-ships and the memory of their homelands burnt to ash. Generations came and went within the land-ships and what was once a military crew became a clan, a tribal city-state with no allegiances beyond its armoured shell. Today, the land-ships crunch and grind their way across the wasteland in paths set out by their Elder-Tacticians, driven on by the hatred of their Gun-Masters, and maintained by the secretive Engine-Orders. Occasionally a land-ship falls, its carcass stripped and looted by the others, and Zayth takes another slow and steady step toward the day it will become a dead world.

### ASH AND DEATH

Zayth is a wasteland pocked with craters and divided by vast dry ocean basins, long since boiled away by radiation and nuclear fire. Even the world's mountains have been shattered and smashed by titanic exchanges of firepower until they are little more than lines of jagged foothills crisscrossing dust choked plains. It is across this remaining macro-continent that the land-ships sail—churning up great plumes of radioactive ash in their wakes. Occasionally their passage unearths a grim reminder of the past—the broken foundations of a pre-war city, the petrified stumps of an ancient forest, or even the skeletal remains of a destroyed land-ship. For the most part these desiccated remains are only given a cursory glance by the land-ship for anything of use, and then quickly forgotten. The clans have little connection to their past and less interest in exploring it.

Beyond these broken memories of the world that once was, the only other major landmarks on Zayth are the Great Craters. Caused by the first bombs dropped in the Big War, these craters are kilometres across and sometimes hundreds of metres deep. So potent were the bombs that made them that the land-ships still avoid crossing them, for fear of radiation hard enough to slice through their shields and fry their hulls. The Great Craters also act as a guide to those crossing the wastelands, their greenish glow visible for thousands of kilometres in all directions. In fact, they can even be seen from orbit as eerie glowing dots of light powerful enough to pierce the thick toxic atmosphere.

Aside from the Great Craters and the land-ships themselves, the greatest danger to a traveller on Zayth are the toxic storms. After centuries of warfare and the complete destruction of its biosphere, the world of Zayth has become a hellish place to visit. Its skies are constantly covered in boiling crimson storm clouds, lit from within by jagged bolts of purple lightning. Without natural barriers to stop it, the wind howls around the world creating tornados of dust and ash that can strip a man to bone in seconds—if the radiation and airborne toxins haven't already reduced him to bloody slag. For the most part, these storms wash harmlessly over the land-ships' heavy shields, but once every so often a titanic one tears across the wasteland and any land-ship in its path must stop and dig into the hard earth to survive—its inhabitants cowering in the ship's hold, praying to the ancestor spirits of the Engine-Orders to keep their ship upright.

### LAND-SHIPS OF ZAYTH

The humans of Zayth live almost exclusively in the land-ships, each one home to a fiercely independent clan with its own set of traditions and rites. Over the centuries, the land-ships themselves have also become unique: as the toxic winds of Zayth and the constant war between the clans damage them they are repaired in a variety of inventive and makeshift ways, mostly from parts scavenged from beneath the ash-covered plains or torn



from vanquished rivals. From a distance, a land-ship looks not unlike an Imperial hive, its ringed hull tapering toward a point hundreds of metres above its vast base. Closer in, a multitude of protrusions become visible—gun decks, sensorium banks and dust glider hangers covering its hull like a thousand tiny wounds. At its base, behind a billowing cloud of ash and dust, legs, tracks and suspensor arrays can be glimpsed, holding the mighty structure aloft. There is nothing in the Imperial arsenal that completely compares to a land-ship, and more than one traveller from the Imperium has commented that it is as if a light cruiser had landed and sprouted legs—certainly a land-ship’s firepower is comparable to many battlefleet ships of the line.

Each of these monstrosities is home to a clan, the ancient descendants of its military crew. Within these clans exists a rigid caste system, perhaps brought about by the martial discipline of their ancestry. At the head of this structure are the Elder-Tacticians, mystic officers charged with plotting the course of the clan and the path the land-ship travels. Ancient and wise, the tacticians spend most of their time cataloguing and researching the centuries worth of records from countless engagements and weapon tests to prepare for their clan’s next encounter with a rival land-ship. In more recent times, the arrival of off-worlders has prompted them to re-evaluate how these outside influences might change the course of the Big War.

Beneath the tacticians are the Gun-Masters, those men and women specially trained to operate the weapon systems of the land-ships, be they conversion-beam batteries, macro-cannon turrets, or squadrons of missile-laden dust gliders. These are sacred positions aboard the land-ships, where surviving the next conflict is all that matters in the never-ending battle between the clans. Below the Gun-Masters dwell the teeming masses of the land-ships; men, women, and children who call the lumbering citadels their home. Of course they too have a role to play, for everyone aboard a land-ship contributes to its battle readiness—be it cleaning decks, crafting shells, or carrying fuel.

Finally there are the Engine-Orders—secretive cults that keep the vast machinery of the land-ships running, passing on the secrets of their working from one generation to the next. Aboard a land-ship they seal off corridors, rooms, and sometimes whole decks behind tarnished copper doors—a clear message to all aboard that only those of the Engine-Order may pass beyond their threshold. Understandably, Adeptus Mechanicus tech-priests and Explorers that have visited Zayth have noted the parallels between the Engine-Orders and the Machine Cult—and there are even rumours of the Mechanicus infiltrating the orders of Zayth to unearth the secrets of the land-ships. Some tech-priests have noted the similarities between the land-ships and similar structures on the moon of Cog and the mobile hive of Ambulon on Scintilla, only further increasing the Machine Cult’s desire to plumb their secrets.

## THE WORLD THAT ONCE WAS

The dust plains and ash wastes of Zayth hide a past long forgotten and buried by war. Travellers to Zayth speak of ancient cities buried beneath the ash, some still mostly intact and littered with ancient Imperial technology, forgotten wealth, and records of man’s expansion into this region of space. One such city that even the clans themselves speak of

is Zolran—fabled capital of Zayth and first colony of man. Stories tell of the city surviving the first bombs of the Big War—sheltered beneath a powerful shield dome. As the war dragged on, however, and more and more of the world was laid to waste Zolran found itself alone, its inhabitants unable to escape the dome that protected them from the land-ships and the world’s worsening climate. Finally its location was lost, buried beneath the shifting ash and dust of Zayth, the clans still whisper that the city and its inhabitants survive, hidden somewhere in the wastes.

There are also reports of something much older on Zayth, ruins that predate even the coming of man and the start of the Big War. It is said that far out in the dust basins are deep ravines, that once long ago would have been deep-sea trenches—before the oceans boiled away—and within these deep cracks in the earth is the remains of an alien city, undisturbed and unvisited for millennia.

## THE ZAYTH NEXUS

In order to locate the Zayth Nexus, the ship’s Navigator has to make a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test**, or another Explorer will have to make a **Very Hard (–30) Detection+Scrutiny Test** to detect the structure with the ship’s sensors. The exact location on the world’s surface to which the Explorers must travel in order to take the reading will be revealed to them, to a level of accuracy determined by the Degree of Success by which the test is passed. Consult Table 2-1 on page 60 to determine this.

The Zayth Nexus is located in a deep ravine, which was once a stygian trench deep below the world’s oceans. These oceans have long since boiled away, consumed by the nucleonic fires unleashed at the beginning of the Big War. The entire area is now a sea of dust and ash, dotted by the occasional craggy spire of rock, wreck of an ancient sea-going war vessel, or even the pitted skeletons of gargantuan sea creatures rising from the otherwise formless wastes. As the Explorers descend from their orbiting ship, they notice two of Zayth’s land-ships cruising through the wastes and headed towards each other. It looks like they’re near the Explorer’s destination, but not close enough to be any concern at the present.

Unless the first test reveals the exact location (five or more degrees of success), the Explorers have to successfully complete the Exploration Challenge (see page 263 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook) listed in the second column of Table 2-1. The Challenges are easier the closer the Explorers are to the Nexus, and whether they succeed or fail on the Challenge, they find the Nexus...eventually. However, if they fail in the Exploration Challenge, they have taken so long in their search that they have attracted unwanted attention in the form of a band of wasteland scavengers and outcasts (see the third column of Table 2-1).

Each band is made up of around a dozen or so Scum or Mutant Outcasts (see **ROGUE TRADER** page 317). They attack the Explorers by default, as they see the Explorers as competitors for what little resources the wastes have to offer. The scavengers have little appetite for a real fight however, fleeing quickly if more than a few are killed.

**Table 2-1: Locating the Zayth Nexus**

Degree of Success	Margin/Subsequent Challenge	Penalty for Failing Exploration Challenge
Standard Success	20 kilometres/Involved Exploration Challenge.	Hard encounter (four times the Explorers' numbers in opponents).
One	10 kilometres/Taxing Exploration Challenge.	Average encounter (twice the Explorers' numbers in opponents).
Two	5 kilometres/Taxing Exploration Challenge.	Average encounter (twice the Explorers' numbers in opponents).
Three	1 kilometre/Simple Exploration Challenge.	Easy encounter (equal number of opponents to Explorers).
Four	500 metres/Simple Exploration Challenge.	No encounter.
Five (or more)	The exact location is revealed.	No encounter.

Having faced down the denizens of the wastes, the Explorers eventually come upon a wide, jagged ravine. Read aloud, or paraphrase the following:

*You stand at the lip of a mighty crack in the cratered wastes, a hot gust of wind sending dust and ash cascading into its black depths. In the midst of the shadows, you can just about make out a curved, bone-white structure, its construction very obviously akin to those you encountered in the fern-forests of Quppa-Psi-12. Checking your coordinates, you confirm that this is the Zayth Nexus, at which your Navigator may take a reading of the star map.*

The Explorers need to descend the steep walls of the ravine in order to reach the nexus. The descent requires an **Ordinary (+10) Climb Test** for each Explorer, and takes a half-hour to complete. The temple is easy to access, and the Explorers should find the starmap on the upper storey in short order. Once they do, a psyker needs to make the reading (see page 50 for more information). However, unknown to the Explorers within the ravine, they are about to have their first encounter with Zayth's other denizens.

Unbeknownst to the Explorers (unless someone remained outside the ravine), the two land-ships spotted on the way down have accelerated and are headed towards the Explorer's position. The two land-ships are unaware of the presence of the Nexus, and are in the area for other reasons (see War Without End, beginning on the next page). However, one happens to be bearing down on the ravine where the Explorers are located. This may mean the Explorers get closer to a land-ship than they'd like.

After 10 minutes of working, any Explorer can make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**. Success means they notice a faint rumbling, more felt than heard, in the air. Every five minutes thereafter, the Explorers may test again, with the test becoming one step less difficult each time. After another ten minutes, the Explorers notice the very rocks shaking and small landslides along the sides of the ravine.

If the Explorers were canny enough to leave someone on the surface, they may make a

**Very Easy (+40) Awareness Test** to notice that one of the two land-ships seen during the descent is getting rather close. In fact, it seems to be headed directly towards the ravine the Eldar Nexus is located in.

The land-ship is completely unaware of the Eldar Nexus. However, the ravine is narrow enough that land-ship is able to drive directly over it, something that could prove disastrous to anyone within. The land-ship altered course at the same time the Explorers began their descent, and takes roughly one hour to reach their location. This means the Explorers have time for three readings before the land-ship rolls over their position and they are likely buried beneath a deluge of rock. If the Explorers try to climb out, it is unlikely they will beat the land-ship. However, they can decrease the time of their climb by making a **Difficult (-10) Climb Test** (rather than an Ordinary Test). Succeeding at this test means they can make the climb in just 10 minutes. Alternatively, if they follow the ravine bed, they can escape the land-ship's 'footprint' without problems.

Being caught in the rockslides and partially collapsed ravine deals 4d10 Impact damage to the body (and possibly more, if the Explorers are partway up the ravine when they are hit and end up falling back to the bottom). The rockslides also crush the Nexus Point beyond use.

After this, hopefully, the Explorers have one part of the coordinates that will eventually lead them to the Dread Pearl. However, the sudden arrival of the land-ship means some serious potential complications. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As you scramble clear of the partially-collapsed ravine, you find yourselves standing at the base of a titanic construction. This mobile behemoth of adamantium and ceramite cruises across the wasteland as if someone had taken a hive spire and given it legs and treads. Even as you watch, one of the immense weapons on the land-ship's flank roars fire and smoke, and a titanic projectile cracks through the air at supersonic speeds. Though you are near deafened by the blast, you can still hear a thundering explosion in the distance, and see a mushroom cloud billowing up over the horizon.*

The Explorers are about to encounter two of Zayth's mighty land ships, which even now are trading fire with one another with macrocannons more suited for starship combat. The second landship is out of sight over the horizon, but it is quickly drawing too close for comfort.

Soon, the wastes are filling with a swarm of ramshackle battle tanks and armoured carriers, and an all-out assault is developing. The Explorers find the path back to their vessel blocked by the arrival of an entire squadron of tanks and a whole company of heavy armed and armoured warriors. Read aloud, or paraphrase the following:

*As explosions fill the sky and bullets scythe through the air, the trembling of the ground increases to a mighty quake. From over the horizon, you see the rearing form of another land-ship, cruising slowly but inexorably in your direction. Suddenly the air between the two bizarre structures is filled with hurtling shells, which explode across the unseen void shields surrounding each. The wastes are now swarming with two large bodies of warriors, heavily armed and armoured, though you cannot make out or recognise the patterns of the equipment they bear. The two opposing armies are converging on your position, and the entire area is rapidly becoming a very dangerous place to be.*

At this stage, the Explorers had better start looking for cover, or the sheer weight of firepower being exchanged by the two forces is going to cause someone a serious injury. The only place nearby they might take cover in is the wreck of a crashed shuttle not far away. Unfortunately, it's this wreck that the two land ships are fighting over. It only requires the Explorers to take an **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (Imperium) Test** to determine that the crashed ship is of standard Imperium manufacture, and obviously not one belonging to the locals.

As they come upon the wreck, have one of the Explorers make an **Easy (+20) Logic Test**. If passed (or if the players haven't worked it out already), it seems apparent that the shuttle, or something in it, must be highly desirable if the two opposing factions are prepared to go to such great lengths for its possession. The Explorers smell a profit to be made...

The following is an optional adventure that draws on the Zayth Gazeteer presented earlier on. With the details presented throughout the adventure, the GM should have all of the setting information needed to play it through. Furthermore, the Endeavour is separate from the plotting of the Zayth Nexus, so that if desired it can be skipped or, conversely, used in an entirely unrelated adventure.

## WAR WITHOUT END ADVENTURE

The Explorers find themselves upon a raging battlefield, trapped between two great armies, each battling for possession of a crashed shuttle that lies wrecked nearby. What do the belligerents want with the shuttle and, more importantly, how can the Explorers turn the situation to their advantage?



### OBJECTIVE I:

## DISCOVER THE SECRET OF THE SHUTTLE

### Themes: Military

In order to find out why the opposing factions are fighting so bitterly to claim the wreck of the shuttle, the Explorers need to reach it before anyone else. This is far from easy, as hundreds of the warriors of both sides are converging upon it even now. How the Explorers go about this very much depends upon their approach, but below are a number of possibilities and how the belligerents might respond.

**The race against time:** So long as they do not waste time and are travelling reasonably light, the Explorers might well be able to gain the wreck before the warriors of either side. This entails a fair amount of dodging bullets and a good deal of running. Have each Explorer roll 1d10 and subtract their Ag Bonus. This is the number of rounds that come close enough to hit them, each one counting as a single shot from a bolter (1d10+5 X Dam, Pen 4, Tearing). Explorers may dodge these attacks as normal. Any hits are worked out as normal.

**Doing it by force:** If the Explorers are accompanied by any armed guards they brought with them, they might try to force their way through, holding off both enemy factions long enough to secure the wreck. This is a major gamble however. Ultimately, the warring factions have a lot more firepower to bring to bear than the Explorers do. Nevertheless, fighting their way through and establishing a strong perimeter might work; if only long enough for the Explorers to discover what is inside the shuttle. The GM can run this as a pitched battle using the mass combat rules found page 292 of

### ROGUE TRADER.

The Profiles for the Land-Ship Armsmen can be found on page 128 at the end of this adventure. For the purposes of combat, there should be a minimum of 100 men on each side, or more if the Explorers have a large military force.

**Negotiations or bluff:** There is always a chance that the Explorers might attempt to impose their will upon one or both sides, opening communications and trying to establish some sort of dialogue. This is even more of a gamble than fighting their way through, and takes some very skilled diplomatic work, or some very good lying. Although the least likely tactic to work, give the PCs a chance of succeeding if they come up with a particularly good play, allowing them to make a **Very Hard (-30) Charm Test**.

### THE WRECK

When they do eventually come upon the wrecked shuttle, they find that it is indeed an Imperial pattern, and it has evidently been shot down whilst traversing the wastes. If they are working against the clock, it takes a **Challenging (+0) Strength Test** to force entry, as the bulkhead is so buckled and warped that the entry hatches are jammed tight.

Having gained entry to the shuttle, the Explorers find that its interior is almost as wrecked as the outside. Every system has been consumed by fire, and loose machine components are strewn all about. They come across a number of ruined and decaying Servitors, their organic body parts shrivelled and burned. In the shuttle's cramped cockpit, they come across a grim scene: the corpse of a long-dead tech-priest of the Adeptus Mechanicus, his shrivelled hand welded by fire to the side of his head.

Should the Explorers decide to search the corpse, have them make an **Easy (+20) Search Test**. Success reveals a crystal data-arc protruding from a port mounted in the Tech-priest's cranial augmetics. Evidently, the servant of the Machine God was engaged in manipulating the port in some way, even at the moment of his own death.

As soon as the Explorers recover the data-arc, the enemy factions converge on the shuttle and they find themselves engulfed in outright war. This should be run fluidly by the GM, with the intention that the factions throw men at the Explorers until they withdraw. The result should be inevitable, however the GM should leave the Explorers several options for escape (fleeing through the wastes, stealing an enemy transport, or even a daring aerial extraction via shuttle or guncutter).

### Reward

- 50 Achievement Points for successfully retrieving the crystal data-arc.
- -10 Achievement Points if the Explorers are required to employ large numbers of their own resources in extraction from the wreck (such as 100 or more Armsmen).

### OBJECTIVE 2:

### TURN DISCOVERY TO ADVANTAGE

#### Themes: Criminal, Trade, and/or Military

Having obtained the data-arc from the crashed Adeptus Mechanicus shuttle, the Explorers are now in a position to turn the information to their advantage. There are a number of ways in which they might do so, though the group may of course come up with even more:

- Usurp the deal that the Tech-priest was to broker, by posing as him and meeting with the Gun-Master detailed in the data-arc. Once the information is obtained, sell it to the renegade faction of the Mechanicus.
- Sell the Gun-Master out to the Elder-Tacticians.
- Sell the emissary out to the Adeptus Mechanicus.

The Zayth gazetteer presented on the previous pages should provide plenty of inspiration for the settings and events that might take place as the Explorers set about this objective. However, some details are provided if the Explorers decide to pursue the first two options (it is worth noting that the second and third options are in no way mutually exclusive).

The Gun-Master the Tech-priest was supposed to contact is named Baddor Hovic. He is aboard the nearer of the two land-ships, the *Indestructible*. The *Indestructible* is an archetypical land-ship, following the descriptions in the gazetteer. It carries a surprisingly large population within its gut, almost all of whom are devoted to the continued operation of the land-ship and continued warfare on its neighbours.



## READING THE DATA-ARC

Once clear of the immediate danger presented by the cauldron of war in which the Explorers find themselves, they will be able to access the data-arc by way of a **Difficult (-10) Tech-use Test**. Provide the players with the handout on page 64. The tech-priest was in fact an emissary from the Adeptus Mechanicus of the Lathes in the Calixis Sector, and he was engaged upon a clandestine mission to curry favour with the Gun-Masters of one of Zayth's mighty land-ships. The emissary's orders were to offer the Gun-Masters some example of the Machine God's beneficence, in return for the opportunity to study the Gun-Masters' weaponry. Furthermore, it is quite clear that the emissary was not acting on behalf of the duly appointed officers of the Cult Mechanicus, but was in fact representing a rogue element within that order seeking to gain an advantage over its rivals. The data-arc contains a message, which the emissary was to secretly present to the Gun-Masters without the knowledge of the Elder-Tacticians, in order to open negotiations. The message makes some astronomical promises, which it is doubtful the Adeptus Mechanicus would have kept were the Gun-Masters to have agreed to the deal.

The data-arc goes on to give the details of the emissary's Gun-Master contact, as well as some damning evidence of the identity of the emissary's masters.

However, the *Indestructible* is beginning to fare the worse in its centuries-long engagement. Rumours run rife through its superstructure that within a few decades, the corpse of the *Indestructible* will be picked clean by other land-ships, and her complement left to rot in the wastes. The Elder-Tacticians, led by Senior Tactician Graves, are confident in their ability to steer the *Indestructible* through these tough times, and bring it back into victory. However, a group of Gun-Masters, led by Hovic, are convinced the only way to ensure their survival is to exchange whatever they can for outside aid.

The renegade Mechanicus agents previously wore out their welcome with Graves and the Elder-Tacticians when they attempted to infiltrate the *Indestructible's* Engine-Order and their agents were exposed. At the Engine-Order's insistence, Graves ordered the Mechanicus envoy banished from his ship under pain of death. The renegades later contacted Hovic, who was more open to their offers, making a deal that offered weapon-tech in exchange for favour and opportunities to study the Gun-Masters' weapons. Unbeknownst to Hovic, the end-goal of the renegades was to use him as a proxy, stringing him along and using him to gain access to the deepest secrets of a Zayth land-ship.

Whatever the Explorers' plan, their first goal should be to gain access to the *Indestructible* (if they want to try broker some sort of deal with the opposing land-ship, the Bulwark, the GM can use the information given about the *Indestructible*, adapted as needed). The Explorers could attempt access through the ship's lower hatches, gargantuan access-ways used to deploy the land-ship's tattered ground forces. However,

these are some of the most heavily-defended points on the land-ship, and the Gun-Masters and soldiers there are under strict orders to shoot any vehicle or individual who is not of the *Indestructible*.

The Explorers may have better luck arriving through the upper dust-glider hangers in a shuttle. Though Zayth has few visitors from off-world, they are not unheard of. Since a land-ship's airpower is usually limited to dust-glider squadrons, true flyers or shuttles are usually assumed to be off-worlders and not fired on.

If the Explorers arrive openly, they are greeted by gruff vox-traffic ordering them to identify themselves. If they identify themselves as off-worlders of any stripe, they are allowed to land in one of the forward hanger bays. They touch down amongst a flurry of activity as a squadron of dust-gliders is being prepped for launch, wing hard-points loaded down with missiles and bombs. The Explorers feel the deck shake beneath their feet as the battle rages on outside the land-ship.

The Explorers are quickly escorted to meet with three Elder-Tacticians, who are sparing time from their war to speak with them. Graves is not be among them at this stage, however he meets with the Explorers if they insist, or provide good reason. Hovic is currently directing fire of Macrobattery Port-3, however he has agents amongst the menials and bodyguards on the upper bridge decks. These spies report the actions of the Elder-Tacticians back to him.

Depending on how the Explorers accomplished Objective 1, the Elder-Tacticians may or may not know what the Explorers have in their possession. What follows is largely dependant on what course of action the Explorers have decided to pursue. If the Explorers have decided to deal with Elder-Tactician Graves, he is at once grateful to them and furious at his deceitful subordinate. Meanwhile, Hovic likely learns of this, and decides to launch an attempted coup in order to save his own skin (and avenge himself against the Explorers who "betrayed" him). The Explorers may find themselves fighting to protect Graves and the Elder-Tacticians against a sudden attack of seditious Gun-Masters, or even assaulting Hovic's fastness in Macrobattery Port-3. In these cases, the GM should create a pitched battle, with enough Gun-Masters and their minions (use the *Hired Gun* from page 370 of **ROGUE TRADER**) to make the battle challenging.

On the other hand, if the Explorers plan on working with Hovic, they may be able to conclude their business clandestinely, exchange information, and leave (with a bit of deception to avoid arousing the Elder-Tacticians' suspicions). They may also want to follow through with the plans of the renegade Mechanicus faction, and inspire a coup. This may even see them fighting alongside Hovic to take control of the land-ship from the Elder-Tacticians (and possibly some of their Engine-Order allies).

Profiles for the Gun-Masters, Elder-Tacticians and Engine-Orders can be found on pages 126-127 in the NPC Appendix. In either case, two likely locations for the action to occur are detailed below:

**The gun-deck:** The land-ships bristle with gargantuan macro-cannons, and the Zaythians have achieved, or in truth retained a secret long lost in the Imperium, a high degree



++To: Gelp Landuss++  
 ++From: REDACTED++  
 ++Sent via Astropathic Transmission 019.816.M41++

Your orders as per Protocol Delta 9: Proceed via Light of Truth to Zayth. Interface via lighter. Use Code k98 [see attached sub-file] to signal Contact X2v (Subject name: Baddor Hovic). Proceed as directed.

It is of utmost importance that you speak only with Contact X2v and the so-called 'Gun Masters'. Do not under any circumstances establish contact with the faction/group known as the Elder-Tacticians. Previous negotiations with others within our own order have made our position untenable with the Elder-Tacticians, necessitating direct and covert contact with the Gun Masters.

Furthermore: You are to establish the full extent of the technological wonders reported to be in the hands of the Zaythians. You are especially to confirm the nature and type of the macrocannons said to defend their land trains, giving especial attention to the loading systems. In all likelihood you will be requested to offer some example of our own technology in trade. See attached sub-file for list of acceptable offers (as well as indexed tech-schematics). Note the Zaythians' particular interest in mass pyrum-transmission systems, with which it is believed they hope to construct large-scale melta-weapon banks for use in combat against other land-ships. It is believed that offering them such technology would ultimately lead to the destruction of that which we seek to study, so do not under any circumstances offer, or even carry, any type of melta device.

Once relationships with Contact X2v are established, do all in your power to obtain information on land-train core cogitator systems and propulsion units. Past experiences have revealed this information to be guarded by heretical pseudo-tech elements hostile to our goals. Recommendation: Armed revolt amongst 'Gun-masters' may instill a regime change more amiable to our needs.

Lastly, be aware that our enemies within our own order even now move against us. Should the Masters of the Lathe discover our actions, our group shall be uncovered and our very lives may be forfeit.



of automation. Where the gun deck of an Imperial starship is crowded with hundreds of straining shell-serfs, hauling on the vast chains that manoeuvre shells the size of tanks into the breeches of the cannon, the gun-decks of the land-ships are instead dominated by arcane and complex auto-loader systems. A gun-deck would make an ideal venue for the Explorers to meet the Gun-Masters, and an incredibly dangerous place to play out a confrontation. Consider the complications thrown up when a huge shell passes between two sides engaged in a gunfight, or the risk of an incautious character being picked up by vast mechanical claws and stuffed into the breech of a macro-cannon.

**The Bridge:** Few are ever allowed access to the bridge of a land-ship, especially those from off world. The Explorers are therefore highly honoured by the invitation to seal their deal in such a venue. The bridge is as large and intricate as that to be found on any Imperial starship, and is probably even more complex, for countless systems and stations have been grafted on and extended over the centuries. Where an Imperial bridge would employ servitors and tech-adepts to man each station, the Zaythians crew each station with an ancient and wizened technician-mystic, one who is able to commune directly with land-ship's systems through the clarity and wisdom of his thoughts, and thus maintain its operation. What would happen if a gunfight were to occur in this most sacred of places, and the innocent technician-mystics were caught in the crossfire?

### Reward

- 75 Achievement Points for selling the information to one side or another.
- 125 Achievement Points for aiding the side they allied with in the upcoming conflict (provided their chosen side is successful).
- -20 Achievement Points if the Explorers are required to employ large numbers of their own resources during the resulting combat (such as 100 or more Armsmen).

### OBJECTIVE 3:

#### ESTABLISH A LONG TERM PROFIT

##### Themes: Criminal, Trade, and/or Military

The final objective of this Endeavour may also turn out to be the hardest—the Explorers must turn short-term gain into long-term profit. How they do this depends on what they did in Objective 2. There are several different possibilities. However, here are the most likely ones based on their previous actions.

If the Explorers allied with the Gun-Master Engine-Order and aided in overthrowing the Elder-Tacticians, they have a man who controls a land-ship and is in their debt. Hovic, being a fairly uncomplicated individual, is more than happy to provide the Explorers with examples of Zaythian technology, especially if they provide him with weapons and other examples of Imperial technology in return. The

Explorers could even provide him with melta-tech, something he desperately desires after having heard it described by the renegade Mechanicus faction.

The sticking point of the situation is the Engine-Order, who are not inclined to make any deals with Hovic or the Explorers. If the Explorers compensate Hovic well (and perhaps offer him aid), he attacks the Engine-Order, killing some and taking others prisoner to interrogate and learn their secrets. The better the deal the Explorers offer, the more zealously he pursues this course of action.

Once the Explorers have obtained as much information as possible, they can depart Zayth, and figure out how to turn the information to profit. The renegade Mechanicus faction would be more than willing to pay for the information, though the Explorers might be able to broker a deal with the main Adpetus Mechanicus as well. All this requires locating Mechanicus representatives or presence, something that takes some time and should likely happen outside the scope of this adventure arc. Meanwhile, the *Indestructible*, with its Elder-Tacticians and Engine-Orders killed or held prisoner, is doomed to a slow death on Zayth. Despite Hovic's beliefs, he finds himself unable to manage the command of a land-ship, and when the other land-ships learn of his dealings for off-world technology, they attack the *Indestructible* en masse, hoping to steal that technology for themselves.

Alternatively, if the Explorers dealt with the Elder-Tacticians, Graves is willing to offer them some technology examples for their aid, such as the secrets of auto-loader technology. However, he remains firm on the Engine-Order's secrets, and little the Explorers can do dissuades him.

However, the Explorers do have an opportunity to establish trade with Zayth and the *Indestructible*. One of the few items the Zaythians are still able to craft (that are worth anything to the larger Imperium) are macroweapons. Their crafters have honed their trade for centuries, and the macrocannons of Zayth are some of the highest-quality starship-class weapons found in the Expanse.

The Explorers need to offer Graves something in exchange to establish the trade. Raw materials (such as adamantium and ceramite alloys) are one possibility, as are stocks of servitors for manual labour. Food and promethium fuel are also scarce on Zayth.

Alternatively, the Explorers may offer to wipe out some of the *Indestructible's* enemies with an orbital bombardment. This is riskier than it sounds, because the land-ships are tough, protected by multiple void shields, and have banks of macro-

batteries. The Explorers' vessel must enter low orbit (well within 10,000 km or one Void Unit of the planet's surface) to initiate a bombardment (essentially, it will have no Manoeuvre actions until it breaks orbit, and must remain stationary—except for changing orientation—every turn it conducts the bombardment). A Zayth land-ship should count as a cruiser with Armour 16, 3 Void Shields, and 75 Hull Integrity. It also has the equivalent of two Mars Pattern Macro-cannon broadsides, which—while designed for surface work—are easily capable of hitting a starship in low orbit. The land-ship has a Detection Rating of -10, and a Crack crew (Skills and Characteristics of 40). It will perform Extended Actions such as Focused Augury and Lock On.

Whatever the Explorers do, they also have the option of selling out the renegade Mechanicus faction to their masters on the Lathes (this trio of forge worlds are the most powerful Mechanicus bastions in the Calixis Sector). Again, this is fairly time-consuming, and should likely take place outside the arc of this adventure. If they set up a long-term trade agreement with the *Indestructible*, however, the land-ship benefits greatly from its off-world patronage, and slowly rise to a position of strength in the Big War on Zayth. The Explorers will also have a trusted ally on Zayth in Elder-Tactician Graves.

## Reward

- 150 Achievement Points if the Explorers aid Hovic and learn the secrets of the Engine-Order to sell to the Mechanicus (either faction, but +25 if they sell it to the renegades, who are willing to pay dearly).
- 175 Achievement Points if the Explorers set up a long term trade arrangement with Graves.
- 50 Achievement Points for selling out the renegade Mechanicus faction to the standard Mechanicus.
- -25 Achievement Points if the Explorers' ship suffers 10 or more damage during any action against a Zaythian land-ship.

Some of the more time consuming aspects of this adventure, such as setting up a long-term trade arrangement with Graves, or selling technological secrets to the Mechanicus, can take place "behind the scenes" if the GM and players prefer. They can have their minions do it, or have arrangements take place during downtime between sessions. So long as the players make arrangements or plans for the events to occur, the GM should award the Achievement Points.



# A PRIEST-KING'S RANSOM

*"Water is the lifeblood of any world, it flows through the veins of the earth feeding the righteous and drowning the wicked. So it has always been, so it will always be."*

—Kalmera Vors, Keeper of the Winds of Atar

Vaporius is a primitive and dangerous world of dry desert sands. It is also the location of another of the clues leading the Explorers ever on toward their final destination. To find the Vaporius nexus and extract its vital information, they must brave the arid wastes, deal with petty tyrants and even risk their own free will against of the waters of death.

## VAPORIUS GAZETTEER

The Heathen Stars were named in part because of the lost human colonies first encountered there; worlds that had wandered from the Emperor's light and sometimes stumbled into dark places. Far from the edges of the Imperium, across the wasteland of the Expanse, often these worlds were left to fester free from Imperial justice or intervention. Sometimes the Ministorum would send missionaries and pilgrims to these places intent on turning their populations back onto the path of the faithful, but success in such endeavours has been slow. One such lost world of men is Vaporius, a parched desert world ruled over by the divine mandate of the Priest-Kings. Little contact has been made with this dry world mostly due to its distance and isolation from the Imperium. However, what has filtered back to such places as Footfall and Port Wander points to a primitive and backward society with naught but sand, dehydration, and death. Those that dig deeper hear other, more interesting rumours that say the waters of Vaporius are precious for a reason, and a rare treasure worth crossing the Expanse to plunder.

## RISE OF THE PRIEST-KINGS

The origins of Vaporius are not known to the Imperium, though it is likely that in a time of expansion millenniums past it was settled by colonists pushing forth the boundaries of mankind's dominion. Over the centuries, however, isolation, the harsh environment of their world and the nature of man himself has seen their society degenerate into a feudal world of harsh laws and strict obedience to so-called divine rulers. This rigid caste system is based on the distribution and use of the world's precious water supplies. On Vaporius a man's worth is measured in water, and water is distributed only by the will of the Priest-Kings.

The Keepers, ancient adepts of wisdom and law, tell tales of the coming of man to Vaporius and the rise of the Priest-Kings. It is said that in the time before time, man landed in the



desert and tried to turn this world green. Even today, they say travellers can see evidence of this folly from the petrified desert forests to the vast trenches where rivers were meant to have flowed. The failure of these first men was not because their technology was flawed or even that they lacked the will to change the red deserts, but that they failed to understand why Vaporius was a desert and where the water had gone. For centuries, the first men toiled and failed, were born and died, their bones parched by the great suns of dawn, noon, and dusk. Over time, their machines broke down, and they were forced to live as nomads wandering from the sun-washed mountains to the poisonous cyan seas.

It was during this age of death that the first Priest-Kings rose to power. Born of the first men, the Priest-Kings looked different to their parents; taller, with distinctive features some would describe as feline and liquid blue eyes. They also had a gift, the gift to find water beneath the desert and call it forth. How this was possible, or why, are not things that are remembered or asked by the inhabitants of Vaporius. It quickly became enough that these sons of the first men could create life where there was none and those that could not flocked to their sides. It also became rapidly apparent that the springs did not maintain themselves, and each required a Priest-King to keep it flowing. Great cities of glass, tile, and copper (one of the few metals on Vaporius) grew up around the places where a Priest-King would call forth water and make his home. These cities were both places to live and monuments to the glory of the Priest-King and his spring.

Today, centuries after the rise of the Priest-Kings, their power and lineage are maintained through careful breeding and the attention of ancient royal families. Conflict between the Priest-Kings is rare, given the distance between the cities and the lack of resources to fight over. Recent events have strengthened the alliances between the cities, namely the coming of missionaries to Vaporius from beyond the sky, preaching the notion of a divine being more powerful even than the Priest-Kings. This is something that could shake the foundations of their world and concerns the Priest-Kings.

## PARCHED EARTH

Vaporius is one vast desert, broken up by continent-spanning mountain ranges, gigantic parched basins filled with dust and sand, and a handful of dead seas, too salty to support any

life. Survival only seems possible near the springs and within the thrall of the Priest-Kings. However, there is more life out in the desert than explorers might expect. Key regions of Vaporius include:

**The Cities of Glass:** Numbering in the hundreds, the glass cities of the Priest-Kings litter the desert like discarded jewels. Always hundreds of kilometres apart (lest the influence of one King clash with another), they are linked by well-worn tracks and caravan trails across the dust plains. Grand in spectacle and epic in design, the cities are mostly self-sufficient, organized around the great divine wells at their centres. Farms are fed by a latticework of aqueducts and canals, while deep pits and cool caves hide the glass foundries and copper forges from the sun. Over time, different cities have begun to create their own goods, promoting trade between the Kings, such as the weave-cloaks of Vyr or the wind-gems of Atar, but for the most part they remain isolated.

**The Sky Mountains:** Like broad scars across the land, the mountains of Vaporius crisscross the plains and divide the world into vast dust bowls. The mountains are also strangely devoid of settlement, and in all the history of Vaporius, no King has ever created a city in their shadow. Keepers say that this is because the mountains hold no water beneath their rocky roots, and the ground is hard and unforgiving to the hand of man. Others, however, whisper that this is not the case at all, and in fact it is because the mountains are filled with monsters made of rock that crush the strongest men to paste.

**The Dead Seas:** Brilliant turquoise and cyan seas dot the surface of Vaporius like tiny puddles of rain. From a distance they appear inviting and cool, a welcome respite from the endless leagues of desert. However, they are dead places, their waters toxic to life and their touch caustic to flesh. Travellers deliberately avoid these places, where a sudden wind can bring about a burning and blinding acid rain.

**The Ocean of Dust:** Beyond the Sky Mountains, the glass cities, and the sandy plains stretches the Ocean of Dust, a seemingly endless valley hemmed in on all sides by towering cliffs. As the Keepers tell it, the Ocean of Dust was once a true ocean, much like the dead seas, and the first men even fashioned boats to sail across it. What they found and why the sea vanished remains a mystery, as travellers do not venture into the ocean, for there is nothing there but death and thirst.

**The Temple of the First Men:** Legends speak of the ships the first men used to sail to Vaporius and of the first great temple they built to honour their gods. Even the Priest-Kings send out expeditions from time to time, chasing rumours of this place, tempted by stories of ancient technology and off-world wealth. For travellers to Vaporius the temple could prove quite a prize, if even half the stories of its wonders are true.

## THE THRALLS OF VAPORIUS

Most of the inhabitants of Vaporius are loyal servants of the Priest-Kings, tied to them by bonds of service and survival. At first glance, they are much like the humans of any Imperial world, though closer inspection reveals their distinctly feline features and deep-set cyan eyes, adapted for the harsh brightness of their world. Vaporians are also typically hairless,

their bronzed skin smooth and unblemished. Of course, they seldom show their skin outside, favouring robes of many-hued glass beads over shimmering cloth, which glitter and tinkle as they move.

At the top of Vaporian culture stand the Priest-Kings and their royal families. Seldom seen outside their grand palaces, and almost never outside the boundaries of their cities, the inhabitants of Vaporius view them as no less than gods, divine beings with power over water and thus the ability to grant life or death. The truth, however, is more sinister, and if one were to sneak into the glimmering halls of the King they would come back with visions of debauchery and sadism, where the noble-blooded, possessing ultimate power over their cities, give in to the worst of humanity's vices. Some Imperial visitors, travelling incognito to the glass cities, have brought back even more disturbing stories and theories about the nature of the Priest-Kings. One such tale is from the Navigator Elyee Vil, who went there aboard the far trader *Spirit of Humility*. A keen psychic sensitive, Vil came to believe the Priest-Kings were psykers, with some kind of power over the waters of Vaporius, which were themselves somehow sentient. Worse still he found their psychic taint in every living soul within the glass cities, leading him to believe this was how they somehow held the whole world in under their spell.

Below the Kings are the Thrall Castes. These can be roughly broken up into five groups: Cutters, Shapers, Scavengers, Breeders, and Water Children. Cutters are the soldiers of Vaporius, robust men and women chosen for their size and aggression. For the most part they act as an internal police force, though they can be gathered together to protect the city borders. Shapers are craftsmen and women, working mostly in copper and glass but also cloth, reed, limestone, and bone. They have a respected position in the cities, where their skills are valued by the Priest-Kings. Scavengers are the recyclers of the cities, ensuring that nothing is ever put to waste. Like the rats of ancient Terra, they scurry below the streets collecting and cataloguing the detritus of the people. Scavengers are also the first to be called upon when an expedition beyond the city walls is required. Breeders are the farmers of the cities, growing crops and tending to the small lizards and birds brought to Vaporius by the First Men. Finally there are the Water Children, sacrifices reared by the city and offered up to the Priest-King so that he may keep the spring eternally flowing. How they perform this task or why the King needs them is unknown, but to be a Water Child is to live a life of privilege and comfort—at least until they reach maturity and are called to their King.

Though the Kings and the thralls of their cities never admit it, there are those that live outside the dominion of the Priest-Kings. They are known as the Sandmen, and can primarily be found in the Sky Mountains, if they want to be found at all. How they survive is not known, though rumours talk of vast limestone caves in the mountains, and deep wells free of the taint of the Priest-Kings. If the Sandmen have a goal it is also unknown, though they are sometimes seen at night watching the cities from afar.

## THE VAPORIUS NEXUS

Taking a reading at the Vaporius Nexus necessitates a journey into the Sky-Mountains, where the Nexus is to be found atop a high, windswept peak.

If arriving by lander, the Explorers have to find a suitable landing place, either high on a plateau or deep within one of the windswept valleys. If they decide to seek out a plateau, the Explorers need to pass a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** to locate one, but its narrowness and precarious position necessitates a **Difficult (-10) Pilot (Flyers) Test** to land successfully. Failing the test potentially damages the shuttle, at the discretion of the GM.

Landing in a valley is far easier, but means the Explorers have a longer trek to reach the nexus, adding at least an additional day to the amount of time it takes to locate the Vaporius nexus. Taking longer to reach the nexus runs the risk of attracting the strange creatures that dwell in the mountains, as described later on.

Should the Explorers land on a plateau, they are able to land within five kilometres of the Nexus. Should they land in the valley, they end up within 10 kilometres instead. In either case, the GM can turn finding the Nexus into an Exploration Challenge (**ROGUE TRADER**, page 263). The five-kilometre trek is a Simple Challenge, while the 10-kilometre trek is Taxing (and requires some scrabbling up some very steep rock faces). During their trek, the Explorers should see some of

the native wildlife (see *The Dwellers in the Heights*, below). Success on their Exploration Challenge means they are able to avoid them should they choose, while failure means they draw their attention. This becomes important later.

The Explorers might of course use a teleportation device to travel directly to the Nexus. There is one risk inherent in this course—the nexus is located high on a mountain peak, so any deviation in the teleporter's coordinates might result in a tragic accident. In order to lock on to the exact point, whoever is programming the teleporter must make a **Hard (-20) Tech-use Test**. A success indicates a safe landing, but failure results in each of the Explorers having to make a **Challenging (+0) Climb Test** to avoid falling 2d10 metres after materialising at the edge of a rocky precipice (see page 261 of **ROGUE TRADER** for the rules for falling).

The nexus itself is an arch-shaped structure, perched on a flat-topped ridge only a few metres across. The arch frames a stunning view of the surrounding region and through it, glittering in the sunlight, can be seen one of the glass cities of Vaporius.

The Navigator must then perform the rite of reading the Nexus (page 50). If however the Explorers have attracted attention to themselves in any way, they are likely to draw an attack by one or more of the creatures that dwell in the Sky-Mountains.

### THE DWELLERS IN THE HEIGHTS

The creatures that live amongst the peaks of the Sky-Mountains represent a highly unusual type of life form. They are rarely encountered, and the humans of Vaporius fear them greatly and give the mountains a wide berth lest they invite attack. The creatures appear to be made of animate rock, suggesting perhaps that their bodies are silicate, rather than carbon-based in nature. A **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Beasts) Test** or **Arduous (-40) Intelligence Test** will reveal that such a life form is highly unlikely to have evolved in the environment of Vaporius, suggesting either that the world has undergone a dramatic change, or that the creatures were introduced, or even created artificially, in some distant and long forgotten time.

The Dwellers in the Heights are terrifying to look upon, for they appear to defy all of the laws of nature. They exhibit a wide range of physical types, ranging in size from one to ten metres, with three being the norm in most cases. The creatures' bodies appear to be made of the same stuff of the mountains in which they dwell, allowing them to lie in ambush for intruders into their realm, bursting into sudden motion to attack without warning. In form, the creatures' bodies are ever shifting, and they appear capable of instantly 'growing' whatever appendages are needed at any given moment. Thus, if facing several enemies they will sprout a dozen or more rocky tentacles, or form their bodies into massive, slab-like piledrivers if faced by a single, larger foe.

It is not known what the creatures rely upon for sustenance, and they certainly do not attack other life forms in order to prey upon them. Rather, they appear to be intent upon keeping intruders out of the Sky-Mountains, almost as if they are obeying some deep-seated imperative seeded in their primitive, animalistic, and entirely alien minds.

For the profile for the Dwellers in the Heights, see page 126 at the end of this adventure.

### A CHANCE FOR PROFIT

For Explorers, there are seldom situations with no opportunity for profit, and the Dwellers in the Heights are no different. A successful **Forbidden Lore (Xenos)**, or **Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus)** Test will reveal that the Adeptus Mechanicus Biologis would pay well for a specimen of such a strange creature. Alternatively, the Explorers might find some profit in selling these creatures to the Carnivoras and fighting pits of the Expanse or the nearby Calixis Sector. Criminal organisations such as the Beast House would pay dearly for such a creature.

These exploits are outside the arc of this adventure, but the GM should feel free to expand on them, and even turn them into their own Endeavours. Alternatively, this could provide another way to earn additional Achievement Points when completing the overarching Endeavour (as the Explorers work out a smaller money-making deal on the side).



## A PRIEST-KING'S RANSOM ADVENTURE

The world of Vaporius offers a wealth of opportunity to the Explorers should they seek profit during their visit. If they perform a survey from orbit, they discover the presence of the cities mentioned in the Gazetteer, or may decide to investigate the glittering city visible from the Vaporius Nexus.

The Endeavour presented offers the Explorers a chance to learn of the properties of the Vaporius water, and trade this to the far reaches of the Expanse—for a price.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

#### AN AUDIENCE WITH A PRIEST-KING

##### Keywords: None

If the Explorers decide to investigate one or more of the glass cities of Vaporius, they land outside an exotic-looking city of shining copper and glass. This is the city of Lah'ndan, whose Priest-King is Ansai (see page 71). On entering the city, they do not spark much interest from the inhabitants, and are soon approached by the servants of the Priest-Kings, who seek to bring these strangers before their master. The Explorers soon discover that nothing happens in or near the cities without the blessing of its Priest-King, and that should they wish to establish any sort of trade it will have to be through the agencies of one of the planet's rulers.

Upon being brought before the court of a Priest-King, the Explorers are offered refreshments, in the form of an ornate glass vessel containing what appears to be nothing more than water. The Explorers should have no reason to doubt that the liquid is anything more than water, but the players' suspicions will no doubt be piqued by the situation. The Explorers are expected to join the court in a ritual drinking of the liquid, and it quickly becomes apparent that great offence will be taken if the Explorers do not join in.

The Explorers may decide at this point that the liquid is some form of poison, in which case the court erupts in outrage. The Priest-King's chief counsellor gives the Explorers one last chance to partake of the benefaction of their host, and if they still insist in their barbaric behaviour they are forcibly ejected from the court and the city. If the Explorers do take a sip of the liquid, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The instant the clear liquid passes your lips, you are overwhelmed with a feeling of purity and clarity, as if the water itself were somehow blessed, its qualities passing into your own form. You feel revitalised and energised, as if darkness of the galaxy and the perils it enforces upon you at every turn are somehow diminished, allowing you to think clearly for the first time in what seems like an age.*

At this point, the players may make a **Challenging (+0) Evaluate Test**. A success reveals that this liquid might find a ready market amongst certain sections of the Imperium. Pilgrims wishing to purify themselves before approaching the object of their devotions perhaps, or any of a dozen other such markets that spring instantly to mind.

If the Explorers wish to trade in this seemingly wondrous commodity, they need to enter negotiations with the Priest-King whose city they have come to. The subsequent negotiations should prove entertaining, and the GM should allow the Explorers to offer whatever they believe the Priest-King might desire. Whatever they offer however, the ruler will merely smile politely, awaiting the next offer. When finally the Explorers have exhausted their options, the Priest-King will name his price. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"I have listened, travellers, to your generous offers, and I thank you for them. But what need have I of treasures from beyond the stars? Look around you—do you not see that I have all I could possibly desire right before me? No, travellers, I have no need of riches. I do, however, have needs of another nature."*

*At this point, the Priest-King gestures to an aide, and the crowd of courtiers parts. Two burly guards appear, between them restrained what can only be a missionary of the Missionarius Galaxia. The man is thrown roughly to the floor between you and the Priest-King, where he assumes a kneeling position, raises his head, closes his eyes and makes the sign of the aquila.*

*"This, travellers, is my price. This man and his fellows seek to turn my people against me. They preach that there exists some ruler higher than the Priest-Kings! They tell the people to acknowledge this man, this 'Emperor' above me! Oh, he says I can still rule my people, but only if the Priest-Kings acknowledge this so-called God-Emperor. I am no priest of some distant god, and I will not do so. Rid me of these turbulent priests, and I will provide you with all the liquid you desire."*

### Rewards

- 50 Achievement Points if the Explorers meet with the Priest-King and establish some form of deal.
- -25 Achievement Points if the Explorers' actions turn the Priest-King actively against them.

### OBJECTIVE 2:

#### PAY THE PRIEST-KING'S PRICE

##### Keywords: Criminal, Creed, or Military

How the Explorers react to the Priest-King's offer is entirely up to them, but he will not be swayed to accept any other price, regardless of any efforts the Explorers might make to negotiate further. He will go on to explain that the Missionarius have established a mission out in the desert, from which they are seeking to convert his people to the worship of someone they call the "God-Emperor of Mankind," and to turn them against his rule. If the Explorers will convince these

missionaries to leave, or force them to do so, then the water in his domains is theirs for the taking.

Whatever the Explorers' reaction, they will also be faced with the question of what to do about the missionary Ansai holds prisoner. They may be callous and simply leave him to the Priest-King's mercy, or they might seek to have him released as part of the negotiations. In this case, Ansai will agree to release the missionary only when he is rid of the mission, in which case the Explorers are welcome to take him with them.

If the Explorers refuse to pay Ansai's price, he will accept this, and dismiss them from his presence. If this happens, the Explorers will be unable to set up legitimate trade with Ansai, or any other Priest-king on Vaporius.

The Explorers are left with limited options. They could try to convince the mission to depart, but it need not be said that the missionaries will never agree to leave until every benighted soul on Vaporius is led to the light of the Emperor. They could try to deceive the mission in some way. This should be left up to the Explorers' imaginations, and the GM should allow any creative or audacious plan a chance to succeed. Any plan will likely require opposed Deceive Tests, and Common Lore (Ecclesiarchy and Imperial Creed) and Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed) should be vital Skills to be tested during the scheme. If the profile for a Missionary is required, use the profile of an Entertainer found on page 370 of **ROGUE TRADER**, but increase Perception by 10 and give them Scrutiny and Common Lore Ecclesiarchy, and Imperial Creed as trained Skills.

The Explorers might actually consider doing what the Priest-King asks, as beyond the borders of the Imperium the only laws are strength and profit, after all. The mission itself is little more than a crude compound built of stone by the hands of the missionaries and the small group of Vaporians they have turned to the light. If the players are callous enough to accept the task of wiping out the missionaries then they are no doubt the sort to order a lance strike from orbit to reduce the mission to ashes. This succeeds—in fact, the GM should overplay how easy it was to wipe out the mission, so that the players get suspicious, paranoid, and maybe even a little guilty. And so they should, because if they take this course of action, then those missionaries who were not present at the mission soon learn their identities, and in time, the Ministorum will hear of the matter—and the Explorers may find they have made themselves a powerful enemy. At some point in the future, long after the adventures in this book are played out, why not have the Priest-King's captive make an appearance and condemn the Explorers for their vile deed?

The last and most devious option the Explorers could accomplish is some sort of deceit. There are multiple choices here: the Explorers could transport the Missionaries to a different part of Vaporius and tell the Priest-King they have been removed; communication between the various cities of Vaporius is fragmented, and it is likely the Explorers could complete several trade-runs before Ansai realises he has been deceived. Alternatively, they could attempt to smuggle the water out from under the Priest-King's nose. Though the Priest-King has absolute control over his subjects, the Explorers could secretly deceive one of his citizens into siphoning off some of the waters and delivering them to the

## Ansai: Priest-King of the Glass City of Lah'ndan

Ansai is the Priest-King of the city nearest to the Vaporius nexus—Lah'ndan—and therefore the ruler the Explorers are most likely to encounter. In appearance, the Priest-King Ansai is quite striking, his face lean and his deep blue eyes wide-set and penetrating. His head is bald, and covered with intricately painted, swirling patterns of red and purple. Ansai holds court from a throne of luxurious cushions, on which he and his attendants sprawl languidly while courtiers and sycophants cluster all around to pander to his every need. His demeanour is at all times polite and languid, and he does not raise his voice or allow himself to become agitated.

This languorous persona is a façade however. Ansai has a keen intellect, and harbours, as do all Priest-Kings, a powerful psychic talent, albeit one which the Explorers may not recognise as such. He is also the absolute ruler of his city, and possesses supreme self-confidence. All his responses are coloured accordingly—he expects deference, is unimpressed by threats, and is disinterested in bargaining.



Explorers. This only works if the citizen does not realise he is betraying his king with his actions. However, the Explorers might be able to enlist aid from the Missionaries' flock of converted Vaporians.

### Rewards

- 150 Achievement Points for meeting the Priest-King's demands.
- 150 Achievement Points for fooling the Priest-King into thinking they have met his demands.
- -100 Achievement Points if they slay the Missionaries and make lasting enemies of the Ecclesiarchy.
- -25 Achievement Points if they slay the missionaries and their general crew learns of the deed.
- -50 Achievement Points if they attempt to fool the Priest-King and he discovers their duplicity.

### OBJECTIVE 3: ESTABLISH THE TRADE IN THE WATERS OF VAPORIUS

#### Keywords: Trade or Criminal

However Objective 2 is resolved, the Explorers need to establish the details of the actual deal. This entails a second audience with the Priest-King, and a second ritual of imbibing

the waters. It is only now that the true nature of the waters will become apparent. A **Difficult (-10) Psyniscience Test**, taken at the second audience as the water is drunk, reveals that the liquid has some form of inherent psychic effect, and that this is the root cause of the feeling of transcendent purity that comes over the drinker. Whether or not the Explorers still wish to establish a trade in the waters is up to them, but certainly if they do a substantial amount of profit is to be made. The Priest-King delivers the first shipment of the waters to the Explorers' landers. The shipment consists of one hundred large, sealed copper urns.

Of course, if the Explorers have come up with different arrangements to obtain the water, this may play out differently. If they are smuggling water out of the city, for example, they may be forced to wait for a couple weeks while the water is brought to them flask by flask and urn by urn.

The Explorers must then decide where they will distribute this water, which (whether or not they realise it) is also highly addictive. Most of the worlds of the Expanse are relatively backwards or unregulated—at least in regard to the Expanses' human colonies—and it could be fairly easy to set up a trade route between one of these worlds. However, the most profitable market is likely to be found amongst the rich and decadent nobility of the Imperium. Not only will this mean establishing a trade route back into the Calixis Sector (not an





## DON'T DRINK THE WATER...

The waters of Vaporius have a power over all who drink them, and the more you drink the greater its hold becomes.

**The First Drink:** A feeling of euphoria sweeps through the drinker and his mind is calmed. Fear and shock effects are ignored for 1d5 hours and Talents such as Frenzy or those that require a heightened emotional state cannot be used.

**The Second Drink:** Fear and doubt are completely replaced by contentment and a feeling of safety even in the face of obvious danger. As above, Talents such as Frenzy or those that require a heightened emotional state cannot be used. Finally the drinker gains the Fearless Talent for 2d10 hours as well as immunity to Insanity Point gain.

**The Third Drink:** Nothing matters but this feeling. In addition to all the effects of the second drink, which now persist for 1d5 days, the drinker must make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** to resist continuing to drink the water of Vaporius.

Those who continue to drink the water for more than a week finally succumb to their full effects and fall into the thrall of the Priest-Kings, becoming tranquil and suggestible to any commands given by one of the royal line. In addition they will work tirelessly and without complaint, completely content in their lot and happy to help those around them, even should it mean working their fingers to bloody stumps and toiling until their hearts finally fail. Sadly this is the state of most that dwell on Vaporius, under the 'protection' of the Priest-Kings.

easy proposition), but the suspect nature of this water may very well attract unwanted attention from official sources. The agents of the Holy Inquisition, for example, have both the resources to determine the water's true properties, and a marked interest in eliminating the trade.

Over the long term, the Explorers also have to provide Ansai with something in return for his water (though their actions with the Missionaries suffices for the first shipment). Luxury goods and other items to satisfy a Priest-King's hedonistic desires should suffice for this. Some more maliciously-minded Explorers may also consider importing slaves to help fill the Priest-King's enthralled workforce.

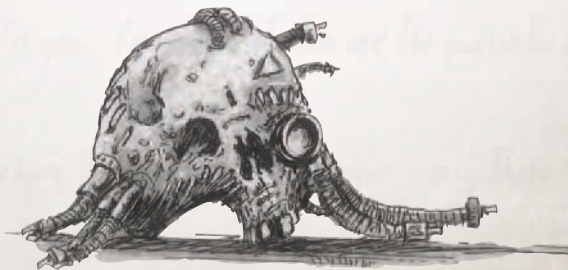
### Rewards

- 250 Achievement Points for successfully establishing a trade route into the Koronus Expanse.
- 350 Achievement Points for successfully establishing a trade route to both the Expanse and the Calixis Sector (or simply the Calixis Sector).
- -150 The Inquisition discovers any Calixis trade and learns of the Explorers' involvement.
- -50 The Priest-Kings eventually learn of a duplicity or betrayal on the Explorer's part that curtails the trade.

### OUTCOME

The immediate outcome of this Endeavour is that the Explorers should have established a profitable interest in transporting regular shipments of the Waters of Vaporius to one or more of the worlds in the Koronus Expanse or the Calixis Sector. The details of who they sell this valuable commodity to can be left to their house agents to worry about, or could even form the basis of a future adventure. Whether or not the authorities back in Calixis take umbrage against the effects of the water could also make an interesting thread worth picking up in the future, as is any ongoing effect the waters might have on those Explorers who imbibed the liquid during their audiences with the Priest-King.

Also worth keeping track of is how the Explorers' actions affect their dynasty's relations with the Adeptus Ministorum. This depends on how the Explorers comported themselves in Objective 2, and may well have serious consequences worth exploring further in future adventures.



# ARK OF THE FORSAKEN

*"The light of Terra ends at the edge of the Emperor's reach."*

—Voidfarers' Proverb

The third Nexus Point is located in the cold depths of interstellar space, its position marked by a lonely Eldar structure floating in the void in orbit around an unnamed gas giant—itsself orbiting an unremarkable star. Marking as it does the confluence of mighty channels of celestial power—the strands of fate engraved upon the Eldar star map—other things are drawn to the point as well. While some of this flotsam is merely the ghosts of vessels long lost to the warp, something else has drifted towards the Nexus, something long since lost to the Imperium, but still clinging hard to life.

That something is the legendary vessel the *Light of Terra*, a mighty warship from the time of Saint Drusus himself. Though it disappeared centuries ago, the vessel now returns, and the Explorers are presented with an opportunity for tremendous profit, if they are bold enough to risk the attentions of the savage descendants of the *Light's* original crew.

## THE LIGHT OF TERRA GAZETTEER

The void is a perilous place, and even more so the warp, where a ship can be lost in the blink of an eye, its crew sent screaming into the deep black. All who sail across the stars have heard the terrible tales of vessels swallowed whole by the dark, such as the *Light of Terra*, greatest of Drusus' battleships and spearhead of the Angevin Crusade. A behemoth of the Imperial war machine, the *Light* blazed across the stars and forged a path into the space one day known as the Calixis Sector. Lost millenia ago with all hands, it is said that the space hulk still drifts the Expanse, a cursed place tainted by xenos hands and the tortured memory of its long dead crew.

## LOST IN THE VOID

The *Light of Terra* was old even before the Angevin Crusade—dispatched as part of an armada of Imperial warships to reclaim the vast stretches of space along the western rim and bring the light of the Emperor back to these darkest of places. Some even speculate that it was constructed, its hull at least, during the time of mankind's first great expansion across the stars. If this is true, of course, the vessel is truly ancient. What is known for sure is that it was as mighty a battleship as the Imperial Navy had ever seen, equal to such vessels as the *Grand Redemption*, *Emperor's Word*, or *Divine Right*.

Throughout the records of the crusade tales of its exploits can be found, always in the vanguard of the fleet, always raining death down upon the enemies of the Emperor. During these long bloody years countless worlds and enemy vessels



fell to the thundering cannons and sky-rending lances as it brought the Emperor's will to the untamed void. Equally well documented are the tales of its Lord-Captain, Draken Roth, a pitiless commander and master tactician favoured of Drusus—or so the stories go. Lord Roth was also a permanent fixture of the *Light*, his body fused with his lord-captain's throne, his organs and flesh almost completely replaced by ingenious Mechanicus devices. It was whispered among the crew that Roth would only die when the ship itself was destroyed.

It was the cruellest of fates that befell the *Light*, when it travelled to meet a flotilla of lesser vessels to rendezvous with Drusus and aid him against a new alien threat known as the Yu'vath. While on route through the warp, a terrible storm rose up and consumed the *Light*, casting it adrift on powerful empyreal tides and doing what alien armies and renegade fleets had failed to do for thousands of years. Cut off from the fleet and lost in the warp, Captain Roth tried to maintain discipline and sustain hope in his crew—but catastrophe after catastrophe befell them. First, they suffered a madness among the ship's psykers, forcing him to stage mass executions lest they turn on the crew. Then, a rent in the Gellar Field allowed an aberrant spectre to infiltrate the vessel and possess a deck master, leading to months of bloody serial killings. Finally, the ship's Navigators, unable to find a path out of the storm, died one by one—driven to suicide by the constant crushing weight of the warp.

Trapped in the storm, unable to escape, the *Light* drifted far from the edges of the Imperium. Months rolled into years and years into decades and finally centuries. The crew turned in upon themselves, and devolved into warring tribes, fighting for the few resources available. Successive generations were born and died in the darkness of the ship's holds and more and more information was lost, until they did not even realise they were on a ship, just a world of steel caverns and tunnels, divided by ancient tribal boundaries. By the time the ship was finally released back into the void to drift within the Heathen Stars, only Lord-Captain Roth remembered the ship's true history; an insane oracle fused into the bridge screaming futilely as the primitive descendants of his crew lay offerings at his feet.

*Hidden Holds*

*Apart from its incredible salvage potential (a monumental task for even the most well-equipped of scavengers) the Light holds both secrets and wonders from a time when it plundered entire worlds and carried their wealth back to the Imperium in glory. There are vast holds, hidden within the bowels of the ship that have remained sealed for centuries, containing alien treasures or forgotten archeotech. The Light was also home to several Imperial Guard regiments and much of their equipment remains, from racks of lasguns and flak armour to Vulture assault craft and Leman Russ Battle Tanks.*

*The other great treasure of the Light is the knowledge still held within its long-slumbering cogitator or the warped mind of Captain Roth. Knowledge of worlds and foes, lost in the march of time.*

**THE WORLD SHIP**

Twisted by battle and weathered by centuries adrift, the *Light* is only barely recognizable as an Imperial battleship. Up close, pitted aquilas and cracked Imperial iconography can be faintly seen amidst warped hull plating and countless scores of impact craters. If the exterior of the *Light* is a scarred and warped nightmare, then the interior is even worse. The once cluttered and tight confines of an Imperial warship are a twisted and broken maze of tunnels and caves, lit by flickering galley-lamps or human-fat candles. There are six distinct types of areas within the *Light* that Explorers can investigate.

**The Cold Edges:** The spaces next to the ship's broken hull are dangerous indeed, as the vessel's primitive inhabitants well know. Tunnels and chambers can suddenly lose air or heat, opening an ancient void-seal may well plunge the hapless explorer straight into space, and some areas are bathed in deadly radiation or filled with scoring plasma. To the tribes of the Terra these areas mark the edge of their world and the end of the known universe.

**The Steel Caves:** This area comprised the bulk of the ship and makes up most of the tribes' known world. A relatively safe area, the Steel Caves stretch most of the length of the *Light* and reach up and down for dozens of decks in both directions. Divided by ancient boundaries, the Caves were once staterooms and barracks, ammo stores and supply wells, or deck gantries and processions—now all merged into an endless series of primitive camps and detritus-littered wastelands.

**The Deep Wells:** Over the years some parts of the ship have become flooded as ancient cisterns and vast aqueducts have cracked and broken. These are known to the tribes as the Deep Wells. It is well known that some of the best salvage can be found somewhere within the Wells, for those brave or bold enough to plunge into their depths. Elders also speak of the dark and hungry terrors which live within the Well's black water, all teeth and eyes and bloody murder.

**The Shadow Hold:** Some sections of the ship remain sealed, either by ancient purity-locks or a simple lack of power that keeps hundred-tonne blast doors firmly closed. Clever and resourceful tribesmen can sometimes find their way into these cold and lightless places to hunt for salvage, bringing back not only wondrous items but also

tales of pale, blind sub-humans, forests of luminous fungi and deadly half-metal warriors with weapons of fire and light.

**Seat of the Oracle:** The ship's bridge is a sacred place for the tribes, and considered neutral ground, as it is the home of the Oracle—the twisted being once known as Captain Roth. Elders often make the pilgrimage to this place to listen to the Oracle's ranting, trying to discern some truth from his words. For the most part, however, his words make no sense to them, especially when he raves about the Void-Beyond.

**The Blazing God:** Far below the Seat of the Oracle at the very edge of the known world lives the Blazing God, in what was once the *Light*'s engine room. In a vast chamber filled with heat and light the Blazing God stands higher than a hundred tribesmen and almost as wide as the world itself. All know that it is the Blazing God that heats and lights the world. It is said that those that brave the journey to the Blazing God and listen to his hums and murmurs are touched by his glorious heat—those especially faithful and blessed lose their hair and return covered in sacred blisters and burns.

**THE TRIBES OF TERRA**

Each region of the *Light* is home to a different tribe, each with different alliances and histories and their own ways of dealing with outsiders.

**Kin of Iron**

Tales tell of mysterious metal men that once tended to the workings of the steel caves. They had minds of wire and hearts of iron and knew the world like none that have come after. The Iron Kin try to keep what is left of their memory alive, along with what few teachings they left behind, draping their bodies with scrap metal and painting their faces with iron dust. Many of the other tribes come to them for their wisdom on the workings of the world.

Predominantly the Iron Kin dwell within the steel caves, near the passages to both the Oracle and the Blazing God. Enclaves of Iron Kin are found throughout the territories of the other tribes as most chieftains value their council.

**Leader:** Unlike the other tribes, the Iron Kin are not led by

a single all-powerful chieftain or tribal leader. Instead they are organised into enclaves and cabals led by Iron Speakers as laid down by the ancient writings and symbols of the cave keepers—those that once tended to the workings of the world. Furthermore, when a tribesman joins the Children he forsakes his or her identity to don the guise of the Iron Ones, hiding behind a mask of cloth and steel. For this reason the Iron Speakers have no names but instead are known by the areas they tend, such as the Master of Junction 3B7 or the Keeper of the Interlaced Mid-Deck Conduits.

**Tribesmen:** Under the guidance of the Iron Speakers, the tribesmen of the Iron Kin spend much of their time wandering the world looking for salvage or tinkering with its workings. Commonly, they help members of the other tribes when problems arise with the wind or water of the steel caves or lead missions to the forgotten regions such as the Deep Wells or the Shadowed Holds in search of ancient artefacts and lost secrets.

**Alliances and Enemies:** Unlike the other tribes, the Iron Kin are seen as an order apart from the normal struggle between the people of Terra. All the tribes rely on their wisdom to survive and their guidance when making pilgrimages to the Oracle or to the Blazing God. For this reason, the Iron Speakers are considered neutral by most and it is widely believed to be ill luck to kill one. Occasionally, however, an Iron Kin gets caught up in a tribal conflict or displeases a chieftain and disappears.

**Motivations:** The Iron Kin exist for a single purpose, to understand and maintain the world, mostly around the areas of the steel caves. Though their understanding of the tech they work with is rudimentary at best, they have a love for the machine that comes straight from the teaching of the Adeptus Mechanicus, whose scriptures they are born from. They are also likely to be the most open-minded and inquisitive when meeting those from the void beyond the world or when presented with strange and advanced tech, and could even be convinced to aid those from beyond if it were for the benefit of the world.

## Wargars

Descended from the ship's gun crews, the Wargars live mostly in the great ammo stores, making huts from ancient macro cannon shell casings and burning flash-powder to fill their chambers with the smell of war. Aggressive and dangerous, the Wargars live to fight with the other tribes for no other reason than to spill blood and prove their strength.

The Wargars rule the steel caves and control most of its interconnected chambers and passages, including areas nominally inhabited by the other tribes. Beyond the caves, their power wanes; in the Cold Edges and the lower decks they have no direct control, travelling in packs like everyone else.

**Leader:** The Wargars are led by a bear of a man known as Urgan, who leads because of his strength and love for violence. Urgan is perhaps the most powerful man on the Terra, his tribe's influence felt by all the other tribes and covering nearly every corner of the steel caves. Unlike many of his predecessors, however, Urgan dreams of controlling all the lands of the world and has in recent times been aggressively expanding

his domains. Brutal and bloody-minded, Urgan respects only strength and the willingness to use it.

**Tribesmen:** The men and women of the Wargars are the largest and most aggressive of the tribes of Terra, either born into the tribe or chosen from the other tribes for their strength and aggression. They typically saunter about the steel caves festooned with weapons: swords fashioned from torn metal or spears of heavy pipe tipped with glass. They consider themselves a warrior class and proudly show off their scarred flesh and often carry trophies from those they have killed. They are no mindless thugs, however, and do possess a kind of honour—generally only attacking those they consider a worthy challenge, or trying to impress their peers with acts of bravery by delving into the lower decks.

**Alliances and Enemies:** Wargars consider themselves the leaders of all the people of the *Light* and master of the tribes. Of course, in reality, they are only paid lip service by most and actively opposed by the rest. The Void Runners especially clash constantly with the Wargars, ambushing their hunting parties and raiding their territories. From time to time, the Wargars launch an attack into the Cold Edges to try and finish the Void Runners, though so far, they are unsuccessful.

**Motivations:** Urgan and his tribe are interested only in being the most powerful. As they consider themselves the leaders and rulers of the *Light* it stands to reason that the other tribes should obey them, and much of their time is spent trying to enforce this loyalty. The Wargars are also deeply suspicious and superstitious of what they do not know, such as the secrets of the lower decks and what lies beyond the world (one of the reasons they hate the Void Walkers so much). They react badly to anything from beyond the world.



## Void Walkers

Living in the cold and broken chambers along the *Light's* hull, the Void Walkers have made an existence living on the razor's edge between the steel caves of the world and the great nothing beyond. A nomadic tribe, the Walkers travel the Cold Edges constantly seeking air and heat as much as water and food. Scarred by vacuum burns and decompression, the Walkers are as hardy a group as can be found on the *Light*, with a unique knowledge of the void. Dwelling almost exclusively within the Cold Edges, the Void Walkers survive on their knowledge of this dangerous and unpredictable land.

**Leader:** Palik the Blind leads the Void Walkers, an ancient sightless man, wizened and twisted. The Walkers look up to Palik for his wisdom and his unequalled knowledge of the Cold Edges. Having lost his sight to a sudden decompression, Palik's other senses have sharpened. He can detect minute changes in the temperature and the purity of the air, enabling him to lead the Walkers to the best chambers for air, water, and warmth. Palik dreams of his tribe journeying out into the void in search of a new world.

**Tribesmen:** Void Walkers are typically small and scrawny from years of malnourishment and living in tiny crawl spaces, vents, and ducts. They wrap themselves in the tattered remains of void suits, air-channel insulation, and protective sheeting against the cold and favour weapons that are also tools, such as pry-bars and cog-spinners. The Walkers consider themselves to be the bravest and toughest of the tribes, living on the edge of the world and unafraid to look out at the distant glittering lights.

**Alliances and Enemies:** Void Walkers have little or no contact with the other tribes beyond their raids. They are bitter enemies with the Wargars and the lesser tribes that belong to them. There is constant raiding and fighting between the two. Occasionally, they deal with the Pale Sons in the Shadow Holds or the lower regions of the steel holds, though such alliances are tenuous at best and often brief. They are also sometimes known to deal with the Iron Kin, who they respect for their knowledge of the world.

**Motivations:** The Void Walkers are concerned almost entirely with their constant struggle for survival. They do dream, however, of travelling to the lights beyond the world.

## Pale Sons

Every society has its outcasts and its dregs. On the *Light*, these are known as the Pale Sons, the forgotten tribe existing in the cracks between the territories of the other tribes or deep in the lower decks and the dreaded Shadow Holds. Many of the Pale Sons are mutants, often the reason they were outcast in the first place, and live close to toxic or radioactive regions of the ship where only their unique physiology allows them to survive. Though the true number of the Pale Sons is unknown, many of the other tribes fear that there are thousands of them, and they will one day rise up from the dark depths to destroy all those on board the *Light*. The primary domain of the Pale Sons is the Shadow Holds, where they can hide from the light and persecution of the other tribes.

**Leader:** Living in small, isolated groups, the Pale Sons do not have a leader in the strictest sense of the word. What they do have is the Pale

Mother. Whispers among the other tribes say the Pale Sons follow a massive mutant who lairs somewhere down deep in the Shadow Hold, grown so large that it cannot move its bulk from the chamber it has become fused with. Known as the Pale Mother, she subtly directs those above to do her twisted bidding. Whether or not the Mother of Mutants actually exists is something the Pale Sons have never explained.

**Tribesmen:** Pale Sons are as varied as the places they call their home, often adapted over the centuries to live in areas of intense radiation, icy cold, and even in the flooded Deep Wells far from the surface light. Though some can pass for human, most bear the taint of mutation upon their flesh and in their bearing. For this reason, they are cautious about revealing themselves fully.

**Alliances and Enemies:** No one likes the Pale Sons. Even within their own ranks, mutant often turns on mutant in bloody, pointless struggles. In fact, the only thing that truly unites the Sons is their fear and hatred of the other tribes. When threatened, the mutants band together to hide, flee, or fight to survive. The great irony of their persecution is that the mutants could offer valuable aid to the other tribes if accepted, given their extensive knowledge of the *Light of Terra's* countless passages and chambers.

**Motivations:** Most Pale Sons care only for survival, though many harbour a bitter resentment of the other tribes, especially if cast out for mutation or some imagined taint. If the rumours of the Pale Mother are true, then this status quo could change, as the Sons become more motivated and more organised.

## THE NEXUS IN THE VOID

The third Nexus Point at which the Explorers' Navigator must take a celestial reading of the star map is located in the cold depths of space, in orbit around a vast, unnamed gas giant. This Nexus, though similar to its planet-bound cousins, is obviously constructed as an orbital structure.

Upon their arrival at the Nexus Point, the Explorers need to complete a thorough scan of the gas giant's orbits, a task that requires a **Hard (-20) Detection + Scrutiny Test** with their ship's scanners. Should they pass the test by one or more degrees of success, they will detect other augur returns, ghostly echoes of rocks and debris from the gas giant's rings. One return, however, is something else entirely, though the Explorers have no way of knowing this just yet.

The nexus is a small wraithbone structure that resembles

### VOID-WALKING

The rules for zero gravity are found on page 269 in *ROGUE TRADER*, and the rules for being exposed to vacuum are found on page 261 of *ROGUE TRADER*. The entire structure suffers from both conditions. Unless the Explorers want to haul the structure into their ship's docking bays (impossible unless the Explorers have a large ship especially designed to do so), they will need void suits and possibly a method of personal propulsion such as a jump pack.



those the Explorers may have already found, although this one seems to have been built as a void-station rather than a ground structure. It is small, perhaps 50 metres across, and is open to the void. Pale wraithbone ribs stretch between the station's several "floors," and on the topmost level appears to be a starmap.

Having located the nexus, and established that it is in fact a solid structure drifting in space, the Explorers will need to work out how best to affect the reading. At the very least, the Navigator needs to make a void-walk, donning a void-suit in order to lay hands upon the nexus. Depending on the Navigator's own skills, this may prove a hazardous task, but it must be completed nonetheless, and it may be prudent for other Explorers to accompany him.

As soon as the Navigator has completed the Nexus reading, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*For the last hour or so, the only sound you have been able to hear is that of your own breathing, and the constant machine chatter of your vac-suit's support systems. You are ready to make the return journey to your vessel, when your vox-set bursts into life with angry static. Through the noise, you can barely discern the agitated voice of your vessel's watch-officer, but his transmission is garbled and unclear.*

*And then, it is as if the stars before you are extinguished, the all-encompassing night of the void swallowing them whole as you are plunged into shadow. From out of the depths looms the cratered flanks of a mighty starship, its portholes dead as the eyes of a corpse, and its vast engines ominously silent.*

The vessel is the *Light of Terra*, its endless passage through the void having brought it past the Nexus, as if drawn there by the inexorable strands of celestial fate. Initially, the ship does not react to the Explorers' presence in any way, but merely continues in its own orbit around the gas giant.

Once the Explorers are all safely back on the bridge of their ship, they are hailed by the *Light of Terra's* master. A strange and distorted signal comes in over the vox:

*"Strangers, fellow void-farers, heed the Light of Terra! By all the Emperor's Saints, I command you to attend me... the taint of the abyss has stained so many of my servants. They are lost to me, lost. However, I... I would travel once more... rid myself of darkness and shed light upon the depths of the abyss... attend me, fellow travellers, attend me!"*

With that, the transmission ends and the Explorers receive no further communications. However, a faint carrier signal continues to transmit, which will be important later. Whether or not the Explorers enter the ship is entirely up to them, but a **Difficult (-10) Scholastic Lore (Legend) Test** or a **Hard (-20) Common Lore (War) Test** reveals the basic details of the *Light's* fate, including the legend that its holds were full to brimming with treasures beyond dreaming at the time it was lost. Surely, no Rogue Trader worthy of his Warrant of Trade could resist such an opportunity!

# ARK OF THE FORSAKEN ADVENTURE

The Explorers have come upon the space hulk of the legendary *Light of Terra*, a vessel thought lost many centuries ago. If the voidfarers' tales are even slightly accurate, the vessel should be carrying a staggering fortune in treasure. But to get their hands on the *Light of Terra's* wealth, they must confront its insane master, and survive the savage descendants of the original crew.

This is an adventure, not an Endeavour, and does not have Achievement Points or Profit Factor awards. The immediate rewards are not grand enough to translate into lasting Profit (though the players will find them very useful). However, at the end of the adventure there are guidelines to turning the end result of the adventure into a later Endeavour.

## OBJECTIVE 1: FIND THE CAPTAIN

### Themes: Exploration

The Explorers have been invited by the master of the *Light of Terra*, Lord-Captain Draken Roth, to attend him on his vessel's bridge. Doing so will not be an easy task, however, because the *Light* is almost entirely without functional systems beyond those required to provide basic life support. The ship is also very large, almost 10 kilometres long, and there is no indication as to where the message came from or who sent it. Despite his being hard-wired into his vessel's bridge, the Lord-Captain has no power over the ship's systems, although he can discern something of what occurs throughout it by semi-dormant sentinel-systems.

The first thing the Explorers need to do is work out how best to get on to the *Light of Terra*. If their vessel is blessed with a teleportarium, this shouldn't be a problem, although the GM should be prepared to unleash an encounter with the ship's denizens should the Explorers materialise right in their midst. If they must rely on a shuttlecraft to cross the void, they also have trouble, as they must first find a way of raising the blast doors on any one of the *Light's* many shuttle bays. A void-walk and some las-cutters could solve this, or the Explorers could even blast a bay door open with weapons on their shuttle or ship. There is

a chance that in doing so they may irreparably damage the bay beyond, however, and have to find another bay to try again.

Having boarded the *Light*, the Explorers need to locate the source of the signal. A **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** could be used in conjunction with an auspex in order to get a rough fix on the carrier signal still being transmitted. Success reveals the signal is being transmitted from the ship's bridge. If the test is failed, the Explorers can attempt again after moving from their original spot—effectively triangulating the signal. A **Hard (-20) Logic Test** determines a vox transmitter of any power is likely found in or near the ship's bridge.

Getting to the bridge takes a few **Difficult (-10) Navigation (Surface) Tests**. The interior of the *Light* is extremely unnerving, with lightless corridors full of damp and mould, pockets of stale air, and a few sections where the grav plates have failed, forcing the Explorers to move through zero gee. The GM may throw in one or two encounters with the descendants of the crew, just to provide an introduction to the types of people that call the vessel home. At this stage, however, keep such encounters small and inconclusive, with the occupants fleeing into dark passageways, lurking in the shadows, or perhaps setting minor booby traps along the way. The idea is to unnerve the Explorers, and introduce the idea that they are not alone on the ship. Most of the journey passes through the Cold Edges (page 74). In this area, the Explorers have to avoid penetrating the weak outer skin of the *Light* and depressurising a small section of the hull. Any weapon with AP 4 or better that misses its target has a 20 percent chance of piercing the hull and depressurising the local area (the corridors 1d10x10 metres in any direction, at which point there is a pressure door that can be sealed). If this happens, see the rules for depressurization on page 223 of **ROGUE TRADER**.

The trek to the bridge is an arduous one, but after several hours the Explorers find the Seat of the Oracle (see page 74). What was once the grand bridge of a glorious vessel is now a dusty crypt, strewn with the detritus the elders of the crew have brought before Draken Roth. At the centre of it all, amidst a halo of decaying life-support devices, is the desiccated body of the Lord-Captain.

Roth appears to be dead, his body shrivelled and his once-resplendent Naval uniform reduced to brittle rags. His eyes are



dead in their sockets and his skull protrudes through skin as dry and thin as ancient parchment. Only when the Explorers approach his command throne, or otherwise tamper with any of the bridge's long dead control stations, does he awaken:

*Lord-Captain Draken Roth, the legendary master of the Light of Terra, sits before you in his command throne, tethered for all time by arcane life-sustaining devices that have preserved his body, if not his mind, for countless ages. Even as you look upon his shrunken features, his eyes open, and his head lifts towards you. "Ah, fellow travellers in the void," the Lord-Captain whispers through desiccated lips. "You came... you came to set me free..."*

The Lord-Captain goes on to make a request of the Explorers. Roth desperately wants the Explorers to send his vessel on its way once more. It has drifted through the Koronus Expanse, and the warp before that, for so long that the once glorious *Light of Terra* is reduced to a derelict, occupied by the savage and benighted descendents of the long-dead crew. Roth himself has been kept alive by the systems of the command throne, and although he knows he is quite mad and can never return to his former life, the Lord-Captain desires to take the *Light of Terra* to the stars once more. He waits to take his vessel far beyond the domains of man, casting the holy light of the Emperor into the depths of the Halo Stars, and find glorious doom amongst them.

Roth makes the Explorers an offer. Restore his control over his vessel, awaken its systems, and send it on its way. In return, the Explorers may claim the contents of the Hidden Holds.

## Rewards

- 50 Achievement Points for locating Lord-Captain Roth and meeting with him.
- 25 Achievement Points for establishing an alliance with any of the tribes aboard the *Light*.
- -25 Achievement Points for establishing any lasting animosity with any of the tribes aboard the *Light*.

## OBJECTIVE 2:

### GAIN CONTROL OF THE LIGHT OF TERRA

#### Themes: Exploration, Military

The second stage of this Endeavour is to do as the Lord-Captain asks; with the Explorers restoring control to various sections of the vessel. There are three main tasks that they need to complete to bring the ship back under the captains command; restore power to the primary plasma reactor, repair the power relays between the plasma reactor and the bridge section, re-initialise the core cogitator granting principle control of the vessel back to the bridge.

#### Awaken the Blazing God

Before the *Light of Terra* goes anywhere, it needs to have its main power restored. The GM should point this out to the Explorers

as it is obvious from the feeble amounts of emergency and backup power currently keeping the galley-lamps burning and the void-seals intact. Investigation around the bridge or of any of the power feeds running through the ship reveals only the barest amount of power is coming from the ship's primary plasma drive. Either an **Routine (+20) Logic or Tech-use Test** tells the Explorers that getting the reactor back online is their first course of action. To restore the reactor, they need to make their way to the engine room and gain access. This means getting past the Iron Kin guarding its entrance. If the Explorers try and blast their way in, they earn the violent enmity of all the tribes for killing Iron Kin, and the rest of their task becomes harder.

Talking their way in requires convincing the Iron Kin they respect the Blazing God and have his best interests at heart. This should require either a **Hard (-20) Charm Test** or **Difficult (-10) Tech-use Test** to placate them with machine mysteries. Any character with obvious cybernetic limbs and any Explorator character gains a +20 on these tests.

Once inside, the Explorers then need to breach the inner reactor shielding and bypass the hard radiation and vacuum on the far side to see the state of the reactor. In a void-suit, this means suffering 2d10 points of energy damage not reduced for armour or Toughness and a permanent level of Fatigue (until they can return to their ship to get purged of radiation) for 10 minutes of looking around (any longer results in death). In that time, the Explorer can make a single **Challenging (+0) Tech-use Test** to work out which parts of the reactor are damaged and what repairs need to be made. Once this test is successful, they can begin the ritual of restoration (taking several hours) to bring the reactor online.

Clever Explorers or those not wanting to risk the inner reactor could come up with other ways of surveying the interior, such as utilizing servitors. Especially charming Explorers may even be able to get a tribesman or Iron Kin to go in and report what they see, though it certainly means their demise...

#### The Ribbon of Light

With the reactor now generating full power, the Explorers realize their next obstacle. From the engine room, pulsing amber runes and wailing alarms inform them something is amiss with the ship's power relays. If there are any Iron Kin about, they immediately begin to wail along with alarms trying to appease the Blazing God and generally annoying the Explorers. From the displays available to them the Explorers can see that the relays connecting the reactor to the bridge systems are broken in a number of places. A **Hard (-20) Tech-use Test** reveals most of them are in the area the tribesmen call the Steel Caves, though some are close to the hull. These relays need to be found and repaired. If the Explorers make the test with two or more degrees of success, they also realize they need not repair all the relays to get power to the bridge—only some of them.

To find each of the relays, the Explorers need to search the ship, following the glowing conduits along corridors and through tunnels. There are 12 in the Steel Caves, two in the Shadow Hold, one in the Deep Wells, and three in the Cold Edge.



The ones in the Shadow Hold and Deep Wells can be ignored (see the above test). To find the relays, they need to make a successful **Challenging (+0) Navigation (Surface) or Tech-Use Test** for each one. If they have the help of the Iron Kin, they can add +20 to these rolls. Once they find one they can repair it using supplies from their own ship and the expertise of their Explorator. If they fail a roll, the GM can have them wander into a dangerous area of the ship or be ambushed by some tribesmen.

To repair the relays in the Cold Edge, they also need the help of the Void Walkers and Palik in particular (see page 76). This requires some Charm or Fellowship Tests and perhaps promising to take the Void Walkers with them when they leave (taking them along grants a +1d5 bonus to Crew Population).

### Mind and Spirit

With power restored to the bridge section the final task is to awaken the machine spirit of the core cogitator. Any Explorator characters know that this needs to be done to restore control to the captain, or any character can make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-use Test** to realize it. In addition, Roth eventually tells them what they need to do. Doing this entails finding the core cogitator chamber and enacting the ritual of awakening. Two major obstacles stand in the Explorers' way. The first is reaching this chamber (once they have its location, either from the Iron Kin or making a **Hard (-20) Navigation (Surface) Test** to work out the chaotic layout of the ship), which lies through the Deep Wells (see page 74)—requiring an underwater swim. The second is to deal with the room's inhabitant, the Pale Mother (see page 76).

Swimming through the Deep Wells the GM can have the Explorers encounter some Pale Sons, or darker denizens of the deep (use the profiles for Mutant Outcast and Mutant Abomination from page 372 of **ROGUE TRADER**). This can be especially frightening if the mutants (who should be able to breath underwater) attempt to tear the Explorer's void-suits or otherwise damage their breathing apparatus (see page 261 of **ROGUE TRADER** for rules on suffocation and drowning). Certain weapons may also not work underwater, while others such as explosives have a much greater radius of effect. The GM should have the Pale Sons stage a number of hit-and-run attacks rather than a stand-up fight—after all, they are interested in driving off the Explorers and keeping them away from the Pale Mother. If they suffer a few casualties, they retreat to the core cogitator room and the Mother to make a stand.

Rising out of the black waters for the Deep Wells, the Explorers discover the core cogitator and the hideous beast coiled around—the Mother of Mutants. There are also at least a dozen Pale Sons here to protect her. The Explorers can bargain with the Mother (who speaks in guttural Low Gothic), though they need to promise they will not harm her sons or her. This requires at least a **Hard (-20) Charm Test** by the Explorers. Alternatively, they can attack—use the Mutant Abomination Profile for the Mother of Mutants modified to have 40 Wounds, Unnatural Strength (x3) and Unnatural Toughness (x2). Once they control the chamber, they can have their Explorator enact the ritual of awakening and get the machine spirit back online.

### Dealing with the Tribes

All of these tasks bring the Explorers into contact with the various tribes (see pages 74-76). In fact, it is difficult (if not impossible) to complete these tasks without at least some help from the locals. The GM can use the following as a guide for running dealing with each of the tribes:

**Wargars:** Winning over Urgan and the Wargars requires the Explorers to make a show of strength, either by impressing them with some suitably destructive weaponry or killing a few of them in combat. To form an especially tight bond, one of the Explorers can challenge Urgan and best him in unarmed combat. If the Wargars are on the Explorers' side, they can move about the Steel Caves freely and have a contingent of tribesmen help them in their efforts.

**Iron Kin:** To get the Iron Kin to work with the Explorers means respecting their customs and faith in tech. This combined with proof that they are fulfilling the will of the Oracle means the Children helps them in whatever they want to do. Killing any Iron Kin results in cold relations with any tribesmen.

**Void Walkers:** The Void Walkers are fascinated by the Explorers, as they represent proof that there is life beyond the world and something out in the void. They help the Explorers if dealt with fairly. However if the Explorers also deal with the Wargars, this may cause friction, which could even erupt into violence.

**Pale Sons:** Dealing with the Sons is difficult, as they are naturally distrustful of outsiders. If they can be won over with charm and gifts, then they are very useful in helping the Explorers get around, adding +20 to any Navigation (Surface) Tests to find their way around the ship and +20 to their Agility Test in Objective 3 (see below). However, if the Explorers approach any Pale Sons in the company of other tribesmen, it is almost certain to end in violence.

### Rewards

- 25 Achievement Points for awakening the reactor.
- 25 Achievement Points for activating the conduits.
- 25 Achievement Points for awakening the core cogitator.
- 25 Achievement Points for convincing any of the tribes aboard the *Light* to aid them or not interfere with the ship's refurbishment (this does not stack with any alliances previously established).
- -25 Achievement Points for establishing any lasting animosity with any of the tribes aboard the *Light* (this does

### CLEARING THE ARK

The Explorers may decide that all this mucking about with primitives (especially ones that don't even have the sense to realize they are on ship in the middle of the void) is a big waste of time and decide to purge the lot of them. The tribesmen do, however, number in the thousands, and united against an external threat (like the Explorers) could provide some real opposition, even armed with primitive weapons. As a result, the GM should make it clear to the Explorers that any attempt to take the vessel by force will prove very costly.

not stack with any animosity previously established).

### OBJECTIVE 3: LOOT THE HIDDEN HOLDS

#### Themes: None

Having restored control over each of the five sections, the Explorers find themselves before the Lord-Captain once more, no doubt expecting a reward for their hard work. Roth is true to his word, but only up to a point. His voice shrill with anticipation at taking his vessel once more into the void, Roth, through insane rantings, tells the Explorers where the Hidden Holds are located and how to access them. He then initiates an automated countdown, at the conclusion of which the *Light of Terra* will make an uncontrolled warp jump for the edge of the galaxy. The Explorers have only an hour before the countdown reaches zero, within which they must locate the Hidden Holds, plunder what they can, and escape before they too are trapped on the *Light of Terra*.

The journey to the Holds takes 30 minutes racing down the decks. However, have each Explorer make a **Routine (+20) Agility Test**. For each degree of success they achieve, this time is reduced by 5 minutes to a minimum of 10 minutes. Of course, this means that some Explorers may arrive before others. The GM may also allow the PCs to come up with novel ways of getting to the holds faster, such as remote-site teleportation (very, very dangerous), void-walking down the side of the ship (probably not really that much faster) or using their knowledge of the ship's layout or systems to shortcut through vents (requiring an **Arduous (-40) Navigation (Surface) Test** not to end up in a plasma feed or carbon exhaust). The GM may also wish to complicate things by introducing trouble with the tribes—perhaps any uneasy alliances they have made breaks down as Roth's voice booms over the vox announcing the ship's departure. However it transpires, the GM should give the Explorers a real sense that time is running out and they very well might not make it.

By the time the Explorers reach the Hidden Holds, their watch-officer is pleading through the vox-net for them to return, warning the *Light of Terra* is powering up for its transition to warp space and its voyage deeper into the Halo Stars. Mighty and ancient blast doors grind open before the Explorers, revealing a shadowed vault so vast its ends are lost in darkness. Within the vault are rows of tethered stasis crates, each with a small blinking telltale light revealing they are still active. The crates range in size from small hand-held boxes to something a Sentinel Power Lifter would be required to shift.

Provided they have at least 5 minutes, each Explorer can take a really good look through the hold making a single

**Challenging (+0) Search Test** to see if they can find something of special value amid all the empty crates and junked goods. If this roll is successful, the Explorer has found a treasure and can make a single roll on **Table 2-2: Treasures of the Hidden Hold** on page 82. Note that each of the treasure items is unique (and has a rarity of "Unique") and Explorers should re-roll duplicated items. Explorers should also make their rolls to discover treasures in the order they arrive in the hold (should they arrive at different times), or have them each make an initiative test to create an order. Each Explorer can only gain one trophy item from the Hidden Holds.

The Explorer who makes the last successful Search Test also finds something with a more subtle value: a small crate full of data slates chronicling the *Light of Terra's* journeys during the Crusade. This is important later.

Any Explorer may modify their Search Test, hoping to take that little while longer to find something truly valuable. This, however, eats into the time they have to make good their escape. The Explorer may add any figure between 10 and 30 to the above roll (declaring before the roll is made), but lose this many minutes off their remaining time as determined by how fast it was they made it to the hold. Alternatively, the Explorers may spend 10 minutes to re-roll the Search Test (which can also be re-rolled by using Fate Points) as many times as they can afford. The Explorers need to save 5 minutes to make their escape to the nearest void-seal.

The Explorers may consider teleporting goods from the holds, however there is simply not enough time to do this with any success.

#### Escape

Whether they witness the event from the bridge of their vessel or the cockpit of their lighter as it clears the shuttle bay, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*An instant before the Light of Terra activates its ancient warp drive and dives for the warp, it appears as if engulfed by a golden halo. Its mighty, pitted flanks are illuminated, as they must have been in the time of Drusus himself, portholes aglow and running lights burning brightly against the black void. You cannot help but to be overcome with the notion that, if only for a moment, the Light of Terra is restored to the glory she enjoyed so long ago.*

And then, she is gone, bound for the cold void and the deep Halo Stars.



TABLE 2-2: TREASURES OF THE HIDDEN HOLDS

Dice Roll	Archeotech
1	<b>Hand of Retribution:</b> This is a small circular device that fits neatly into the palm of the hand and is easily concealable (+30 on any tests to hide). When the hand is opened however the device sprouts a thin blade of shimmering power, counting as a Best craftsmanship power weapon: (1d10+4 E; Pen 6; Power Field).
2	<b>Stalker Carapace:</b> A strange alien suit of carapace armour (AP 5 All) made of what looks like black volcanic glass that seems to drink up surrounding light. Those wearing the suit gain a +20 to Concealment Tests. If they remain motionless in a shadowed or dimly-lit area, they automatically pass any Concealment Tests they make (without any degrees of success in the case of Opposed Skill Tests).
3	<b>Darloth Chain Cannon:</b> This bulky and fearsome multi-barrelled weapon counts as a best-Craftsmanship Orthlack Heavy Stubber (see page 118 in the <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> Rulebook) with the Tearing and Storm qualities. In addition, it is a self-loading weapon and takes only a Half Action to replenish its drum.
4	<b>Retribution Bolt Shells:</b> Extremely rare, these bolt shells incorporate duel explosive tips designed to finish off targets that survive the initial impact. In all respects, these count as bolt shells and can be loaded into a boltgun or bolt pistol. However, in the round following a successful hit, they will deal their damage again as the secondary charge explodes. This secondary damage does not benefit from any Talents or Traits increasing damage. There are enough Retribution Bolt Shells to equip one individual.
5	<b>Book of Imperial Graces:</b> This rare work of the Imperial Cult recounts the founding principles of the saints of the Calixis Sector and beyond. Such is the exquisite writing in this tome that anyone quoting from it when dealing with the faithful of the Emperor may add +20 to all Fellowship-based tests, and gains the utmost respect of the Ecclesiarchy. The Ministorum considers these books relics.
6	<b>Consort Honour Blade:</b> Once used exclusively by the royal guards of Heltor (a world consumed by the Crusade) this best-Craftsmanship glaive counts as a two-handed Power Axe (see page 131 in the <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> Rulebook). In addition, it incorporates a Hellgun (see page 118 in the <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> Rulebook) in its shaft. In any given round, the wielder must decide if he is using the honour blade as a glaive or a gun.
7	<b>Void Weave Cloak:</b> Fashioned from the hair of some unknown beast, this unnaturally dark cloak is highly resistant to damage, especially fire. It can be worn over other armour and provides 3 APs to Body, Arms, and Legs. In addition, these armour points count against fire damage (normally fire damage ignores armour), and are never reduced by weapons dealing Energy damage.
8	<b>Ghost Voice Auspex:</b> A sensory device of ancient and wondrous design, the Ghost Voice functions as an auspex in all respects (but has a 100 metre range that cannot be blocked by normal materials). In addition, the auspex constantly whispers to the user, alerting them of danger. A character using the Ghost Voice Auspex cannot be surprised, and adds +4 to Initiative rolls.
9	<b>Crusade Combat Servitor:</b> A brute built for combat and held within a stasis casket, this servitor has seen a lot of fighting, but remains ready for more. The Crusade Combat Servitor counts as a Charron Battle Servitor (see page 375 of the <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> Rulebook) with the following changes: it has 25 Wounds, 9 AP on all locations, is armed with a Power Axe and Heavy Flamer, and has the Hulking Trait.
0	<b>Skitarii Cyber Weapon:</b> Crafted by the Adeptus Mechanicus for their Tech-Guard, this weapon is at first glance a best-Craftsmanship cybernetic arm. Closer inspection reveals that it incorporates both a las weapon and grenade launcher hidden within its armoured plates. These count as a best-Craftsmanship hellpistol and grenade launcher with the Compact upgrade (see page 133 in <b>ROGUE TRADER</b> ) and can be used by the owner of the arm (provided he has had it surgically attached) in combat—though only one may be used at a time.

## OUTCOME

The immediate result of the adventure is each Explorer should have an item in their possession that is truly unique (and is only found in this adventure). However, a Rogue Trader, is seldom in a situation he cannot turn to profit. The log-books of the *Light of Terra* are a unique and valuable find in themselves. If they are brought to the officials of Battlefleet Calixis (or the Imperial Navy in general), the Navy will pay

dearly to have it returned and be in the Explorer's debt. In addition, the Explorers' reputations will be vastly increased throughout the Sector and the Expanse. All this will translate to +2 Profit Factor, and the Imperial Navy's willing assistance in a future venture of the Explorers. However, this is beyond the scope of this adventure.

- 50 Achievement Points if at least one Explorer gains a trophy from the *Light's* hidden holds, proving one's worth to his fellows and crew.

# LAND OF THE SKY-FATHER

*"A more backward place than Dross I have yet to find."*

—Tarak Hippal, Pilgrim of the Red Walk

**L**and of the Sky-Father sees the Explorers travel to the world of Dross, a planet only known to have been visited once in all the history of the Imperium's exploration of the Koronus Expanse. Having pierced the deadly storms surrounding the world, the Explorers find a land strewn with the wrecks of past expeditions. Although the wrecks offer countless rich pickings, the Explorers must contend with vengeful natives to whom each wreck is a sacred site, and find a way to escape the planet.

## DROSS GAZETTEER

The planet Dross appears on most of the Imperium's maps of the Koronus Expanse. It was named by the Rogue Trader Nejo Skylax, who claimed to have established trading contacts with its savage tribes, and learned the name from them. According to Nejo's writings, the name has various meanings in the debased tongue of Dross's natives, the most common being "Land of the Sky-Father," and "Place of Banishment."

Nejo Skylax is the only explorer known to have visited Dross and returned, writing about his experiences. Over a dozen expeditions to the world have been declared over the centuries. How many such missions actually took place is not known for sure, but it is certain that no others returned.

## THE STORMS OF DROSS

The reason so many expeditions have apparently failed to return is that the planet Dross is entirely engulfed in a storm of unknown type and origin. The storm is not tied to the Immaterium, but beyond that, ship-born augers are unable to glean any other information. Only a remotely piloted or tethered probe sent in to the raging storms is likely to have any chance of taking such measurements, and if any such probes have been launched, it is likely that none have returned.

The storms cover the world's entire surface, and extend thousands of kilometres into near space. The raging energies are capable of inflicting catastrophic damage on vessels attempting to pass through them. In places the storms rage so fiercely that shuttlecraft are incinerated by boiling plasma, crushed by pressures more often found in the depths of the deepest oceans, or barraged with crippling radiation.

These are the worst effects of Dross's storms, yet even the quietest regions inflict such debilitating interference upon a shuttlecraft's systems that delicate cogitation systems melt and the interference stuns the most robust machine-spirit. This is the real reason so many expeditions have been lost at Dross—although most were able to avoid the worst of the storms, interference shut down all advanced systems and forced the shuttles to land

in an unpowered glide. Only one man—Nejo Skylax—ever succeeded in such a prodigious feat of piloting. The remainder burned up in the atmosphere or crashed far below on the surface.

The surface of Dross is strewn with the wreckage of vain attempts to penetrate its storms from any number of explorers, pirates, and smugglers. Xenos ships have also fallen afoul of the storm. These range from ships of Eldar or Ork manufacture, to those built by the hands of long dead and forgotten races. Needless to say, such wrecks would offer a highly desirable prize to any who could salvage them.

What the Explorers may well discover at the conclusion of their visit, is the storms are a direct result of the presence of the Nexus Point upon the surface. The wraithbone structure marking the Nexus Point was damaged long ago, celestial energies bursting forth through the fabric of reality and encompassing the world around it.

## GEOGRAPHY

The surface of Dross is arid with very little in the way of plant life. There are seas, but these are shallow and poisoned, and the only life they support is equally poisonous. The most striking features of Dross's surface are its huge rock stacks, formed from volcanic material through some unknown process of erosion. Millions of these formations cover the world's entire surface, and many are several kilometres high. Needless to say, any pilot skilled or lucky enough to have survived an uncontrolled planetfall is hard pressed to avoid smashing straight into one of these mighty natural features. In fact, the bases of many are strewn with twisted wreckage.

## THE TRIBES OF DROSS

Despite its inhospitable climate and environment, Dross is home not only to a range of auto-chthonic life forms, but also to a human population. According to the writings of Skylax, these are savage and feral, and divided into hundreds of small, ever-warring tribes. Each tribe claims as its home the largest and most defensible rock stack it can capture, which is hollowed out in to a formidable rock fortress. From these strongholds, the tribes sally forth in order to battle over the wrecks of the many vessels that have descended upon their world, which they believe to be sacred—bestowed by their god, the Sky-Father.



## THE SHRINES OF THE SKY-FATHER

The Sky-Father forms the central figure in the religion of the tribes of Dross. The priests preach that the Sky-Father created the tribes, but banished them to Dross as punishment for some long-forgotten wickedness, for which the tribes must atone until the Sky-Father returns and bestows his forgiveness.

The priests believe that the many wrecks that plummet from the skies are the gifts of the Sky-Father. They covet highly what artefacts they can recover intact from the crash sites, seeing the most innocuous object as holy relic. The more intact wrecks are made into shrines, and adorned with the symbols of the natives' religion. At one such shrine, for example, the remains of a long-dead pilot have been preserved with resin-soaked fabric wrappings. In another, a broken aquila has blood offerings made before it at especially auspicious times.

The Shrines of the Sky Father are not only sacred to the priests, they also form a measure of the power of the tribe that controls them. The warriors of each tribe fight continuously for possession of the most sacred shrines, and daub them in the blood of the defeated. Only when all of the shrines are in the possession of a single tribe will the peoples of Dross prove their strength and earn the forgiveness of the Sky-Father, so the priests teach. To date, no single tribe has come anywhere close to such a position, and so the ancient religious war continues unabated.

## THE FORSAKEN OF THE SKY-FATHER

The people of Dross exist in a state of barbarism, and their entire society is founded upon the principle of adoration of their lost god, and of constant warfare in his name. They wear scant clothing, much of it made from crude cloth woven from the fibre of the gmundha vine, one of the few forms of plant life to prosper on Dross. Much of the people's sustenance is also derived from this plant, and its fruits are distilled to make the potent but vile liquor known as gmundha blood. This concoction is imbibed during the almost-daily rituals the priests convene. If consumed in great enough quantity, it is capable of bringing about a euphoric state in which the priest can, apparently, commune with the distant Sky-Father. Nejo Skylax makes mention of this weird brew, stating that he was required to consume it as a sign of his worthiness to speak with the priests, and likened its effects to those of Dusk Lotus, a highly-poisonous drug.

## THE DROSS NEXUS

The Dross Nexus is located in an equatorial zone dominated by the world's rock stacks. As the Explorers approach the world, they immediately see the storms raging around it, and extend into nearby space, even to the extent of engulfing the world's three small satellites. A **Hard (-20) Common Lore (Koronus Expanse) Test** reveals only one explorer—Rogue Trader Nejo Skylax—is known to have ever returned from the world's surface, but many others have apparently perished in the attempt.

In order for the Explorers' Navigator to take a reading at the Dross Nexus, the Explorers must brave its storms and descend to the surface. Teleportation cannot penetrate the storms.

As the Explorers' vessel approaches Dross, the augurs report all manner of unconventional energies engulfing the world. The storms appear like scattered roiling clouds, shot through with fierce lightning and the occasional glow of brilliant gold light. To penetrate the storms using the ship's augers, an Explorer have to make a **Punishing (-50) Scrutiny + Detection Test**. Success reveals the traces of scattered metal returns from a solid surface, indicating possible wrecks. Anything else simply reveals that there is a planet beneath the storm. The Dross Nexus is automatically detectable by any scan, successful or not.

## LAND OF THE SKY-FATHER ADVENTURE

This Adventure is indelibly tied to the Explorers' attempts to reach the Dross Nexus. If the Explorers simply reach the Nexus, scan it, and leave, they will not receive many Achievement Points. However, if they take the opportunity to make a profit while they are there, they will be able to gain additional Achievement Points (as described on page 87).

### OBJECTIVE 1:

#### PENETRATE THE STORMS OF DROSS

##### Keywords: Exploration

The descent to the surface of Dross is extremely perilous—more so than the Explorers can possibly know until they begin their planetfall. Once committed, the pilot discovers that his vessel's guidance systems are becoming increasingly unreliable, and he is forced to rely more and more upon his own skills. But it's too late to turn back now! Soon, the vessel's augurs begin to fail, until after a while, little more than the most basic avionic data is available to him. He can rely upon little beyond what he can see through the cockpit canopy. The shuttle's pilot must make a **Arduous (-40) Pilot (Space Craft) Test** to navigate the storm successfully. However, this roll can be modified with help from other Explorers:

- **Navigate by Eye:** If an Explorer passes a **Difficult (-10) Navigation (Surface or Stellar) Test**, add +20 to the Pilot's roll.
- **Rerouting Systems:** If an Explorer passes a **Challenging (+0) Tech-use Test**, add +10 to the Pilot's roll.
- **Dump Excess Weight:** If an Explorer passes a **Challenging (+0) Evaluate Test**, add +10 to the Pilot's roll. Note that if this test is failed, the GM may wish to have the Explorer throw out something of value by mistake...
- **Pray to the Emperor:** If an Explorer passes a **Difficult (-10) Charm Test**, he confidently recites a prayer covering this exact situation. The prayer boosts everyone's faith and raises hopes they may make it alive, ultimately adding +10 to the Pilot's roll.

Each of these tests may only be attempted once by a single Explorer chosen by the group.

Once the test is made, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Your shuttle screams as you struggle with the nonresponsive controls, illuminated by strobe-flashes of lightning. Suddenly, the roiling clouds part and the surface of Dross appears below. Your vessel is only scant kilometres from the surface, which is arid and dominated by mighty rock formations that rear hundreds of metres into the air as if massive, dead trees or ancient stalagmites.*

If the pilot succeeded on his Test, the shuttle makes a rough but serviceable landing. If he fails, he crash-lands, instead. The shuttle digs a massive furrow across the ground, before coming to rest as a crumpled wreck. All those inside must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or take 2d10 damage (not reduced by armour) from the crash.

### Rewards

- 75 Achievement Points for reaching the planet's surface.
- -25 Achievement Points for crashing the shuttle.

For this objective, the Explorers cannot gain Achievement Point bonuses from any source not currently present on the planet's surface.

### OBJECTIVE 2:

#### SALVAGE AND FIRST CONTACT

##### Keywords: Exploration, Trade, and/or Military

Upon finally landing amongst the rock stacks, the Explorers immediately discover the extent of wreckage scattered about the area. A successful **Challenging (+10) Evaluate Test** reveals many of the fragments strewn across the area in which they have landed present the possibility of substantial amounts of salvage.

The Explorers landed fifty kilometres from the Dross Nexus, and given the state their vessel is likely to be in following its landing, they would be well advised not to push their luck by attempting to fly to its location. If the players decide to risk the short flight, they need to make a **Very Hard (-30) Pilot (Space Craft) Test** or crash.

As they explore the area, the Explorers come upon more and more wrecks. Some are little more than debris fields scattered across a wide area, while others represent intact vessels almost entirely submerged between the shifting sands at the feet of the rock stacks. Some are long-decayed skeletons, while others are almost perfectly preserved.

Although the majority of the wrecks appear to of human vessels, the Explorers soon come across xenos wrecks. Although an Ork wreck is hard to identify (or even tell if it's destroyed or not), Eldar wrecks are obvious—with great, shattered void-sails rearing from the sands and rocks, broken wraithbone scattered all about. Still more wrecks are of indeterminate origin, some appearing to be solid, jet black stone, while at least one other appears to be a gigantic portion of a truly

immense sphere. If the GM wants to, he can have the Explorers come across pieces of xenos gear, although these should not be intact. As they explore, they begin to encounter wrecks that have unintelligible runes scrawled in dried blood across their flanks, whilst others are surrounded by painstakingly-arranged human bones.

As the Explorers progress, they attract the attentions of the natives. A **Very Hard (-30) Awareness Test** allows the Explorers to notice they are being followed. Unless they pull off something truly cunning, the Explorers are attacked by a group of ten tribesmen (plus five for each degree of failure with the Awareness Test). The Explorers could attempt to reason with the natives, establishing contact by way of a Charm Test, with bonuses for good roleplaying applied. In the end, the success of this should be determined by whether or not the Explorers succeeded on their test, and whether or not they interfered with any wrecks that the tribes know about. If they did interfere, no amount of reasoning placates the tribes' religious fervour. The profile for the Dross Tribesmen can be found on page 125.

Having defeated or fled from the tribesmen, allow the Explorers to take a **Difficult (-10) Logic Test**. Success indicates the savages appeared to be fighting not simply to inflict injury on the Explorers, but to drive them away from the last wreck they encountered. Passing the test by one degree of success suggests that the wrecks might be valuable to the tribesmen, while passing it by three or more degrees of success reveals that the wrecks must be of religious significance to the natives.

Eventually, Asira Storm-Speaker appears. The High Priestess of the Sky-Father has taken it upon herself to gauge the identity of these strangers, and whether or not they have the blessing of her peoples' god. She approaches at the head of several dozen of her best warriors, and awaits the Explorers' response.

What happens next is really up to the players. They might attempt to communicate with the High Priestess, or they might prefer to fight her. The former results in Asira requesting the Explorers' aid against the enemies of her tribe, while the latter sees her unleashing her formidable powers on them.

### Aiding the Natives

If the Explorers want to aid Asira, she explains in broken and halting Low Gothic that she wants the Explorers to wage

war on her enemies. Asira willingly admits she believes she is destined to unite the tribes and end the storms that surround her planet. This has mostly to do with her success at waging war on them thus far, but even a warrior-psyker of her prowess cannot hope to win the religious war alone. She believes the Explorers can provide her with the aid she needs, however.

The Explorers are most likely far better armed than any natives on the planet. However, even they cannot wage war against an entire planet (unless they have brought a large contingent of armed troops to the surface, which is unlikely given the circumstances). If the Explorers want to try aiding Asira directly, the GM should oblige them. In fact, the GM could create some objectives that a small and well-armed group could accomplish, such as visibly and violently taking over a prominent shrine to overawe the other tribes, or infiltrating a tribal fortress during the night to unlock the gates and allow Asira's tribe access.

However, it should eventually become obvious to the players that they are fighting a losing battle. The more successful Asira is, the more the other tribes unite against her. On their own, the Explorers cannot help her accomplish her goals. There are several ways to do so, however. These are discussed in the next objective.

### Rewards

- 100 Achievement Points for establishing peaceful relations with Asira and gaining her assistance.
- 50 Achievement Points for doing something definite towards defeating Asira's enemies, such as directly taking action against them.
- -100 Achievement Points for gaining Asira's enmity.

For this objective, the Explorers cannot gain Achievement Point bonuses from any source not currently present on the planet's surface.

### OBJECTIVE 3:

### ESCAPE THE STORMS OF DROSS

#### Keywords: Creed and/or Military

Eventually, the Explorers come to the Dross nexus. Here the Navigator can take his reading, as described on page 50. However, in the course of making the reading, the Navigator

### COMMUNICATING WITH THE NATIVES

When the Explorers interact with the Children of the Sky-Father, a **Very Hard (-30) Speak Language (Low Gothic) Test** reveals the natives speak a highly debased, Low Gothic dialect. If an Explorer has skill with languages (such as the Polyglot Talent) his Test is **Challenging (+0)** instead. This is because the Sky-Children are descended from Imperial pilgrims, whose vessel was driven off course by a warp storm and spewed into the grip of the Storms of Dross. Although the pilgrims' vessel was torn apart, a number of them did manage to escape by saviour pods—the ancestors of the current population.

When it comes to routine conversation with the tribesmen, have the Explorers make a Speak Language (Low Gothic) Test the first time any communication between the two groups occurs. Failure indicates the two parties simply cannot make themselves understood at this point. If the test is passed, the degree of success indicate the clarity of communication. If for example the test is only just passed, then convey what the natives are saying in very simplistic terms, and vis versa. If however the test is passed by more degrees of success, then use more complex terms to communicate. Allow the Explorers to retake the above test periodically, whenever they have spent enough time in the company of the tribesmen.

## ASIRA STORM-SPEAKER, HIGH PRIESTESS OF THE SKY-FATHER

Asira is one of the pre-eminent religious leaders of the tribes of Dross, and her tribe—the Sky-stalkers—have proven one of the most successful, and belligerent, of their generation. Asira leads the warriors of her tribe in battle, and she has been successful enough to usurp the tribe's actual leaders. Asira is not only a potent warrior, she is gifted of prodigious psychic powers as well. The enemies of her tribes often break and flee at the first sight of her.

High Priestess Asira Storm-speaker's Profile can be found on page 127 in Appendix: NPCs.

should also learn that the storms are linked to the psychic dissonance generated from the partially malfunctioning Nexus (page 83). Furthermore, a powerful enough psyker should be able to wrestle with the Nexus and be able to bring the roiling energies under control—for a short time at least.

At this point, the Explorers have several options. Unless one of the Explorers wishes to stay behind on Dross while the others leave, they need to enlist the aid of another psyker—Asira is the obvious choice. How they proceed with this determines whether or not they are able to wrest any profit from their ventures.

The Explorers may choose to level with Asira and explain the situation. If the Explorers explain the situation to Asira, she graciously offers to operate the Nexus and allow the Explorers to leave. In fact, she positively encourages them to do so. Asira's clever mind realises almost immediately that with the Explorers gone and her control over the storms that shroud her world, she can realise the prophecy of the Sky-Father's return. Once the Explorers have left, she can present herself as the Sky-Father's high priestess and with her ability to briefly part the storms, hopefully the tribes unite under her leadership voluntarily.

However, with the Nexus under her control, she sees no reason to treat with the Explorers further. She refuses to part the skies for them to return, and if they do so via shuttle, she effectively holds them hostage on the planet until they agree to leave. Needless to say, she will not allow the Explorers any salvage, and the Explorers will not be able to earn any further Achievement Points on the planet.

Another option for the Explorers is to present themselves as the Sky-Father's emissaries, who have travelled to the planet secretly to bestow Asira with the power to quell the storms. This requires some deceitful behaviour, however it does have a reasonable chance of succeeding. As Asira is a priestess of a faith that worships technological relics, it does not seem impossible to her that off-worlders bearing wondrous weapons and devices are emissaries of her deity. The Explorers may even offer to return with gifts of weaponry and even soldiers to help Asira conquer the planet.

If the Explorers are successful in this charade, they can convince Asira to quell the storms long enough for them to return with multiple landers and shuttles. They may also be

able to convince Asira to let them salvage the myriad wrecked ships for valuable archeotech and xenotech.

### The Return Journey

If the Explorers have been able to secure Asira's aid, they find the return journey far less perilous than the planetfall. As they launch, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As you lift off in your shuttle, the roiling aetheric clouds above become still. As you gain altitude, the part of the storm towards which you are flying parts, forming a tunnel through the storm. The edges of the tunnel churn with celestial energies, but they are somehow being held in check, forced back by the workings of the nexus and Asira's prodigious psychic powers. As you pass through the tunnel, the black of the void is discernible up ahead, and after a while you are through, the blessedly welcome sight of your vessel looming ahead. Behind you, the tunnel collapses in upon itself, and Dross is lost to your sight and your sensors.*

Returning without the Sky-talker's aid requires the same **Pilot (Space Craft) Test** as landing (see page 85), which may of course be modified by the actions of the other Explorers.

### Rewards

- 25 Achievement Points for getting off-world.
- 150 Achievement Points for convincing Asira to allow them future salvage operations.
- -100 Achievement Points for leaving without guaranteeing future salvage operations.
- -10 Achievement Points for not securing Asira's aid in controlling the Nexus and leaving the planet.

### OUTCOME

If the Explorers establish themselves as emissaries of the Sky-Father—and subsequently aid Asira in uniting the planet—they also find their deception has long-term benefits. Dross will be extremely favourable to the Explorers in the future, which could allow them to establish Endeavours on the planet in the future under extremely agreeable terms. Of course, the Ecclesiarchy may not look on their actions favourably, which could cause problems in the future.

The Explorers may even set up a longer-term salvage operation, involving their minions and spanning several years or even decades. Provided they arrange the initial deal with Asira, and make some other arrangements, the GM can feel free to award the Explorers with additional Achievement Points, or even 1 or 2 points of Profit Factor.



# JOINING THE PROCESSIONAL

*"Death has a face. I have seen it in the stars; I have seen it in the dark; I have seen it in the damned."*

—Orlis Siber, sole survivor of the *Vagabond's Will*

**F**ar beyond the Heathen Stars, accessible only by way of a warp portal known as the Gateway of the Damned, is the vast, system-wide celestial graveyard legend has dubbed the Processional of the Damned. Whilst taking the next reading of the star map nexus, the Explorers encounter a group of hunted, haunted men and women wishing to flee the Processional once and for all. But this damned place is home to other groups, who would see the Explorers and their vessel join the sea of blasted wrecks.

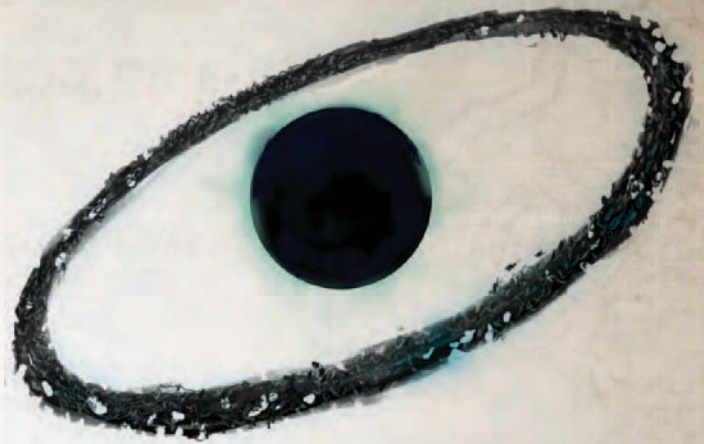
## PROCESSIONAL OF THE DAMNED GAZETTEER

Hidden in a far corner of the Accursed Demesne, the Processional of the Damned is a cursed place where even the most intrepid explorers fear to tread. Through the centuries only a handful of Imperial ships have visited it and returned, it has earned a strange and dire reputation among the inhabitants of the Expanse. Stories tell of a place where death holds court over a limitless flotilla of ancient, desiccated vessels and ruinous mouldering worlds, each drawn across the reaches of space by a deep and slumbering evil. A ship's graveyard of more than a million-million vessels, the Processional is a tempting target for scavengers and treasure hunters, and every few decades an expedition from Footfall sets off into the dark with dreams of fortune and glory. Those few that do return bring back terrible tales of death and malign mystery, but also enough wealth to tempt others to try their luck, and so the Processional is never short of willing sacrifices.

### AN ALIEN INTELLIGENCE

How and why the Processional of the Damned came into being is unknown to mankind, or even to the myriad xenos races man has either dealt with or destroyed. If there are those who know this cursed place's secrets, they are either long vanished or well hidden. What is known is the star at the centre of the Processional—a writhing, flickering mass of dark matter—has some kind of pull within the warp, and dead ships, their crews long since perished, are drawn in to join the vast rings of wrecks in its orbit. Such is the power of the Processional that even dead worlds are not outside its grasp and several blasted, crumbling planetoids jostle for positions amongst the sea of space hulks.

Over the centuries, scattered Imperial explorers have visited the Processional, from lowly pirates and adventurers to noble Rogue Traders. Most never returned, claimed by accident, treachery, or something worse. However, the writings of Wrath Umboldt, captain of the *Righteous Crusader* and the first Rogue



Trader to find the Processional and return, do catalogue the edges of the system and build a sketchy picture of the terrible forces at work within the wreck rings. What these titbits of information seem to reveal suggests strange powers at work within the Processional. From lengthy readings, Umboldt determined patterns in the ebb and flow of the space hulks, some being drawn closer, some being pushed away. His men also claimed that the closer the ships were to the star, the more decayed and ancient they seemed, even though markings from some ships revealed some closer vessels were of more recent manufacture than those further out. All of this seems to point to some kind of power at work, a power that grows in strength the closer travellers get to the centre of the Processional.

Over the years, a range of theories have developed amongst those few with access to the details of the Processional. Most of these are little more than hypothetical meanderings, posited by those who never actually visited the cursed place. Other such authors may have dispatched hirelings to investigate further or test the veracity of their theories, damning thousands of souls to their doom. One theory suggests that the processional exists in many different times simultaneously, with explorers crossing from one time to the next as they near the dark star in its centre. A variation on this theory suggests that time speeds up, relative to the outside universe, the closer the observer is to the centre. Thus, an explorer near the star might occupy a point in time many thousands of years into the future, while one at the edges would occupy the present. Several savants of the Ordo Calixis have, according to whispers, been driven to madness attempting to decipher this riddle. Others claim that the dark star is in fact some form of alien life, or a previously unheard-of type of black hole. One theory even suggests that it is a brooding shadow of something that exists out of phase with this dimension, but that is nonetheless nearby.

These attempts to comprehend the Processional are somewhat frustrated by some of Umboldt's writings, recorded long after he returned from his accursed voyage. It is evident that something terrible occurred during Wrath's exploration, something neither he nor those of his crew who returned ever made sense of. From the mad ravings of his own crew and the recorded visions of his astropaths, he seemed to have become convinced that the dark light at the centre of the Processional was in fact death itself, or perhaps some ancient xenos god of decay—slowly drawing the corpses of dead vessels into its cold embrace. Whatever the truth, Wrath never returned to the Processional and refused to reveal its location to others

## GHOSTS OF THE DEEP

despite the treasures he recovered and vast sums offered.

Although Umboldt refused to speak of the Processional, his surviving crew brought back countless void-farers' tales. Their stories soon spread from ship to ship, from port to port, until variations could be overheard in scum-bars the length and breadth of the Expanse. Such tales speak of a region haunted by the past and the future, where half-glimpsed spectres of things yet to come flit at the periphery of vision. They tell of vox-channels bursting into life as a hundred voices hail an explorer's ship all at once, before abruptly cutting off to be replaced with cold, angry static. At other times, so they tell, voices whisper from the depths of the white noise of the vox-channels, only to fade away as the instruments are fine-tuned. Some men claimed they have seen long-lost loved ones, or other, hideous things, whilst traversing the outer limits of the system. Of those who have donned void-suits and left the safety of their ship only the most fortunate have returned sane.

Furthermore, there are dark and disturbing whispers suggesting that every peril, every voice, and every half-glimpsed figure is in fact some aspect of the dread evil that lurks at the heart of the system. Nothing happens by chance in the Processional, so the void-born claim, and no secret is unknown to that which lies at its centre.

One of the mysteries presented by the Processional is just where all of the dead vessels orbiting around its centre come from. While countless vessels have been lost to the Koronus Expanse, the numbers are not anywhere great enough to account for the space hulks found there. Some suggest the place is a resting ground for ships lost in the warp anywhere in the galaxy, as if it were some cosmic vent from which lost ships are expelled. Certainly, the warp is not subject to the laws that govern the material universe, and it is possible that a ship lost whilst traversing a route between two worlds on the other side of the galaxy could end up upon the dark shores of the Processional. Others claim that many of the wrecks are the corpses of vessels yet to be lost, echoes of future disasters.

Some obscure writings on the subject suggests the Processional might occupy a region where some terrible incident once occurred, and to a degree is still occurring. What atrocity might have caused such a phenomenon will likely never be discerned, but the ravings of madmen speak of decide, and the laws of time and space being violated in the most despicable ways imaginable. They speak of entire civilisations, entire species, being tortured and sacrificed upon the alters of forbidden powers, unnameable gods, or forces old when the universe itself came into being.

The final clue comes from the Eldar. Though capricious and untrustworthy, some believe the ancient aliens know more about this place than anyone else. It is said that long before the coming of man to the Expanse, the Eldar were aware of the Processional, having tracked lost ships to its forsaken shores. What they found there was a creature with a connection to the fabric of fate itself, something of great interest to the Eldar farseers. This creation of fate beyond fate, or entropic spirit as the Eldar referred to it, was a sinkhole in reality and a dent in the fabric of time. If any of this is true or not, and whether the Eldar have any interest in the Processional, is not known for sure. However, the xenos have constructed a webway portal to connect it to their domains, indicating at least some importance placed upon this cursed system and its dead inhabitants.

Despite the terrible nature of the Processional, a number of groups call this cursed place home. The first of these are known as Wrath's Carrion. Descendants of the crew of Wrath Umboldt, left behind when their master fled back into the void, they survive by scavenging the outer regions of the Processional. Of this group very little is known, although a great many rumours and myths have sprung up amongst superstitious void-farers.

Some say that the Carrion are touched by the evil that haunts the Processional. Some claim that the Carrion are not men and women of flesh and bone at all, but ghostly spectres out of synch with the place in which they live. Other rumours state that the Carrion are all too real, yet they are held in thrall by some ancient evil, perhaps paying a penance for some ancient crime. What contact has occurred with the Carrion suggests that some of their number are indeed strangely distant in their mannerisms, as if barely able to register the presence of outsiders. Others long to escape whatever it is that holds others of their number enthralled, yet, for whatever reason, cannot break the hold of the Processional. These beg outsiders for deliverance from their dark realm, in person or over crackling vox-channels. Often, such transmissions are cut off without warning, as if some agency refuses to allow them to escape.

There are also the Hollow Men, normally only encountered deeper in the system. Very little is known about them, not even whether they are human, alien, or something else. It is generally accepted that the Hollow Men are scavengers, and that they cloak themselves in heavy void-suits, which they use to lurk amongst the wreckage of the space hulks, slowly breaking them down, one piece at a time, until nothing but a bare skeleton is left. The Hollow Men are an ever-present threat to any traversing the Processional. While they rarely move about openly, they are always there, at the periphery of vision and the far extent of a vessel's sensors. They crawl across the wrecks as flies over a cadaver, and flit from one to the next when an explorer's attentions are turned elsewhere. Sometimes, their presence can be detected by an increase in false augur returns, angry bursts of white noise over the vox-channels, or strange noises emanating from the vessel's outer hull.

No one has ever been able to ascertain why the Hollow Men go about the perilous task of scavenging the wrecks of the Processional. The purpose of the Hollow Men in the Processional, as well as their origin, remains a mystery.

Finally the Processional, as can be imagined, is a fearfully haunted place. The warp has a strange relationship with the turbulent star and "things" are regularly seen by scavengers, either drifting between the space hulks or hiding in their holds. Some reports claim that people or vessels known to be alive and intact many light years away have been seen amongst the ruined space hulks, as if the witness is catching a glimpse of some terrible future fate. Others report their augurs returning errant signals as they pass through the debris fields, and even having vox-conversations with the crews of vessels they know to be long dead. Such conversations test the very sanity of those who penetrate the secrets of the Processional of the Damned.



## THE SOLAR GRAVEYARD

The Processional of the Damned is a ship graveyard unsurpassed in size and scale. Larger than anything else ever encountered in the Expanse, it dwarfs the debris fields of the Battleground in the Maw or the ruined remains of the Al'terran Shipyards. Countless millions of kilometres across, it is a system of dead worlds and desiccated ships slowly orbiting a dark star in vast and fragmented circles. Despite its scattered and chaotic appearance the Processional has many documented layers; each wrapped protectively around the turbulent star at its centre. Each of these layers have their own distinctive character and present their own unique dangers.

**The Damned Gateway:** Though far from the edge of the Heathen Stars, the Processional of the Damned remains permanently linked to this distant place by an Eldar webway portal. It is not known whether or not the Eldar still make use of this portal, though it continues to function, fuelled by energies beyond the Imperium's understanding.

**The Fragmented Cloud:** The outer edges of the Processional are known as the Fragmented Cloud, a region of smaller, broken vessels and twisted remains. There is little salvage to be had this far out, though it does make a good base from which to venture deeper into the system. It is also the haunt of the Carrion, marooned descendants of Wrath Umboldt's crew.

**Blight—The First World:** The first of the three worlds trapped in the endless dance of the Processional, Blight is a dead and desiccated place. Hollowed out from within, like an

apple devoured by worms, Blight is a honeycomb of ship-sized tunnels and crevasses, some clogged with the remains of vessels drawn in by its weak gravity. The Carrion routinely explore Blight for vessels that have drifted out of the Sea of Space Hulks, though even they remain wary this close to the edge, as the Hollow Men are also known to scavenge the dead world.

**Outer Sea of Space Hulks:** The bulk of the Processional is known as the Sea of Space Hulks, a region of space thick with the ruined remains of vessels of every manufacture, race or function drawn from across the Expanse and even out of the greedy clutches of the warp. Such is the scale of the Sea that to look upon it is enough to drive most explorers to despair as the endless tumbling shapes and broken debris fill their vision and choke their ship's sensors. It would be possible to spend a hundred lifetimes exploring the Sea and scavenge only a handful of its vessels.

**Decay—The Second World:** Deep within the Sea of Space Hulks lurks the blasted world known as Decay. Smaller than Blight, it is more a moon than true world, hidden against the deeper darkness of the void by its stygian surface. It is only detectable by the weak light of the turbulent star or its faint gravity shadow. The Carrion tell any visitors to the Processional that Decay is home to the Hollow Men and best avoided.

**Inner Sea of Space Hulks:** The further one presses through the Sea of Space Hulks, the more apparent the effects of the turbulent star become and the more decayed and desiccated the space hulks appear. Few travellers venture this far, though stories persist of unique vessels and fabled treasure ships hidden

within the inner rings of the Sea. However, accurate reports of this region are hard to come by and neither the Carrion nor the Hollow Men press far into the Inner Sea.

**Oblivion—The Third World:** There is a third and last world in the grip of the turbulent star, known only as Oblivion. Visible from the edges of the system only with powerful sensors and auspexes, practically nothing is known about Oblivion except that it is larger than both Blight and Decay and apparently has a dark, murky atmosphere. What lurks beneath its boiling grey clouds, however, remains a mystery.

**The Carrion Deeps:** Beyond Oblivion, the Sea thins out to almost nothing and the thick fields of wrecks and debris give way to scattered space hulks and blasted broken fragments. Rumours, mostly propagated by the Carrion, say that it is here that the greatest vessels are eventually drawn, close to the baleful light of the turbulent star. Such rumours are practically impossible to confirm or refute as no living soul has ever ventured into the Carrion Deeps and returned.

**The Turbulent Star:** In the centre of the system hangs the Turbulent Star, known also as the Reaper's Eye, the Black Heart or the Hole in the Void. None have ever gotten close enough to learn the true nature the celestial phenomenon, or whether or not there is indeed a dark intelligence behind its presence.

## THE PROCESSIONAL NEXUS

The next point on the star map at which the Explorers' Navigator must take a reading is not on the surface of a planet, but another one that is to be found in the depths of space. Upon arriving at the correct coordinates however, the Explorers discover that instead of an ancient structure floating in space, they are confronted with a shimmering warp portal. An **Ordinary (+10) Psyniscience Test** reveals that some power of staggering proportion has twisted and distorted the strand of fate that leads to this place, drawing the nexus away, through the portal, to another place entirely.

If the Explorers are to take the reading and thereby gain another vital part of the coordinates that lead them to the Dread Pearl, they must take their ship through the portal.

The portal appears as a small point (only a few kilometres in diameter) of violet-hued light framed by gleaming wraithbone shards, wide enough for a ship. Navigating the ship into and through the portal taxes the abilities of the helmsman, but the Explorers have no choice if they are to locate the nexus and stand a chance of reaching the Dread Pearl before their competitors.

Passing though the portal requires an **Ordinary (+10) Pilot (Space Craft) + Manoeuvrability Test**. Failure simply means the ship misses its mark, and must make another pass as the helmsman endures the stifled chuckles of his fellow crew. However, the GM can make this situation tenser by having the Explorers ambushed by an Aconite Frigate or even one of their competitors as they approach the portal.

The transition is instantaneous, then the Explorers are confronted with a spectacle that few have ever witnessed—the Processional, in all its glory. The portal emerges at the very fringes of the celestial graveyard, but even at this distance, the

pulsing singularity is detectable, as is the dark halo of dead vessels that shrouds it. So dense is the cloud, at this distance the Explorers' augurs cannot discern individual vessels—just a mass reverberating with eerie signals and ghostly sensor returns.

Almost immediately upon their arrival, the Explorers are struck with a sense of deep-seated dread. The temperature on the bridge of their vessel drops inexplicably and a thin skein of jagged frost creeps across the vista-panels, their breath clouding as they breathe. The vox-channels come to life; a low, burbling static laced with half-heard whispers filling the bridge.

The most immediate task Explorers are faced with is determining the location of the nexus. Locating this takes a **Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny + Detection Test**, and reveals the now-familiar Eldar structure floating in the void in the region known as the Inner Sea. (In fact, it shows up on the auger displays strangely clearly, considering that it's surrounded by a sea of debris millions of kilometres across. This has no further relevance to the adventure, but the GM should be sure to play up this point, adding to the sense of "wrongness.") Unfortunately, the Explorers must pilot their vessel into the debris field in order to reach the Nexus, which is far beyond the range of smaller vessels such as guncutters or lighters.

Before the Explorers can reach the Processional Nexus, they must negotiate the perilous debris fields. This brings them into contact with a number of the Carrion, and trigger the Processional adventure described below.

## THE PROCESSIONAL ADVENTURE

This adventure is entwined with the Explorers attempting to reach the Nexus, allowing them to make a profit on the way.

### OBJECTIVE 1: MEET THE CARRION

#### Keywords: Exploration

Reaching the location of the nexus requires the Explorers to navigate their vessel through the Fragmented Cloud. At least one **Difficult (–10) Pilot (Space Craft) + Manoeuvrability Test** is required to avoid taking impact hits (2d10+5 points of damage) from slow moving debris which ignore void shields. The GM may wish to make this test harder, or require more than one test if the Explorers wish to travel at more than a crawl or spend any length of time exploring the cloud.

As the vessel eventually clears the cloud, the bridge crew reports activity amongst the wrecks, within only a couple of hundred thousand kilometres. Have them make a **Hard (–20) Scrutiny + Detection Test** to determine the nature of the disturbance, and describe how a number of bridge officers show signs of tension; making the sign of the aquila, fingering charms, and muttering imprecations against the perils of the void. The degree of success by which the test is passed determines the range at which the disturbance is detected; while failure means that it is not detected until the danger is right on top the Explorers' vessel.

The activity in amongst the wreckage is in fact a group of Hollow Men, stalking the Explorers' vessel through the debris field. Each is wearing an armoured suit, and so presents no more

than a miniscule target that barely registers on the Explorers' fire control augurs. Depending on the result of the test described above, the Explorers have little or no warning that anything is awry, and even if they do detect the presence of the Hollow Men, they have no way of knowing what they are facing. The Hollow Men make for the Explorers' vessel, and swarm all over its hull, cutting at components as if it were one of the wrecks of the Processional. Although the Hollow Men do not inflict any cataclysmic damage (unless left to their own devices for a long time), their activities soon begin to interfere with the vessel's augurs, communications and other such systems.

In the event that the Explorers detect the Hollow Men as they close on the vessel, any shots they may take with shipboard weapons suffer a penalty of -40 to hit. Any shot that hits reduces 1d5 Hollow Men to atoms.

How the Explorers choose to deal with the Hollow Men is up to them, but they have to decide soon, before real damage is inflicted upon their vessel. The most obvious solution would be to don void-suits and confront the Hollow Men face to face, in which case the Explorers need to call upon a number of their servants to aid them, for there are a great many Hollow Men. The players might concoct a more unconventional plan, in which case they should be allowed to let their imaginations run riot. There are 50 Hollow Men in total, and they disperse as they swarm over the outer hull, meaning they can be confronted one-on-one if the Explorers decide to do so.

Should the Explorers ignore the Hollow Men, or take too long to deal with them they inevitably begin to damage their vessel as they tear off outer workings and even burrow into the hull itself. Every 15 minutes of game time that the Explorers' vessel is under attack the GM should total up the number of surviving Hollow Men and roll percentile dice, as if making a characteristic test. If the score is equal or less than the number of Hollow Men remaining then a vital system has been damaged. Randomly choose a ship component (either an essential component or supplemental component) that has some external presence, such as an auspex array or weapon battery. This component has been damaged (see page 222 in the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook), and must be repaired. If the GM rolls a 05 or less, the Hollow Men cut open some vital bit

of the hull, and destroy one point of hull integrity instead.

Should the Explorers manage to slay half of the Hollow Men, the remainder disengage and melt into the surrounding debris field. They are impossible to track once in amongst the junk, and augur scans pick up nothing more than an odd movement or flickering energy return.

The Hollow Men having been driven off, the Explorers may well decide to carry on with their search for the Processional Nexus. First, however, a transmission comes over the vox:

*"Unknown vessel, repeat, hailing unknown vessel. Requesting permission to board, do you read us. Please, do you read us?"*

The voice sounds distinctly tense, as if the speaker is terrified that he might be overheard. The speaker is one of the Carrion, but unlike his fellows who are entirely in the thrall of the evil place they inhabit, this individual and his comrades are not. Instead, they are a hunted minority, living a life of terror in which they must hide not only from the evils of the Processional but from their own people as well. Having detected the Explorers' vessel, these outcasts see a potential escape.

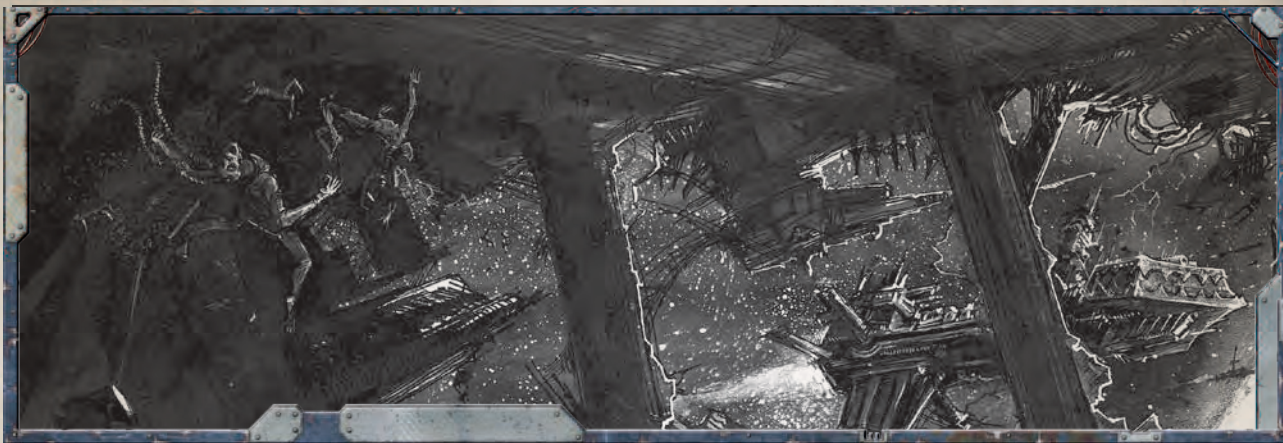
If the Explorers take too long in deciding what to do, the Hollow Men return, zeroing in on a nearby wreck. This is the location of the outcasts who have contacted the Explorers, and unless they can drive the Hollow Men away, the outcasts are likely to be slain before the characters' very eyes.

If the Explorers agree to let the outcasts come on board, the outcasts emerge from their hiding place in a small, decrepit lighter, which is barely able to limp the short distance to the Explorers' ship and is visibly venting gases into space. Confronting the outcasts, the Explorers find a ragged bunch of grizzled void-farers, carrying a motley collection of wargear scavenged from the wrecks on the outer fringes of the Processional. Most notable about the group is the haunted expression in their eyes, a glimmer of something dark, as if each has seen such things as would drive most men to madness. In quiet tones, the outcasts explain about the descendents of Wrath's crew, and that they themselves

## HOLLOW MEN

No one appears to know exactly where, or how, the Hollow Men survive amongst the vast debris field of the Processional of the Damned. They are encountered near large space hulks and in the hollow interiors of massive asteroids, but they are seen operating any kind of spaceship. Instead, they wear large suits of battered, scrap-built exo-armour with jury-rigged thruster packs, making them loom larger than a man. They swarm over wrecks, as well as any living vessel they are able to catch, stripping it from the outside in. Once they get their claws into a disabled vessel, its crew are as good as dead, for they slowly peel back its armoured panels, strip its systems, and pierce its metal skin. It is almost as if the Hollow Men are unaware of the living within such vessels, for they ignore the crews so long as they do not attempt to stop them. Such crews are ultimately doomed, however—as their vessel is dismantled around them they soon suffer the cold embrace of the void.

The Hollow Men are extremely well armed and armoured, although all of their equipment serves as much as tools as weapons. Short-range fusion beamers are just as useful for dismantling a wreck as disabling an enemy. To date, none have seen what lurks within the exo-armour, for the wreckers' face panels are as black as the singularity at the heart of the Processional. According to legend, their suits disintegrate into dust and ash the instant the creature within perishes. Other tales suggest there is nothing inside the suits at all, other than a malicious incarnation of the evils of the Processional. Profiles for Hollow Men are on page 128.



represent a small, outcast, and hunted faction that can take no more of the Processional and desire to leave, at any cost. The outcasts are scattered throughout the system, each group subsiding as best it can whilst avoiding the Carrion and the other perils of the Processional. Each group is little more than an extended family grouping, and is vastly outnumbered by the Carrion. Within little more than a decade, the outcasts explain, they will be hunted to extinction.

There follows a chance to negotiate with the outcasts. They ask that their kin be picked up and safely transported to Footfall. In return, the outcasts are willing to serve on the Explorers' crew for two years and a day. A **Challenging (+0) Evaluate Test** reveals the outcasts are hardened fighters and appear trustworthy—employing them as a boarding crew or as armsmen would add a great deal to the Explorers' shipborne resources. Rescuing them may also boost a Rogue Trader's reputation as a proven individual in the Expanse.

### Rewards

- 50 Achievement Points for rescuing the outcasts.
- 25 Achievement Points for locating the Nexus.
- –25 Achievement Points for every Component the Hollow Men damage.

## OBJECTIVE 2:

### GATHERING THE OUTCASTS

#### Keywords: Exploration and/or Military

The few hundred or so outcasts wishing to leave the Processional are scattered throughout the system, in a number of groups living in the wrecks of a variety of dead spacecraft. Each group must be located and transferred to the Explorers' vessel. There is one group in each of the major regions of the Processional, and the Explorers face a different set of challenges in recovering each, as described below:

**Blight:** The second group of outcasts the Explorers must rescue are occupying a wrecked Sword-class frigate that is lodged deep within the twisting tunnels of Blight. Although the tunnels are in the main large enough to permit the passage of the Explorers' vessel, this is an extremely dangerous task that could go horribly wrong and result in the Explorers being marooned along with the Carrion. It is far safer to take a lighter into the hollow planetoid. Doing so requires actually

taking a void-walk (see page 76) through the micro-gravity and hard vacuum of the pitch black tunnels—and possibly running into prowling Hollow Men.

**Outer Sea of Space Hulks:** The Sea of Space Hulks is so thick with wrecks the Explorers must keep their turrets busy at all times, lest they suffer damage from drifting debris. The Sea also decreases the efficiency of the ship's augurs, requiring a **Difficult (–10) Scrutiny + Detection Test** (tried once an hour) to locate the group of outcasts dwelling in this area of the Processional. For every hour including the first that they remain in the Outer Sea of Space Hulks one Explorer can roll a Ballistic Skill Test with the ship's guns. Success means they keep the worst of the debris at bay. Failure indicates a sizable impact, inflicting 2d10+2 points of damage and ignoring void shields.

**Decay:** The next group of outcasts are stranded on a wreck drifting perilously close to Decay, the home of the Hollow Men. Detecting the wreck requires a **Hard (–20) Scrutiny+Detection Test** (which may be retried each hour). However, here the Explorers could be attacked at any moment. Each hour after the first, there is a 50% chance of attack by 4d10 Hollow Men. If the Explorers are still rescuing the outcasts, the Hollow Men attack the outcast's wreck. If they are on board the Explorers' vessel (or being brought on it), they attack that ship in the same manner as on page 92.

**Inner Sea of Space Hulks:** The Inner Sea marks the extent of the regions in which the Carrion make their homes, though here it is only on the very edges. This last small group

### ONGOING THREATS

Throughout the exploration of the Processional and the gathering of the outcasts, be sure to remind the players that this place is saturated with evil and dread. Describe the half-heard whispers at the edge of hearing, and the ghostly figures that flicker in the periphery of their vision. Have the Augurs constantly returning false signals, and just as the players get used to the tension, have something unexpected happen. Such events could range from a wreck drifting across the vessel's course as if thrown at them, necessitating a test to avoid damage, to another attack by the dreaded Hollow Men. The key is to maintain dynamic—the expectation that something really unpleasant is about to happen...any minute...now...

of outcasts is living on board an ancient space hulk dating back to the earliest days of the Imperium. So old is the vessel that the Explorers may well be tempted to tarry awhile and explore it for archeotech. The Inner Sea is also the location of the Processional Nexus, which appears to be drifting ever closer to the writhing darkness at the heart of the system. The Explorers now have to conduct the reading of the nexus, requiring the Navigator to suit up and make a void-walk (see page 76), whilst the last of the Outcasts are rescued.

If the Explorers have decided to investigate the ancient vessel housing the last group of outcasts, they find a number of interesting looking techno-relics to pocket and investigate later.

### Rewards

- 50 Achievement Points for each group of outcasts rescued.
- 75 Achievement Points for looting wrecked ships.
- -25 Achievement Points for every Component the Hollow Men damage.

### OBJECTIVE 3:

### ESCAPE WITH THEIR LIVES!

#### Keywords: Military

The last part of the Endeavour sounds simple, but may in fact prove the most hazardous. As the Explorers depart the Inner Sea, they pick up several ship returns moving towards them, powered vessels on an intercept course. The larger faction of the Carrion, which wants nothing to do with the Imperium or any other outside group, has finally caught up with the Explorers.

The main group of Carrion have at their disposal three vessels analogous to Wolfpack Raiders (see **ROGUE TRADER** page 209) as well as a dozen smaller gunships. These converge on the Explorers' vessel as the breakaway Carrion are coming aboard. The Explorers are forced to fight their way clear of the main group of Carrion and the debris field, and escape. Once the Explorers are clear of the Inner Sea, the Carrion continue to pursue them, taking every possible opportunity to ensure the outcasts do not escape. Run this last Objective as a series of **Scrutiny+Detection Tests** and **Manoeuvre+Piloting Tests**, representing a combination of cat-and-mouse pursuit and outright flight. The GM may also use any or all of the rules in this adventure for dealing with the danger of debris, especially if travelling at speed.

If the enemy attempts a boarding action the outcasts muster to the defence of the Explorers' vessel (adding +10 in the ensuing boarding action) as they bitterly fight their erstwhile kin.

### Rewards

- 75 Achievement Points for escaping the Processional.
- -50 Achievement Points if they escape the Processional and their ship has less than half its Hull Integrity remaining.

### OUTCOME

At last, the Explorers reach the warp portal and escape. The Carrion do not pursue the Explorers through what they call "the Damned Gateway," but are certainly prepared for any more

strangers attempting to use it to invade their accursed domain. The outcasts are most grateful to have escaped the hated place, and all too willing to pay the price agreed upon—they remain with the vessel for two years and a day. Their ship gains a +1 bonus to Crew Population for every group they rescue, and their fanatical loyalty to their saviours means the ship gains a permanent +1d5 bonus to Morale.

## CONCLUDING THE HEATHEN TRAIL

As stated at the beginning of the adventure, the GM should have determined beforehand how many readings his players must take to learn the location of the Dread Pearl. When the players have accomplished the predetermined number of readings, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As the last reading is completed, your minds fill with a reprise of the vision you beheld at Footfall, when you witnessed the Foretelling of the Seven Witches. Once more, the Dread Pearl is revealed to you, but this time, you know with utter certainty where it is and how it may be reached. The perfect gem that, to your mind's eye, represents that planet to which you must travel, is, even now, being unveiled as the storm that has long shrouded its perfect face abates.*

This concludes the Heathen Trail, and they now have the coordinates to the Dread Pearl. The time and place at which the Dread Pearl will be revealed is now clear to them and especially their Navigator, who has the location and ability to plot their trip through the warp. Proceed to the next adventure—The World Beyond.



### EXPERIENCE

With the adventure concluded, and the Explorers hopefully all in one piece the GM should award experience points based on their exploits. In addition to the standard rewards for surviving each play session (see page 292 in the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook) the GM can assign these additional rewards to each PC:

- For each Nexus Point successfully read: 100 xp.
- For every new alliance made with a Rival since the first adventure: 200 xp.
- For every alliance with a Rival established in the first adventure and preserved through the entire Heathen Trail: 50 xp.
- Each Rival defeated (though not necessarily destroyed): 200 xp.
- Establishing a new trade route from Zayth: 100 xp.
- Establishing a new trade route from Vaporius: 100 xp.



THE  
WORLD  
BEYOND

THE DREAD PEARL  
•  
PIERCING THE  
STORM  
•  
THE DREAD PEARL  
REVEALED  
•  
PARADISE FOR THE  
TAKING  
•  
WAR COMES TO  
PARADISE  
•  
AWARDS AND  
CONSEQUENCES  
•  
APPENDIX: NPCs



# THE WORLD BEYOND

*"The void has more secrets than man's imagination can conjure—each more terrifying than the last."*

—Samus Vyr, Lord-Captain of the *Tears of Terra*

The World Beyond is the third and final part of the Explorers' quest. Having crossed vast gulfs of the Koronus Expanse and faced the perils of the Heathen Stars, the Explorers now arrive at the fabled planet known only as the Dread Pearl.

As predicted at the beginning of the Explorers' adventures during the Foretelling of the Seven Witches, the Dread Pearl is to be found at the heart of a terrible warp storm that, even as the Explorers arrive, is lifting. But what they do not know is that the Dread Pearl is not some treasure planet littered with riches ripe for the picking, but an Eldar Maiden World, seeded aeons ago by that enigmatic race. Eldar Farseers long ago predicted the lifting of the storm, which engulfed the world at the moment of the fall of their race ten thousand years ago. Eldar sentinels have awaited the clearing of that storm.

Although the Eldar lost their paradise world to the warp storm so long ago, others have since come to occupy it. A human colony ship, sent out in the Imperium's distant past, was cast upon its shores, perhaps dragged off course by the currents of the very warp storm that isolated the world. Believing themselves to have reached a utopia promised in their sacred texts, the descendants of those original colonists claimed the world for their own, and have dwelled there ever since.

## TO CLAIM THE TREASURE

Upon arriving at the Dread Pearl, the Explorers find their competitors have not been idle. While some have pieced together the clues of the star chart and discovered its coordinates for themselves, others have fought or tricked their way across the Expanse to reach it. Regardless of how they arrived, every competitor believes the Dread Pearl and the riches it must surely harbour is theirs alone. Some might still be prepared to negotiate, others most certainly will not. Will the Explorers wait for the warp storm to fully lift, risking a confrontation with their rivals, or will they risk plunging through the raging energies even before they have fully receded?

Once they have made their planetfall, the Explorers find themselves on a paradise world, its vast oceans strewn with many thousand tropical islands. Just as prophesied by the Seven Witches, treasure is indeed to be found here, waiting only to be claimed.

Soon, the Explorers encounter the Sanctarchs—the descendants of those ancient colonists—who believe their world to be

some blessed afterlife, reward for the toils of their ancestors. How will the Explorers conduct this first contact? Will they make firm allies of the Sanctarchs, or will they bring strife and bloodshed?

Soon after the Explorers meet the Sanctarchs, the Eldar return to their Maiden World and claim it for themselves. The Explorers, their competitors and every human on the planet are issued an ultimatum—leave now, or die. Even as the ancient guardians of the Maiden World—long-inert Wraithguard construct-warriors—awaken, the skies boil and the warp storm returns. The Seven Witches predicted its lifting, but did they deliberately withhold the fact it was only temporary?

Faced with the mighty Farseer, hundreds of Wraithguard, potentially vengeful natives, and jealous rivals, it is all the Explorers can do to stay alive, yet alone escape. Amidst such devastation and chaos, can the Explorers turn events to their advantage and escape not only with their lives, but with a profit?

## USING THIS CHAPTER AS A STANDALONE ADVENTURE

The World Beyond the Warp represents the grand finale of *Lure of the Expanse*, taking the Explorers to their ultimate end on the fabled world known as the Dread Pearl. Though it does rely to some degree on elements from the two previous adventures, most notably the rivals seeking the Pearl, it can still be run as a standalone scenario. Ultimately, the Dread Pearl is a treasure world that can be placed anywhere in the void and protected by any means the GM chooses. Some potential ideas for finding the Dread Pearl could include:

**Treasure Map:** The easiest way for the Explorers to find the Pearl is to get their hands on an ancient chart or treasure map leading them to its location. How and why they receive such a thing is up to the GM, but such a valuable item should not come cheaply.

**Chance Encounter:** The Explorers could have a chance encounter in the void or the warp with either a well-travelled captain or an Eldar pirate. In exchange for goods or coin, or even the offer of a favour, the Explorers learn of the location of the Pearl.

**Eldar Ruins:** A single ruin or on a dead world visited by the Explorers could hold the Dread Pearl's secret.

Finally, the GM could either use some or all of the existing NPC Rogue Traders as competition for the Pearl—as laid out in this adventure—or insert his own adversaries chosen from his existing campaign or the background of the Expanse.

# THE DREAD PEARL

*"The Dread Pearl is a myth! Another lost damned world in a galaxy of lost damned worlds!"*

—Corbus, Footfall Dock-Scavenger

The world known as the Dread Pearl was once, many thousands of years ago, known as Lilae'Fionnadh. In a long distant age, the alien Eldar came to the world. Although at that time a bare, airless planet, Fionnadh's position amongst the firmament was found to be especially portentous, and the ancient xenos set about sculpting it to their needs and desires.

Through a process of geo-arcane psychic-engineering that lasted for eons, the Eldar slowly changed the planet, making it into a lush paradise one molecule at a time. The undertaking was not the crude, industrial, and ultimately destructive process humanity would one day inflict on the worlds it colonised, but one in which every grain of sand, every drop of water, every living cell whether plant or animal was slowly crafted to the ancient Eldar's vision for the galaxy, imbuing every living thing on the planet with their grace.

At the end of this noble undertaking, the world of Fionnadh awakened and came into its power, as if it were sentient and somehow one with the race that had created it. In many ways, the world and those Eldar who came to settle it were indeed as one. Even those as long-lived as the Eldar must in time die, but so attuned were they with their abode that their very spirits joined with that of Fionnadh, so that the ground itself was holy, the air blessed, and the oceans sacred.

Despite a birth lasting ages, Fionnadh's maturity was tragically short-lived, cut short as the Eldar's galaxy-spanning empire collapsed, consumed by its peoples' dark passions and destroyed during a terrible cataclysm known only as the Fall. Almost the entire Eldar race was obliterated in this apocalypse, and Fionnadh was not spared.

## THE FALL

On Fionnadh, the Eldar population suffered a grim fate. The Eldar had constructed a number of gateways, which passed through the dark halls of the warp and linked to similar gateways on other worlds, light-years distant—thus a traveller could pass between worlds in a single step. But now, at the very moment of the cataclysm, these gateways erupted with writhing energies, the raw stuff of the warp vomiting forth. Most Eldar of Fionnadh were slain in the resulting destruction, the lucky ones trapped within the soulstones scattered across the planet. The warp engulfed an area of space around the world, spilling out into realspace. Although its surface was protected by ancient wardings placed during its birth, Fionnadh was surrounded by a warp storm so tumultuous that surely none could ever penetrate it and discover the perfect world within.

## SILENCE

With its population gone and their settlements cast down and ruined, Fionnadh slowly recovered from the disaster. For millenia, the ground knew not the tread of sentient being. Slowly, the Eldar structures deteriorated and crumbled to the ground. Even those that had survived the devastating Fall and the subsequent passage of time became weathered and decayed, overtaken by the lush vegetation that swarmed across the islands of Fionnadh.

## STRANGERS COME

Then one day, a new star appeared in the jade skies. For the first time in an age, intelligent beings came to Fionnadh. These were not Eldar, but men, who in the early millennia of the Imperium had departed the world of their birth in a mighty colony vessel. Perhaps it became lost in the endless void and some serendipitous celestial phenomena cast the vessel upon the golden shores of Fionnadh. Perhaps the warp storm raging around the world somehow drew the generation ship there, sucking it in upon inexorable currents, to discharge it into the serenity lying at the very eye of the storm. Whatever the reason, the ship arrived, and became trapped in the storm.

Soon, these newcomers established themselves on the largest of Fionnadh's lush islands. They rejoiced in the world they discovered, for their holy texts had told them that one day paradise would be theirs, a reward for religious devotion. Here was that world, a place where sweet fruits hung from



trees and calm seas teemed with such life that a single catch could feed a family for a month. The air was warm and scented, the soil rich and fertile—clearly it was paradise.

In time, the colonists discovered traces of the former occupants of their new world. While many islands were entirely untouched, others were strewn with all manner of strange objects and dotted with ruins. Gems as large as fists were simply scattered amongst the undergrowth, waiting to be gathered up. They collected countless artefacts, all of which appeared to be made of some graceful, yet deceptively tough substance more akin to bone than any artificial material. Some of these objects were clearly tools, while others were obviously weapons. Most the colonists would never fathom a use for, yet many were gathered to be studied and in time cherished for their simple beauty, if nothing else.

Within a decade, the colonists lived amongst the ruins of the Eldar's settlements. They adorned themselves with the gemstones gathered from the lands, yet they knew not why the gems had been created or who had made them.

### PARADISE FOUND

Over the next generation, what technologies the colonists maintained throughout the ages failed and died. The loss of the ability to construct machines had little bearing, however, for the colonists had everything they needed within arms' reach. They found ample shelter within the shell-like ruins, and the seas and jungles teemed with fish and fruit. They had no need of vehicles, for they made their homes on the small islands that dotted the seas and could cross the calm, shallow waters in simple sailing craft.

Furthermore, the colonists noted that their life spans lengthened substantially while living on the island, more affirmation that this was the paradise promised. They cast off their Imperial technologies and, with time, only scattered remnants of regalia and clothing remained to remind them of their origins.

The colonists named themselves the Sanctarchs, and declared themselves the rightful heirs of this paradise, which must surely have been prepared for them by the Holy Emperor. Yet, they could not possibly have known that their arrival had been noted, even predicted, by the descendants of Fionnadh's true creators.

As their society recovered from the Fall, the Eldar cast their gaze into the void, and witnessed the spread of Mankind throughout their former realm. Across the entire galaxy, worlds seeded eons ago, Maiden Worlds intended one day as the homes of the Eldar, were being intruded upon by humanity, and other, equally barbaric races. Where they could, the remnants of the Eldar race took to the stars and challenged these intruders, driving many from the paradise worlds they attempted to claim. However, many worlds were beyond their reach—such as Fionnadh. The Farseers could see intruders walking upon Fionnadh's surface, and knew terrible sorrow that such a fate had come to pass, that their former jewel had been sullied. However, there was nothing they could do.

### The Long Watch

The Eldar are not rash, and seldom act without first considering every possible consequence of their deeds. Casting their runes and scrying the myriad strands of fate, the Farseers of Craftworld Kaelor determined that one day, the warp storm engulfing Fionnadh would abate, if only for a time.

As that day approached, Kaelor called on its agents scattered through the Expanse, as well as its allies amongst the Twilight Swords Corsairs. Redirected from other tasks, those Pathfinders and scouts who had infiltrated the worlds of the Expanse attempted to discover any who might know of the location of Fionnadh—and quickly learned of the Seven Witches of Footfall. Meanwhile, silent Corsair vessels patrolled the space-lanes, ready to pounce on would-be interlopers.

The Eldar prepared for the day when the warp storms would die—the day when they would descend on the desecrators and remove them from their sacred ground.

That day has now arrived.

## PIERCING THE STORM

After all of their travails crossing the Koronus Expanse, the Explorers finally emerge from the warp to see the warp storm holding the Dread Pearl in its terrible grasp. The Explorers view the following scene from the bridge of their vessel:

*Through the armoured vista-panels of your vessel's bridge, you see a raging storm before you, in the centre of which is the Dread Pearl. Your souls fill with longing to possess that which is now so nearly within reach, to tread upon the surface of that wonderful planet which until now you have witnessed only in your dreams. As your vessel draws nearer, the raging purple and violet energies begin to boil, and you see a spectacle few void-farers ever witness.*

*The storm's energies alter in their slow, churning dance, causing a shudder to run through your vessel. Phantasmal lightning flashes and stutters deep within the roiling clouds, which begin slowly to part even as you stare, dumbfounded. Amidst the raging tumult, a region of calm appears, at first small, but soon expanding outwards.*

*In that epicentre of stillness the light of a star begins to break through the storm. As you watch, the light glitters and grows in intensity, until it shines brightly through the rapidly fading, dissipating energies of the warp storm. The stellar system of the Dread Pearl appears before your eyes.*

The Explorers now see before them the planet known as the Dread Pearl. Before the etheric energies that once entrapped the planet can dissipate, a bridge-officer calls out a warning. The vessel's augurs have detected the presence of several ships rapidly closing on the Dread Pearl.



The Explorers have two choices. They can make for the Dread Pearl immediately, risking the perils of the warp energies that have yet to fully dissipate. Or, they can wait for the storm to fully recede. If they wait, however, the ships detected by the vessel's augurs will be upon them. As yet, the Explorers do not know the identity of the other vessels—are they the competitors? If so, are they allies, or rivals?

Impress upon the players that they do not have the luxury of time, and must decide upon a course of action before it is too late. Perhaps the best way to impart tension is by way of the Explorers' bridge crew asking for orders at regular intervals, interrupting any discussion the players are having on the matter. If they decide to risk approaching the planet before the warp storm has entirely dissipated, proceed to Running the Straits of Damnation, below. If they decide instead to delay their achieving orbit and face who or whatever is closing on their position, proceed instead to the next section—Battle of the Dread Pearl.

## RUNNING THE STRAITS OF DAMNATION

### Themes: Exploration

Penetrating a warp/realspace overlap, as such phenomena as warp storms are often classified, is a perilous undertaking, and one that requires the skills of both the ship's Navigator and its helmsman if any are to survive it. Both understand what is being asked of them, and no doubt wish to say a brief prayer that their souls might be spared from the

depths of the warp and the vile things that lurk within. The Explorers' Navigator knows, and can explain to those who do not, that taking the vessel into a warp storm is akin to conducting a warp translation without the protection of the ship's Gellar Field. The Gellar Field must be raised, and even then the ferocity of the warp storm may prove extremely dangerous.

The approach to the Dread Pearl precipitates a number of challenges, each of which the Explorers must overcome before they can achieve orbit. The GM can choose to inflict as many or as few of these encounters on his players as he feels is necessary to create a proper atmosphere of dramatic tensions.

### ARE YOU SURE, SIR? (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

What the Explorers are about to ask of their crew is something very few void-farers would willingly undertake. The crew is very disturbed at the thought of entering the warp storm, and even the bridge crew, loyal and professional men and women to a fault, appear edgy and disturbed. The Explorers need the crew's full cooperation if they are ever to reach the Dread Pearl, and must act fast to assuage any doubt and to quell any potential rebellion.

There are two ways of running this element of the approach to the Dread Pearl. The simple way is to have the ship's master make a **Difficult (-10) Command Test** to enforce his will over his crew. Have the Rogue Trader character make a brief, rallying address to his crew, to be repeated across the vox-net of the entire vessel. If the speech is especially rousing, then award a +10 bonus to the aforementioned test. If the test is passed, the crew's spirits are bolstered and they rally behind their masters. If he fails, reduce ship Morale by 20.

The second way to run this is to play out a confrontation between the Explorers and a member of the bridge crew who refuses to enter the warp storm. Start the situation off with the officer questioning the Rogue Trader's orders, and afford the Explorer plenty of opportunity to reason with or inspire the officer, or threaten him back to his station. Depending on how the situation develops, things might turn unpleasant. If the Explorers resort to violence, the officer defends himself, calling upon others amongst the bridge crew to join him. So long as the Rogue Trader makes an example of the officer by personally defeating him (which might just mean disarming or first blood) then the remainder of the bridge crew obey his commands without question. Acting in this fashion increases ship Morale by 1d5. If, however, the matter gets out of control and the Explorers are unable to deal with the situation promptly, word soon gets around that the ship's master cannot properly impose his will on his vessel or its crew. This reduces Morale by 10.

The Profile for the Mutinous Bridge Officers can be found on page 128 at the end of this adventure, in Appendix: NPCs.

## THE TOUCH OF THE WARP (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

As the Explorers' vessel plunges into the warp storm, the glowing jade orb of the Dread Pearl expanding in the forward vista-panels, a great coil made from the very stuff of the warp unfolds itself from the dissipating storm. In a moment, it sweeps around to intercept the ship. The coil resolves itself into a dread tentacle, glistening with warp-light, and reaches out across space as if grasping for the Explorers' vessel.

The helmsman must make a **Very Hard (-30) Pilot (Space craft) + Manoeuvrability Test** to avoid the massive appendage. If the appendage is not avoided, then the ship suffers 4d10 points of damage—ignoring shields—and the horrible warp-deaths of scores of crewmen on the lower decks further reduces the ship's Morale by 5.

## THE DAMNED UNLEASHED! (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Even as the last threat recedes, something even more terrible arises from the depths of the dissipating warp storm. A thousand alerts sound at once, and the proximity alarm klaxons wail their mournful dirge. The augur screams with contacts as uncounted sensor returns fill every data-slate.

Although unknown to the characters, the sensor returns are the ethereal spirit-projections of vessels long ago lost in the warp. The warp/realspace overlap of the receding warp storm is spewing out all manner of hellish phenomena, as if the crew of those damned vessels were struggling to escape the eternity of torment to which they have been condemned.

One of these ghostly ships is heading on collision course with the Explorers' vessel. Have one of the Explorers make a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny+Detection Test** using the ship's sensors to detect the danger amidst the hundreds of ghostly vessels. For passing, the Explorer notices that one of the ships is headed directly towards their own. For each degree of success the Explorer gains on this test, the helmsman may add +10 to his subsequent **Punishing (-50) Pilot (Space Craft) + Manoeuvrability Test**. Success means the pilot hauls on the ship's wheel and somehow brings the mighty vessel onto a new heading even as the other vessel fills the vista-panel and passes overhead, every crater on its scarred keel clearly visible.

If the test is failed, the players should be given every indication that the two vessels are about to collide. At the speeds the two ships are travelling, there is very little chance of surviving such an impact. Describe the other vessel filling the vista-panel as it bears down on the explorers' ship, and the curses and prayers that fill the air with equal passion. And then, the two vessels collide...

...and pass straight through one another! Everyone on the bridge must take an immediate **Horrifying (-20) Fear Test** as the bridge is fleetingly swarmed with the wailing spirits of lost void-farers. The captain must make a **Hard (-20) Command or Charm Test**, or the crew loses 1d5 Morale. In an instant, the ghost ship has passed and the Dread Pearl now fills the vista-panels.



### Rewards

- 50 Achievement Points for reaching the Dread Pearl
- -10 Achievement Points for every 5 points of Morale lost.

## THE BATTLE OF THE DREAD PEARL

If the Explorers decided to wait for the warp storm surrounding the Dread Pearl to fully lift before moving into orbit, they soon witness the arrival of their competitors. Exactly which of the competitors arrive depends on how each has fared throughout the first two adventures in the Lure of the Expanse arc. Some may have perished at the hands of the Explorers or other competitors, so their vessels are present only if you have decided that command has passed to a subordinate or been inherited by another member of the same House.

### A LAST CHANCE TO TALK

As the ships approach, the Explorers have one last chance to enter into negotiations. Whether or not their competitors want to go along with such suggestion depends very much on the individual in question. See pages 24-29 for some ideas of how the various competitors are likely to act. If the Explorers do not make an effort to bring about any alliances, then one or two of the competitors might attempt

## WHAT ARE THE ELДАР DOING?

The Eldar have waited for millennia for the dissipation of the storms that have held their lost Maiden World for so long. In fact, Eldar farseers predicted the moment the storm would lift many ages ago, and have been preparing for the event ever since. However, the Eldar of Kaelor and the Twilight Swords have other, vital business in the Koronus Expanse, and thus are unable to bring their full strength to bear.

As the storm lifts and the competitors race to claim the Dread Pearl, the Eldar look on bitterly. They haven't the forces immediately at hand to stop the humans reaching the surface and wreaking destruction. The Eldar are not idle, however, and even now powerful forces muster in the webway, making their way to the Maiden World. They will not arrive just yet, but when they do, the intruders will pay for their desecration, and they will pay dearly.

If the Explorers decide to keep a watch for the Eldar, they will have to spend some time scanning the outer reaches of the system, where the Eldar sentinel-vessels are lurking. Such an undertaking would take far more time than the Explorers have available to them, and doing it would mean the competitors would reach the Dread Pearl first. The only conceivable way the PCs might detect the presence of the Eldar would be for an Astropath-Transcendent to filter the aether for alien thoughts. This requires a **Very Hard (-30) Psyniscience Test**. Success will reveal the faintest of echoes, tainted by an underlying bitterness, but nothing more than a vague presence is discernible.

to do so, with or without the Explorers' involvement.

If the Explorers and the competitors do enter into some form of negotiation, they should not be afforded the luxury of time. Such negotiations are limited to ship-to-ship vox, as no one wants other groups to steal an advantage at this critical juncture.

## WAR IN SPACE

So long as the Explorers do not tarry overlong attempting to set up such alliances, they may still be able to move off towards the Dread Pearl before their rivals. Perhaps one of the most exciting possibilities here would be for the Explorers and their allies to act in concert against their foes, forming their vessels into a flotilla and engaging in a fleet action against them. The profiles of the ships belong to each competitor can be found beginning on page 135, and the GM can design an appropriate space combat scenario based on which competitors are alive and who is allied with whom.

Although this battle is by no means the climax of the race for the Dread Pearl, it should certainly be played up quite a lot. After all, there may be a substantial number of cruisers and escorts clashing against one another, and there is plenty of opportunity for drama and excitement. There is also a real chance some major NPCs will die. However, the GM should ensure the rivals act intelligently. Most likely break off the

engagement if they are too badly damaged, while some may bypass it altogether in an attempt to reach the planet first.

Another response to the arrival of the competitors might be to shoot first. Such a response inevitably makes negotiations moot, although any previously established alliances may be maintained. If the Explorers do find themselves outnumbered, there is the reasonable option to flee the battle and make a dash for the Dread Pearl. In fact, it is very possible that combat will be unbalanced in one way or another. If the Explorers are outmatched, running for the Dread Pearl and going on Silent Running to avoid detection is a perfectly valid response.

## Rewards

- 50 Achievement Points for every alliance made or maintained at this juncture.
- 25 Achievement Points for every enemy driven off temporarily.
- 100 Achievement Points for every enemy destroyed.
- -10 Achievement Points if forced to run for the Dread Pearl and flee the opposition.
- -75 Achievement Points if the Explorer's ship is crippled.



# THE DREAD PEARL REVEALED

*"No mere human could ever understand what this world means to us—their tiny minds only see forests to fell and mountains to mine—while we see its true worth..."*

—Amon Har, Captain of the *Shard of Dawn*

As the Explorers descend upon the Dread Pearl, they catch their first glimpse of its outstanding natural beauty. From orbit, the world is a shimmering blue jewel, just as was revealed to the witnesses of the Foretelling of the Seven Witches. Wispy and graceful clouds dance across the surface high above, forming patterns reminiscent of arcane runes across the orb of the Dread Pearl. Below the thin cloud layer the surface is dominated by a single world ocean, the light of its sun casting shimmering, dancing motes across the seas.

As the ship descends further, the Explorers make out thousands of tiny green islands, arranged, as if by the hand of a puissant artist, in gracefully-curved chains. Many of these islands are little more than a few metres across, while others are several dozen kilometres from end to end. Soon, more of the islands' features can be discerned. Each is wreathed in dense vegetation, and bordered by a bright halo of golden sand.

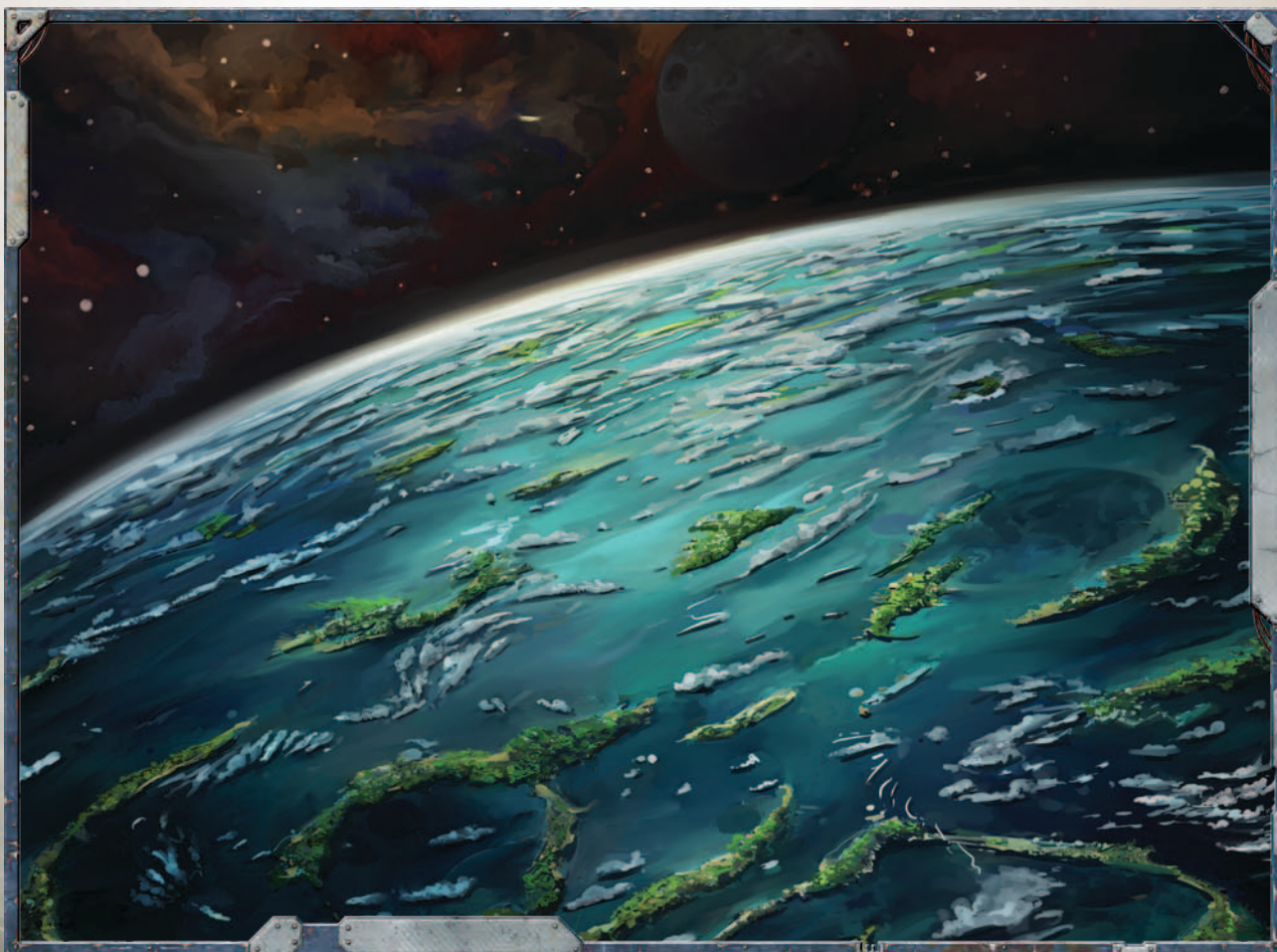
## THE SEAS OF FIONNADH

The azure waters of the Dread Pearl are teeming with all manner of sea life, from island-sized schools of shrimp-like creatures to mighty cetaceans that traverse the seas in stately processions. The oceans are home to a complex eco-system created by the ancients themselves, yet most of its inhabitants are utterly benign. Only on an Eldar Maiden World might one encounter an ocean almost entirely devoid of dangerous creatures.

The Sanctarchs ply the seas in small coracles made from the shimmering shells of sea creatures washed up on the golden beaches of their paradise islands. As these fishing boats need not travel far to reach the best waters, and the seas themselves are so calm, they need not be large. Explorers flying overhead might easily miss them. Explorers approaching within 500 metres of the surface can make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** to detect a Santarch coracle.

## THE POLES

The north and south poles possess modest icecaps. The Sanctarchs have never had reason to visit these cooler regions, although they are aware of their existence. As with many of the islands in the ocean, those trapped beneath the icecaps are host to a range of Eldar structures. Unlike the ruins in the more temperate regions, however, those below the ice are well preserved and would yield a fortune in Eldar gems and other relics to any who discovered and set about recovering them.



## THE MAIDEN ISLANDS

The vast majority of Fionnadh's paradise islands are empty of all but teeming flora and fauna. The Sanctarchs have only visited a tiny proportion of the countless thousands of small landmasses, and so they have little or no idea what riches might be hiding upon them. Even the ancient Eldar, who resided upon their Maiden World for many centuries (though to them it was only a single generation) never visited all of the islands of Fionnadh, and so most do not feature the ruined, wraithbone structures to be found elsewhere.

## RUINS OF THE ANCIENTS

Of the many thousands of islands scattered across the seas of Fionnadh, several hundred bear the ruins of the ancient and lost civilisation of the Eldar. On many such islands, these signs are not immediately obvious to explorers—overgrown structures jutting up from the rich soil or so wreathed in vines they are barely discernible from surrounding vegetation.

Other islands are home to larger structures. Although most have fallen into decay, here and there are to be found elegant statues of the Eldar gods rearing from the trees, walls covered in murals depicting Eldar history, and shrines and sanctums for Eldar Farseers. Other islands are home to all manner of ruined structures, most fallen. These range from statues to archways, and many other features of no discernible function.

## The Gateways

As with many Eldar worlds, Fionnadh is graced with a number of gateways, which allowed travellers to pass from one planet to the next in a single instant. By accessing the Eldar webway—the labyrinth that the race constructed through the other-realm of the warp—the Eldar could travel from one end of the galaxy to the other. However, when the fall of their race forced the Eldar to seal many such gateways, lest the terrible beings of the warp burst forth and devour them, as occurred on Fionnadh. In the case of many worlds, they were entirely devoured by the daemonic forces bursting forth, yet Fionnadh itself avoided becoming a world haunted by demons. The most likely explanation for this is that some agency of the Eldar (or perhaps of their gods) closed the gateways from another location, though it must surely have pained them greatly to abandon their brothers and sisters to their ghastly fate. Whatever the truth, the gateways remain sealed to this day, and stand inert and overgrown amongst the abundant flora of Fionnadh's islands.

## THE BLESSED ISLES

The Blessed Isles, or the Home Islands, are the islands populated by the human colonists. This chain stretches around five hundred kilometres near the equator, consisting of a few hundred small islands with a total population of less than half a million. Each island is home to small communities, each based around an extended family group, which is ostensibly led by a ruling matriarch or patriarch, or sometimes both. In the main, the population lives amongst the Eldar ruins. Each

extended family group farms its land for fruits and fishes the surrounding waters. There are few domesticated animals, and the Sanctarchs rely primarily on fishing, rather than hunting. What each family group does not need it trades with those on nearby islands for handicrafts, tools, and other items. Thus, a healthy, if rudimentary economy exists. However, in reality, each island could easily survive on what it has on hand.

The Sanctarchs build very few structures, and when they do, these tend to be temporary in nature and lightly constructed of a timber frame with roughly woven fabric forming awnings. When they do require shelter from the elements, the Sanctarchs do so amongst the Eldar ruins around which each of their island communities is based. Such ruins are the base from which the community operates, providing a busy and vibrant communal home, meeting place, and cooking and storage area.

## THE SANCTARCHS

The human population of Fionnadh call their world Solar Fides in reference to the ancient texts which promised their ancestors a paradise world as reward for their many lifetimes of toil. The Sanctarchs believe themselves the reincarnations of their forebears, who were cursed to live their lives over and over, until their toils were done and they were reborn, one last time, into paradise. The fact that their life spans have increased dramatically provides confirmation to the Sanctarchs that they are indeed in some form of afterlife, and sickness and death are rare things on the Maiden World. This is due to the effects of the Maiden World itself, which, down to a microscopic level, is designed to nurture and sustain life in all its forms. Natural death does still occur amongst the population, but only after many centuries of life. The Sanctarchs believe those who die are reborn once more into their paradisiacal world, the cycle continuing from one long-lived generation to the next.

In appearance, the humans of the Fionnadh are robust and healthy, for their lifestyle and the effects of their environment are highly conducive to physical and mental well-being. They dress in light robes derived of the natural materials surrounding them. Some of these garments are modelled in the guise of ancient Imperial clothing, others in simpler style. Most strikingly, the Sanctarchs ornament themselves with all manner of jewellery, each item to them no more than an attractive bauble, yet to an average citizen of the Imperium an entire treasury of riches. These jewels are simply gathered up from amongst the ruins left behind by the Eldar, and the Sanctarchs have no clue as their true origin.

Beyond the matriarchs and patriarchs that rule each island and the family group that dwells upon it, the Sanctarchs have need of very little in the way of centralised government. These rulers occasionally meet with their opposite numbers on nearby islands to discuss matters of trade or inter-family marriage. Every now and then, a larger council of family heads might be convened, but these tend to be on an ad hoc basis and it is very rare for there to be any emergency that must be discussed or problem that must be resolved. In truth, power resides in the family heads, and there has never been any real cause to question this arrangement. At least, that is, until the Explorers and their competitors arrive.



# PARADISE FOR THE TAKING

Once the Explorers have arrived safely upon the surface of the Dread Pearl, they have an opportunity to take in their surroundings and glean something of the nature of the paradise in which they find themselves. Were it not for the fact that so many others seek possession of the world, the Explorers would be able to explore it at their leisure, gathering riches and no doubt planning a life of such indolent luxury as to make a sector governor turn green with envy.

The next few pages cover the Explorers' initial time on the Dread Pearl. A number of locations near their landing place are described, as are a number of events that can take place. These are intended to communicate the character of the world, and although the GM need not play through them all, he should impress on the players the scale of the riches found.

As the Explorers discover more of the Dread Pearl, they begin to get some idea of its true nature. Even if the Explorers themselves do not recognise the planet as an Eldar Maiden World, it is quite probable that your players will. Keep in mind, such knowledge is uncommon in the Imperium, and it takes at least a **Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** to reveal any information about such worlds.

At some point, the Explorers will want to make a landing on one of the islands. Lacking any other information, they might choose one at random. If they spot any Eldar ruins or Sanctarch coracles or settlements on their approach, they will almost certainly choose to land on an island with one of those features. If not, it's likely they'll select their island based on convenience—the largest island they can find with the best landing zone for their shuttle. The villages of the Sanctarchs are fairly small, and set amongst large, tropical trees. They also have no evidence of modern technology, and can only be spotted from the air with an **Arduous (-40) Awareness Test**.

However they come to the surface of the Dread Pearl, once the Explorers have set foot upon its rich soil, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*After so long in the claustrophobic environs of your starship, breathing air recycled a thousand times and drinking water of dubious origins, you feel somehow released the instant you set foot upon the surface of this world you have known only as the Dread Pearl. Even those of you void-born, for whom the planets of the galaxy normally offer no more than squalor and stifling imprisonment feel somehow... different about this place.*

*The first thing that strikes you is the wondrous light. The skies are a delicate jade hue, with graceful clouds dancing high above. Looking around, you see that you are in the middle of a clearing amidst a light forest of the most sublime paradisiacal beauty. Trees that wave in a light, warm breeze are laden with fruit and the grass beneath your feet is as soft as down. Through the trees, you glimpse an azure sea, and gently rolling waves lapping at a beach of golden sands.*

*And then you take your first breath of the air. Never before have you smelled such heavenly scents. That breeze carries the gentle sounds of leaves swaying to and fro, of birds singing high above, of animals calling to one another.*

*Truly, here is paradise, and it is yours for the taking.*

The Explorers no doubt wish to familiarise themselves with their immediate surroundings. Describe the lush vegetation, the crystal-clear waters, and other incidental features as they explore. If the Explorers have set down near a Sanctarch settlement, refer to the "Meeting the Natives" section on page 110. Otherwise, the Explorers are exploring an uninhabited island. The following is a selection of treasures and encounters for the Explorers to find. Each is more significant and potentially valuable than the one before, so ideally, the GM should introduce them in the order they are presented here in order to contribute to a building sense of excitement.

## LOCATION-INDEPENDENT ENCOUNTERS

### Keywords: None

The following encounters can occur at any time on any island. Use them to refocus the Explorers on the mystery of the Dread Pearl and to reinforce the idea that there are precious treasures everywhere.

### THE FROZEN TEARS

Soon after setting off to explore their immediate environs, have one of the Explorers make a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test**. Success reveals that a small pebble stepped on a moment ago is in fact something more than a mere stone. A closer look reveals it to be a gemstone of some sort, obviously worked by the hand of a master craftsman into a sublime and perfectly-smooth tear shape. A **Routine (+10) Evaluate Test** reveals that the stone has great value and could fetch a good price amongst the nobles of the Calixis Sector. A **Very Hard (-30) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** suggests that the gem is of Eldar origin, while a **Hard (-20) Psyniscience Test** reveals that the stone has some form of psychic signature, a fact that should give the Explorers pause if they are tempted to trade the artefact in the Imperium openly. It is up to the GM to decide whether or not the gems that the Explorers find are actually spirit stones, and if they are spirit stones, whether or not they actually contain souls of long-dead Eldar.

More of the gemstones can be discovered, and no doubt having found one, the players want to go looking for more. A further five can be found in the immediate vicinity, two requiring **Challenging (+0) Awareness Tests** to locate, two requiring **Hard (-20) Awareness Tests** to find, and the last requiring a **Arduous (-40) Awareness Test** to uncover.

- If the players find at least three gemstones, they should receive 5 Achievement Points.

## RUNES

If the Explorers decide to explore the beach area, they find what appear to be delicate fronds of coral scattered all about. If any decide to investigate further, have them make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**. A success reveals a small object in amongst the glittering coral, which appears to have been made of a similar material. When examined, the object is found to be a small trinket carved, or perhaps somehow cultured, into the shape of an alien rune. No doubt the other Explorers immediately set about searching for other such items – three more may be found, but they require **Very Hard (-30) Awareness Tests** to locate amongst the coral fronds that litter the tide line.

Each rune counts as a Charm (see **ROGUE TRADER** page 139). In addition, if carried by a psyker, it also counts as a Psy-Focus (see **ROGUE TRADER** page 146).

## ANCIENT STATUE

As the PCs explore the forested island, they begin to find more hints of an ancient presence that resided there long ago. Each Explorer may make a **Hard (-30) Awareness Test** to notice that just beneath the rich, fertile soil (and jutting through in places) are scattered what at first appear to be stones of a white material, carved into all manner of graceful, curved shapes. Closer inspection reveals that the items are not naturally formed, but made by the hand of an intelligent and artful being.

Passing through the woods, the Explorers come across a small glade, the sun lancing down in almost-solid beams through the dense canopy above. The air here is still, untouched by the warm breeze that stirs the leaves in the trees elsewhere. As the Explorers' eyes become accustomed to the peaceful gloom, they see one of the beams of sunlight penetrating the canopy resting upon a tall form, perhaps a column, swathed in vines and other undergrowth.

On closer inspection, the column is in fact revealed to be a statue, made of the same white material as was found strewn about. If they clear the vines away, the Explorers discover that the statue depicts some form of goddess. The statue is too large for the Explorers to remove easily, though if they have the resources they may decide to order a servitor to

haul it off to their lander. A **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** identifies the god as the Eldar goddess Isha.

- If the players recover the statue, they should receive 5 Achievement Points.

## THE SACRED BLADE

As the Explorers examine the statue described above, have one make a **Very Hard (-30) Psyniscience Test**. A success indicates that there is something with a faint psychic signature very nearby. Following the psyker's inkling, the characters may search about, and a **Difficult (-10) Search Test** turns up an object lodged in the vegetation at the base of the statue after twenty minutes or so.

The object is a sword, obviously of Eldar manufacture. Should an Explorer lay hands upon the weapon, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The instant you lift the blade, you are filled with an overwhelming sadness. You sense the world around you responding to your presence, as if you are suddenly connected to a vast intelligence by your contact with the weapon.*

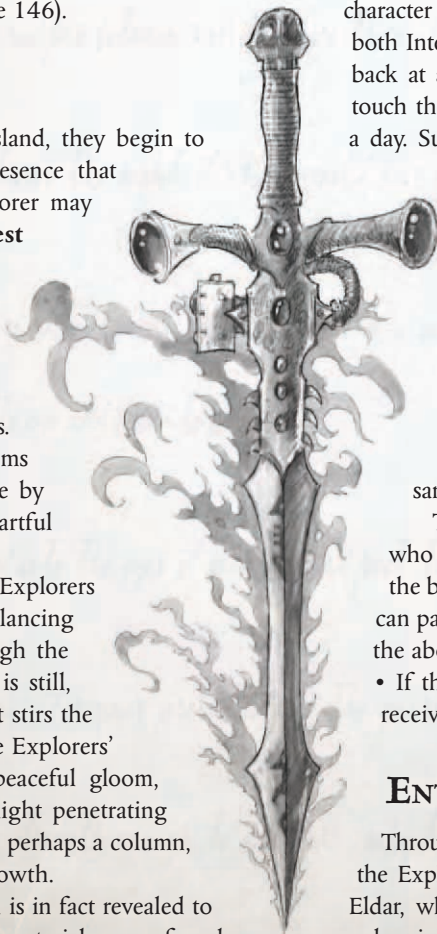
The Explorer lifting the blade must make an immediate **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. A failure results in the character taking 1d10 points of temporary damage to both Intelligence and Willpower (this damage will come back at a rate of 1 point per hour) and an inability to touch the blade (it brings great mental pain) for at least a day. Success, however, grants the Explorer a sense of kinship with the blade, allowing him to wield it in battle. This sword is a Witchblade (see page 132), though only functions as a best craftsmanship power sword (with a Pen of 0) unless the wielder is also a psyker. After a number of hours equal to his Willpower Bonus the wielder must make an additional Willpower test as above or take damage and be forced to drop the weapon. Any of other Explorers wishing to handle the blade must go through the same process.

The GM may at his discretion allow a character who is also a psyker become completely attuned to the blade (and thus wield it freely without tests) if he can pass three or more Willpower tests in a row using the above rules.

- If the players recover the Witchblade, they should receive 5 Achievement Points.

## ENTER THE PATHFINDERS

Throughout their efforts to find the Dread Pearl the Explorers have been under the watchful eye of the Eldar, who have been carefully tracking their moves and weighing up their worth. As part of this alien observation they have had Pathfinders, highly-skilled Eldar rangers and scouts, tracking their movements across the worlds of the Heathen Stars. Now, time has run out, and as the



storms part and the Explorers descend onto the Maiden World, so too have the Pathfinders come in their shadow to intervene.

Led by an unforgiving and bitter Eldar known as Athelorn-Kai, the Pathfinder group is only six strong. As a result they are not interested in open battle if they can avoid it, but rather in choosing an opportune moment to turn the tide against the humans defiling the Pearl.

Athelorn and his Pathfinders have been included to provide the GM with a wild card to influence encounters and tip the balance of combats. Using their exceptional skills at stealth and their long rifles, the Pathfinders typically strike from a distance, escaping before any trace of them can even be found. Their favoured tactic is to pick off stragglers or those already engaged in combat, leaving little evidence of their involvement and melting away into the forest. Particularly charming Explorers may (if they can make contact with the Pathfinders) make an alliance with them—if they can convince them the Explorers mean no harm to the Maiden World and can help protect it from the other Rogue Traders—even evacuate the human population. Of course it is up to the GM just what lengths they need to go to make this plan work, especially as it may have a significant effect on the outcome of the adventure. More likely, the Pathfinders follow the Explorers and their rivals, waiting until the time is right to strike, probably only making their presence known during the final confrontation as they work to protect their farseer from danger.

Finally, it is possible that Athelorn and some of the Pathfinders may survive the events of the Dread Pearl, escaping into the void or across the webway. If this is the case then at the GM's discretion, Athelorn could become a recurring ally or enemy (more likely the latter) appearing when the Explorers least expect it as their paths cross deep within the wilderness of the Expanse.

The profile for the Eldar Pathfinders is on page 131.

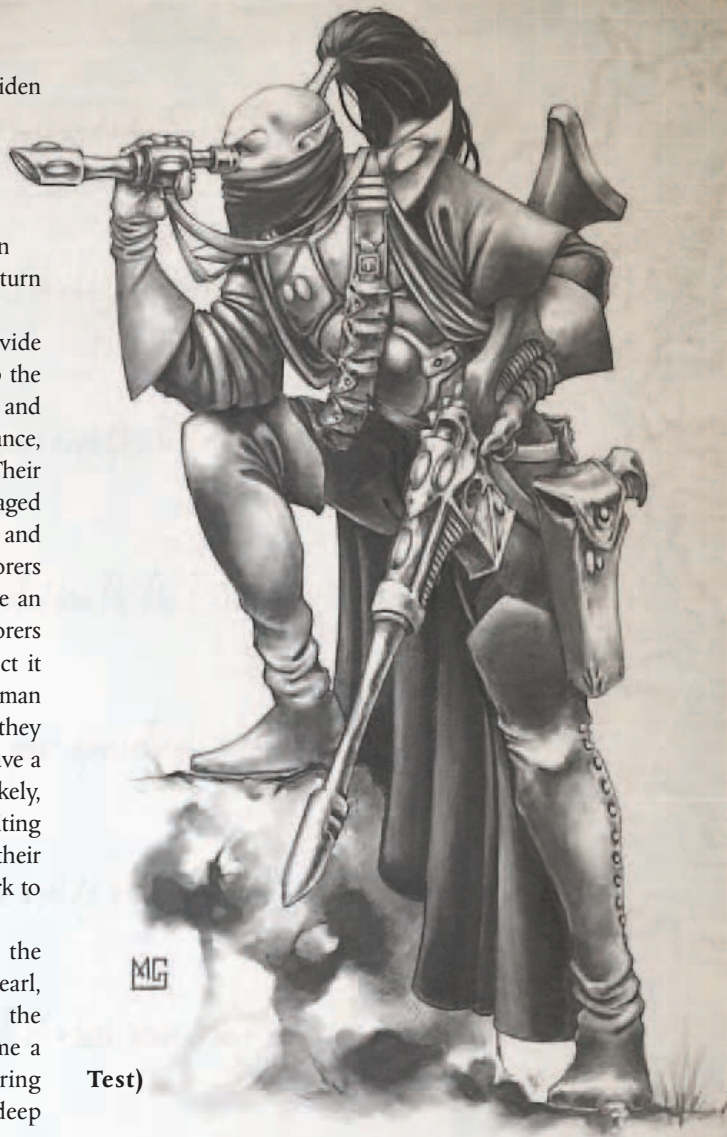
## LOCATION-BASED ENCOUNTERS

These encounters are based on particular locations on particular islands. Although they can happen practically anywhere, they represent locations the Explorers may want to return to over the course of their adventures on the planet. It's entirely likely that catching a glimpse of one of these locations from the sky is what inspires the Explorers to land on their chosen island in the first place.

### LANDING SITE

As the Explorers approach the islands in a shuttle, they find the most likely landing sites are the islands' beaches. The interiors of the islands are covered with lush, thick plant life, while the beaches are long, smooth expanses of white sand.

If the Explorers land on the beach, they find themselves in a tropical paradise, with low waves lapping against white sand, and wide-frond palm trees waving gently overhead. In the distance (requiring an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness**



Test)

the Explorers can just make out ruins in the depths of the forest. The landing site (or nearby) makes a good place to introduce the “Frozen Tears” or “Runes” encounters.

### OVERGROWN RUINS

Within a dense forested area, the Explorers encounter a large ruined structure of obviously Eldar construction. The similarity to the Temple of Farseeing back on Quppa-Psi-12 is unmistakable. As the Explorers continue, they come upon more of these structures. Many are in an advanced state of decay, vast segments having collapsed long ago. A **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** reveals several areas of damage, in the form of scorch marks and great, ragged tears. Again, the similarity to the damage displayed by the star map on Quppa-Psi-12 is obvious.

Soon, the Explorers come upon an even larger structure rearing from the forest (it may have been visible from aloft and the Explorers may have been headed towards it since they landed). This has survived in a better state than the ruins encountered so far, and it features vast, sail-like veins almost identical to those encountered in Quappa-Psi-12. On closer inspection, the gleaming white surfaces of these veins can be seen to be engraved with an incredibly fine pattern of graceful lines and sweeping curves. In amongst the patterns

## AN UNEXPECTED ALLY

At some point during their trek through the jungle, have each Explorer take a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**. Success indicates that someone or something is lurking nearby, hidden by the dense undergrowth and keeping its distance, but following them nonetheless. How the Explorers go about dealing with this problem is up to them—they might try to double back and ambush their mystery stalker, or they might go in all guns blazing.

If the Explorers take a less confrontational approach, they come upon a small, cat-like creature that a **Very Hard (-30) Scholastic Lore (Beasts) Test** identifies as a Gyrinx. The creature is initially quite standoffish, regarding the Explorers from a distance with a noticeable air of feline superiority. Should any of the Explorers attempt to approach the Gyrinx, have them make an **Opposed Charm Test** with it. Several Explorers may attempt this, but the first one that succeeds finds himself befriended by the creature.

If the Explorers went about determining the nature of their stalker in an aggressive manner, they have one chance to **Charm** the creature at a -20 penalty. Failure results in the Gyrinx disappearing into the undergrowth.

Should an Explorer befriend the Gyrinx, provide the player with its profile (page 127). The creature from now on makes every attempt to stay at his side, even when he would rather it didn't. Allow the player to control the Gyrinx as if it were his own character, but be sure to step in if you think the creature might react to any given situation in a manner the player may not want it to.

### THE GYRINX

A Gyrinx resembles a large cat, with very thick fur and bright blue eyes. They can grow to as much as a metre in length. Gyrinx are not intelligent as such, but they have an astounding ability to empathise with other creatures, forming a mental bond with their owner comparable to true friendship. This mental empathy is of great benefit to the creature's owner, whose own speed of thought and action are actually improved whilst the Gyrinx is in close proximity. What benefit the Gyrinx obtains from the relationship is unclear, but there is clearly some deep-seated need being fulfilled, because an ownerless Gyrinx will actively seek out and adopt some other creature. Oddly enough, Gyrinx show a slow metabolic change so that they come to resemble their owner physically, temperamentally, and in habit.

are a multitude of runes. A **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) Test** reveals these runes are somehow related to the positions of nearby star systems. Passing the test by one or more Degree of Success reveals that a number of the runes appear to relate to worlds not within the Koronus Expanse, but further away across the void. Passing the test by two Degrees of Success reveals that several of the worlds in question are located in the Calixis Sector. Passing the test by three or more Degrees of Success reveals one is likely the planet in the Calixis Sector known as Seedworld AFG:218. This may prove important during the adventure's climax.

## SEALED GATEWAY

This gateway may be located near or within the Overgrown Ruins described above, or may be somewhere else entirely. The structure takes the form of a graceful archway, around ten metres at its tallest point and studded with glittering gemstones. Each of these gems glows with an angry inner light, and any attempting to touch (or steal!) one must take a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. A success causes the Explorer to withdraw his hand at the last instant, suddenly knowing the folly of touching the gems. A failure means that the Explorer neglected to heed his own inner voice, and foolishly touched the stone. All who touch a stone must take an immediate **Frightening (-10) Fear Test** as they suddenly feel the presence of something very old, and they are not welcome to pass through the gateway.

The structure is a gateway, a portal constructed by the Eldar, through which one may pass from one world to the next by way of the Eldar webway. The gateway appears

inactive, and the players can clearly see through the archway to the surrounding environs. The gateway is actually warded and sealed, and has been this way since the Fall. Attempting to pass through it knocks the individual off his feet, and stuns him for 1d10 rounds.

## EXPLORING THE SEAS

Should the PCs decide to investigate the shallow waters surrounding the islands, perhaps as they cross one of the wraithbone bridges or sandbars linking them. A **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** reveals the presence of many small objects glittering on the seabed. Further investigation, involving wading into the shallows, reveals hundreds of tiny gems scattered amongst the golden sand. Further out, however, the Explorers may notice more tempting treasure. To reach it, though, the Explorers must use breathing gear, or be able to hold their breaths for extended periods. Rules for swimming and drowning can be found on pages 261 and 267 of **ROGUE TRADER**. It is up to the GM how many Eldar jewels they are able to recover, but it should be relative to how far out to sea they go and the risks they choose to take.

Remember that time is precious, and unless solving these sorts of problems is very appealing to the group, it risks becoming boring. This may be an ideal task for delegation to trusted crew.

- 25 Achievement Points if the Explorers (or crewmembers) devote at least several hours to recovering gems. If the Explorers delegate 50+ crewmembers to this task, they gain 50 Achievement Points, instead.

## A PORTENT IN THE HEAVENS

This brief encounter serves to remind the Explorers they do not have the luxury of unlimited time, and may occur when the GM feels it is best. Read aloud or paraphrase the following sight:

*As you travel through the lush forest, you notice that the wildlife, so strident in its song throughout your exploration, has gone suddenly silent. You cannot help but strain your ears and turn your head to the skies. A bass growl becomes audible, rising in pitch and volume to an unbearable roar. A vessel streaks through the skies above you, its hull still aglow with the heat of atmospheric entry. Behind it, the ship leaves a black contrail that cuts the serene sky in two and churns the graceful clouds. In an instant, the vessel is gone, over the horizon and far beyond sight.*

*The vessel could only have belonged to one of your competitors; a reminder, if it were needed, that others would claim for themselves the treasures of this world.*

As always, the GM should keep track of what the competitors are doing, even if the players have no idea. See page 113 for more information about what actions the competitors took on arriving to the Dread Pearl.

## THE WRAITHBONE ARMY

As the Explorers journey through the Eldar ruins, they find dozens of what appear to be iconic statues. Many have been destroyed or buried by the ages, but there are caches of these particular statues scattered all across the planet. The Explorers should find at least

### EVIDENCE OF THE SANCTARCHS

As the PCs' explorations continue, they should start to find the odd hint that the Eldar are not the only sentient race to have come to the planet. Although they will not meet any of the natives just yet, it will pay to foreshadow their presence with the occasional clue. This also serves to keep the players on their toes, as a little paranoia in an Explorer is often the difference between life and death. Perhaps the best way to go about this is to require the Explorers to take a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** every now and then, varying the difficulty as you deem appropriate. This has the added effect that the players will no doubt assume that you are checking to see whether they notice hidden treasures lying about, and the GM could punctuate genuine tests to find such artefacts with others intended to notice signs of the natives. Some of the giveaways of the Sanctarchs' presence on the world might be:

- The smoke from a cooking fire glimpsed rising from a distant island.
- Signs of a long abandoned camp.
- Something that could be a sail, far out to sea.
- A discarded, long-decayed item of clothing.
- Footprints in the sand.

one of these caches during their journey to properly foreshadow the roles the Wraithguard play in the adventure later.

The Wraithguard storage facility does not resemble any armoury or munitorium familiar to any Imperial citizen. The Explorers can be easily forgiven for mistaking it for a temple or museum of some kind. Their first encounter with the statues is likely to be outside the facility proper, perhaps encountering a matched pair of statues almost completely occluded by vines, standing a millennia-long vigil outside the facility's front gates. If the Explorers pass a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** as they approach the "statues," read or paraphrase the following:

*As you pass between what you first assume are a pair of stunted trees, a glint of pale stone—or something like stone—catches your eye. Peering closely, you find that the "trees" are in fact a matched set of some sort of xenos statue. The graceful curves and bone-white material of the statues is similar to the ruins you have encountered thus far, and you guess that these are a representation of some sort of xenos warrior. It appears to be wearing a helm that obscures its face entirely and bears a gracefully curving, fluted crest.*

*Both figures are almost entirely obscured by creeping vines and other flora, and it is difficult to make out any further details.*

As the Explorers press on into the facility, they encounter more and more of the "statues" beneath graceful arches in an outdoor gallery, and then several rooms featuring nothing more than eight alcoves, six of which contain dormant Wraithguard and two of which contain the entrances to the room. The facility may include other treasures, such as an Eldar communication device of some kind, but most items of interest have been destroyed by either time or the Fall.

The Wraithguard have stood, inactive, for long millennia, placed there perhaps in the last few days before the Fall of the Eldar as a hoped-for defence. They have waited ever since to be activated and to march off to war against those who would defile the sacred ground of Fionnadh. Though the players have no way of knowing this, many of the Eldar who died in the cataclysm that befell Fionnadh had their souls trapped in the spirit stones placed on the Wraithguard, instead of devoured by the warp. The Eldar did not intend this, and whether it was simple luck, an after-effect of the psychic shockwave generated by the Fall, or even some incomprehensible mechanism of the world itself, no-one knows. In any case, without direction or guidance from a Farseer or Warlock, the spirits have slumbered within these massive constructs, unaware of the outside world, for more than ten thousand years. These Wraithguard have never stirred from their millenniums-long vigil.

Bear in mind that, in all likelihood, the Explorers have no way of knowing what a Wraithguard is, even if the players do. Do not name the warriors, but describe them instead and refer to them as "mighty warrior-statues" or the like. If you think it possible that one or more of the Explorers might have some valid claim at having a chance of identifying the warriors then allow them to make an **Arduous (–40) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. A pass reveals the basic details, including the highly relevant fact that the statuesque forms are animated by the spirits of long-dead Eldar heroes. Passing the test by one Degree of Success cause the Explorers to recall the name of the

## ELDAR WRAITHGUARD

To the Eldar, death does not guarantee respite from war. With the guidance of a Seer, it is possible for an Eldar spirit to flow into a spirit-stone put aside for that purpose. Such a spirit-stone can then be placed within the robotic body of a wraith-construct, imbuing its artificial form with a living intellect. Though this process is abhorrent to the Eldar, none can deny that the resultant combination of fierce warrior spirit and impervious host body is a major weapon in the Eldar arsenal.

The predominant type of ghost warrior is the Wraithguard. These are entirely constructed from the resilient psychoplastic wraithbone, and tower above lesser beings. They have the same exquisite design and flowing organic shapes common to all Eldar constructs. However, these wraith-constructs contrast sharply with their living counterparts, for the vitality and alacrity of the Eldar is absent. Instead the Wraithguard stride purposely forward with the inevitability of death, the sepulchral silence of their advance punctuated only by the sound of reality itself being torn asunder by their wraithcannon.

Too heavy for a normal Eldar to carry, the wraithcannon allows a Wraithguard to focus a portion of its psychic power upon a fixed point. This incredible weapon can then open a rift between warp space and the material universe at that location for a split second. If this rift is opened within an enemy, the results range from catastrophic trauma to full bodily displacement into the depths of the warp. It is best not to dwell on the fate of such unfortunate individuals.

The Profile for Wraithguard and their terrifying wraithcannons can be found on page 132.

warriors (confirming to the players, who probably do know what the warriors are, that their suspicions are correct), which you may use to refer to them from that point onwards.

What happens next is up to your players. A few possibilities you should be prepared for are discussed below. Ensure you are clear on what the PCs intend to do, because their actions here might have an impact on later events.

**Loot ‘em!:** If your players are the types that look for profit at every opportunity (they are Rogue Traders, so that’s fine) then they may well try to loot the Wraithguard of anything that appears valuable. Likely targets are the spirit-stones mounted on the chest of each Wraithguard, as well as the weapons they carry. Removing the spirit-stones takes a lot of time—at least an hour for each Wraithguard, and rushing or forcing the issue results only in the stone shattering. If this happens, have the Gyrinx (if it is present) flatten its ears, hiss loudly, and retreat to a safe distance. This should hopefully convince the Explorers that interfering with the spirit-stones is a bad idea. Removing the Wraithguards’ weapons is harder still, for they are held in a vice-like grip that has not relaxed in many thousands of years. Again, it would take the Explorers several hours and specialised equipment to remove

the weapons—time, and most likely equipment, they do not have. Ironically, moving the Wraithguard themselves is probably the easiest solution. Although heavy, the Wraithguard can be borne by a team of servitors or a larger team of crewmen to a suitable transport vehicle.

**Smash ‘em!:** More canny players might harbour the suspicion that the Wraithguard are likely to present a danger, if not now, then certainly at some point in the not too distant future. They are absolutely correct, but don’t let it on. Some players might want to sabotage the Wraithguard, so they cannot activate later on. Bear in mind that there are scores of the warriors in the vicinity, and perhaps more nearby, but if the players really want to attempt this course of action then they may do so. Sustained weapons-fire or powerful blows from close combat weapons eventually shatter a Wraithguard, though the process is time consuming. Especially unsubtle Explorers might even be tempted to call in an orbital fire mission from their vessel high in orbit. If this does happen (and shame on the players for taking such a crude option!) then you should allow them to believe they have successfully destroyed all of the Wraithguard. They haven’t of course, but they can dream.



If the Explorers thoroughly destroy all the Wraithguard at this location, they have bought themselves only time. There are so many Wraithguard, scattered so widely across the planet, that it is outright impossible for the Rogue Traders visiting the planet to do more than put a dent in their numbers even if they work together. But the Explorers should receive some reward for their caution, such as weaker initial waves of Wraithguard if they remain in the same general vicinity of the planet during the finale.

## MEETING THE NATIVES

When you feel the Explorers have explored enough, it is time to introduce them to the Sanctarchs. There are quite a few ways in which the two groups might encounter one another, and lots of potential outcomes to that first contact. Here are a few ways in which the two groups might come together:

- If the Explorers make a lot of noise, they eventually draw notice to themselves. At first it may just be a group of fishermen keeping an eye on the Explorers from a distance, while runners are dispatched to inform the Sanctarchs' leaders of the Explorers' presence. Initially, the first Sanctarchs to see the Explorers keep their distance, deliberately hiding. After about thirty minutes, the Sanctarch delegation (see below) arrives.
- If the PCs act destructively at any time during their exploration of the islands, especially with regard to the Wraithbone Army, they are noticed almost immediately. In this case, the Sanctarch delegation appears soon after.
- If the Explorers suspect the presence of humans on the planet, especially having noted the signs as discussed on page 108, they may decide to go looking for the natives themselves. In this case, so long as they are subtle enough, allow them to encounter a lone fisherman working the reefs. If they approach this individual, he makes a run for it, and if they capture him, another fisherman witnesses this and make off to summon the Sanctarch delegation.
- Lastly, it is possible that the Explorers might display such prodigious tracking skills that they are able to stalk any native they discover for some time. One way to handle this would be to allow the Explorers to follow the native back to his home community. If they approach the village, the Sanctarchs hastily assemble to greet them.

## WHERE AND WHEN?

There are two possible locations the Explorers might encounter the Sanctarch leaders. The first is out amongst the islands they are exploring, should the delegation have cause to come to them. In this case, run the first contact encounter wherever the Explorers happen to be at the time. The second is amongst the Home Islands, although this is only really likely to happen if the Explorers manage to track a native back there. In this case, use the description of the Blessed Islands given on page 103.

## THE SANCTARCH DELEGATION

However and wherever it comes about,

when the Explorers and the Sanctarch rulers finally meet, the natives approach openly and boldly, in a group consisting of two rulers (a matriarch and a patriarch) attended by around two dozen villagers. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Walking in stately procession towards you is a group of humans, a man and a woman of noble bearing at their head. As seasoned explorers, you note several things in an instant. The members of the group bear no technological weapons, although many are carrying a variety of spears and tridents intended, by their appearance, more for fishing than for combat. The second thing you notice is that the members of the group are accoutred in primitive garb—the two at the head of the column in artfully woven and shimmering robes of deep green fabric (vaguely reminiscent of Imperial uniforms) and the remainder in little more than loin cloths, all of it made from the same fine material. As the group approaches still closer, you note the flashing and glittering of multihued light, and see that each individual wears a staggering variety of gemstones, affixed to limbs and hanging about their necks by simple thongs of twisted vine.*

*As they approach, the group halts. Silence descends. The two nobles, a man and a woman of indeterminate years yet of obviously noble cast, regard you calmly. The attendants behind the nobles look upon you with expressions ranging from curiosity to fear.*

Before any sort of interaction can begin, determine the Sanctarchs' disposition towards the Explorers. This depends on a number of factors, not least of which is how the Explorers comported themselves when they first set foot on the planet. If they have behaved badly, they may now pay the price. As the Explorers need to use their Charm skills to affect this, use the following range of dispositions to describe how the Sanctarchs feel about the Explorers: Infatuated, Affectionate, Favourable, Indifferent, Disdainful, Contemptful, and Disgusted.

The starting disposition is "Indifferent." In order to discover the actual disposition consider a number of points, and modify the starting disposition, up or down, accordingly.

Each of the factors below has a modifier attached. This modifies the disposition by one "level." For example, modifying "Indifferent" by +1 results in a disposition of "Favourable," while modifying it by -1 provides "Disdainful." Each modifier is cumulative, so all of the factors given below should be taken into account to arrive at the final disposition.

-1: If the Explorers befriended (or were befriended by) the Gyrixx (see page 107) then the Sanctarchs are less well disposed towards them. No Sanctarch has ever become friends with one of the creatures, harbouring as they do a superstitious dislike for them probably inherited from their forebears.

-1: If the Explorer group contains one or more Missionaries, and they speak openly about their faith, then the Sanctarchs become unsettled. This is because the Sanctarchs believe that they have already entered paradise, and dimly-recalled signs of a faith that predates this state (from stories passed down by ancestors) cause them some disquiet. The Sanctarchs, do, however, wear certain icons such as Aquilas, as a tradition. They believe that to wear such symbols is to honour the sacrifices of their ancestors.



–1: Any overt show of force goes against the Explorers. This includes being accompanied by large numbers of heavily armed retainers. If the Explorers are accompanied by a great many such followers, then impose a –1 modifier for every 10 retainers.

–1: Any mention of the galaxy beyond the planet may cause great upset amongst the Sanctarchs. Always bear in mind that they believe themselves to have entered paradise. Therefore, as far as they know the rest of Humanity simply never made it.

+1: If the Explorers have gathered any of the gemstones and runes encountered when they first landed, and if these are visible, then they see the Explorers as having ‘made an effort to fit in.’ The gems are nothing more than pretty baubles to the Sanctarchs, but the sight of strangers wearing them makes them feel more at ease.

+1: If the Explorers offer the Sanctarchs any form of gift, they may become far better disposed towards their visitors. Note, however, that although the Sanctarchs are aware of technology, they believe it irrelevant to their current existence. Although they will not reject, for example, a data-slate, such a gift will not improve the Sanctarchs’ disposition. Instead, they value brightly coloured and finely wrought objects, regardless of their function or material value.

+1: Speaking in High Gothic impresses the Sanctarch’s rulers, as they regard it as their sacred tongue. Hearing the language spoken by strangers serve to confirm to the natives that the Explorers are ‘entitled’ to join them in paradise.

**Variable:** The best way the Explorers can earn the Sanctarchs’ favour is to offer a really good explanation as to who they are and what they are doing on their world. This is really

down to the players’ imaginations, and should be roleplayed to the hilt. Offer the players some hints into the Sanctarchs’ beliefs, by way of conversation, and allow them to use these as a basis for their explanation. This provides a positive or negative modifier as the GM feels appropriate.

Once the GM has the Sanctarchs’ disposition worked out, the players can use social Skills to improve it. This should not be a matter of simple dice rolling, and the GM should apply any modifiers for good roleplaying he thinks appropriate.

What the Explorers are seeking to gain from this encounter is up to them. The Sanctarchs are simply looking to discover who the Explorers are, and what they want. The players might take the encounter in any number of directions, from opening trade negotiations to demanding ever-lasting fealty, depending on their particular style. How the Sanctarchs act or react depends on their disposition:

**Infatuated:** The Sanctarch rulers embrace the Explorers as equals, gifting them with finely crafted jewellery from about their own persons. The rulers happily discuss trade or other mutually beneficial arrangements, and make little effort to gain advantage—they’re just happy to talk! The villagers shower the Explorers with gifts, stuffing their pockets and pouches with a small fortune in gems and artefacts. Romantic interest in one of the Explorers (the one with the highest Fellowship for example) may be displayed by one of the rulers.

**Affectionate:** The rulers present each Explorer with a gift, in the form of an item of their own jewellery. They are happy to enter into trade or other negotiations. The villagers crowd



## LANGUAGE OF THE SANCTARCHS

Although the Sanctarchs have been separated from the bulk of Humanity for countless generations, the language they speak does in fact have something in common with that spoken by the Explorers, making communication possible. The rulers of the Sanctarchs speak High Gothic, yet to them, this is a hieratic tongue, passed down through generations of rulers throughout their people's long voyage across the stars. The common people speak a debased dialect of Low Gothic, one that evolved over the centuries and now bears only the slightest of similarities to its source. Thus, the Explorers will find it a simple enough matter to communicate with the Sanctarchs' leaders, but may have some difficulty making themselves understood by the rest of the natives.

about, offering gifts of food and drink to each Explorer.

**Favourable:** The rulers are polite and relaxed in the Explorers' presence, and order dishes of food to be set before each. They are willing to enter into trade negotiations. Having served refreshments, the villagers seat themselves in a wide semi-circle and regard the Explorers with benign interest.

**Indifferent:** The Sanctarchs prove willing to talk on matters of trade, but do not appear especially welcoming. The villagers maintain their distance.

**Disdainful:** The conversation is stilted and awkward, with the rulers appearing distinctly haughty and sullen. Those villagers nearest the Explorers remain on guard, with weapons raised as if distrustful of the strangers' intentions.

**Contemptful:** The rulers are not interested in any sort of negotiations and one more wrong word or gesture results in them firmly requesting that the Explorers leave. Any aggressive words or actions are met with the armed villagers interjecting themselves between the Explorers and the rulers.

**Disgusted:** The rulers demand that the Explorers leave, and walk away. The encounter hovers on the cusp of violence, bloodshed but one miscalculated word or hastily-drawn weapon away.

The Profile for the Sanctarchs is on page 129.

### Rewards

- 20 Achievement Points for each level above Indifferent the Explorers reach in their relationship with the natives.
- -10 Achievement Points for each level below Indifferent the Explorers reach in their relationship with the natives.

# TO PARADISE

*"Indigenous natives, you say? Run out the forward batteries, Commander Mieland, and let's show them how the Imperial Navy negotiates."*

—Lord-Admiral Bastille

Whatever the result of the first contact with the Sanctarchs, war comes the Maiden World of Fionnadh. As the meeting with the delegation draws to a conclusion (whatever that conclusion might be), the Explorers' competitors take a hand in matters. Some desire to take the world by force, while others may still form or adhere to alliances.

Below are described the actions of each of the competitors. The GM should feel free to change or expand on any of these. Also bear in mind that some of the competitors may have been slain in previous encounters and should therefore be ignored, or the actions should be carried out by a successor.

What began as an opportunity to seize the prize of the Dread Pearl is rapidly turning into a deadly situation. As chaos erupts all around them, the Explorers are faced with the problem of rescuing what profits they can. The GM should allow the players to react, using the descriptions below as a guide, before moving on to introduce the Eldar in the next chapter.

## HADARAK FEL



# WAR COMES

Ever since he first set foot upon the surface, Hadarak Fel has been aware that taking possession of the Dread Pearl would not be a simple affair. Having discovered something of the world's origins, however, Fel has decided that it is worth fighting for. To that end, he landed his company of household troops, and upon encountering the Sanctarchs, entered into a protracted negotiation with the world's natives. Fel informed the Sanctarchs that their world stood upon the brink of destruction at the hands of enslavers, murderers, and liars. He went on to describe how he came to save them, and only by accepting his authority would they survive the coming war.

Initially, the Sanctarchs were skeptical of Fel's claims, until they saw the actions of some of the other strangers that had come to their world. Even now, those Sanctarch rulers Fel convinced to join him are gathering others to his cause, forming a small army and spreading Fel's influence all the wider.

Once Fel gathers what he regards as sufficient numbers of Sanctarch to his banner, he intends to lead them against any that stand in the way of his possession of the Dread Pearl. Then, he intends to set himself up as the Sanctarch's ruler, and profit immensely from the riches they lay before him.

## JEREMIAH BLITZ

The notorious rogue that he is, upon encountering the Sanctarchs, Jeremiah Blitz immediately set about swindling them for everything he could get his hands on. Blitz knew that he would need to divest the natives of as much of their riches as he possibly could in what he knew would be the very short period of time before things got out of control between the competitors. In fact, he has already filled several landers with gems and artefacts. Jeremiah's instinct for trouble proved correct as soon as the actions of the competitors began to become clear. Blitz plans to transport as many loads to his vessel as he can, leaving only when the fighting erupts.

Blitz is accompanied by a band of equally-unscrupulous scoundrels. His vessel waits in orbit, and Blitz intends to return to it and to leave the Dread Pearl at the first opportunity. As events unfold, Jeremiah might change his intentions, perhaps aiding the Explorers if they can appeal to his combined (and highly developed) sense of profit and self-preservation.

## ABEL GERRIT

When Abel first arrived on the surface he soon discovered the Sanctarchs and set about expounding to them the glories of the Imperium and the advantages in becoming subjects of the Emperor (the Sanctarchs having forgotten their distant origins as Imperial subjects). Although well-intentioned, Gerrit's words served not to inspire the Sanctarchs, but to enrage them. Upon being informed that their world represented not the eternal afterlife they believed it to be, but instead just one planet amongst many, the Sanctarchs turned on Gerrit and his landing party, and he barely escaped with his life.

Now, Abel Gerrit has regrouped, on an island not far from the one on which the Explorers are holding their own talks with the Sanctarchs. When the intentions of the other competitors become clear, Abel seeks to contact the Explorers and suggest that they join forces to turn the situation to the mutual advantage of both parties. Not a hasty man, Abel has ordered his vessel to stand off for the time being, and to await further developments.

## MADAM CHARLABELLE

Charlabelle made planetfall in the midst of the Maiden Islands, some distance from the area so far explored by the Explorers. She immediately found a large complex of ruins and set about plundering it as quickly as possible. Charlabelle believes she has struck it rich, and has loaded her shuttle with all manner of Eldar artefacts that she intends to ship back to the Calixis Sector in an effort to restore her family's ailing fortunes. Unfortunately for Charlabelle, the area she has been looting is in the midst of another of the Wraithbone Armies (see page 108). While war erupts across the Blessed Islands, Madam Charlabelle remains ignorant of the nature of the statues surrounding her.

When the truth is revealed (in the next chapter), Madam Charlabelle issues a plea for help on all vox frequencies. Whether or not the Explorers choose to come to her aid is up to them, as they may have their hands full dealing with other matters.

## LADY SUN LEE

Lady Sun Lee has extensive experience in dealing with natives ignorant of the truths of the wider galaxy. Upon encountering the Sanctarchs, she quickly understood the basic tenets of their beliefs, and set about turning their dogma to her advantage. So adept is Sun Lee at this ruse, several hundred Sanctarchs now believe her to be the creator of their world, returned from a million-year battle against the forces of darkness. Even now, her new disciples are spreading the word that a deity walks amongst them.

The Lady hopes to turn sufficient numbers of the Sanctarchs to her cause that they will support her against her competitors and allow her to exploit the planet's riches without even realising they are doing so. Sun Lee did not account for the sheer barbarity of her competitors however, several whom resorted to hostilities the instant they arrived.

The Explorers find that the Lady Sun Lee is open to offers of an alliance, if the two factions are not already working together. The only thing she will not compromise on during negotiations is her perceived status amongst those Sanctarchs she has contacted. Any who contradict the Lady in this matter invokes her immediate ire.

Accompanying Sun Lee at all times is a retinue of the Ma'Kao Household Guard. These resolute warriors are equipped with powerful hellguns and heavy carapace armour, and form an impenetrable wall around their mistress which the Explorers will only be able to pass through if explicitly invited. Use the Rogue Trader Household Troops on page 129, replacing their armour and weapons with Hellguns and Storm Trooper Carapace Armour.

## DJANKO SCOURGE

Having found a world not only strewn with riches beyond imagining, but also home to a native population, Djanko Scourge immediately set about landing troops in order to take control and claim the world for himself. Even as the Explorers were facing the Sanctarch delegation, Scourge's troops were landing in their heavy barges. The force made planetfall some fifty kilometres to the south of the Explorers' current position, and set about subjugating the first natives they met.

As his troops set about the brutal task of demonstrating to the Sanctarchs just how futile any sort of resistance would be, Djanko himself was looking out upon an island chain he had already named Djanko's Landing. As more of his troops land, Djanko dreams of the conquests to come, thoroughly relishing what he imagines will be the subjugation of an entire world.

## LORD-ADMIRAL BASTILLE

Bastille uses the prodigious firepower of his flagship to open fire on those major population centres he can detect from orbit. He is following fairly standard and therefore unimaginative Imperial Navy "gunship diplomacy" protocols for dealing with such situations. When faced with a primitive population in possession of a highly desirable world, the textbook calls for an overwhelming demonstration of the awesome destruction even a single Imperial Navy vessel

can bring to bear. Usual practice is to spare the largest population centres (which may be home to the leadership, whose surrender will be accepted later on) and flatten a large number of secondary conurbations. Then, troops can be dispatched at the commander's leisure.

As soon as the Lord-Admiral begins his orbital bombardment, the Explorers become aware of his actions. The skies are suddenly filled with the black contrails of rapidly-falling ordinance. A dozen islands nearby erupt in fireballs as the bombardment pounds the surface. Bastille's escort also joins in the bombardment, transfixing ruins with terrible lance fire.

How the Sanctarchs react to this at least partly depends on their disposition towards the Explorers. The villagers flee for cover, wailing in terror, but the rulers look to the Explorers. If they are ill-disposed towards the Explorers they immediately blame them, accusing the Explorers of bringing destruction to their world. They may order the villagers to attack the PCs or to attempt to apprehend them, in which case it is quite likely that a bloodbath with ensue unless the Explorers can rapidly bring the situation under control.

Bastille's bombardment continues for some time, providing a suitably apocalyptic backdrop to events, until the next chapter moves things along.

## KRAWKIN FECKWARD

Having made planetfall on the Dread Pearl, it took Feckward no time at all to discover the natives. Soon after, he landed one of his mighty slave-barges and began filling its hold with stunned captives whose entire world had just fallen to pieces.

Feckward's slaver-troops pass from one island to the next, gathering captives in the bellies of massive, tracked transport-cages. These slave-transport and their accompanying troops are now closing in on the island where the Explorers are located, fully intent upon enslaving the occupants. Regardless of any alliance or understanding he may have made with any of the competitors, they slay any who would interfere with their master's ambitions.

Feckward's vessel remains in orbit overhead, ready to receive the slave barges as they ferry their captives to its waiting pens. Feckward himself is on the surface, tallying the riches to be made from this world and its peoples.

## THE SENTINELS RETURN

As chaos and destruction reigns all around, the Eldar finally make their move. The GM should allow the Explorers to play out their confrontations or interactions with their competitors. However, these confrontations should take place near a particularly large ruin, a vast wraithbone platform not dissimilar to the top of the Temple of Farseeing. This location should be part of the backdrop of whatever climactic scene is occurring. Then, at the most dramatic possible moment, read aloud or paraphrase the following:



*Even as the islands are consumed in explosions, the jade skies above turn suddenly dark. The gentle clouds slowly boil away, and a livid, churning scar appears across the heavens. A great wailing goes up from the natives, and friend and foe alike pause, regarding the scene in horror.*

*The jade sky slowly transforms to an angry violet, boiling with unnatural energies. Lightning arcs from the firmament, grounding itself with a blinding flash upon the ruins of an alien structure nearby. The air becomes charged, the hairs upon the back of your neck prickling as witchfire races and flickers across the structure's form. The energies appear to coalesce in the centre of the ruin, gathering into a fiercely-raging light almost too bright to look upon.*

*From the midst of the raging witch fires, a figure steps forth. At first, the energies are so bright all you can see is a tall, slender silhouette, robes dancing in an ethereal wind. As the light dims, the figure speaks, not with mortal voice, but straight into your minds.*

*"This place, this world, is ours. You—who would despoil all you touch and bring ruin upon us all—have no place here."*

*At these words, the Sanctarchs fall to their knees and wail. Even you, who have seen so many of the horrors the galaxy has to offer, know a terrible dread deep within. The figure continues.*

*"Your actions prove you will not change your ways; you will not make amends. Yet even now, we will offer you one chance.*

*"Look to the heavens, and see what power we hold. This world was lost to us for an age, locked within the raging storm. For an age, we waited for it to lift. Now, as we reclaim our birthright—we recall the storm. Better you are expelled, even though this world be lost to us for another aeon, than you be allowed to enact your wickedness here!"*

*As you look to the skies, you can see the muddled purple roiling of the warp storm on the horizon, like a bank of storm clouds in the distance. Even as you watch, it draws ever closer.*

*"You shall quit this place. All of you. Or you shall be slaughtered, and your bones be entombed at the centre of the storm for all eternity!"*

*With that, the figure raises its arms to the heavens and is engulfed in a raging storm of witchfire. From the figure's hands leap great arcs of ethereal lightning, branching into a thousand strands of light and streaking into the islands all about. Working its hands in mystic gestures, the figure manipulates energies, and soon a new sound is heard.*

*From every direction comes the tread of a thousand wraithbone feet, girded to action for the first time in an eternity.*

The Explorers now find themselves in a dire predicament. Atop the nearby wraithbone plinth stands an Eldar Farseer of prodigious power, while the natives panic and flee in all directions. Their rivals may also be nearby, intent on slaying the Explorers, one another, or the natives. To make things worse, hundreds of Eldar Wraithguard, called forth by the Farseer's powers, are closing on the Explorers, intent upon expelling the humans whose presence has polluted the Maiden World for so long.

The Farseer is controlling the Wraithguard, having woken the spirit stones set within each. He is also using witchfire to protect himself (much as the Warlocks in Eye of the Needle did) so his minions may complete their task. A nimbus of eldritch fire surrounds the Farseer on his pedestal, an all to

familiar sight for the Explorers. The pedestal is at one end of a jungle clearing, with a beach at the other end. The pedestal is two metres high, and completely exposed.

## THE WRAITHBONE ARMY

The Wraithguard, now roused to action by the spirit of the Farseer, emerge first from the trees, in small groups, and make to attack the humans. Initially, the Wraithguard only attack in modest numbers, but unless the Explorers can conceive of a plan to deal with them, more and more will converge on them. Soon, Wraithguard begin emerging from the sea itself, having crossed the shallow waters between islands in answer to the Farseer's call to arms. In addition to the menace from the Wraithguard any surviving Pathfinders may also be lurking nearby to complicate matters and protect the Farseer.

The Explorers are presented with three options. The first is to fight, an option which is ultimately doomed to failure because there are simply too many Wraithguard to stand against—as one falls, another emerges from the trees entangled in vines, or rises from the sea draped in seaweed. They may also flee, following the Farseer's instructions and heading back to their landers. Finally, they can slay the Farseer and end his control over the implacable Wraithbone constructs. Any Explorer can make a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** to determine the Farseer is guiding and directing the Wraithguard, and slaying him may stop or slow the constructs' assault.

The witchfire swirling around the Farseer impedes any

## ELDAR FARSEERS

Eldar farseers are masters of prediction, and are the eldest and most experienced of advisors. Even in battle, they can perform their divinations, casting the complex wraithbone runes of the Eldar and interpreting changes in the glowing icons as they orbit around their bodies. In this way, the Farseers explore the myriad skeins of past and future, studying the manifold consequences of the smallest decision to guide their people to victory.

Just as the Farseers guide the fate of the Eldar, so they guide their armies in times of war. A Farseer can uncover the enemy's intentions, calculate the likely effects of his clumsy attacks, and guide him to his doom. The Farseer himself fights with a grace that makes the enemy seem predictable and slow, flowing around blasts of fire without breaking stride. So powerful is a Farseer that he can obliterate an enemy's mind or hurl a battle tank into the air. In the crucible of battle, Farseers shape the future with the skill of a master craftsman. Their tools are the warriors they lead—in this case, the Wraithguard—and their clay the flesh of those who would defile the Maiden World of Fionnadh.

Farseer Serrenon arrived on Fionnadh unaware of the Wraithguard army that slumbered within its temples. Now he intends to use it to drive the interlopers off-world, then bring the Wraithguard's spirit stones back to Craftworld Kaelor to have them join the craftworld's infinity circuit.



attacks by the Explorers as its eldritch energies turn aside bolt shells, and push back those trying to pass through it. In addition, the Farseer attacks those that venture too close. The witchfire has the following effects that will persist until the Farseer is defeated.

Passing through the witchfire to move within melee range of the Farseer requires a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. Every round an Explorer is in melee with the Farseer, he suffers 1d10 damage. This damage is reduced by the Explorer's Willpower Bonus in the same manner as regular damage is reduced by Toughness Bonus, but ignores armour.

Shooting at the Farseer through the fire is also difficult and all ranged attacks against him suffer a -30 to hit. Navigators also suffer a -30 when rolling to use any power against a Warlock protected by witchfire—the psychic light of the fire blinding their third eye. In addition, the witchfire amplifies the dangers of the warp. Add +20 to all rolls on the Psychic Phenomena Table made during this battle.

Unlike the Warlocks in Chapter I, the Farseer actively fights even while surrounded by the witchfire. The Farseer begins combat with three Wraithguard approaching from opposite the pedestal he is currently standing atop (the jungle near the shoreline). There are also two Pathfinders hidden near the Farseer's location. They focus their shots on anyone approaching the Farseer. Besides the Farseer's considerable powers, he is also able to summon additional nearby Wraithguard to fight with him. To do so he must spend a half-action and make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower**

**Test**. Success means one Wraithguard appears from a random direction. If the Farseer is engaged in melee combat, the Test is **Hard (-20)** instead.

The Profile for the Eldar Farseer is on page 131. A map of the battlefield is on page 142.

## THE SANCTARCHS

The situation is complicated even further by the actions of the Sanctarchs. Depending on how successful the Explorers were in the first contact described on page 110, the natives' reactions might range from pleading for help, to turning on them in anger. Use the following to determine how the Sanctarchs react, referring back to the Disposition settled upon at the conclusion of the first contact:

**Infatuated:** The Sanctarchs throw themselves at the Wraithguard and the Farseer, even though to do so is to die. Dozens are slain before the Explorers can even shout a warning, but the natives fight on regardless. Even the rulers fight to the death to save the PCs, begging the Explorers to leave while they still have the chance.

**Affectionate:** The bulk of the natives form a circle around the Explorers, insisting that they carry the rulers to safety while they buy time for the escape, with their lives if necessary.

**Favourable:** The rulers implore the Explorers to take them and their people with them, promising them whatever payment they accept in return, while others attempt to hold the Wraithguard at bay.

**Indifferent:** The natives form a protective circle around their rulers, but raise no hand to aid the Explorers. They fight to protect their leaders, even if they die in the process.

**Disdainful:** The Sanctarchs fight primarily to defend themselves, but take any opportunity to attack the Explorers they get.

**Contemptful:** While the villagers form a circle around their leaders and the Explorers, the rulers challenge the PCs to single combat. The villagers fight to the death to allow their revered matriarchs and patriarchs the opportunity to avenge the destruction brought down upon their world.

**Disgusted:** The Sanctarchs turn on the Explorers, blaming them exclusively for bringing doom upon their world. The leaders attempt to engage the Explorers in combat, determined to see them dead before they themselves fall.

## THE COMPETITORS

The other thing to consider throughout the chaos of this scene is just what the competitors are doing. This largely depends on their interactions with the Explorers and with each other up to this point, as well as the character of the competitor in question. The following summarises the actions of each competitor, if they are present. Obviously the GM may need to adjust these reactions if they contradict any interactions that have presented themselves throughout the adventure. Furthermore, there is no need to use every single one of these encounters, only those that the GM thinks are most appropriate.

**Hadarak Fel:** Fel arrives at the head of a small army of around a hundred of those Sanctarchs he has convinced to follow him. These may be convinced to join with the Explorers if they are fighting beside the Sanctarchs they first met, turning on Fel if the Explorers can make an Opposed Charm Test against Fel. Fel will not stick around if the Wraithguard start slaughtering large numbers of islanders—although no coward, Fel is a businessman first, and an ideologue second. Instead, he returns to the island on which his shuttle landed, and make good his escape before the storm makes it impossible to do so.

**Jeremiah Blitz:** Even as the Wraithguard attack, Jeremiah Blitz and his cronies are making his way back to his shuttles, each heavily laden with looted Eldar artefacts. The group's return journey takes it past the unfolding scene, and the Explorers have an opportunity to engage Blitz one last time before he makes good the escape he has planned from the moment he arrived on the Dread Pearl. If the Explorers choose not to do so, Blitz will be gone, his shuttles passing overhead as they return to orbit.

**Abel Gerrit:** The Maiden Isle to which Abel had retreated after his first contact with the Sanctarchs collapsed turned out to be the resting place of several hundred Wraithguard. Having fought their way clear, Abel appears at some point during the PCs' battle with the Wraithguard and the Farseer, along with a dozen or so of his household troops. Being a noble fellow, Abel fights side by side with the Explorers, but he will also seek to escape by whatever means they come up with, as his own shuttle is now lost to him.

**Madam Charlabelle:** Having loaded her three landers with looted artefacts and dispatched them to orbit, Madam Charlabelle was awaiting its return when the forests all around her exploded into chaos. The ruins she had been looting were home to several hundred Wraithguard, who even now are pursuing her towards the Explorers. Her retainers have already sold their lives in a series of valiant rearguard actions, and Charlabelle herself is the only survivor of her party. She appears on the scene, fleeing from her implacable pursuers. Whether or not the Explorers choose to aid her is up to them, but if they do not she will in all likelihood join forces with another of the competitors, who will aid her. She will also bear a considerable grudge towards the Explorers if she is abandoned in this manner.

**Lady Sun Lee:** The Lady Sun Lee appears at the height of the battle against the Wraithguard, ordering her Household Guard and her Sanctarch followers to form a line against the advancing Wraithguard. This allows the Explorers the time they need to confront the Farseer, if that is what they plan to do.

**Djanko Scourge:** The now self-proclaimed Lord of the Dread Pearl, Scourge is fighting a losing battle against the uncounted Wraithguards that have appeared all over the islands. Enraged that any should challenge his right to possess this new world, Scourge ordered his troops to repel these unknown enemies. Unfortunately for him, Djanko's troops have been massacred and he himself has only narrowly managed to avoid death. It might be entertaining to have Djanko Scourge arrive on the scene and confront the Explorers, accusing them of bringing ruin to "his" planet. Scourge seeks to escape should things get too heated, and his vessel is equipped with a teleportarium, making this possible. However, while the Farseer is still alive and active, the energies raging about him preclude any teleporters gaining a lock on their targets, and so Scourge cannot escape until the Farseer is dead.

**Lord-Admiral Bastille the Seventh:** While the Explorers face the Wraithguard, Lord-Admiral Bastille is making good his escape in his heavy lander. He soon reaches his flagship, and once there will manoeuvre to a safe distance in order to take stock of the situation. This means that he is unlikely to make a personal appearance during the fight against the Wraithguard, but might spring an ambush on the Explorers if or when they eventually reach their vessel and attempt to get clear of the storm.

**Krawkin Feckward:** As the Wraithguards awoke, those Sanctarchs that Feckward enslaved rose against him, taking advantage of the chaos to overwhelm their oppressors. Though many were slaughtered in the ensuing battle, many more of the slavers were killed, and Feckward himself is now attempting to escape. If Feckward appears at the scene, it is likely that some of the Sanctarchs recognise him for the callous slaver he is, and, even in the midst of the chaos, take the opportunity to exact their revenge. Feckward appeals to the Explorers to aid him, and whether or not they choose to do so is entirely up them. If the Explorers do not intervene, Krawkin Feckward is likely to be torn apart by the mob, or if the GM prefers, to escape, perhaps to make a reappearance at a future date.



## THE FARSEER SLAIN

Once the Farseer is slain or otherwise incapacitated, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Throughout the battle against the alien, more and more of the implacable warrior-constructs converged on the scene. All around you is chaos, as vengeful Sanctarchs throw themselves at their enemies even though to do so is to die. But, as the xenos seer dies, the statuesque warriors falter, their movements becoming sluggish and uncoordinated. They cease their implacable, remorseless advance and stand their ground, and though they stubbornly attack those who stray too close, they seem not to notice anyone who is far away.*

*Yet, there is no time to rejoice, for even as the raging energies that protected the alien dissipate into the structure on which it had stood, the storm overhead reaches a deafening crescendo. The very stuff of the warp closes off the sky with roiling clouds surrounding the planet. If you are to escape, it had better be now...*

## THE STORM RETURNS

Only once the Farseer has been defeated, the Explorers can make their escape. The warp storm has now almost entirely returned, and will very soon engulf the world completely. The GM should impress upon the players that if the Explorers do not escape right now, they will be trapped upon the Dread Pearl for the rest of their lives.

There are a number of possible courses of action the Explorers might take to escape.

### FLYING OUT

If the Explorers' lander is nearby, they may be able to reach it in time and fly through the rapidly encroaching storm. With the tendrils of the warp reaching out to embrace the planet, this is a perilous course of action.

Have the Explorer controlling the shuttle make an **Ordinary (+10) Pilot (Space Craft) Test**. For every degree of Success, they gain three kilometres of altitude. If they reach twelve kilometres, they push into the stratosphere and almost out of the planet's grasp and should jump to Cloud Combat below. If they don't reach this height, their engines begin to labour and they need to deal with them, as detailed in Engine Failure.

### Engine Failure

As the Explorers leave, the lander's engines seem to be struggling against the storm and look close to failing. Repairing them requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-use Test** along with tearing out part of the shuttle walls and generally creating chaos in the crew compartment. Before the repairs begin, the engines fail completely, and the lander begins to plummet to the ocean below. The Explorers may attempt a **Hard (-20) Tech-use Test** to repair the engines. Failure meaning the lander drops one kilometre down. Provided the lander does not crash, the Explorers may attempt the Test again, with the same results. A **Hard (-20) Pilot (Space Craft) Test** allows the lander to glide awkwardly, negating the altitude loss from one failed test.

Fixing the engines requires another piloting test as detailed in Flying Out, adding any altitude gained to the lander's current altitude. Crashing means the lander is completely wrecked, and the Explorers each suffer 2d10 Impact damage ignoring armour. Provided they survive, they have to find another way off the planet.

### Cloud Combat

To complicate matters, once they reach the upper atmosphere and are plunging through the edges of the storm they are attacked by an Eldar interceptor, which begins raking their lander with Shuriken Cannon fire. Outgunned and outmanoeuvred (the GM should be clear that the Eldar interceptor is far superior to them even if they are piloting an armed vessel such as a guncutter) there are only a couple of options available to them if they wish to escape:

**Hide in the Clouds:** The easiest way to avoid the interceptor is to hide in the clouds. This requires a contested **Pilot (Space Craft) Test** from one of the Explorers with the Eldar pilot's Perception (50). If they fail, they come under attack again, otherwise they lose the interceptor in the clouds.

**Superior Flying:** Another way to lose the interceptor is to out-fly and evade it. This should be represented with a contested **Pilot (Space Craft) Test** between the piloting Explorer and the Eldar (whose skill is 50). Three or more degrees of success are needed to permanently shake the interceptor, and if the Eldar pilot wins the test, he's able to fire on the lander. This damage should be kept abstract, though the GM should describe shuriken rounds hacking apart wings and perforating the hull. In general, if the interceptor is able to fire on the lander four or more times, the lander is forced to crash (see Engine Failure).

Should none of the Explorers come up with these strategies the GM can allow the Explorers to make an **Ordinary (+10) Logic Test** or a **Routine (+20) Pilot (Space Craft) Test** to think of the above tactics. Alternatively the GM may allow the Explorers to come up with something else, such as psychically attacking the Eldar pilot (WP 40) or dumping some of their promethium fuel and igniting it to create a flame cloud (requiring both a **Hard (-20) Pilot Test** and a **Hard (-20) Tech-use Test** to time the valves).

However they proceed, if they can shake the interceptor they will be able to make orbit. Once the Explorers have escaped the warp storm, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*With a suddenness as violent as the heaviest of the warp storm's turbulence, your lander ploughs through the last vestige of its grasp and you are once more in open space. Your vessel is closing rapidly on your position, and the sight of a yawning shuttle bay never looked so welcoming. Behind you, the warp storm closes around the Dread Pearl, isolating it for another ten thousand years.*

## Using the Gateway

This is an option that may not at first occur to the Explorers, and it is really a course of last resort. However, it is also the only way of rescuing large numbers of the Sanctarchs. If the Explorers find themselves agonising over saving the natives, then a **Difficult (-10) Logic Test** can be used to suggest this to them.

Unlike before, the gateway is now plainly active. Within the wraithbone archway seethes a vortex of swirling light. In addition, the Explorers see several Eldar Pathfinders fleeing through the portal, while a number of Wraithguard equal to half the Explorer's party size guard their retreat.

The Wraithguard are clearly remaining behind on the planet, and the Explorers must shoot their way through if they want to use the portal. The Explorers may be able to run past the constructs and enter the portal without engaging them. However, if they have any number of Sanctarchs with them, they need to defeat the Wraithguard if they want to evacuate the villagers.

If the Explorers show some reluctance about entering the portal, the Gyrinx (if it has joined them) watches them for a moment. Then it calmly walks to the portal, and steps through it, vanishing. If the Explorers follow its lead, read or paraphrase the following:

*Taking a deep breath and shielding your eyes from the blinding light of the energies that dance and swirl before you, you step into the mystic gateway. For an instant, your senses expand, as if stretched impossibly to touch every corner of the galaxy. Your next step feels as if it is upon soft, yielding earth. Before your vision can clear, you collapse to what feels like a bed of soft vegetation, and darkness consumes you...*

## TELEPORTING OUT

Another possible avenue of escape is to use a teleportarium, should the Explorers' vessel be equipped with one. Only once the Farseer has been killed or otherwise put out of action is it possible for the teleportarium crews to gain a lock on the Explorers, although even then, this is a dangerous course of action.

To complete the teleport have one of the Explorers make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-use Test** with the following modifiers:

- -10 Every 20 people (such as natives) transported.
- -10 Every 100kg of loot.
- +20 There is an Explorator to oversee things.
- +10 Five minutes can be spent properly adjusting coordinates.

The GM can allow characters with the Tech-use skill to make a **Challenging (+0) Logic Test** to think of any of the above conditions if they do not think of them themselves.

With the storm closing in, there is still time for several teleports (potentially allowing the Explorers to get the natives off-world), however the GM should come up with a fast limit as to how many the Explorers can attempt. If the Explorers spend too much time teleporting loot (or natives) they may miss the opportunity to teleport themselves. If it is failed however they need to find another way off the planet. As an option, if the test fails, the GM can have some of the subjects teleported to the vessel—potentially suffering damage—while others remain stranded behind. He should not be too harsh, however, as this is the closing scene of the adventure and teleportation mishap (though common) is an ignominious way to die...

If the Explorers successfully teleport away, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*For an instant, your world is pain and raging atoms, before the blessed sight of your vessel's teleportarium resolves itself before you. You race for the bridge, but already your watch-officer has brought your vessel about and is making best speed away from the raging warp storm. The augurs report that the vessels of your competitors are likewise hastening away—if you could not claim the Dread Pearl, well at least neither could they...*



## PLUCKING RICHES FROM THE CLAWS OF DESTRUCTION

Some Explorers look for any opportunity to turn a profit, perhaps grabbing whatever artefacts they can as they rush for their shuttle. If it occurs to the players to do so, then use the following to give them a chance of grabbing some last-minute mementoes. Any Explorer can make a **Hard (-20) Search Test** to see if they find something of value in the ruins. They may try as many times as they wish, however each time past the first will impose a -10 on subsequent Piloting tests (see Flying Out on page 118) or Tech-Use test (see Teleporting Out on page 119). The GM should make the Explorers aware that this looting, though admirable, makes escape more difficult.

### RESCUING SANCTARCHS

The question of whether or not the Explorers choose to rescue any of the Sanctarchs should be an agonising one for the players. The Explorers can rescue some of the natives, though this will depend on what means they have to get them to their ship. If the Explorers thought ahead, they may even have called down multiple landers, and be able to rescue hundreds or thousands of natives. This also depends upon the Sanctarchs' Disposition towards the Explorers, as described on page 110. Even if the Sanctarchs have turned upon the Explorers however, it is likely that some of their number end up helping the Explorers in their fight against the Wraithguard, the Farseer, or their rivals, and so the chance to save these few at least should be afforded.

This is an ideal opportunity to confront the players with a moral quandary. If the Explorers aren't the type to care for revolting natives, they may care about the fortune in gemstones each one carries about their person, and be motivated to rescue a few for entirely selfish reasons!

### HITCHING A LIFT

If all else goes horribly wrong, it is possible a competitor might step in and rescue the Explorers. Use this option only as an absolute last resort. The GM might utilise the competitor that, with reference to previous interactions, is most likely to help them out, diverting their shuttle at the last possible moment and picking them up. Perhaps more entertainingly, the competitor in question could be one they have far from cordial relations with, but one who might be persuaded to offer them a seat in the last shuttle out, for a price of course.

## Rewards

- 100 Achievement Points for every 100 kg of loot recovered from the planet via teleportation or shuttle (to a maximum of 500 Achievement Points).
- 50 Achievement Points for every 10 natives rescued (to a maximum of 500 Achievement Points).
- 50 Achievement Points for rescuing a rival in dire need.
- -50 Achievement Points if the Explorers are rescued by a rival.
- -10 Achievement Points if the Explorers are forced to leave valuable equipment (such as a shuttle) or soldiers behind on the planet.

## THE AFTERMATH

Depending on how the Explorers escaped the return of the warp storm, one of several potential aftermaths come into play. The GM should choose the appropriate aftermath from those described below, but can of course embroider them further, especially to account for the actions of various competitors, or make up their own instead.

### ESCAPED VIA THE GATEWAY

As they regain consciousness having passed out as they stepped through the Eldar gateway, the first sight the Explorers see is the Gyrinx (assuming it befriended them), sat upon a rock beside a glittering woodland spring, looking at them quizzically. As their vision clears, the Explorers see a

clear blue above, and dense forests all about. They also have no idea where they are.

The GM however, knows exactly where they are! The gateway on the world of Fionnadh was connected to another of the Eldar's Maiden Worlds, comparatively nearby (in stellar terms), to the world the Explorers knew as the Dread Pearl. This planet is actually in the Calixis Sector, where it is known as Seedworld AFG:218. The only chance the Explorers have of discerning their location is with reference to the engraving on the overgrown ruins described on page 106. If an Explorer was able to recognise Seedworld AFG:218 at the ruins, a chance to study the stars and pass a **Hard (-20) Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) Test** reveals this information.

The Explorers will not, of course, be stranded on this uninhabited paradise world forever, but they have quite a wait before anyone passes this way and can pick them up. If there is an Astropath Transcendent in the group, he may be able to broadcast a signal that brings help sooner, but still, a response takes some time. Battlefleet Calixis does patrol the surrounding system. In fact, it enforces a quarantine of the world, and the Explorers may have to do some quick thinking to avoid being incarcerated on a Battlefleet picket ship.

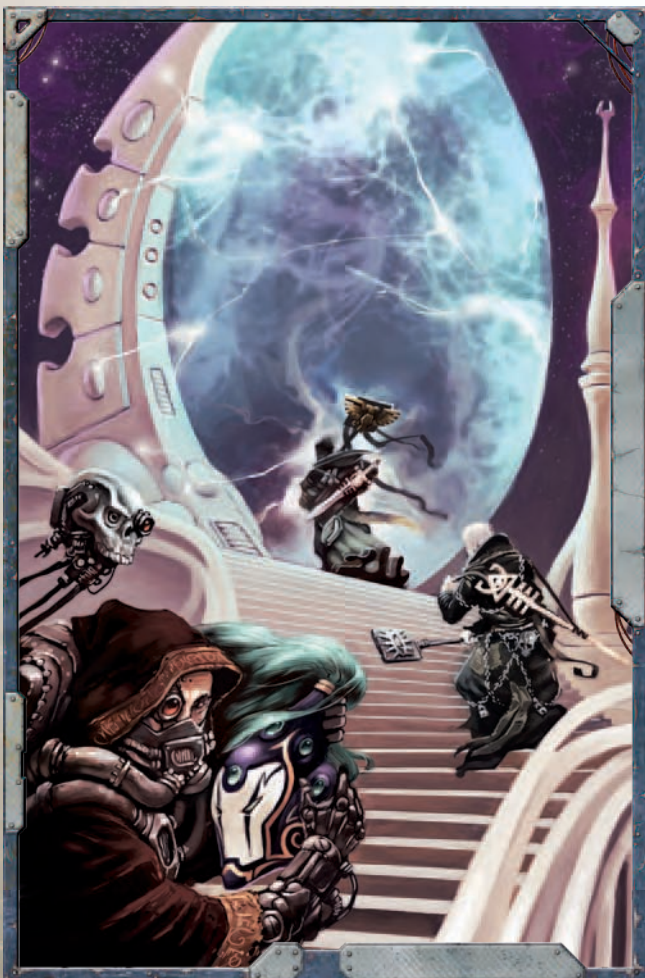
Eventually, the Explorers will be picked up and be able to make their way back to the Koronus Expanse and rejoin their vessel at Footfall or Port Wander. Or perhaps some clever thinking on the behalf of their servants will bring the Explorers' vessel to pick them up. Either would make a great subject for a future adventure, but in the meantime, it is

suggested that the Explorers relax and enjoy the scenery for a while. The galaxy so rarely offers a chance for peace.

## A SHIP FULL OF HOMELESS COLONISTS

If the Explorers cared enough for the fate of the Sanctarchs, they may well find themselves with a number of now-homeless colonists on their hands. The numbers vary from a mere handful to several thousand or more, depending on their actions at the end of the adventure. They will therefore be faced with a number of problems. Will they attempt to integrate the Sanctarchs into their ship's crew, and if so, are the colonists willing? How will the Sanctarchs adjust to the thoroughly alien world of an Imperial vessel?

One interesting strand might be to seek to establish a new colony for the Sanctarchs. The colonists themselves will be agreeable to this arrangement, and the Explorers could turn a significant profit if the undertaking were to prove successful. Perhaps they might consider establishing such a colony on the world of Quppa-Psi-12—it may not be the paradise the Sanctarchs were accustomed to, and they would have to learn to fight off the world's more predatory life forms, but certainly such a venture could succeed. If the colony were to prove viable, maybe it might be named after one of the Explorers, thus ensuring his name lives on, even beyond the frontiers of the Imperium, for all time.



## RESCUED BY A COMPETITOR

It is possible that the Explorers had to be rescued from the warp storm by one of their competitors. Depending on which of the competitors this was, a number of interesting questions might come up. For example, was the competitor willing and able to deposit the Explorers on their own vessel before leaving, or must they rendezvous with their ship at a later point, perhaps at Footfall or Port Wander? More importantly, what price will the competitor exact, or favour will they reserve, to be called in at some later date? This is something that can be picked up again in a later adventure, ideally when the Explorers least expect it. No Rogue Trader likes to find himself beholden to a competitor, but then again, no Rogue Trader wants to be stranded on a world trapped inside a raging warp storm.

## AWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

Getting into the Foretelling, learning the secrets of the Dread Pearl and then hunting across the stars for its location were all for a single purpose—fortune and glory. After such an epic adventure, overcoming countless obstacles and perils along the way, the GM should make sure that the Explorers receive a reward suitable to their efforts. There should also be suitable consequences for their actions, not only on the Dread Pearl but across all three adventures.



### EXPERIENCE

In addition to the regular amount of experience points for completing each session (see page 291 of *ROGUE TRADER*) the GM can give each player a bonus depending on their actions:

- Each rival Rogue Trader defeated (though not necessarily destroyed): 200 xp
- Keeping a deal struck with a rival Rogue Trader to the bitter end: 500 xp
- Betraying a rival Rogue Trader after striking a deal with them: 100 xp
- Destroying 10 or more active Wraithguard: 500 xp
- Defeating the Farseer without any Explorer casualties (retainers and mercenaries don't count as casualties): 200 xp
- For every 20 Sanctarchs rescued from the Dread Pearl: 50 xp
- Escaping the Dread Pearl by lander: 200 xp
- Escaping to Seedworld AFG:218 and subsequently finding their way off-world and back to the Expanse. 500 xp.

# PROFIT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The Explorers are forced to flee the Dread Pearl without permanently claiming its riches. However, the treasures garnered from the Dread Pearl are Eldar artefacts and gems, and their extreme rarity amongst the Imperium means that a single gemstone may be worth more than one of the Explorers' landers. Even though the amount gathered is not likely to even be noticed amongst the cargo holds of the Explorers' vessel, their rarity is such that each artefact and gem can be sold for staggering sums.

In addition, there is the matter of any Sanctarchs the Explorers rescued. Like the gems and artefacts, the Sanctarchs prove valuable by their rarity (and unique body chemistry). The Explorers may bring them to ancient archaeo-researchers or scholars of xenos, who will be fascinated to learn more about their culture and the world they lived on. The Mechanicus and Ordo Xenos would also like to learn more about the Sanctarchs, though it is unlikely the Sanctarchs would enjoy the experience. Finally, the Explorers can sell them as slaves, dump them somewhere in the Expanse, or even help them set up a new colony. All of these help contribute to the Explorers' Profit Factor.

In addition, if the Explorers have made the most of the opportunities they were presented with as they strove to find the Dread Pearl, they will find they are much better off than they first thought.

Once the Explorers have had some time to take stock of what they have recovered (and what they have done during their quest to find the Dread Pearl), the GM should check through his records and tally up how many Achievement Points the Explorers earned—and lost. Then, compare the total to the Grand Endeavour they were participating in:

## CONQUERING THE DREAD PEARL

**Grand Endeavour, 3,000 Achievement Points Required, +3 Profit Factor**

**Themes:** All

If the Explorers have accumulated fewer Achievement Points than the 3,000 points required, they still earn +1 Profit Factor as the stories and reputations of their adventure spread across the Expanse. However, any profit-earning opportunities they may have set up along the way are overshadowed by the staggering expenses they shouldered to find the Dread Pearl.

However, if the Explorers accumulate enough Achievement Points to equal the 3,000 point threshold, they manage to turn a Profit as described above, despite the exorbitant costs. In addition, Conquering the Dread Pearl is designed so the Explorers can earn far more Achievement Points than they need to reach the threshold, if they take every opportunity to do so. **For every 100 Achievement Points they exceed the Threshold by, the Explorers receive an additional +1 Profit Factor.**

In addition, the adventures of Zayth and Vaporius have the potential to create long-lasting Profit for the Explorers. If the Explorers completed these adventures by establishing lasting trade agreements, **they gain an additional +1 Profit Factor for each adventure. This is in addition to the Achievement Points they received for successfully completing the adventure.**

At the end of these adventures, the players may feel cheated that they were not able to conquer the Dread Pearl outright, and claim it for their own. However, if they played their cards right, the GM should impress on them how their actions have established a dynasty and base of operations that reaches throughout the Heathen Stars. They could have established exclusive trade routes to many of the heathen worlds, and even have the opportunity to establish colonies beholden to them. All in all, the Explorers should end LURE OF THE EXPANSE with their fortunes well established and their names written across the Expanse, even if they did not conquer the Dread Pearl.



# APPENDIX: NPCs

Presented here are the profiles for the key non-player characters, adversaries, minions, and creatures as they appear in *Lure of the Expanse*. These NPCs are arranged by broad type (all the Rogue Traders in one section, for example), then alphabetically.

Note that all NPC weapons have any appropriate bonuses added into the profile (such as damage bonuses for Strength with melee weapons, or damage bonuses from various Talents). It is also important to note that NPC's are not necessarily bound to follow the same strictures for their profiles as player characters.

## ROGUE TRADERS

These powerful and capable individuals are the Explorers' rivals (or possibly allies) in the race to claim the Dread Pearl. Note, however, that none of these esteemed and powerful individuals are likely to be encountered alone and will always bring with them an entourage of ratings, armymen and other lackeys. A GM can use the minions presented on page 128-129, or take suitable NPCs from page 370 of **ROGUE TRADER**.

### ABEL GERRIT

Full background on Abel Gerrit is on page 24.

Gerrit Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	4I	38	42	40	37	38	45	56

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 20

**Profit Factor:** 42

**Skills:** Awareness (Per)+10, Barter (Fel), Charm (Fel), Commerce (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Merchant) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Evaluate (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int), Inquiry (Fel) +10, Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +10, Pilot (Space Craft), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Trader), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Trader's Cant) (Int).

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Blademaster, Dual Strike, Iron Discipline, Jaded, Lightning Attack, Master and Commander, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, SP), Resistance (Fear), Peer (Nobility), Renowned Warrant, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Mesh-lined finery (arms 3, body 4, legs 3).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; pen 4; clip 8, reload full; tearing), 2 power swords (1d10+8 R; pen 5; power field, balanced).

**Gear:** 2 bolt-pistol clips, coin embossed with image of the cruiser *Oceanid*.

### DJANKO SCOURGE

Full background on Djanko Scourge is on page 28.

Scourge Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
4I	33	50	54	28	36	32	37	33

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Wounds:** 30

**Profit Factor:** 42

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel) +10, Carouse (T) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Guard, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Intimidation (S) +20, Interrogation (Fel) +10, Navigation (Stellar) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Trader's Cant) (Int), Trade (Trader) (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Battle Rage, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Frenzy, Furious Assault, Hip Shooting, Iron Discipline, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Training (Universal), Sure Strike, Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Mesh-lined dress uniform (arms 4, body 4, legs 4).

**Weapons:** Gold-plated best-craftsmanship plasma pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+6 E, pen 6, clip 10, reload 3 full), chainsword (1d10+9\* R; pen 2; balanced, tearing).

**Gear:** 1 spare hydrogen flask.

### HADARAK FEL

Full background on Hadarak Fel is on page 25.

Fel Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
48	42	30	40	35	38	37	45	4I

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 22

**Profit Factor:** 45

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Charm (Fel) +20, Commerce (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Void, Imperial Navy, War) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S), Interrogation (Fel) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) +10.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Las, Bolt, SP), Decadence, Jaded, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, SP), Resistance (Fear), Peer (Rogue Traders, Criminal), Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Light carapace (arms 4, body 4, legs 3).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol with red-dot laser sight (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; pen 4; clip 8, reload full; tearing), best-craftsmanship mono-sword (1d10+4 R; pen 2, balanced).

**Gear:** Captain's finery, 4 bolt-pistol clips, personal vox, signet ring, respirator.

## JEREMIAH BLITZ

Full details and background on Jeremiah Blitz is on page 26.

### Blitz Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
31	53	44	35	47	36	30	39	46

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 25

**Profit Factor:** 38

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +20, Barter (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Commerce (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, Underworld, Merchant) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +20, Evaluate (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Intimidate (Fel), Navigation (Stellar, Surface) (Int) +10, Pilot (Flyers, Space Craft) (Ag) +20, Tech-Use (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Dual Shot, Gunslinger, Hip Shooting, Hotshot Pilot, Independent Targeting, Jaded, Last Man Standing, Leap Up, Mighty Shot, Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Enforcer light carapace (body, arms, legs 5).

**Weapons:** 2 best-craftsmanship hellpistols (35m; S/2/-; 1d10+6\* E; pen 7; clip 40, reload 2 full)

**Gear:** 2 hip-pack power source, cloak, 1 gold Throne-gelt, lho-sticks, micro-bead.

## KRAWKIN FECKWARD

Full background on Krawkin Feckward is on page 28.

### Blitz Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
42	35	35	35	35	33	33	38	38

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 25

**Skills:** Awareness (Per)+20, Barter (Fel), Charm (Fel), Chem-Use (Int), Command (Fel)+10, Commerce (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Evaluate (Int) Literacy (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Trader's Cant) (Int) +10, Wrangling (Int).

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Blademaster, Decadence, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Chain, Power), Paranoia, Peer (Nobility), Pistol Training (Universal).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Xenos-hide and flak-woven longcoat (3 body, 2 arms, 2 legs).

**Weapons:** Best-craftsmanship bolt pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; pen 4; clip 8, reload full; tearing), mono sword (1d10+3 R; pen 2; balanced), mono knife 1d5+3 R; pen 2).

**Gear:** 4 bolt-pistol clips of Inferno shells.

## LADY SUN LEE

Full details and background on Lady Sun Lee is on page 27.

### Sun Lee Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
54	33	50*	32	50	40	35	48	41

\*Includes bonus from power armour.

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 20

**Profit Factor:** 55

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Concealment (Ag) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Commerce (Fel), Common Lore (Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperium, Underworld, Koronus Expanse) (Int), Deceive (Fel)+20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Interrogation (Fel) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Logic (Int) +10, Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +10, Pilot (Star Craft), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Trader), Scholastic Lore (Archaic, Imperial Creed, Legend), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Trader Cant) (Int).

**Talents:** Armour of Contempt, Assassin Strike, Blademaster, Catfall, Combat Master, Crippling Strike, Disarm, Iron Discipline, Jaded, Lightning Attack, Nerves of Steel, Precise Blow, Resistance (Fear), Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Wall of Steel, Whispers.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Best-craftsmanship jade light power armour (all 8).

**Weapons:** 1 concealed las gauntlet built into the power armour (50m; S/4/-; 1d10+4 E; pen 1; clip 20, reload full; reliable), best-craftsmanship archeotech power sword (1d10+9\* E; pen 10; power field, balanced).

**Gear:** 2 las-gauntlet clips, best-craftsmanship robes of shifting fabric, 3 plasma grenades.

## LORD-ADMIRAL BASTILLE THE SEVENTH

Full background on Lord-Admiral Bastille is on page 27.

### Bastille Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	45	30	30	38	45	30	48	37

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 22

**Profit Factor:** 50

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Void, Imperial Navy, War) (Int) +20, Drive (Ground, Skimmer), Intimidate (S), Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +20, Pilot (Flyers, Star Craft) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Trader's Cant) (Int), Tech-Use.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Bolt), Blademaster, Counter Attack, Iron Discipline, Into the Jaws of Hell, Nerves of Steel, Master

## TOUCHED BY THE FATES

**Prerequisites:** NPCs only, must have free will, may not be applied to Deamons or non-living creatures. The NPC has a number of Fate Points equal to half his Willpower Bonus (rounding up). These Fate Points may be spent or burned in exactly the same manner as player characters. In addition, this NPC gains the Righteous Fury rule.

and Commander, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Peer (Imperial Navy), Pistol Training (Universal), Resistance (Fear), Two Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ballistic), Void Tactician.

**Armour:** Reinforced captain's uniform (arms 3, body 4, legs 3).

**Weapons:** Naval pistol (20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; clip 6; reload full; tearing), power maul (High: 1d10+8 E; Pen 4; power field, shocking; Low: 1d10+4 E; pen 2; shocking).

**Gear:** 2 spare naval pistol clips, cybernetic leg, cybernetic arm, micro-bead, captain's baton.

## MADAM CHARLABELLE

Full background on Madam Charlabelle is on page 25.

### Charlabelle Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
48	32	27	40	44	35	50	47	47

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 23

**Profit Factor:** 28

**Skills:** Awareness (Per)+10, Barter (Fel) +10, Charm (Fel), Commerce (Fel) +20, Concealment (Ag) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Underworld, Merchant) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Xenos) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +10, Pilot (Void), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Trader), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Trader's Cant, Kroot) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Search (Per).

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Combat Sense, Exotic Weapon Training (Harlequin's Kiss), Fearless, Foresight, Hatred (Orks), Hardy, Iron Discipline, Light Sleeper, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Paranoia, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Sure Strike, Swift Attack, True Grit, Two Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ballistic).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 2.

**Armour:** Xenos mesh (arms 5, body 5, legs 5).

**Weapons:** Harlequin's Kiss (1d10+8 R; Pen 10; tearing), plasma pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+6 E, Pen 6, clip 10, reload 3 full, overheat).

**Gear:** 2 plasma pistol hydrogen flasks, captain's greatcoat, personal accounts ledger.

## ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

The following are a sampling of the myriad aliens, adversaries, and characters scattered across the Koronus Expanse.



## DROSS TRIBESMAN

The primitive inhabitants of Dross favour spears tipped with jagged hull-metal from the wrecks dotting their landscape, creating weapons as sharp and dangerous as mono-weapons.

### Tribesman Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
44	44	43	42	41	18	38	32	36

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 15

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Survival (Int), Tracking (Int), Wrangling (Int).

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Thrown), Swift Attack.

**Armour:** Hides and metal plates (body 2).

**Weapons:** Scavenged hull-metal spear (1d10+4 R; Pen 2), Re-curve bow (1d10+2 R; pen 0; clip 1; reload half; primitive, reliable).

**Gear:** Tribal regalia, fetishes of the Sky-Father, 10 arrows.

## DWELLER IN THE HEIGHTS

Strange, rocklike creatures that inhabit the Sky-mountains of Vaporius, attacking anyone who might stray too near.



### Dweller Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
34	—	(8) 44	(12) 42	11	16	28	21	—

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Wounds:** 35

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag) +10.

**Talents:** Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Amorphous, Burrower, Fear (1), Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour, Part of the Landscape (see below), Size (Hulking), Strange Physiology, Sturdy, Unnatural Senses, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x3).

**Weapons:** Rocky protrusions (1d10+8 I; pen 0).

**Armour:** Rocky carapace (all 4)

**Part of the Landscape:** The Dwellers look just like any other rocks when still, making them almost impossible to detect. An unmoving Dweller gains a +50 bonus to Concealment Tests.

**Variable Size:** The profile presented here is for a 'standard' Dweller, measuring 3 metres in height, though they do appear in a variety of sizes—much like rocks. The GM can make a Dweller one size category larger or one size category smaller, adding +10 S, +10 T, and +5 Wounds to the larger creature, and subtracting the same amount from the smaller creature.

## ELDER-TACTICIAN

Part strategist, part pilot, and part military leader, Elder-Tacticians guide the land-ships of Zayth through their eternal war.



### Elder-Tactician Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
24	22	28	31	30	44	38	39	35

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 10

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel), Inquiry (Fel), Navigation (Surface) (Int) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Combat Formation, Iron Discipline, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Chain), Pistol Training (Bolt, SP).

**Armour:** None.

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (30m; S/2/—; 1d10+5 I; pen 4; clip 8; reload full; Tearing). Chainsword (1d10+4 R; pen 2; Tearing, Balanced).

**Gear:** Elder-Tactician uniform, bolt pistol clip.



## ENGINE-ORDER

The Engine-Order are a secretive group entrusted with maintaining the inner workings of Zayth's land-ships.



### Engine-Order Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
30	35	38	38	30	40	35	38	19

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 15

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Ciphers (Engine-Order) (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int), Drive (Ground Vehicle, Walker) (Ag), Logic (Int) +10, Pilot (Civilian) (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Security (Ag), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Autosanguine, Binary Chatter, Concealed Cavity, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Energy Cache, Ferric Lure, Gun Blessing, Iron Jaw, Luminen Charge, Luminen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (Manipulator, Utility), Meditation, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Chain), Pistol Training (Bolt, SP).

**Traits:** Duty to the Land-Ship (see armsman profile).

**Armour:** Augmetic armoured engine suit (all 5).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (30m; S/2/—; 1d10+5 I; pen 4; clip 8; reload full; Tearing), two-handed chain axe (2d10+7 R; pen 2; Tearing, unbalanced).

**Implants:** Bionic arms (good craftsmanship), bionic respiratory system (good craftsmanship), auger arrays (good craftsmanship), manipulator mechadendrite, utility mechadendrite, cybernetic senses (all, good craftsmanship, incorporating dark sight, photo-visior, sonar sense and a full vox system), MIU interface (good quality).

**Gear:** Data-slates, power-cells, spare clip for bolt pistol, cipher keys, various spares, instruments and other paraphernalia.

## GUN-MASTER

The Gun-Masters of Zayth supervise the massive macroweapons mounted on the land-ships. However, they often lead Zayth armymen into battle, carrying massive stubbers or shotcannons.

### Gun-Master Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
34	50	46	42	31	29	31	28	26

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 16

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Tech-Use (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int)

**Talents:** Arms Master, Basic Weapon Training (SP), Bulging Biceps, Heavy Weapon Training (SP), Iron Jaw, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (SP).

**Armour:** Carapace (All 5).

**Weapons:** Heavy stubber (120m;

-/-/10; 1d10+5 I; pen

3; clip 40; reload full) or

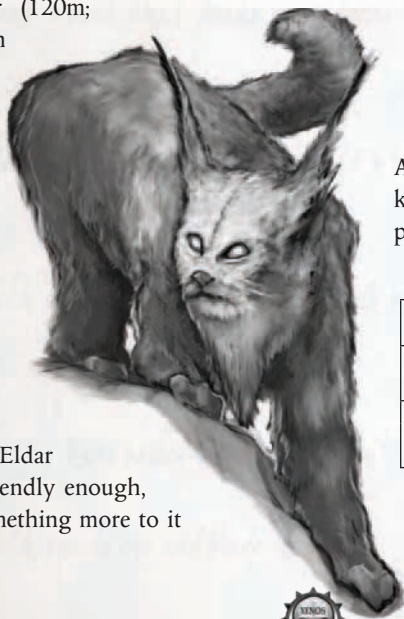
naval shotcannon (40m;

S/3/-; 2d10+4 I; Pen

0; clip 24; reload 2 full;

scatter, unreliable).

**Gear:** Uniform, 2 stubber belts or 4 shotcannon reloads.



## GRYNIX

A strange, catlike creature sometimes found near Eldar ruins. Though it seems friendly enough, there also seems to be something more to it than first appears.

### Grynix Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
24	—	13	11	43	20	40	20	35

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 5

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20.

**Talents:** None.

**Traits:** Dark-sight, Natural Weapons, Quadruped, Size (Puny), Telepathic Bond†, Mental Alacrity††.

**Weapons:** Claws (1d5+1 R; primitive).

**Gear:** None.

†Telepathic Bond: A person can, over time, befriend and form a bond with a grynix—in fact this seems to be the key goal of the grynix, though why is not known. Once a character has befriended the creature the bond forms.

Within few hours the character gains a telepathic link to the grynix and can communicate with it (it cannot talk normally but can communicate via emotions and images). This telepathic bond functions over a number of kilometres equal to the character's Intelligence Bonus. Additionally, if the character is a psyker the grynix benefits from any powers that affect, protect or enhance the character as long as they are no more than two meters apart. Psykers can also use powers that enhance senses or perform detection through the grynix (counting their location as if it were that of the grynix) as long as they are in telepathic range of the creature. While in physical contact with its owner a psyker bonded to the grynix counts it as a Psychic Focus (see page 146 of **ROGUE TRADER**).

††Mental Alacrity: Grynix have keen alien minds, something they pass on to their bonded companion. Characters bonded to grynix gains +10 to Intelligence Tests while in contact with the creature, (i.e., stroking it while reading a book). Furthermore, the creature's quick reactions enhance its bond, and as long as the grynix is within telepathic range of its owner he gains a +4 to Initiative Rolls.

## HIGH PRIESTESS ASIRA STORM-SPEAKER

Although she hails from a primitive culture that has no knowledge of the wider universe, Asira is a canny leader and possesses the powerful abilities of a potent psyker.

### Asira Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	51	45	44	36	24	29	45	33

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 22

**Psy Rating:** 6

**Disciplines:** Telepathy, Telekinesis.

**Warcraft Techniques:** Short Range Telepathy, Mind Probe, Terrify, Delude, Force Bolt, Compel, Telekinetic Crush, Telekinetic Shield.

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Occult) (Int), Common Lore (Koronus Expanse) (Int), Command (Fel), Deceive (Fel) +10, Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Invocation (WP) +10, Psyniscience (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

**Talents:** Fearless, Jaded, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Resistance (Psychic).

**Armour:** Ragged leather robes (all 2, primitive).

**Weapons:** Sky-Father Staff (1d10+4 I; pen 0; balanced).

**Gear:** Rune stones, salvaged trinkets and small bones.



## HOLLOW MAN EXO-WRECKER

Little is known of the mysterious Hollow Men haunting the Processional of the Damned, methodically scrapping ships.

### Hollow Man Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
44	48	65	65	14	30	30	40	05

**Movement:** 2/4/8/16

**Wounds:** 21

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Pilot (Exo-armor) +10, Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Chem Geld, Fearless, Heavy Weapon Training (Melta), Melee Weapon Training (Power).

**Traits:** Dark-sight, Fearless, Flyer (10), Regeneration, Silent Killers (see below), Size (Hulking).

**Armour:** Sealed exo-armor (all 8).

**Weapons:** Thermic cutting torch (10m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; pen 12; clip unlimited; reload -), power cutter (1d10+11 E; pen 5; power field, unwieldy).

**Gear:** Ancient scrap and salvage long desiccated by the void.

**Silent Killers:** When they have taken Damage equal to their Wounds, their corpse disintegrates in a hissing cloud of vapour. They do not talk and cannot be reasoned with. All Fellowship based skills automatically fall against Hollow Men, as do any kind of interrogation or intimidation. Those using psychic powers to read their minds only encounter an eerie emptiness.



## LAND-SHIP ARMSMAN

The armsmen of a Zayth land-ship are ill armed and equipped compared to Imperial Guard regiments. They are often used as fodder in Zayth's unending wars. Use the Hired Gun profile from page 370 of **ROGUE TRADER**, replacing the weapons with an Autogun (90m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; pen 0; clip 30; reload 2 full) and Mono-knife (1d5+3 R; pen 2), and the armour with Land-ship Tox-resistant Flak (AP 4 all, incorporates a respirator).

## MUTINOUS BRIDGE OFFICER

A bridge officer for the "Are you sure, sir?" encounter. Use the Rogue Trader Companion Profile, adding Command +10 and Pilot (Space Craft), and removing Loyal to the End.

## PRIEST-KING ANSAI

One of the rules of the glass cities of Vaporius, An sai hides his cunning mind behind a facade of decadence.

### An sai Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	35	35	49	38	44	41

**Movement:** 3/6/9/12

**Wounds:** 20

**Psy Rating:** 4

**Disciplines:** Telepathy

**Warpcraft Techniques:** Inspire, Delude, Compel, Dominate, Reprogram.

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Blather (Fel), Carouse (T) +10, Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Inquiry (Fel), Intimidate (S), Psyniscience (WP), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int)

**Talents:** Absolute Loyalty†, Air of Authority, Dark Soul, Decadence, Fearless, Enemy (Ecclesiarchy), Foresight, Master Orator, Meditation.

**Armour:** Benign contempt.

**Weapons:** Superior attitude.

**Gear:** Finery and regalia.

†**Absolute Loyalty:** The Priest-Kings have the absolute loyalty of their servants. If An sai is attacked or threatened, any inhabitants of his city present will throw themselves at the attackers, sacrificing themselves to protect their king. Any subjects count as possessing the Fearless Talent for the duration of the encounter.

## ROGUE TRADER COMPANION

In addition to their armsmen and lackies, Rogue Traders are often accompanied by trusted companions. These individuals are colleagues and friends who fight steadfastly by the Rogue Trader's side. This profile can be used to represent the companions of any of the rival Rogue Traders.



### Companion Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	45	40	40	35	35	35	35	30

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 14

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperium, Rogue Traders) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Drive (Land Vehicle) (Ag), Inquiry (Int).

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Bolt), Crack Shot, Disarm, Loyal to the End<sup>†</sup>, Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Primitive, Shock), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Training (Las, SP, Bolt), Quick Draw.

**Armour:** Flak and carapace (body 4, arms 2, Legs 2).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; pen 4; clip 8, reload full; tearing), compact laspistol (25 m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 I; pen 0, clip 25; reload full), shock maul (1d10+6 I; shocking).

**Gear:** Fine dynasty uniform or personal dress of their master, micro-bead, 2 bolt pistol clips, 1 krak grenade, filtration plugs, photo-contacts.

<sup>†</sup>**Loyal to the End:** As long as their master lives, most companions will never leave his or her side. As long as the companion's master is alive and either visible or in voice communication (such as over a vox or by psychic means) then they add +30 to all Willpower tests to resist fear, compulsions or the effects of Fellowship skills that would make them work against or in some way betray their master. Should their master be slain, they will either collapse in grief, or fight to the death.

### ROGUE TRADER HOUSEHOLD TROOPS

Rogue Traders often have a trusted retinue of competent warriors. This profile can be used to represent the household troops of any of the rival Rogue Traders.



### Troops Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	35	32	38	35	23	3I	25	2I

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 12

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Drive (Land, Walker) (Ag), Search (Per), Silent Move (Ag).

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Heavy Weapon Training (SP, Launcher, Las), Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Primitive), Pistol Training (Universal), Resistance (Fear).

**Armour:** Naval flak armour (arms 3, body 4, head 3, legs 3).

**Weapons:** Lasgun (S/3/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload full; Reliable), 3 frag grenades (9 m, S/-/-, 2d10 X; Pen 0; Blast [4]), mono knife (1d5+3 R; Pen 2).

**Gear:** 2 spare lasgun clips, 2 hotshot charges for lasgun, personal vox, house uniform (bearing the colours of their dynasty), respirator, photovisor.

### SANCTARCH RULER

The rulers of the Sanctarchs have guided their people through centuries of peaceful existence on the world known as the Dread Pearl.



### Sanctarch Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	30	30	30	25	30	40	40

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 12

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic Dialect) (Int)

**Talents:** Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

**Traits:** Blessings of the Maiden<sup>†</sup>.

**Weapons:** Staff of Office (1d10+3 I; Pen 0: Balanced, Primitive)<sup>††</sup>.

**Gear:** Robes, dozens of gemstones and gleaming trinkets.

<sup>†</sup>**Blessings of the Maiden:** The human inhabitants of the Dread Pearl have been altered and evolved by their environment. In addition to a very long life-cycle, the Sanctarch may re-roll any failed Toughness Test, regardless of its source, and is immune to the Toxic quality.

<sup>††</sup>**Staff of Office:** The Sanctarch Ruler carries a long, twisted staff made of living coral. As a symbol of authority, the Sanctarch ruler can re-roll any failed Command Tests involving the Sanctarchs as long as he hold it in his grasp.

### SANCTARCH VILLAGER

The Sanctarchs are the descendents of colonists who arrived on the Dread Pearl by accident millennia ago. Their profile is the same as the Sanctarch Ruler, with +5 WS, -5 Int, and -5 WP. They are also equipped with Sanctarch Coral Tridents (1d10+6 R; pen 4; Toxic)

### STRYXIS RAG-TRADER

Untrustworthy, suspicious, and full of malevolent cunning, Stryxis rag-traders can be found throughout the Expanse. They are always willing to trade, and covet trinkets and charms over things that seem more 'valuable' to human traders.



### Stryxis Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
27	39	3I	37	49	6I	38 <sup>(6)</sup>	42	46

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 12

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +30, Inquiry +20 (Fel), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Speak Language (Void Cant, Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Merchant).

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Chem Geld, Jaded, Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Primitive, Thrown),

Paranoia, Pistol Training (Las, SP).

**Traits:** Dark Sight, Unnatural Perception (x2)

**Armour:** Xenos hide and skin-bonded rags (arms 3, body 4, legs 3).

**Weapons:** Xenos light pistol (30m; S/—/—; 1d10+5 E; pen 0, clip 30; reload full; reliable, accurate).

**Gear:** Rags, trinkets and dubious intentions.

## WRATH'S CARRION

The Carrion in the Processional of the Damned are a varied and scattered group. The GM can use any of the Colonist profiles for their rank and file, and the Free Trader Captain for their leaders, should he need to stat them out (see pages 370-371 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook).

## CREATURES OF QUPPA-PSI-12

The following are just a few of the myriad creatures the Explorers will encounter on the hellish jungles of the lost world Quppa-Psi-12.

### CRIMSON STINGERS

Crimson Stingers are swarms of small, voracious insects. They can strip a full-grown grox to the bones in minutes, if the swarm is large enough.

#### Crimson Stingers Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
31	—	11	17	24	09	21	03	—

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Skills:** Awareness (Per).

**Talents:** None.

**Traits:** Flyer (10), Overwhelming<sup>†</sup>, Size<sup>††</sup>, Strange Physiology, Toxic, Swarm Creature<sup>†††</sup>.

**Armour:** None.

**Weapons:** Stingers (1d10+1 R; pen 1d5; Tearing; Toxic).

<sup>†</sup>**Overwhelming:** A Crimson Stinger Swarm is made up of thousands if not millions of individual insects, and is capable of attacking many things at once. For every 10 Wounds the swarm has remaining, it may make one additional melee attack as part of a standard attack action. These attacks may never be against the same target.

<sup>††</sup>**Size:** The swarm grows or shrinks depending on how many Stingers are still alive. 1–20 Wound swarms are Average, 20–40 Wound swarms are Hulking, 40–60 Wound swarms are Enormous, and swarms with more than 60 Wounds are Massive. In addition, swarms may fill rooms, cover fields, and generally take up large amounts of space at the GM's discretion.

<sup>†††</sup>**Swarm Creature:** Any attack that does not have the Blast, Flame, or Scatter quality only inflicts half Damage on the creature. In most circumstances, a swarm creature cannot be

Grappled, Knocked Down, or Pinned, and the swarm may “pour” through suitable small openings such as ducts, vents, and the like, but it may not Jump. The swarm is counted as being destroyed once all its Wounds are lost. The swarm's attacks have a variable Penetration value (roll each time an attack lands), representing its ability to engulf its victims and attack vulnerable areas.

## DRAGON HORNET

As big as an Aquila Lander and far more deadly, Dragon Hornets are the apex predator on Quppa-Psi-12.

#### Dragon Hornet Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
36	—	(8)	(8)	40	10	45	23	—

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 80

**Skills:** Awareness (Per).

**Talents:** None.

**Traits:** Flyer (20), Multiple Arms, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (All 12), Strange Physiology, Size (Massive), Tail Coil<sup>†</sup>, Toxic, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour:** None.

**Weapons:** Bite (2d10+8), tail lash (1d10+10; Toxic).

<sup>†</sup>**Tail Lash:** The Dragon Hornet has a long, barbed tail that it often uses to snare its prey (be it a lumbering Silt Runner or an Aquila Shuttle). If it hits its prey with its tail lash then it can immediately make a grapple attack against it (see page 240 of **ROGUE TRADER**).

## WHIPPER

Long, centipede-like creatures that travel in packs of a dozen or so. They are far more canny than an insect should be.

#### Whipper Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
37	—	30	33	44	16	27	09	—

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Wounds:** 8

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Concealment +20 (Ag).

**Talents:** None.

**Traits:** Natural Armour (5), Unnatural Speed (x2).

**Armour:** Chitin Hide (all 5).

**Weapons:** Bite or scratch (1d10+3; pen 4).

**Canny:** Whippers are natural hunters and always attempt to attack from ambush in numbers of a dozen or so. They will retreat if suffering too many casualties—to gather more Whippers and attack again later.

# THE ELДАР

The Eldar striving to protect the Dread Pearl only recently arrived in the Expanse. It is believed they hail from Craftworld Kaelor, though their reasons for being in the Expanse (beyond seeking to protect the Dread Pearl) are unknown.

## PATHFINDER

Eldar Pathfinders leave their home for decades or centuries, scouting the galaxy and seeking out threats to their craftworld.



### Pathfinder Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
47	60	35	38	(10) 55	39	58	39	31

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 14

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness +20 (Per), Climb (S), Concealment +20 (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Disguise (Fel), Dodge +10 (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Navigation (Surface) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Security (Ag), Shadowing (Ag) +10, Silent Move +20 (Ag), Speak Language (Eldar, Low Gothic), Survival +20 (Int), Tracking +20 (Int).

**Talents:** Arms Master, Basic Weapon Training (Las, Primitive), Catfall, Crack Shot, Cover and Displace†, Deadeye Shot, Exotic Weapons Training (Shuriken Pistol, Ranger Long Rifle), Foresight, Heightened Senses (Sight, Hearing), Jaded, Leap Up, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Marksman, Pistol Weapon Training (Las), Rapid Reaction, Sprint, Swift and Silent††.

**Traits:** Unnatural Agility (x2).

**Armour:** Xenos-mesh armour (body 4, arms 4, legs 4).

**Weapons:** Ranger long rifle (200m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 E; pen 2; clip 40; reload full; accurate, reliable), Shuriken pistol (20m; S/3/5; 1d10+2; pen 4; clip 40; reload 2 full), best craftsmanship mono-knife (1d5+4† R; pen 2).

**Gear:** Cameleoline cloak, 2 clips long rifle ammunition, 2 clips shuriken ammunition, xenos-craft magnoculars, waystone gem.

†**Cover and Displace:** Pathfinders are exceptional snipers and are experts at hiding, displacing and making use of cover. The Armour Points of any cover the Pathfinder benefits from are doubled for the Pathfinder only. Pathfinders can re-roll failed Agility Tests when moving through difficult terrain.

††**Swift and Silent:** Spending years along on strange worlds, walking the webway and shadowing the enemies of the Eldar they learn to be ghosts; mere shadows within shadows. Pathfinders may re-roll any failed Concealment or Silent Move Tests. In addition, Pathfinders add a bonus degree of success to any successful Concealment and Silent Move Tests. Pathfinders also never suffer penalties to Concealment or Silent Move as a result of terrain, lighting, or related factors.



## FARSEER SERRENON

The Farseers of the Eldar are the leaders of their people, guiding them with their ability to see the myriad possible futures and select the most advantageous. They are also prodigiously powerful psykers, and prove highly dangerous opponents.

Serrenon is a respected seer amongst the inhabitants of Craftworld Kaelor. He is one of the many Eldar sent by his craftworld to the Expanse to work with the Twilight Swords. However, he sees the protection of the Dread Pearl as a sacred duty, and will not shirk from it willingly.



### Serrenon Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
59	57	33	41	(10) 57	44	53	(10) 59	35

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 30

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness +20 (Per), Climb (S), Concealment (Ag) +10, Deceive (Fel), Dodge +10 (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int) +20, Inquiry (Fel), Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eldar, Low Gothic).

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Las), Blademaster, Exotic Weapon Training (Shuriken Pistol, Witchblade), Improved Warp Sense, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Training (Las), Psy Rating 8, Psy Disciplines: Telepathy, Telekinesis

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates 5, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Willpower (x2).

## ELDAR GEAR

The Eldar have many strange and wonderous items, most of which are psy-active and respond to the bearer's psychic ability.

### RUNE ARMOUR

**Locations covered:** All      **AP:** 6      **Wt:** 8 kg

Warlocks wear special carapace-like armour, fashioned from wraithbone and psychically charged with arcane runes and mystic wardings. In addition to providing 6 armour points to all locations, a suit of rune armour ignores all weapon Penetration. This means that when making attacks against a warlock in rune armour all weapons are considered to have a Pen of 0 rather than their normal Pen. A suit of rune armour worn by anyone other than an Eldar psyker loses this special property.

### WITCHBLADES

These potent power swords channel and focus an Eldar's own psychic power, enhancing his strength and projecting his mental energy into each blow. A Witchblade counts as a power sword with the additional effect of tripling the user's Strength Bonus. Also, a Witchblade's Penetration is equal to the user's Psy Rating, provided the user is an Eldar psyker. Using a Witchblade required an Exotic Weapon Training talent, and in the hands of a non-Eldar is simply an unusual power weapon.

### WRAITHCANNON

Of all the weapons employed by the Eldar, the wraithcannon—a portable version of the much larger D-Cannon—is among the most feared. Using a form of warp inversion and cohesion unknown to the Imperium, the wraithcannon fires a bolt of unstable exotic matter, creating a small warp space/real space hole in reality where it hits. This can have any number of terrible effects on its targets, such as sending them spinning into the empyrean, teleporting them into solid objects or literally turning them inside out. Usually, it simply tears them into bloody gobbets of meat as their cells are ripped in a million directions at once.

When a target is hit by a shot from a wraithcannon, roll 2d10. This is the amount of damage the Wraithcannon inflicts. Similar to a Warp Weapon, the damage ignores Armour and Toughness. In addition, if the Damage result is 19-20, the target is destroyed outright, regardless of the number of wounds it possesses (Fate Points may be burned as normal). If the Damage result is 2-10, the target takes damage and is teleported a number of metres equal to the result in a random direction (use the scatter diagram on page 248 of **ROGUE TRADER**). If the target is teleported into the same space as another object, move the target into the closest available space. The target takes 1d5 additional damage, ignoring Armour or Toughness.

The wraithcannon can be removed from the Wraithguard. However, the weapon's power supply is part of the Wraithguard itself, meaning that the wraithcannon does not function once removed. The alien technology of the wraithcannon is beyond the understanding of nearly all humans. The GM should think very carefully before allowing players a functional wraithcannon.

TABLE 3-1 ELDAR WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Reload	Special	Wt
<b>Ranged</b>									
Wraithcannon	Heavy	30m	S/-/-	Special	Special	1	Special	-	40kg
<b>Melee</b>									
Witchblade	Melee	-	-	1d10+5	Special	-	-	Power Field, Balanced	40kg

**Psy Powers:** All Telepathy and Telekinesis powers as detailed in Chapter VI of **ROGUE TRADER**. In addition Farseers have their own set of unique psy powers as detailed below.

**Armour:** Rune Armour<sup>†</sup> (all 6; special).

**Weapons:** Shuriken pistol (20m; S/3/5; 1d10+2; pen 4; clip 40; reload 2 full), Witchblade (1d10+14; pen 8; power field, balanced, special).

**Gear:** Rune-encrusted armour and flowing robes, spiritstone<sup>†††</sup>, ghosthelm<sup>††††</sup>, runes of warding and witnessing<sup>†††††</sup>.

<sup>††††</sup>**Spirit Stones:** Farseers carry gems housing the souls of powerful warlocks and farseers so that they may call upon their psychic power in battle. Once per combat the Farseer may use his spirit stones to use one of his psy powers as a Free Action. This functions as a normal power in all respects.

<sup>†††††</sup>**Ghosthelm:** Covered in arcane and spidery runes, a ghosthelm is a potent and ancient device worn by many Farseers to protect them from the dangers of the warp. While

wearing the helm, if the Farseer is ever affected by results on the Psychic Phenomena Table or the Perils of the Warp table he can make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** to be personally unaffected. The effects of the result rolled on the table still occur and may affect others or the environment as normal.

<sup>††††††</sup>**Runes of Warding and Witnessing:** Farseers carry countless trinkets, esoteric devices and runes all designed to enhance their powers and diminish those of their foes. All enemy psykers within 20m must add an additional +10 to all rolls they make on both the Psychic Phenomena Table and the Perils of the Warp table, and the Farseer may subtract -10 from any rolls he makes on that table.

## Farseer Psychic Powers

The Eldar's knowledge of warcraft is far beyond mankind's. Farseers are especially potent psykers with a level of skill and subtlety that far outstrips that of man, allowing them to perform feats and use energies little understood but the bulk of humanity's psykers. Except as where noted in their descriptions, all of these powers use the normal rules for psychic powers found in **ROGUE TRADER** Chapter VI.

### Doom

**Focus Time:** Half Action

**Sustain:** Yes

**Focus Power Test:** Opposed Willpower

With this power, the Farseer marks a target for doom, twisting the fates around them and hastening their demise. The Farseer chooses a target within a range of 5m x Psy Rating. Both the target and the Farseer immediately make an opposed Willpower test. If the target wins, the power has no further effects. If the target fails, then all attacks directed against the target and any additional enemies within a number of metres equal to the farseer's psy rating gain a bonus amount of damage equal to the farseer's psy rating. The effects of doom only last for a single round, though the power may be sustained as normal.

### Guide

**Focus Time:** Half Action

**Sustain:** Yes

**Focus Power Test:** Willpower

Farseers focus on guiding the Eldar race to victory in all their endeavours, be they among the stars or on the battlefield. This is especially true when it comes to enhancing Eldar warriors, using their prophetic powers to guide their allies' blows. Guide affects the Farseer plus a number of allies equal to his Psy Rating in a radius of 50m x Psy Rating. Alternatively, if the Farseer does not wish to gain the power's benefits himself, the power may be centred on any ally within line of sight, with the same radius of effect (essentially counting the chosen ally as the Farseer). All those affected by the power gain may re-roll failed Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests for a number of rounds equal to his Psy Rating. This power does not stack with re-rolls from other effects. It may be sustained as normal.

### Mind War

**Focus Time:** Half Action

**Sustain:** No

**Focus Power Test:** Opposed Willpower

Perhaps one of the Farseer's most feared powers is mind war. A terrifyingly personal attack, this power allows the Farseer to reach out directly into the mind of one of his foes and literally crush their psyche with a single, brutal thought. The Farseer chooses a target within line of sight up to a range of 10m x Psy Rating. Both the target and the Farseer immediately make an opposed Willpower test. If the target wins the power has no further effects. If the target fails they will suffer 1d10 points of Explosive damage plus an additional 1d10 damage for each degree with which the Farseer defeated them. This damage ignores armour and is reduced by Willpower Bonus rather than Toughness Bonus. Critical effects from mind war damage are always applied to the head, often with spectacularly gory results.



## WARLOCK

These Eldar psykers aid the Farseers in their duties, and often accompanying Eldar warriors into battle to augment them with their psychic powers.



### Warlock Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
44	48	3I	34	<sup>(10)</sup> 54	44	43	52	32

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 15

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness +20 (Per), Climb (S), Concealment (Ag) +10, Deceive (Fel), Dodge +10 (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Psyniscience (Per) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eldar, Low Gothic), Survival (Int).

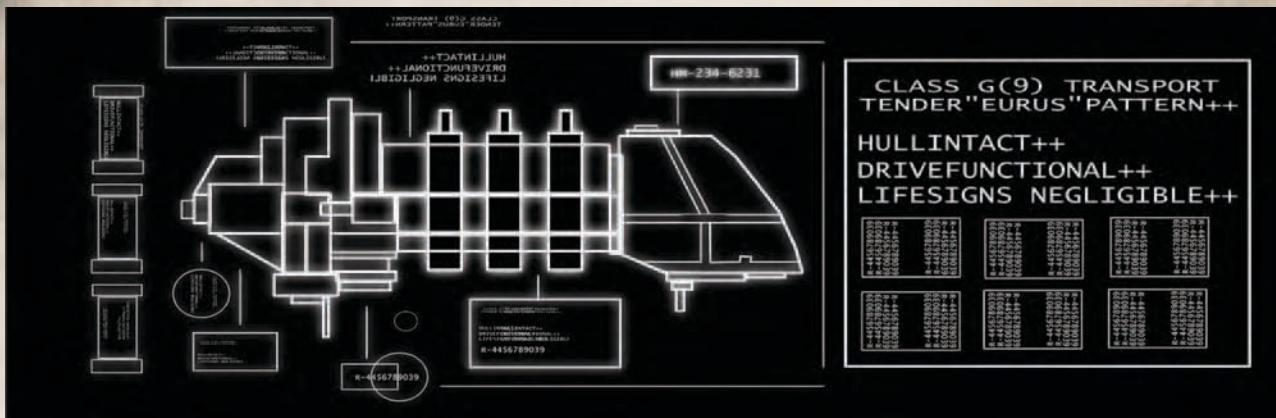
**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Las), Blademaster, Exotic Weapon Training (Shuriken Pistol, Witchblade), Improved Warp Sense, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Training (Las), Psy Rating 5,

**Psy Disciplines:** Telepathy, Telekinesis.

**Traits:** Unnatural Agility (x2).

**Psy Powers:** Warlocks have a multitude of divinatory powers and abilities, none of which have any application here. In addition, each Warlock trains extensively to use certain psychic powers, to the point where their manipulation is second nature. Each Warlock in this adventure has one of the following powers:

**Destructor:** The warlock concentrates his will into a roiling blast of pure psychic force. This ability functions as an attack



that does 1d10+6 E Damage (Pen 0) with the Flame quality, although it does not set targets on fire. It has a 10 metre range, and like all flame weapons, fires in a 30 degree arc. However, the power only harms enemies within the area of effect. Although this ability is a Psychic Power, it works automatically and does not trigger any psychic phenomena.

**Enhance:** The Warlock's eldritch power energizes himself and any allies within 20m, improving reflexes and reaction times. Those that are affected by this power gain a bonus of +2 to Initiative and +10% to Weapon Skill. Multiple uses of this power do not stack. Although this ability is a Psychic Power, it works automatically and does not trigger any psychic phenomena.

**Armour:** Rune Armour (all 6; Special: See below).

**Weapons:** Shuriken pistol (20m; S/3/5; 1d10+2; pen 4; clip 40; reload 2 full), Witchblade (1d10+14; pen 5; power field, balanced, special).

**Gear:** Rune-encrusted armour and flowing robes.

## WRAITHGUARD

The Wraithguard are construct guardians employed by the Eldar. Each is animated by a single spirit stone that contains the soul of an Eldar, now guiding this towering wraithbone construct.

### Wraithguard Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	45	<sup>(10)</sup> 50	<sup>(12)</sup> 60	<sup>(6)</sup> 30	—	25	40	—

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 20

**Skills:** None.

**Talents:** Exotic Weapon Training (Wraithcannon).

**Traits:** Auto-stabilised, From Beyond, Machine (5), Natural Weapons, Size (Hulking), Strange Physiology, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), Unnatural Senses, Wraithsight†.

**Armour:** None (all 5).

**Weapons:** Wraithcannon (50m; S/—/—; dam special; pen special; clip special; reload special), fist (1d10+10 I).

†**Wraithsight:** Wraithguard are animated by the souls of ancient, deceased Eldar warriors, some of whom lived millennia ago and have little connection to the living, breathing world. If there is a friendly Eldar psyker within

line of sight of the Wraithguard then it may act normally. If, however, there is no Eldar psyker to direct the Wraithguard then it must make a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test**. On a success, it may act normally. Otherwise, it will wander off in a random direction (see page 248 of **ROGUE TRADER**) at its normal move (i.e., not running), and takes no other actions until the next Round, when it may attempt another Perception Test.

## STARSHIPS

No two starships in the Imperium are alike, and this is doubly true for the vessels of Rogue Traders. This section provides the characteristics for the most prominent ships in the adventure.

### ADEPTUS MECHANICUS PROBE

*Hull:* Unknown

*Class:* Unknown

*Dimensions:* 0.1 km in diameter

*Mass:* 1 megatonnes, approx.

*Crew:* None

*Accel:* 9.5 gravities max acceleration

The Adeptus Mechanicus probe is a strange spherical vessel. It seems to have no crew, only a very advanced core cogitator.

### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 13

**Detection:** +15

**Void Shields:** 1

**Space:** 35

**Morale:** N/A

**Weapon Capacity:** Dorsal 3

**Turret Rating:** 0

**Crew:** Competent (30)

**Manoeuvrability:** +20

**Armour:** 13

**Hull Integrity:** 30

**Power:** 45

**Crew Population:** N/A

### Essential Components

Strelov 1 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Jovian Pattern Class 2 Drive, Single Void Shield Array, M-201.b Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Auto-stabilised Logis-targeter, Dorsal Sunsear Laser Battery x2

## CHAINS OF DUSK

*Hull: Raider*

*Class: Hazeroth class privateer*

*Dimensions: 1.5 km long, .25 km abeam approx.*

*Mass: 5 megatonnes approx.*

*Crew: 22000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 6.5 gravities max sustainable acceleration*

Krawkin's ship is a light swift raider that suits his purposes well. Despite its size, however, it is still a dangerous foe, made more so by Krawkin's cunning and skill at laying ambushes.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 11

**Void Shields:** 1

**Morale:** 100

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 35

**Manoeuvrability:** +28

**Armour:** 14

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Dorsal 1

**Power:** 45

**Detection:** +12

**Hull Integrity:** 32

**Crew:** Competent (30)

### Essential Components

Strelov 1 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Jovian Pattern Class 2 Drive, Single Void Shield Array, Command Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Voidsman Quarters, M-201.b Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Prow Sunsear Laser Battery, Dorsal Sunsear Laser Battery, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Gravity Sails

## FEL HAND

*Hull: Frigate*

*Class: modified Firestorm class frigate*

*Dimensions and statistics:*

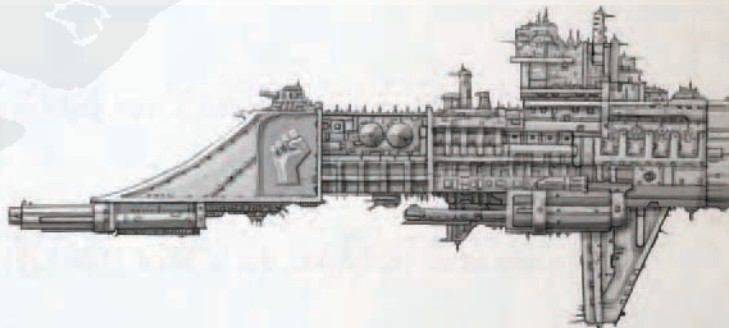
*Dimensions: 1.8 km long, .3 km abeam at fins approx.*

*Mass: 6 megatons approx.*

*Crew: 22000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 4.4 gravities max acceleration*

Though Fel's vessel does not have the brute power of a larger ship, it combines strength, speed, and firepower—meaning he is able to deal with a variety of situations in turn.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 7

**Void Shields:** 1

**Morale:** 97

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 40

**Manoeuvrability:** +20

**Armour:** 15

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Dorsal 1

**Power:** 45

**Detection:** +15

**Hull Integrity:** 37

**Crew:** Competent (30)

### Essential Components

Strelov 1 Warp Engines, Jovian Pattern Class 2 Drive, Gellar Field, Single Void Shield Array, Armoured Command Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Voidsman Quarters, M-201.b Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Prow Titanforge Lance Weapon, Dorsal Mars Pattern Macrocanons, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Luxury Passenger Quarters, Reinforced Interior Bulkheads, Trophy Room, Murder-servitors



## GRACE OF SOPHA

*Hull: Transport*

*Class: Vagabond class merchant trader*

*Dimensions and statistics:*

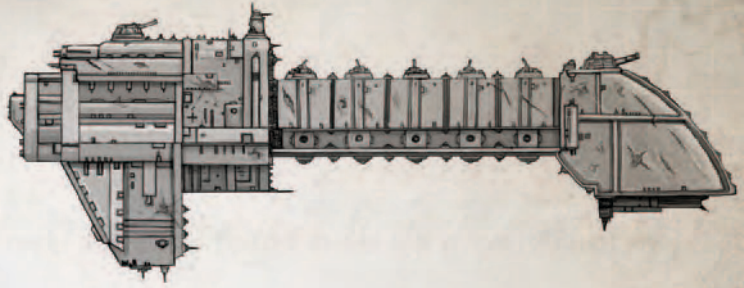
*Dimensions: 2 km long, .4 km abeam approx.*

*Mass: 8 megatonnes approx.*

*Crew: 16000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 2.1 gravities max acceleration*

An ancient and battle scarred vessel that has seen a hard life and much hard fighting. Charlabelle keeps it in good condition and rules her crew with an iron fist.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 4

**Void Shields:** 1

**Morale:** 100

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 40

**Manoeuvrability:** -5

**Armour:** 13

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Dorsal 1

**Power:** 40

**Detection:** +8

**Hull Integrity:** 40

**Crew:** Veteran (50)

### Essential Components

Strelov 1 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Lathe Pattern Class 1 Drive, Single Void Shield Array, Combat Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Voidsman Quarters, R-50 Auspex Multi-band

### Supplemental Components

Prow Sunsear Laser Battery, Dorsal Sunsear Laser Battery, Main Cargo Hold, Librarium Vault

## HAMMER OF TRUTH

*Hull: Light Cruiser*

*Class: Dauntless class light cruiser*

*Dimensions and statistics:*

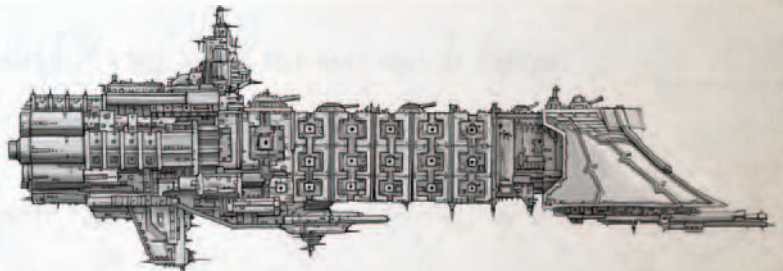
*Dimensions: 4.5 km long, .5 km abeam at fins approx.*

*Mass: 22 megatonnes approx.*

*Crew: 65000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 2.5 gravities max sustainable acceleration*

Djanko's ship is as unsophisticated as he is. Once a swift Dauntless class cruiser, he has heaped it with armour and weapons until its much abused engines struggle to drag it through the stars.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 5

**Void Shields:** 1

**Morale:** 98

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 60

**Manoeuvrability:** +7

**Armour:** 22

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Port 1, Starboard 1

**Power:** 60

**Detection:** +20

**Hull Integrity:** 60

**Crew:** Competent (30)

### Essential Components

Strelov 2 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Jovian Pattern Class 3 Drive, Single Void Shield Array, Armoured Command Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Pressed-Crew Quarters, M-100 Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Port Mars Pattern Macrocanons, Starboard Mars Pattern Macrocanons, Prow Mars Pattern Macrocanons, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Barracks, Reinforced Internal Bulkheads, Armour Plating, Excess Void Armour

## MAXIM'S GAMBIT

*Hull: Raider*

*Class: Havoc class merchant raider*

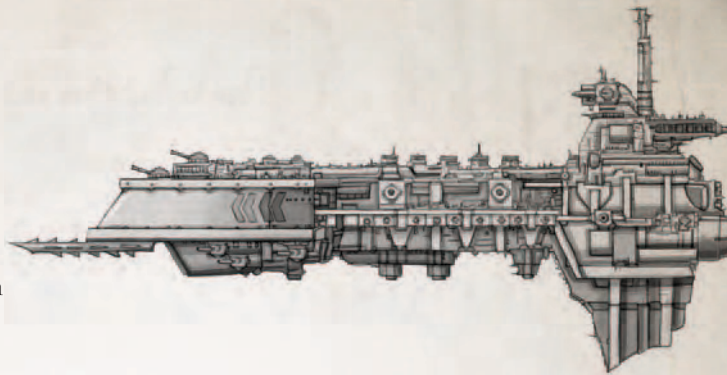
*Dimensions: 1.6 km long, .4 km abeam approx.*

*Mass: 6 megatonnes approx.*

*Crew: 24000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 5 gravities max sustainable acceleration*

Abel's vessel is small for its class but packs a fair punch none-the-less. It is also faster and more manoeuvrable than many vessels.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 9

**Void Shields:** 1

**Morale:** 98

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 40

**Manoeuvrability:** +22

**Armour:** 16

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Dorsal 1

**Power:** 45

**Detection:** +10

**Hull Integrity:** 30

**Crew:** Competent (30)

### Essential Components

Strelov 1 Warp Engines, Jovian Pattern Class 2 Drive, Gellar Field, Single Void Shield Array, Combat Bridge, M-1.r Life Sustainer, Pressed-Crew Quarters, M-100 Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Dorsal Mars Pattern Macro cannons, Prow Mars Pattern Macro cannons, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Compartmentalised Cargo Hold, Barracks

## NIHONTU

*Hull: Light Cruiser*

*Class: Dauntless class light cruiser*

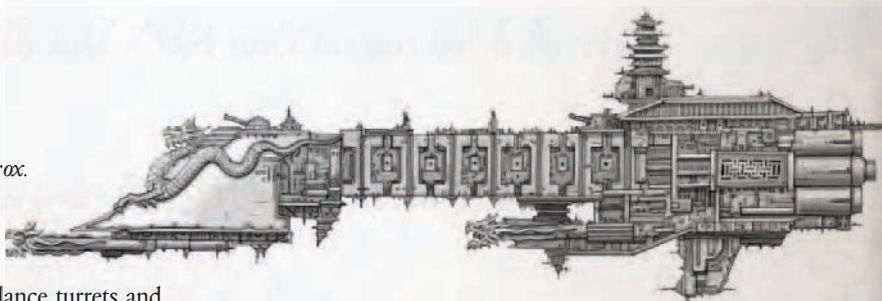
*Dimensions: 4.5 km long, .5 km abeam at fins approx.*

*Mass: 20 megatonnes approx.*

*Crew: 65000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 4.5 gravities max sustainable acceleration*

A fearsome vessel equipped with banks of lance turrets and heavy armour, and the pride of Sun Lee's dynasty. Her paranoia over losing the ship in combat, however, prompts her to never leave port without an escort of three raiders. Use the Wolfpack Raider from page 209 of **ROGUE TRADER** to represent these vessels.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 7

**Void Shields:** 1

**Morale:** 98

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 60

**Manoeuvrability:** +13

**Armour:** 19

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Port 1, Starboard 1

**Power:** 60

**Detection:** +20

**Hull Integrity:** 60

**Crew:** Competent (30)

### Essential Components

Strelov 2 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Jovian Pattern Class 3 Drive, Single Void Shield Array, Command Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Voidsmen Quarters, M-100 Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Port Ryza Pattern Plasma Battery, Starboard Ryza Pattern Plasma Battery, Prow Dragon's Breath Lance Weapon, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Barracks, Extended Supply Vaults, Observation Dome

## ORDAINED DESTINY

*Hull: Cruiser*

*Class: Heavily modified Lunar class cruiser*

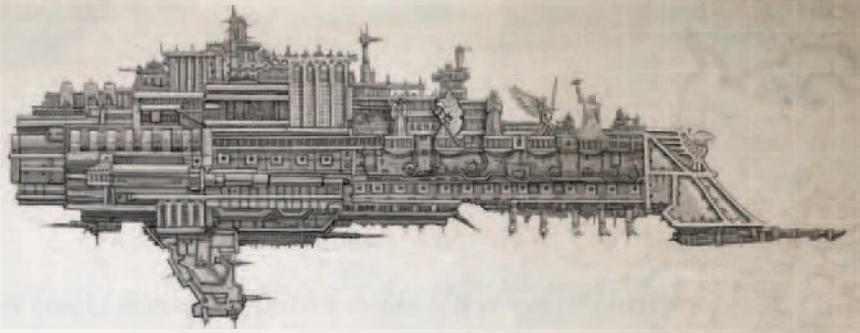
*Dimensions: 5 km long, .8 km abeam abeam at fins approx.*

*Mass: 27 megatons approx.*

*Crew: 80000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 2.5 gravities max sustainable acceleration*

Jeremiah's vessel is a grand affair and impressive to behold. Some say beneath its gilded battlements and carved hull plates it is no match for a real cruiser. Those who have faced it, however, it beg to differ. Jeremiah—having won the vessel along with his Warrant—has never seemed entirely comfortable with the level of ostentation, but also treats his vessel with a certain back-handed affection.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 5

**Void Shields:** 2

**Morale:** 98

**Turret Rating:** 2

**Space:** 75

**Manoeuvrability:** +10

**Armour:** 17

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Port 2, Starboard 2

**Power:** 75

**Detection:** +10

**Hull Integrity:** 65

**Crew:** Competent (30)

### Essential Components

Strelov 2 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Jovian Pattern Class 4 Drive, Multiple Void Shield Array, Ship Master's Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Pressed-Crew Quarters, M-201.b Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Port Mars Pattern Macrocannon Broadside, Starboard Mars Pattern Macrocannon Broadside, Port Starbreaker Lance Weapon, Starboard Starbreaker Lance Weapon, Prow Starbreaker Lance Weapon, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Compartmentalised Cargo Hold, Barracks, Munitorium, Augmented Retrothrusters, Gilded Hull

## COLOSSUS

*Hull: Cruiser*

*Class: Lunar class cruiser*

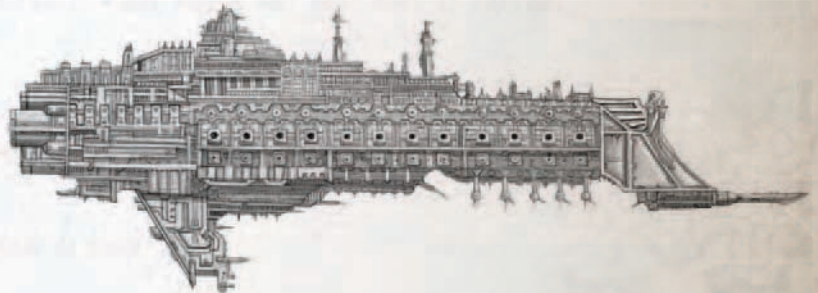
*Dimensions: 5 km long, .8 km abeam abeam at fins approx.*

*Mass: 28 megatons approx.*

*Crew: 98000 crew, approx.*

*Accel: 2.5 gravities max acceleration*

Bastille runs his ship like a military vessel, his years of naval training keeping her in prime fighting condition. A canny commander, he also frequently travels with an escort, the Firestorm Frigate *Aberrant*. The *Aberrant* can be represented by using the profile for the Sabre from page 211 of **ROGUE TRADER**.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 5

**Void Shields:** 2

**Morale:** 101

**Turret Rating:** 2

**Space:** 75

**Manoeuvrability:** +15

**Armour:** 20 (24 Prow)

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 1, Port 2, Starboard 2

**Power:** 75

**Detection:** +15

**Hull Integrity:** 71

**Crew:** Crack (40)

### Essential Components

Strelov 2 Warp Engines, Gellar Field, Jovian Pattern Class 4 Drive, Multiple Void Shield Array, Bridge of Antiquity, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Pressed-Crew Quarters, M-201.b Auger Array

### Supplemental Components

Port Mars Pattern Macrocannon Broadside, Starboard Mars Pattern Macrocannon Broadside, Port Sunsear Laser Battery, Starboard Sunsear Laser Battery, Cargo Hold and Lighter Bay, Barracks, Munitorium, Temple-Shrine to the God Emperor, Trophy Room, Armoured Prow, Augmented Retrothrusters, Teleportarium.

## OPTIONAL SHIP COMPONENTS

These are some of the Components found on the ships in LURE OF THE EXPANSE.

### DRAGON'S BREATH LANCE WEAPON

A rare and ancient variation of the Titanforge, the Dragon's Breath was designed for short-range power in close engagements. **Fore Weapon:** This weapon may only be equipped in Prow slots, even on cruiser size ships and larger.

Type	Strength	Damage	Crit Rating	Range
Lance	3	1d10+6	3	3

### EXCESS VOID ARMOUR

For some captains, there is no such thing as too much armour. Excess void armour layers heavy plates over existing ones, building up a formidable defence at the cost of speed and manoeuvrability.

**More Dead Weight:** Decrease this vessel's Manoeuvrability by 3 and its Speed by 2.

### GILDED HULL

Some captains place opulence and style over substance and protection. These gregarious fellows are wont to dress flamboyantly, wear impressive yet impractical armour and wield flashy weapons more suited to a trophy room than the battlefield. Such men also often gild the armour plating of their vessels, to the point that they sacrifice protection for grandeur.

**Armour:** Decreases this vessel's Armour by 3.

**Impressive:** Any Fellowship Tests made by the captain of the ship (while either on or in sight of it) gains a +10 bonus.

TABLE 3-2 SUPPLEMENTAL COMPONENTS

Supplemental Component	Appropriate Hull Type	Power	Space	SP
Excess Void Armour	Raiders, frigates, transports	0	2	2
Excess Void Armour	Light cruisers, cruisers	0	3	2
Gilded Hull	Raiders, frigates, transports	0	1	2
Gilded Hull	Light cruisers, cruisers	0	2	2
Dragon's Breath Lance Weapon	All ships	13	8	3

## SHARD OF DAWN

*Hull:* Frigate

*Class:* Aconite Class Frigate

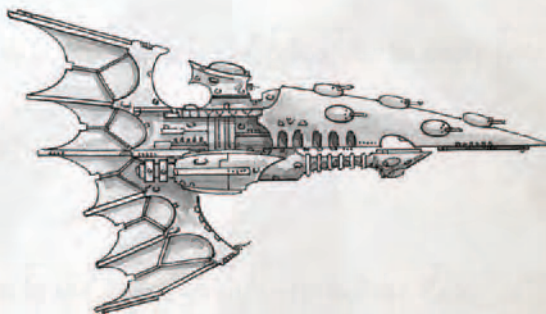
*Dimensions:* 1.5 km long, .2 km abeam at fins approx.

*Mass:* 4 megatonnes approx.

*Crew:* Unknown

*Accel:* No max acceleration determined in Imperial records

The Shard is an Eldar frigate tasked with patrolling the edges of Imperial space and watching for those that would seek out the Dread Pearl.



### Game Statistics

**Speed:** 14

**Void Shields:** —

**Morale:** 100

**Turret Rating:** 1

**Space:** 30

**Manoeuvrability:** +45

**Armour:** 14

**Crew Population:** 100

**Weapon Capacity:** Prow 2

**Power:** 50

**Detection:** +25

**Hull Integrity:** 20

**Crew:** Crack (40)

### Essential Components

Aconite Solar Sails, Warp-plotter, Command Bridge, Xenos Life Sustainer, Xenos Crew Quarters, Xenos Sensor Array

## Supplemental Components

Prow starcannon cluster battery x2, Holo Field, Runecaster

## Additional Rules

**Master Starfarers:** The Eldar are some of the most skilled voidfarers in existence, and their ships are designed to make the most of their talents. Any Eldar aboard an Eldar vessel may re-roll any Piloting Tests for Manoeuvre Actions.

### ELDAR COMPONENTS

The ships of the Eldar are vastly different from any human construction, and may have different rules that apply to them.

#### ACONITE SOLAR SAILS

The Eldar disdain the use of brutish plasma drives, and instead soar across the void powered by the light of stars, caught in vast solar sails that extend from the ship like wings. This both powers the ship and provides propulsion. A solar sail allows an Eldar ship to move, and provides it with power. In addition, it conveys the following benefits.

**Supreme Manoeuvrability:** A ship with solar sails may interrupt its Manoeuvre Action at any point to perform a Shooting Action. Once the Shooting Action is resolved, it must complete the remainder of its Manoeuvre Action. The limit of one Shooting Action per turn still applies.

#### ELDAR STARCANNON CLUSTER BATTERY

The Eldar have long perfected plasma technology, and do not arm their vessels with crude projectile cannons. Their 'macrobatteries' are made up of multiple turrets of immense clusters of starcannons, capable of punching through armour with intense plasma beams.

**Superior Accuracy:** Eldar vessels gain a +10 to Ballistic Skill Tests made to fire a starcannon cluster battery.

Type	Strength	Damage	Crit Rating	Range
Macrobattery	4	1d10+2	4	6

#### HOLO FIELD

A Holo Field is an ancient wonder of the Eldar race and the bane of Imperial gunners. The field creates a multitude of "ghost images" of the Eldar ship, each in a different location. It effectively masks the ship's true position to such an extent that it is nigh impossible to determine exactly where it is, taking random shots into the void in the hopes of scoring a glancing hit.

**Holographic Cloaking:** All attacks made against a ship with a functioning Holo Field suffer -40 to any Test to hit in addition to any other penalties (for example, this would include both a Ballistic Skill Test to hit the ship with lances, and a Pilot (Space Craft) + Manoeuvrability Test to ram the Holo Field equipped ship). **Macro batteries, due to their massive broadsides that fill a large area of space with ordinance, only suffer a -20 to hit.** Ships also suffer a -30 to any attempts to use any Extended Actions against the a holo fielded ship that involve Detection (such as Lock on Target and Focused Augury).

**Eldar Defensive Doctrine:** Eldar ships have no void shields, and always have their Holo Field active unless it is destroyed.

TABLE 3-3 ELDAR COMPONENTS

Eldar Components	Appropriate Hull Type	Power	Space
Aconite Solar Sails	Frigate	50 generated	0
Starcannon Cluster Battery	All ships	5	3
Holo Field	All Ships	8	4

### ELDAR STARSHIPS

The Eldar race is an ancient one and its ships are amongst the most sophisticated in the galaxy. In addition, Eldar crews are arguably the best-trained and most naturally-able spacefarers of any race. Eldar ships move by capturing stellar energy through their sails and using this to power their movement. The amount of energy they can capture and therefore the distance they can travel depends on their orientation with regards to the nearest star. The ships are graceful and extremely manoeuvrable, allowing them to dart in and launch an attack and then pull back before their slower moving enemies have a chance to react. Eldar ships are protected by holofields which distort targeting sensors and make them very hard to hit, rather than offering any physical protection. However, attacks that do strike home tend to cause considerable damage to these sophisticated but fragile vessels.

As a race, the Eldar are highly accomplished raiders. They use rapid hit-and-run attacks to eliminate isolated pockets of the enemy, utilising their speed and manoeuvrability to strike where he is weakest. However, if the enemy is able to bring sufficient force to bear, Eldar ships are not sturdy enough to withstand the furious bombardments of a full fleet engagement. Therefore, strength in numbers and a compact defence have always been the best tactics to use against an Eldar attack.

# MAP I: THE TEMPLE OF FARSEEING



III: THE WORLD BEYOND

# MAP II: SITE OF THE FINAL BATTLE OF THE DREAD PEARL







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