

ROGUE TRADER™

TWILIGHT CRUSADE™



AN ADVENTURE FOR
ROGUE TRADER

CREDITS

LEAD DEVELOPERS

Max Brooke and Tim Flanders

WRITING AND DEVELOPMENT

Blake Bennet, Tim Cox, and Anthony Hicks

EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Andrew Kenrick with David Johnson and Mark Latham

MANAGING RPG PRODUCER

Chris Gerber

GRAPHIC DESIGN MANAGER

Brian Schomburg

COVER ART

David Griffith

INTERIOR ART

Alberto Bontempi, Matt Bradbury, Adam Burn, Mauro Dal Bo, Zach Graves, Nicholas Gregory, Nikolaus Ingeneri, David Lecossu, Henning Ludvigsen, Jorge Maese, Jesse McGibney, Peter Mohrbacher, Ameen Naksewee, David Nash, Wayne Reynolds, Iver Saaremael, Oleg Shekhovtsov, Imaginary FS Pte Ltd, and the Games Workshop Design Studio

MANAGING ART DIRECTOR

Andy Christensen

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Eric Knight

LICENSING AND DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS

Deb Freytag and Amanda Greenhart

EXECUTIVE GAME DESIGNER

Corey Konieczka

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Michael Hurley

PUBLISHER

Christian T. Petersen

SPECIAL THANKS

Playtest Coordinator Zach Tewalthomas; "Unrepentant" Lachan "Raith" Conley with Aaron Wong, Nicole Gillies, Rhys Fisher, and Jordan Dixon; "The Librarians" Pim Mauve, Gerlof Woudstra, Keesjan Kleef, Jan-Cees Voogd, and Joris Voogd; "Well Done My Lord, You Killed Them" Siobhan Robson with Brad Wallis and Luke Caspers

GAMES WORKSHOP

LICENSING MANAGERS

John French and Graham Nicoll

HEAD OF LICENSING

Jon Gillard

GAMES WORKSHOP'S BUSINESS AND LEGAL ADVISOR

Andy Jones

HEAD OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Alan Merrett



**FANTASY
FLIGHT
GAMES**

Fantasy Flight Games
1995 West County Road B2
Roseville, MN 55113
USA

© Games Workshop Limited 2014. Games Workshop, Warhammer 40,000, Warhammer 40,000 Role Play, **ROGUE TRADER**, the foregoing marks' respective logos, and all associated marks, logos, places, names, creatures, races and race insignia/devices/logos/symbols, vehicles, locations, weapons, units and unit insignia, characters, products and illustrations from the Warhammer 40,000 universe and the **ROGUE TRADER** game setting are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Ltd 2000–2014, variably registered in the UK and other countries around the world. This edition published under license to Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc. Fantasy Flight Games and the Fantasy Flight Games logo are registered trademarks of Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved to their respective owners. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Product Code: PRT16

For more information about the Rogue Trader line, free downloads, answers to rule queries, or just to pass on greetings, visit us online at

www.FantasyFlightGames.com

CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter I: Into Endless Night	4
Chapter II: The Whirling Realm	4
Chapter III: A Dynasty Falls	4

Chapter I: Into Endless Night

Adventure Background	6
Rogue Trader Vir Modren	7
Distress Call	8
A Call to Adventure	8
Last Stand of the Valorous Charge	9
Aftermath	12
Key Dramatis Personae	14
An Undeniable Proposition	15
Meeting Silberthorne	16
The Cadre	19
Key Dramatis Personae	19
Into Uncharted Territory	20
Navigating the Uncharted	20
Derelict	21
Ancient Weapons	24
Reavers	25
Eaters of the Dead	25
Exodus	26
Key Dramatis Personae	28
Crossing the Boundary	29
The Sensoria Network	29
Rewards	30

Chapter II: The Whirling Realm

GM's Briefing and Chapter Synopsis	32
Gazetteer: Modren's Realm	34
The Worlds of Modren's Realm	34
The Den of Heresy	36
Silberthorne's Plan	36
Guests of the Heretic	38
Key Dramatis Personae	39
Trial by Flame	40
Preparations	41
The Fallen Magos	41
Master of the Fleet	44
The Pirate Prince	48
The Greenskin	52
The Enigma	56
Optional Encounter: The Fanatic	60
Key Dramatis Personae	61
Rewards	62

Chapter III: A Dynasty Falls

GM's Briefing and Chapter Synopsis	64
Into the Serpent's Lair	65
A Court of Heretics	66
The Trap is Sprung	67
Key Dramatis Personae	69
On Tainted Ground	69
Navigating Scathe	70
Palace Security	71
Communication Breakdown	71
Silencing the Forges	73
The Lair of the Heretek	73
Into the Darkness	74
XV8 Crisis Suit	77
XV88 Broadside Suit	78
The Ethereal	79
Key Dramatis Personae	81
Silencing the Signal	81
From Bad to Worse	81
The Vox-Shield Emitter	82
Communication Restored	84
A Reckoning	84
Battle in the Void	84
Duel With Damnation	86
Key Dramatis Personae	87
Conclusion	88

NPC Appendix

Dramatis Personae	90
Customised XV9 Hazard Suit	93
Supporting Cast	110
Tau NPCs	112
Important Vessels	116

INTRODUCTION

"It shall all be mine"

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

Ambition is the greatest strength of a Rogue Trader. It is his ambition that drives his ever-outward exploration and expansion of the Imperium of Man. Granted nearly limitless authority and scope by their Warrant of Trade, such men and women ever seek the next horizon, drawn towards new worlds and reaches of the galaxy yet swathed in the darkness beyond the light of mankind's great Imperium. They bring with them illumination, as each new world is brought to light and brought under the rightful control of the Rogue Trader and the Imperium he serves.

Yet there are those Rogue Traders whose ambition cannot be satisfied within the extraordinary bounds afforded his kind. Dominion over entire planetary systems in the name of the Emperor is too small an honour to sate the lust for power, glory, and profit possessed by some Rogue Traders.

Vir Modren is one such man, and he has set his sights on a stretch of void beyond the frontier of the Koronus Expanse. He has built a small empire out among the stars and guards it jealously, though in his greed and his ambition he desires ever more. He has gathered about him a fleet of renegade pirates, chaos reavers, and xenos corsairs, each with their own agendas and their own schemes, though each is but a means to an end for Modren.

Seeking to expand his dominion yet further, Modren now seeks to embrace yet more vile heresy in the form of xenotech and the artifice of Heretek technomancers. In his perversity he now attempts to master the wondrous technology of the Tau, that he might put it to use devastating those who would stand in the way of his unbridled expansion.

GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

Twilight Crusade is an adventure in three parts that focuses on the actions of Vir Modren and the politicking between his vassals. It takes the Explorers on a Grand Endeavour into the heart of Modren's Realm, alongside the acolytes of an ardent Inquisitor and his unexpected allies—a hunter cadre of Tau—from the far-flung reaches of the galaxy. The Explorers must venture deep into Modren's domain and negotiate the power-struggles of his many followers in order to gain entry to his personal fortress, where they can confront him directly.

The three chapters of this adventure form a Grand Endeavour that provides the GM with a framework to gauge the progress and success of the Explorers as they venture into Modren's Realm and navigate the intrigues of Modren's vassals. This Endeavour can be modified to suit the GM's needs and broken down into smaller sections or padded out with new goals depending on the actions of the Explorers. A detailed breakdown of the Grand Endeavour's objectives can be found at the end of each chapter of the adventure.

In addition, this adventure gives GMs the perfect opportunity to incorporate the content of the **TAU CHARACTER GUIDE**, as the warriors of that xenos race are featured extensively throughout.

CHAPTER I: INTO ENDLESS NIGHT

Chapter I opens as the Explorers stumble upon a massed naval battle between the Imperial Navy cruiser, the *Valourous Charge*, and several renegade ships. With the aid of the Explorers' ship, the *Valourous Charge* survives the battle but has suffered crippling damage and cannot continue. Thus, a man named Silberthorne contacts the Explorers and beseeches them for aid. Unbeknownst to the Explorers, Silberthorne is an Inquisitor pursuing the renegade Rogue Trader Vir Modren.

The Inquisitor fears that Modren, having seized several pieces of Tau technology as well as one of the mysterious Ethereal caste, might seek to use their secrets for his own dark agendas. Modren, with the help of fel allegiances, must be stopped.

Silberthorne seeks to uncover the outcast Rogue Trader's shrouded domain and stop him from unlocking the secrets of the Tau, putting an end his seditious treachery entirely. Aiding him in this is a cadre of Tau Fire Warriors led by the indomitable Commander Skyroar and honour-bound to rescue their lost Ethereal.

CHAPTER II: THE WHIRLING REALM

Chapter II takes the Explorers into Modren's twisted domain. There they must make their way to heart of the renegade's power. To do so, the Explorers must overcome Modren's servants and allies. Five in total, these renegades, xenos, and traitors are more than a match for the Explorers when acting together. Luckily for the Explorers, the disparate loyalties and ambitions of Modren's vassals weaken them, even while their combined savagery makes them dangerous.

To make their way through Modren's defences, the Explorers must somehow remove each of his allies in turn, whether they do so by defeating them on the field of battle, outmanoeuvring them politically, or turning them against their traitor master.

CHAPTER III: A DYNASTY FALLS

The final chapter takes place within the stronghold of Vir Modren. After overcoming his vassals, the Explorers receive an invitation to visit the court of the renegade Rogue Trader on his fortress world of Scathe. Whether this invitation is genuine or a trap depends on how the Explorers conducted themselves in the previous chapter.

Once they reach Scathe, the Explorers must infiltrate Modren's fortress and rescue the Ethereal from Modren's devoted Heretek, Magos Forcyz. During their explorations they uncover the true depth of Modren's blasphemy and must face the fel creations of Forcyz: twisted Daemon engines brought to form and foul life by Warp-born sorceries at Modren's behest.

With his allies defeated and his Warp-creations destroyed, Vir Modren's power base is broken. The Explorers must confront him face-to-face and bring him down. With this done, their service to Silberthorne is done and the Grand Endeavour is concluded.



**INTO ENDLESS
NIGHT**

**ADVENTURE
BACKGROUND**



DISTRESS CALL



**AN UNDENIABLE
PROPOSITION**



**INTO UNCHARTED
TERRITORY**



**CROSSING THE
BOUNDARY**



CHAPTER I: INTO ENDLESS NIGHT

"The unknown is simply that which I have not yet conquered."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

In the first chapter of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, the Explorers find themselves pulled into a quest to stop the renegade Rogue Trader Vir Modren from unlocking the secrets of the xenos species known as the Tau and end his ambitions to conquer the Koronus Expanse and beyond. The adventure opens with the Explorers thrust into an ongoing battle between dangerous reavers and a vessel of the Imperial Navy. Regardless of the battle's outcome, the Explorers receive a proposition they cannot turn down from a mysterious and influential man who identifies himself as Silberthorne. After this opening scene of desperate ship-to-ship combat, the Explorers have some time to catch their breath as they learn more details from Silberthorne and meet his allies—a Tau Hunter Cadre. Meeting aliens from the far side of the galaxy is a momentous event for most Explorers in itself. How this meeting plays out depends very much on the attitudes of the Explorers, and GMs must bear this in mind. In the remainder of the chapter, the Explorers make their way to the realm of the renegade Rogue Trader Vir Modren, guided by the Tau. Along the way, the Explorers encounter several challenges, from pirates in the service of Modren to marauding xenos. In addition to these potential combat encounters, however, the Explorers must overcome strange mysteries, tense negotiations, and even a bit of horror.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Chapter I of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE** thrusts a new Endeavour upon the Explorers without warning. During the course of a journey—whether by chance, fate, or the will of the Emperor—the Explorers' vessel exits the Warp in close proximity to a battle between an Imperial Navy cruiser known as the *Valorous Charge* and several renegade vessels. Despite the superior power of the *Valorous Charge*, the raiders have caught it in an ambush and outnumber it, leading to a slow but inexorable defeat for the valiant Navy ship. Whether the Explorers immediately choose to involve their vessel or not, they receive a vox-signal calling for help and offering a reward for doing so. Even with the Explorers' aid, however, at the conclusion of the battle the *Valorous Charge* is in no shape to continue its journey and might even be a dead hulk. At least one individual survives: a man named Silberthorne, at whose behest the *Valorous Charge* was undertaking its perilous journey deep into the Expanse. Though the Explorers might not discover the truth until later, Silberthorne is, in fact, an Inquisitor.

The Inquisitor had pressed the *Valorous Charge* into his service while within the Jericho Reach, pursuing the agents

of a renegade Rogue Trader named Vir Modren. While in the Jericho Reach, the Rogue Trader's servants encountered the xenos species known as the Tau and, along with a considerable amount of dangerous xenos technology, they absconded with a member of the Tau's leader caste, an Ethereal. This would be dangerous enough for any individual to possess, but Inquisitor Silberthorne knows Modren to be a traitor to humanity in the worst sense, having aligned himself with the Ruinous Powers for his own personal gain. Silberthorne's aim is to locate the outcast Rogue Trader's hidden realm, which he knows to be somewhere beyond the charted regions of the Koronus Expanse, and to stop him from unlocking the Tau's secrets. Silberthorne fears that should Modren gain insight into the technology of the Tau or the mysterious Ethereals who control that xenos race, it could pose a dire threat to the future of Mankind. For even if Modren is content to remain in his private empire amongst the far stars of the galaxy, the forces of the Archenemy of Mankind are already working through him. If not Modren himself, then another scion of Chaos will surely use this potent knowledge against the Imperium.

Silberthorne is a circumspect individual, and shares information about his mission and true objectives only as necessary (see the **Roleplaying Inquisitor Silberthorne** sidebar on page 8). He does whatever it takes to gain the aid of the Explorers, for without the *Valorous Charge*, he needs their assistance to reach Vir Modren's realm. After striking whatever bargain is necessary, the Explorers provide aid and transport for Silberthorne and his Tau allies (see **More than Mere Coin** on page 17 for more guidance on narrative motives Silberthorne might offer). It is only with the strange technology of the Tau that the Explorers can hope to find the distant and hidden realm of Vir Modren. As they journey beyond even the scantily charted reaches of the Koronus Expanse, the Explorers encounter a number of dangers that threaten to end their mission. Some of these take the form of individuals in service to the outcast Rogue Trader himself. For more information on Silberthorne, see his profile in the **NPC Appendix** on page 90.

ROGUE TRADER VIR MODREN

The Modren Dynasty is a venerable house that once held great influence and respect within the Imperium's halls of power. Scions of the Modren Dynasty led their ships alongside the Angevin Crusade in conquest of the Calyx Expanse, driving the enemies of humanity back into the shadows. While it is said that history repeats itself, this was not to be the case for the Modren Dynasty. For rather than exploring and conquering the Koronus Expanse in the name of the Emperor, Vir Modren, the wielder of the dynasty's Warrant of Trade, fell to his own ambition and the dark lures of forbidden knowledge. The black depths between stars are home to innumerable threats, and while any Rogue Trader knows of the danger to body and ship, just as dangerous are the moral threats. It is, perhaps, a testament to the resolve and strength of will of Rogue Traders that it is only a relative few who succumb to the temptations of the stars, for beyond the boundaries of the Imperium, a Rogue Trader holds limitless power and there is little to hold a Rogue Trader in check

save his own will. For some, it is no large step to move from speaking with the authority of the Imperium to believing himself beholden to no authority save his own. This is the fate of Vir Modren, whose lust for power has led his once-great dynasty into damnation.

As recently as two generations ago, the Modren Dynasty was a successful (if oft-overshadowed) house, with a veritable flotilla to its name and holdings on a hundred worlds. Like many Rogue Trader houses with ties to the Calixis Sector, the Koronus Expanse was the obvious next frontier, ripe for exploitation. Also, like so many Rogue Trader houses, the scions of the Modren Dynasty encountered great loss in the uncharted reaches of the Expanse, losing many ships and promising heirs to the predations of pirates, xenos, and stellar phenomena, with many more simply vanishing with no cause ever determined. However, the Modren Dynasty faced particularly ill fortune in the Koronus Expanse, and as it lost priceless voidships to the depths, its once-mighty fleet shrank to a handful of ships. Though some within the dynasty favoured a withdrawal from the Koronus Expanse, others argued that the house had already paid too high a price to abandon the Koronus Expanse, and that perseverance would reap rewards. Of this latter camp was Vir Modren. As further time passed and the Modren Dynasty suffered calamities that stripped its assets further, casting its sons and daughters adrift in the void, the Warrant of Trade passed to Vir. Officially endowed with the authority of a Rogue Trader, Vir Modren chose to redouble his house's efforts in the Koronus Expanse, personally leading

the bulk of the Dynasty's remaining forces. Modren intended to pass further through the Expanse than any other, ensuring that he would be the first to claim whatever treasures awaited. As Vir Modren made his perilous journey, skirting between the Rifts of Hecaton and Unbeholden Reaches, he passed beyond the generally accepted boundaries of the Koronus Expanse, into space that was truly and completely uncharted.

Years passed and Modren's fleet did not return, although several wrecked hulks of ships that had been amongst his forces have been found drifting derelict in the Koronus Expanse, washed upon the currents of the Warp. Such events have only fuelled the common assumption that Modren's endeavour cost him his life, ending the once-mighty dynasty. This could not be further from the truth, however. Beyond even the nebulous grasp of the Imperium that extends to the Koronus Expanse, Vir Modren sought to establish his own realm, a kingdom entirely independent and answerable to none but himself. Although it is the duty of Rogue Traders to colonise new worlds in the name of the Emperor, this was not Modren's intent. Overtaken with ambition, Modren turned to dark forces in order to make his vision a reality, allying himself with aliens and even courting the powers of the Dark Gods.

For more information on Modren's realm, see page 29; for details on the wicked Rogue Trader himself and his personal history, see his profile in the **NPC Appendix** on page 94.



DISTRESS CALL

"Out here, in the Expanse, you cannot expect anyone to come to your aid. You must rely solely on your own strength."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

TWILIGHT CRUSADE begins with the Explorers unexpectedly encountering Silberthorne. The Inquisitor's quest to find and stop the outcast Rogue Trader Vir Modren faces the threat of an abrupt ending under the guns of a number of piratical renegade vessels. The impact of this scene, and those to follow, is at its highest if the Explorers (and players) are caught by surprise. For this reason, it is recommended that the GM insert this encounter into a journey related to his ongoing campaign. This could be a routine trip to visit a colony or other holding of the Explorers' dynasty, or even in the midst of an unrelated adventure or Endeavour. Assuming that the GM intends for the Explorers to return to their original plan later, it's best to use an encounter that isn't time sensitive, lest the players resist abandoning their original plan in order to aid Silberthorne.

GM GUIDANCE: ROLEPLAYING INQUISITOR SILBERTHORNE

Silberthorne is an enigmatic figure, and the GM should attempt to reinforce this through his portrayal of the Inquisitor. One key thing to keep in mind is that Silberthorne does not broadcast his status as an Inquisitor; to do so would not be in keeping with his philosophy and preferred method of operation. Silberthorne prefers to act with subtlety, often performing his operations entirely through his agents and Acolytes, without ever becoming personally involved. Silberthorne presents an air of wisdom and authority, speaking softly but with certainty. He speaks only as necessary, taking care not to waste any words, and is as likely to answer a question with a raised eyebrow as a verbal response. In his interactions with the Explorers, Silberthorne does not reveal any information before he deems it necessary, providing the Explorers with only the bare minimum knowledge they need to fulfil their roles in his mission. This means that the rate at which Silberthorne reveals information depends on the Explorers; if they ask more questions or refuse to cooperate without knowing more, Silberthorne reveals more than he otherwise would.

A CALL TO ADVENTURE

Regardless of the reason for their journey, when the Explorers' vessel exits the Warp, they quickly discover that a battle is raging nearby. The particular location of this battle is not defined, so that it can be set in any part of the Koronus Expanse, depending on the Explorers' current activities. It could occur in the darkness between stars, with the Explorers only happening upon it as they drop out of the Warp in order to adjust their course or allow their Navigator to fix upon the Astronomican, or it could occur in a star system, perhaps even close to a planet in which the Explorers have some stake.

Wherever the GM decides to set this encounter, once the Explorers' vessel translates out of the Warp, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

No sooner do you exit the tumultuous Warp into the seeming calm of realspace than the augurs detect the presence of multiple vessels less than 30,000 kilometres from your location. Upon further scanning, energy fluctuations indicate that approximately four vessels are engaged in combat. Scant moments later, a vox-hail comes in. Shrouded by layers of static, no doubt due to the duress placed on the transmitting machine spirits, a deep, forceful voice announces, "This is Captain Hesteron of the Battlefleet Calixis warship Valorous Charge to unknown Imperial vessel. We are under attack and request immediate aid. In the name of the Emperor, lend us your assistance!"

For many groups of Explorers, simply doing their duty to assist the servants of the Immortal Emperor is enough incentive to offer their assistance. The possibility of gaining an ally amongst the Imperial Navy as a reward, or at least having a favour owed them, might suffice for many. Others might need further incentive. If the Explorers ask about the possibility of payment or reward, or after several minutes of deliberation, a different voice comes over the vox—that of Silberthorne. At this time, he does not announce his identity as an Inquisitor. If the Explorers do not make the decision to assist the *Valorous Charge* after several minutes, or otherwise need encouragement, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The vox crackles to life once again with a message from the Valorous Charge, but this time a calm, measured, almost whispering voice issues forth. "Fellow servants of the Emperor, I have no doubt that you will assist us, as duty dictates. However, I feel I should make clear that you will be well-rewarded for your efforts."

The Explorers might wish to know about their promised reward before assisting. The speaker, who identifies himself only as Silberthorne, urges them to hurry, as time is of the essence, and assures them that they can discuss the reward as soon as the *Valorous Charge* is out of danger. For advice on handling this and other exchanges with the enigmatic Inquisitor, see the **Roleplaying Inquisitor Silberthorne** sidebar, left. Silberthorne has absolutely no desire to reveal his true identity as an Inquisitor at this time. However, the situation is desperate, and he is willing to do so as a last resort if the Explorers otherwise seem unwilling to enter the battle. If this occurs, it leaves Silberthorne with a decidedly sour first impression of the Explorers, which the GM should bear in mind during subsequent interactions.

LAST STAND OF THE VALOROUS CHARGE

Whether because of a true sense of duty or with the promise of a reward, the Explorers move to engage the enemy ships attacking the *Valorous Charge*. As the Explorers close on the battle, either their augurs or visuals show the *Valorous Charge* locked in desperate battle with three smaller vessels, while a fourth assailant ship drifts nearby as a burning hulk. If the Explorers possess more than one vessel of their own, or a particularly powerful ship, such as a cruiser, the GM should add one or perhaps even more enemy vessels, at his discretion. The fight to rescue the *Valorous Charge* should not be overwhelming, but it should pose a reasonable challenge to the Explorers.

The ships attacking the *Valorous Charge* are crewed by renegades, piratical raiders in the service of Vir Modren. They are remorseless killers who have forsaken the Emperor's light, and now serve only their own greed and bloodlust. They maraud as they choose, paying a portion of their loot to Modren in exchange for support and a safe harbour beyond the Imperium's justice. The renegades' attack on the *Valorous Charge* represents a rare instance in which their victim is more than just a target of opportunity. Modren suspected that the activities of his servants in the Jericho Reach did not go unnoticed and tasked the Raiders with intercepting and destroying any pursuer.

When the Explorers close on the battle, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Ahead, you see the valiant form of a Navy cruiser engaged in combat with several renegade vessels of Raider-class, as another drifts nearby, a dead hulk. The smaller vessels surround the Valorous Charge, subjecting the mighty vessel to a relentless torrent of fire, pressing the advantage of numbers and a surprise attack. Although the Valorous Charge has vanquished one of its assailants, the Navy ship has clearly suffered significant damage, and flames billow from the hull as oxygen escapes the vessel from massive rents, like blood spilling from a wounded animal as a pack of wolves close in for the kill.

THE BATTLE UNFOLDS

Although the Raider-class vessels of the renegades lack the power of the *Valorous Charge*, they caught the Navy vessel in an ambush, using their superior numbers and the element of surprise to their advantage. The *Valorous Charge* suffered considerable damage in the unexpected attack, and although it was able to destroy one of the renegade vessels, it stands no chance of overcoming the others without the Explorers' help.

When the Explorers arrive in the area, the *Valorous Charge* has already suffered significant damage, and several components have been damaged or destroyed, so that even if it survives the battle it cannot take Silberthorne any further. Treat the *Valorous Charge* as having suffered an Engines Crippled Critical Hit result, with its Speed reduced to 1. In addition, the vessel's titanforge lance battery was damaged in a lucky hit during the enemy's opening salvo, leaving the warship at a distinct disadvantage. As the battle progresses, the *Valorous Charge* suffers additional damage.

If the Explorers do not intervene, the raiders destroy the *Valorous Charge* within five Strategic Rounds, while the *Valorous Charge* cripples one more of its assailants in that time. Assuming the Explorers do intervene, the result of the battle depends on their own success. On one end of the spectrum, the Explorers might suffer from poor luck and tactical choices, and end up doing no significant damage to the renegades. However, even drawing some of the macrocannon fire that would otherwise have targeted the *Valorous Charge* provides help, allowing the Navy cruiser to continue fighting longer and inflict more damage on its enemies.

There are a number of ways the GM can handle this battle and the *Valorous Charge*. However, to avoid leaving the players as mere observers, and to ensure the outcome of the battle progresses the story appropriately, it is recommended that the GM handle the actions of the *Valorous Charge* and the raiders directly attacking it narratively. The Explorers, and attacks directed against their vessel, should follow the normal rules.

Assuming the Explorers do nothing, the following sequence of events plays out over the course of the battle, beginning with the Strategic Round in which the Explorers arrive on the scene:

- **First Strategic Round:** The *Valorous Charge* is struck dead-on by the macrocannons of one of the raiders, and suffers an Internal Damage Critical Hit result.
- **Second Strategic Round:** The *Valorous Charge* suffers no substantial damage this round, as its void shields absorb incoming fire.
- **Third Strategic Round:** The *Valorous Charge* suffers another volley from its attackers' macrocannons. The damage is severe, and the vessel is now Crippled.
- **Fourth Strategic Round:** The *Valorous Charge* suffers a Decapitation Critical Hit result. Captain Hesteron is slain almost instantly, but Silberthorne and his Acolytes withdraw from the bridge just prior to the deadly hit. If the Explorers are in vox contact with the *Valorous Charge* when this occurs, they hear the horrific sounds of shearing metal and exploding terminals, and the screams of the bridge crew, as Captain Hesteron is cut off mid-sentence.
- **Fifth Strategic Round:** The *Valorous Charge* is caught between the guns of two of the raiders and its void shields are overpowered. In a cascade of explosions, the *Valorous Charge* is all but destroyed. It counts as suffering a Catastrophic Damage Critical Hit result, leaving it as a smouldering hulk. Fortunately, its plasma drives or Warp engine do not detonate.



If the Explorers involve themselves in the battle, they have the potential to offset the damage to the *Valorous Charge* and potentially save it. By damaging enemy vessels or absorbing firepower that otherwise would have struck the *Valorous Charge*, the Explorers can buy additional time for the Navy ship. Each time the Explorers' vessel destroys one of the raiders, or suffers a Critical Hit, or loses Structural Integrity, it delays the next effect on the *Valorous Charge* by one Strategic Round. For instance, without interference, a raider's attack destroyed the bridge of the *Valorous Charge* on the fourth Strategic Round after the Explorers arrive. If the Explorers' vessel suffers a Critical Hit during the third Strategic Round, the *Valorous Charge* does not suffer any ill effects during the fourth round, but loses its bridge in the fifth round, unless the Explorers inflict or suffer additional damage before that time (then it is not destroyed until the sixth round).

During the battle, the Explorers can, of course, communicate via the vox with Captain Hesteron and/or Silberthorne, discussing tactics and generally benefitting from their alliance and cooperation. At the GM's discretion, particularly clever plans might also prolong the *Valorous Charge's* life, in the same way as the Explorers' vessel suffering or inflicting damage.

The raiders are under orders to destroy the *Valorous Charge*, not the Explorers' vessel, and consequently focus their attacks on the *Valorous Charge* unless the Explorers prove themselves a significant threat. If the Explorers damage or destroy one of the raiders, the remaining renegade vessels respond appropriately. If the *Valorous Charge* is significantly damaged, the raiders might turn their attention fully to the Explorers'

vessel, intending to finish off the crippled Navy cruiser after dealing with the immediate threat the Explorers pose. If the *Valorous Charge* still poses a threat, the raiders might continue to focus fire on it, hoping to neutralise one target as quickly as possible, rather than split their fire. If the Explorers destroy at least one of the raiders and it becomes obvious that they will lose the battle, the remaining renegades attempt to flee.

Boarding Action

If it fits his group, the GM might wish to have the Explorers board the *Valorous Charge* in order to help repel boarders as part of the ongoing space battle. If the GM wishes to introduce the Explorers to the Tau Cadre somewhat earlier, this also presents an opportunity for the Explorers to see the xenos in action, as they fight to secure the vessel against the renegades.

During the battle, the GM can alert the players to the fact that one of the Raiders has launched a boarding action against the *Valorous Charge*. Some groups of Explorers might decide on their own to help out, or the GM might have either Captain Hesteron or Silberthorne contact the Explorers and request aid in repelling the boarders. The Explorers can only be in a single place at a time, and so this encounter is best resolved by providing the Explorers with a distinctive objective to hold. If the Explorers have a plan of their own, the GM can work with this, otherwise, Captain Hesteron requests the Explorers' aid in holding one or more specific locations against the attackers. If the GM is using this element alongside a space battle, it is probably best to have a single combat encounter aboard the *Valorous Charge*. However, if

all of the Explorers deem it appropriate to come aboard the *Valorous Charge*, the GM can handle the space battle occurring around them narratively, and focus on the boots-on-deck combat. In this case, the GM could have the Explorers hold a single point against successive waves of attackers, or move from one location to another, assisting the Naval armsmen of the *Valorous Charge*.

During their time on board the *Valorous Charge*, if the GM chooses, the Explorers can encounter some of the Tau Hunter Cadre, potentially alongside Silberthorne. It should be clear that the Tau are also fighting to defend the *Valorous Charge*, particularly if the Explorers have a history of being trigger-happy when encountering new xenos. The Tau could already be present at a junction or bulkhead the Explorers are arriving to defend, holding back the oncoming renegades with ranged volleys of fire. Alternatively, the GM could wait to introduce the Tau when the Explorers are in a dire situation, such as facing overwhelming odds, running low on ammunition, or after suffering grievous wounds—or some combination of all three. In this case, the Tau could come to the Explorers' aid, perhaps even saving their lives, adding further incentive to assist Silberthorne and his xenos allies.

Regardless of the specific situation in which the Explorers encounter the Tau during the defence of the *Valorous Charge*, it should be an opportunity to showcase the impressive firepower of the Tau and their seamless military discipline. The Explorers do not witness the entire Hunter Cadre at this point, but they should encounter, at the least, a squad of six to twelve Fire Warriors (see page 115). In addition, should the GM wish to really display the fearsome technology of the Tau, he might include one or more Crisis Battlesuits (see page 77).

During any interaction with the Tau at this stage, the GM should keep certain points in mind. The Tau are ignorant of the Imperial hierarchy, and do not understand the significance of a Rogue Trader's title. In addition, they are most likely to assume that the Explorers are additional Navy crew; although, they might puzzle over the PCs' lack of Navy uniforms. In order to smooth over any "communications difficulties" and avoid this encounter turning into a conflict between the Explorers and Tau, the GM might wish to include Silberthorne alongside the Tau forces. However, introducing Silberthorne at this point might accelerate some of the revelations that he offers the PCs; in effect, some of the interactions and information that would normally occur after the battle might come into play during it, requiring adjustment to the **Unlikely Passengers** section on page 13 and even the events of **An Undeniable Proposition**, beginning on page 15.

In terms of opposition, use the Renegade profile on page 373 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook to represent the rank-and-file renegades boarding the *Valorous Charge*. The number of renegades confronting the Explorers should depend on whether the combat aboard the ship is the Explorers' primary contribution to the battle, or merely supplemental to their actions in the ship combat, as well as the support they have in the form of Navy armsmen, Tau warriors, and their own armsmen and servants brought over from their ship. As a baseline, the Explorers need to

defeat double their number in renegades, although the GM should increase this number for particularly combat-capable groups or if the average Rank of the Explorers is 4 or higher. In addition to those the Explorers must deal with personally are a number of renegades roughly equal to the number of NPCs assisting the Explorers. Rather than rolling attacks and damage for each friendly and enemy NPC, which would bog down the game unnecessarily, the GM should simply narrate the combat occurring around them as the Explorers cut down the enemies attacking them personally. Unless some exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise, the friendly NPCs should defeat those opposing them, while suffering casualties of approximately half their number. If the supporting NPCs include Tau Fire Warriors or Crisis Suits, they should do significantly better, as the Tau's advanced weaponry scythes down the poorly armoured renegades.

If the GM chooses to have the Explorers fight aboard the ship as a major component of the ongoing battle, he can throw several waves of renegades at them. These could occur in a single locale that the Explorers are attempting to hold, or in several areas as the Explorers fight to cleanse the ship. If handling the void battle between the ships narratively, the Explorers should face three waves of renegades, with a renegade officer leading the final wave (use the Void Pirate Captain profile on page 373 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook).



AFTERMATH

The aftermath of the battle depends very much on the Explorers' actions and their success. Regardless of the outcome, it is crucial that Silberthorne survives and contacts the Acolytes to offer his proposal (see **An Undeniable Proposition** on page 15). Ultimately, handling the events in the direct wake of the battle is subject to the GM's discretion, as any number of factors that arise during the battle could influence the following events, not least of which is the condition of the *Valorous Charge* and its crew. The primary outcome is that Silberthorne and the Explorers arrange to meet, either aboard their own ship or on the *Valorous Charge*, if it survives. If the Explorers save the *Valorous Charge*, Captain Hesteron personally thanks them and, if they have not already spoken with him, introduces Silberthorne. Should the raiders succeed in destroying the *Valorous Charge*, they quickly depart, fearing retribution (and, hopefully, the Explorers). Shortly after, the Explorers receive a vox signal originating amidst the wrecked hulk, as Silberthorne contacts them using the vox aboard an intact shuttle craft.

In any case, Silberthorne explains to the Explorers that he is in need of their services in order to complete a mission of great importance and that he can reward them well for their assistance. Depending on the players and the GM's preferences, the details of the mission might come into the discussion at this point, or later, after meeting in person. Silberthorne prefers to discuss such delicate matters in person. As always, he reveals only the bare minimum of information in order to convince the Explorers to meet with him and discuss his proposition. However, Silberthorne does not say anything about the Tau—the Explorers should encounter them face-to-face, either during a boarding action as detailed on page 10 or when they first come aboard the Explorers' vessel with Silberthorne.

THE FATE OF THE VALOROUS CHARGE

Depending on the Explorers' participation in the battle, at its conclusion the *Valorous Charge* could be damaged, crippled, or destroyed. If the Explorers saved the *Valorous Charge* from certain destruction at the raiders' hands, they have earned the respect and appreciation of Captain Hesteron, who could be a potential ally in future endeavours. However, even if the *Valorous Charge* suffered no further damage after the Explorers' intervention, the condition of its engines and other damage leaves it unfit to complete Silberthorne's mission. Additionally, once Silberthorne learns that the Explorers are a Rogue Trader and his allies, he sees them as much more useful for infiltrating Modren's domain.

If the *Valorous Charge* survives, Silberthorne orders Captain Hesteron to turn back for repairs. He does this in private, "off-camera," so as not to reveal his status as an Inquisitor to the Explorers. Over the vox, Silberthorne explains to the Explorers that he has a proposition for them that has the potential to be very lucrative, and requests to discuss the details in person.

If the Explorers ask about his connection to the *Valorous Charge*, or assume that he is a Naval officer, Silberthorne also explains at this time that the *Valorous Charge* was escorting him to his destination and that with the damage it suffered in battle, he now requires the

Explorers to do so. Silberthorne is adamant that further details must be discussed in person. If the Explorers prove resistant or overly inquisitive, Silberthorne states that he needs their assistance in dealing with a traitor to the Imperium, and that the rewards will be great.

If the *Valorous Charge* is destroyed in the battle, Silberthorne survives, along with his acolytes and Tau allies. As the situation of the vessel becomes desperate, the Inquisitor and his allies withdraw to shuttles and landers—both those belonging to the Imperial Navy and a small handful of Tau shuttles. Like the Imperial lighters, the Tau craft are capable only of short-range travel, and it would be impossible to complete the journey to Modren's realm using these shuttles. In a dangerous gambit, the shuttles stay close to the *Valorous Charge* even as it is subjected to enemy fire, and conceal themselves amongst the wreckage after its destruction, in order to evade the renegades. Once the renegade vessels have departed or been defeated by the Explorers, Silberthorne contacts the Explorers by vox and the surviving craft reveal their presence.



OPTIONAL: A DESPERATE RESCUE

As an alternative to the outcome described above, the GM can call upon the Explorers to rescue Silberthorne and his allies as the *Valorous Charge* draws close to its demise. This adds a degree of complexity to the battle for the *Valorous Charge*, but also has the potential to further entangle the Explorers with Silberthorne, adding additional incentive for their continued cooperation.

After the *Valorous Charge* becomes Crippled (in the fourth Strategic Round after the Explorers arrive, unless their actions delay it), Silberthorne contacts the Explorers' vessel directly by vox to request a rescue. The situation is dire, and Silberthorne invokes his authority as an Inquisitor if necessary. However, he much prefers to keep this fact under wraps for the time being, and initially attempts to convince the Explorers to rescue him through other means. Silberthorne initially asks the Explorers for assistance in evacuating important passengers from the ship. If the Explorers delay or ask about a reward, Silberthorne promises them great payment for their assistance, though he remains vague about the specifics.

Rescuing Silberthorne from the doomed *Valorous Charge* is a dangerous affair, further complicated if the Explorers' vessel is currently under attack. There are two primary means by which the Explorers can retrieve Silberthorne and his allies from the Navy cruiser, although, as always, the GM should keep an open mind and consider whatever plans the players hatch. The first method is to retrieve the passengers using shuttles, lighters, or other small craft. The second is for the Explorers to bring their own vessel into contact with the *Valorous Charge*, in much the same way as if launching a boarding action. While the second

is arguably more difficult, both options are dangerous; the first leaves the passengers all but exposed to the enemy while aboard the shuttles, and the second exposes the Explorers' vessel to greater danger. In addition to the other concerns, the Explorers have only one Strategic Round in which to rescue Silberthorne and the others unless their ship suffers damage, they deal damage to an enemy ship, or otherwise take an action the GM deems suitable to buy additional time for the *Valorous Charge*.

In order to evacuate the passengers in a lighter or shuttle, the Explorers' vessel must be within 5 VUs of the *Valorous Charge*. The number of passengers Silberthorne wishes to evacuate—himself, his Acolytes, and the Tau Hunter Cadre—is too many for a single craft, unless the Explorers have access to the kind of bulk lander usually used for military exercises. The Explorers can either attempt to evacuate the passengers in numerous shuttles during the same Strategic Round, or one at a time over the course of two or more rounds. This latter approach, however, is doomed to fail unless the Explorers' actions also delay the destruction of the *Valorous Charge*. Reaching the *Valorous Charge* under combat conditions requires the pilot of a shuttle to pass an **Ordinary (+10) Pilot (Space Craft) Test**. It takes some time to load the passengers, and the shuttle must wait until the beginning of the following Strategic Round to depart, at which time the pilot must make another **Ordinary (+10) Pilot (Space Craft) Test** to return to the Explorers' ship with the rescued passengers. If the pilot fails the test, it takes an additional Strategic Round to collect the passengers due to docking at the wrong bay or taking a circuitous route to avoid enemy fire. If the shuttle passes within 1 VU of an enemy vessel, its pilot suffers a penalty to his Pilot (Space Craft) Test in accordance with that vessel's Turret Rating. If the shuttle is subject to enemy turret fire and the pilot fails the skill test by four or more degrees, it is shot down.

The second option requires the Explorers' vessel to come within 1 VU of the *Valorous Charge*, and the helmsman to pass a **Difficult (-10) Pilot (Space Craft) + Manoeuvrability Test**. While "docked" in this way, the Explorers' vessel cannot take Manoeuvre Actions. In the following Strategic Round, the helmsman must make another identical test to safely separate from the *Valorous Charge* with the rescued passengers.

If the Explorers are unable to rescue Silberthorne before the *Valorous Charge* is destroyed, the Inquisitor and his xenos allies nonetheless survive of their own efforts, as described on page 12. While this is necessary for the plot of the adventure, the players should not be under the impression that the outcome was predetermined or that their actions were inconsequential. One way the GM can avoid this is by incorporating negative effects short of the deaths of Silberthorne and his allies. For instance, Silberthorne might be injured during the ship's destruction, by shrapnel from an exploding terminal or pinned beneath a falling support beam. In addition, the Tau might suffer any number of casualties, or damaged or destroyed vehicles. When the Explorers retrieve the passengers from the wreckage of the *Valorous Charge*, the effects of their failure to rescue them prior to the vessel's destruction should be obvious in the sight of the injured Inquisitor and the many bloodied and broken Tau warriors.



UNLIKELY PASSENGERS

Although if the Explorers successfully defend the *Valorous Charge* it might not be necessary for them to come face-to-face with the Tau until after opening talks with Silberthorne, if they board the *Valorous Charge* or must rescue the passengers, they encounter the xenos. Depending on the outlook of the Explorers, this could range from merely surprising to problematic. If the Explorers balk at the idea of rescuing the xenos while leaving the thousands of Navy crew to go down with their ship, Silberthorne announces calmly but forcibly that their survival is necessary for his own mission, which is of dire importance. Once again, Silberthorne is willing to reveal his identity as an Inquisitor, but only as a last resort; it leaves a foul impression should the Explorers force this.

For their part, the Tau hold no particular resentment or enmity toward the Explorers. Further, such is the importance of rescuing the Ethereal, that the Tau are willing to overlook many insults, up to and including violent "misunderstandings" if they believe the Explorers' help to be necessary in accomplishing their mission (as they do, once Silberthorne reaches this conclusion).

For more information on introducing the Tau to the Explorers, see **Meeting Silberthorne**, on page 16.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs play an important role in this part of **Chapter I**.

Silberthorne

At this stage in the adventure, the man known as Silberthorne takes every measure to avoid revealing his identity as an Inquisitor, doing so only if it becomes necessary to ensure the success of his mission. Silberthorne is cordial in his interactions with the Explorers, seeing them as a potential boon to his mission (and a necessity, once the *Valorous Charge* sustains extensive damage). However, Silberthorne is as cautious as he is pragmatic, and attempts to gain the measure of the Explorers prior to entrusting them with the success of his mission. To this end he observes their behaviour, from how they respond to his cryptic promises to how they deal with the renegade ships. Although it adds difficulty to his efforts to remain circumspect, Silberthorne begrudgingly admires Explorers who question his role aboard a Navy ship or other incongruous aspects of the situation. Such lateral thinking and questioning, while seen as dangerous throughout the Imperium at large, is exactly what Silberthorne anticipates needing once within Modren's realm.

GM GUIDANCE:

SILBERTHORNE'S IDENTITY

Throughout **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, Silberthorne attempts to conceal his true identity as an Inquisitor. While some groups of players might accept that Silberthorne is a powerful individual who prefers to keep the source of his power private, or content themselves with reaching the conclusion that he is likely an Inquisitor on their own, others might fixate on the question. Some degree of supposition and even snooping can add interest and tension to the adventure, but the GM should not allow it to get to the point that it derails the adventure. If the Explorers (or players) make clear that they are unwilling to proceed with Silberthorne's plan without knowing his identity, the GM should have him reveal that he is an Inquisitor—in a suitably dramatic fashion, of course. This might range from a rare moment of anger on Silberthorne's part to calmly revealing his rosette, a small, crimson symbol of the Inquisition. The exact manner of the revelation should depend on the Explorers' actions that prompt it. In any case, the revelation should be sobering for the Explorers, perhaps even frightening if they have acted in a disrespectful or confrontational manner toward Silberthorne.

Captain Ontkean Hesteron of the *Valorous Charge*

Ontkean Hesteron is captain of the Navy cruiser *Valorous Charge*, of Battlefleet Calixis. He is the first to ask the Explorers for aid, with Silberthorne stepping in if they do not seem receptive to helping without promise of a reward. As a primarily by-the-book officer, housing xenos aboard his ship makes him more than a bit uneasy, but he knows better than to try and gainsay the word of an Inquisitor.

Hesteron also understands that Silberthorne wishes to keep his presence, his identity, and that of his Tau allies as discrete as possible. For this reason, the vast majority of the crew are unaware of the Inquisitor or the Tau, or even that they are no longer in the Jericho Reach. Hesteron is an honourable man, and if the Explorers lend their aid, and he survives, he remembers them in the future, should they require any favour within the bounds of Navy protocol.



AN UNDENIABLE PROPOSITION

"While I find the Tau's philosophy troubling, I cannot but agree with certain facets. Perhaps most notably, the maxim that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. After all, must not sacrifices be made every day that humanity might live?"

—*The Private Journals of Inquisitor Silberthorne*

Once the Explorers have driven off or destroyed the renegade ships (or once the rebels have destroyed the *Valorous Charge*), Silberthorne contacts the Explorers to arrange a meeting to discuss the particulars of the business proposition he has for them. The Explorers might understandably suspect that there is much more to the situation than Silberthorne is letting on. An Explorer can pass a **Difficult (–10) Scrutiny Test** to detect that Silberthorne is, indeed, hiding something but that he is also sincere in his promise to reward the Explorers well for their aid. Silberthorne is amenable to meeting the Explorers on their own vessel or on the *Valorous Charge* if it is still intact.

In truth, commandeering a Navy vessel is far afield of Silberthorne's typical operations, but he had few choices for passing through the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate and pursuing his quarry across the vastness of the Koronus Expanse. In fact, although he does not say it, obtaining the assistance of the Explorers is a great boon in Silberthorne's eyes, for unlike a Navy ship-of-the-line, a Rogue Trader has the potential to enter

Modren's domain through duplicity and guile, rather than brute force. While it is true that Navy officers might go rogue (as is, in fact, the case with Modren's master of the fleet, Sabina Alsunet), Modren is bound to subject such would-be vassals to greater scrutiny. Consequently, Silberthorne views the Explorers and their vessel as better suited to his needs than the *Valorous Charge*, even if it survives the battle more-or-less intact.

This portion of the adventure consists almost entirely of social interactions between the Explorers, Silberthorne, and Shas'o Ja'Vra. As such, how the following events unfold depends largely on how the Explorers conduct themselves. For Explorers skilled in matters of diplomacy and social grace, this presents a real opportunity to shine, and it is recommended that the GM allow conversations to go on for as long as seems natural and the players remain engaged. As with other social encounters, the primary element should be roleplaying, with Skill Tests serving in a supplemental fashion. These interactions serve primarily to advance the story, and so there is no real way for the Explorers to "fail" in this, regardless of poor word choices or dice rolls. However, if the Explorers behave poorly or fail abysmally on social Skill Tests, this can nonetheless have a negative impact in several ways. If the Explorers leave Silberthorne or Shas'o Ja'Vra with a negative first impression, this can and should impact future interactions and encounters, with the NPCs providing less assistance beyond the minimum required to complete their own objectives. Conversely, if the Explorers impress Silberthorne and the Tau, they are more likely to offer assistance in the way of advice and military support from the Hunter Cadre. Another area in which the Explorers' success can have a tangible impact is in the rewards they obtain from Silberthorne in exchange for their service.

GM GUIDANCE: XENOS EXPLORERS

Although it might seem that a group of Explorers that includes xenos Explorers should have no problems accepting the Tau Cadre, this is not necessarily the case. If the Explorers include Ork characters, such as the Freebooter Career from *INTO THE STORM* or the Weirdboy introduced in *THE NAVIS PRIMER*, this adds an additional level of difficulty in relations with the Tau. Although the Tau Empire seeks to incorporate as many alien races as possible, it long ago gave up on any hopes of peaceful interactions with Orks, adopting a policy of extermination or avoidance. Battles against the Orks have been some of the costliest and longest-running of the Tau Empire's many wars, and enmity for the greenskins runs deep. Shas'o Ja'Vra is shocked to see Orks serving aboard a Rogue Trader vessel, not only due to familiarity with the Imperium's xenophobic ways, but with the Orks' unchecked aggression and violence. Although she is willing to tolerate nearly any problem in order to rescue Ethereal Aun'Roh, the presence of an Ork adds considerable strain to any interaction, and she prefers to avoid such a creature when possible.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Shas'o is pleased to see a Kroot character amongst the Explorers. Ja'Vra, like all Tau, wishes that the Kroot would fully embrace the Greater Good and cease their mercenary ways. However, she understands that, at least so far, it is one of several unfortunate traits of the Kroot that they are unable to evolve beyond. Nonetheless, Kroot represent a link to the Tau Empire, and the presence of one aboard the Explorer's vessel increases Ja'Vra's trust in the Explorers.

Dark Eldar Explorers are unlikely to care much about these lesser beings, but the Tau are not overly fond of these ancient predators. Ja'Vra is curt with any Dark Eldar Explorers, with guarded respect for their power but disdain for their cruelty.

As to the most prominent aliens aboard the vessel (humans, obviously), Ja'Vra is somewhat neutral—her history involves violent conflict against the forces of the Imperium, but her duty outweighs any such concerns. Further, she hopes that the Imperium might someday be brought into the growing Tau Empire, finding its place beneath the grand banner of the Greater Good. She is sufficiently circumspect, however, not to mention this desire in specificity unless she believes that it could not possibly endanger her pressing mission.

Note also that this is a good opportunity to introduce any Tau Explorers, if any of the players wish to use the rules for Tau Explorers presented in the *TAU CHARACTER SUPPLEMENT* and the GM allows it. Tau Explorers might share some of their Shas'o's sentiments regarding aliens (such as Orks, Kroot, Eldar, and humans) or might be more open-minded (and some might say naïve) than their Commander, as their players see fit.

MEETING SILBERTHORNE

If the Explorers have not already met Silberthorne during the battle on board the *Valorous Charge* or while rescuing him and his allies in the midst of the mighty cruiser's death throes, the meeting to discuss his proposition in more detail is their first face-to-face encounter. Meeting Silberthorne for the first time, the Explorers should note both a lack of ostentation in his dress and appearance as well as the aura of calm authority that emanates from him. The location where they first meet Silberthorne is primarily left to the Explorers' discretion, whether it be in a hangar bay as he emerges from a lighter, in a formal stateroom, or on the bridge.

Many Inquisitors surround themselves with trusted servants and operatives. Silberthorne is no exception, though he keeps his warrior band small, in fitting with his preference for discrete, covert work. When the Explorers meet Silberthorne, he is accompanied by two retainers with the appearance of a bodyguard and an aged scribe, respectively. The first, a man named Diamnas Char, does indeed fulfil the role of bodyguard, although he is much more besides. Char cuts an imposing figure—tall, broad-shouldered, and heavily muscled, with his hair cropped close in a military cut. Silberthorne's other agent, Gulette Anhd, also includes the protection of her master amongst her duties, although she accomplishes this in a more esoteric fashion. Anhd's scholarly, even frail, appearance belies her abilities as a powerful psyker. Both acolytes stay close to Silberthorne at all times, unless he finds reason to dismiss them. While they respect their master's wishes, the fiercely loyal pair are never happy about leaving the Inquisitor unprotected. The profiles for Diamnas Char and Gulette Anhd can be found on pages 104 and 105, respectively.

Assuming the Explorers have not already encountered the Tau, the GM must decide whether Shas'o Ja'vra and her bodyguards accompany Silberthorne, or if he summons them after first meeting with the Explorers alone. If the Explorers have shown a tendency in the past to be suspicious or hostile toward xenos (as all good Imperial citizens are taught), it might keep things running smoothly if Silberthorne introduces the idea before presenting the Tau in the flesh. If the Explorers have a reputation either way in regards to tolerating xenos, Silberthorne is likely to be aware of it, and act accordingly. If the Explorers include any xenos amongst their number or in their employ, this also leads Silberthorne to introduce the Tau sooner, rather than later. If the Explorers have not made a reputation for their treatment of aliens, Silberthorne bases his decision instead on the relationship he has thus far forged with the Explorers. If the Explorers have shown a willingness to follow Silberthorne's lead with minimal questioning, he has the Shas'o accompany him, whereas if the dealings have been more strained, he holds back on introducing the Tau until he has gotten the Explorers accustomed to the concept.

Once introductions are complete, Silberthorne explains the basic details of his proposition for the Explorers. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Finally, the grey-haired Silberthorne briefly locks eyes with each of you and wets his lips as he prepares to explain the proposition on which he places so much importance. "I am sure you know the name Modren, a Rogue Trader Dynasty that has all but vanished in recent decades. You may also be aware of certain rumours regarding the fate of Vir Modren, the holder of the Dynasty's Warrant of Trade. Some of these rumours say he is dead, a victim of his own hubris; others, that he lives still, beyond even the depths of the Koronus Expanse. These latter rumours are true. Modren has claimed himself independent of the Imperium, and sought to establish his own realm beyond the generally accepted bounds of the Koronus Expanse. He thinks himself not beholden to the Emperor and beyond the Imperium's justice. I intend to prove him wrong, and with my previous transport no longer fit for the journey, which will be long and difficult, I ask for your help. You have experience travelling beyond the borders of the Imperium and facing the unknown, making you well-suited to this mission. I can promise you that the rewards will be more than adequate." With that, he smiles knowingly, though there is no mirth behind the gesture.

Silberthorne is open to discussion regarding the specifics of the reward for the Explorers. As an influential and powerful Inquisitor, he can offer many things that no amount of money could ever buy. At a fundamental level, he can offer all of the Modren Dynasty's holdings, both those beyond the Koronus Expanse and within the Imperium, as Vir Modren's crimes have damned his entire bloodline, and Silberthorne intends to bring the full weight of the Inquisition down upon the dynasty after dealing with the immediate threat. Of course, those items of forbidden lore and other heretical artefacts are not included in this deal, but Silberthorne does not see fit to discuss those prematurely. In addition to the wealth and property of the Modren Dynasty, Silberthorne offers other rewards tailored to the desires of the Explorers; see the **More than Mere Coin** sidebar on page 17 for more information. As an additional incentive, if the *Valorous Charge* was destroyed in the course of the battle, Silberthorne suggests that the Explorers take possession of the wreck as salvage. He assures them that he can ensure no interference from the Imperial Navy regarding the salvage. The exact condition of the salvage depends on how well the Explorers did in the prior battle. However, unless the Explorers are keen to salvage specific components, salvaging the wreck of the *Valorous Charge* should simply grant the Explorers +200 Achievement Points.

As Silberthorne states, it is possible that the Explorers might have already heard of Vir Modren or the Modren Dynasty. Any Explorer can attempt an **Ordinary (+10) Scholastic Lore (Imperial Warrants)** or **Common Lore (Rogue Traders) Test** to determine if the character knows anything about the Modren Dynasty. Success means that the Explorer has heard of the Modren Dynasty, and knows it has been a presence in the Calixis Sector since the Angevin Crusade. Additional Degrees of Success indicate that the character is more familiar with the Dynasty's history and its troubles

in more recent years; the GM should provide additional information based on the Degrees of Success and his own preferences for how much the Explorers should know.

As in all things, Silberthorne willingly provides only the minimum information necessary for the Explorers to assist him. For purposes of his mission beyond the Koronus Expanse, this means explaining the objective of the journey, but not the true reason. Silberthorne intends to travel to the hidden domain of the apostate Rogue Trader Vir Modren, kill him, and bring down the pseudo-empire he is attempting to build. If the Explorers ask about the reason, Silberthorne says that it is because Modren has forsaken his duties to the Imperium and renounced the Emperor's rule. The true reason, however, is even darker. Silberthorne knows Modren to be in league with the Ruinous Powers, drawing power from tomes of forbidden knowledge, and associating with Warpwitches—hereteks of the worst sort. While this, in itself, is more than enough to secure a death sentence and excommunication from the human race for Modren, Silberthorne has thus far delayed acting due to Modren's remoteness from the Imperium. However, Modren's recent theft of Tau technology and kidnapping of a Tau Ethereal has added a degree of urgency. Silberthorne fears that, should Modren and the hereteks in his service unlock the secrets of Tau technology or the mysterious Ethereals and the infallible sway they hold over all other Tau, the result will be a new and highly dangerous weapon in the arsenal of the Archenemy of Mankind.

THE TAU

How the GM introduces the Tau and their involvement in Silberthorne's plan depends somewhat on the Explorers and their attitudes toward aliens. While this relies on the GM tailoring the adventure to suit his players, it also reflects Silberthorne's in-game decisions. The Inquisitor is perceptive, extremely so, and picks up on any indicators of the Explorers' views toward xenos, regardless of how subtle. If the GM wishes, he can also seed subtle enquiries, both direct and concealed, into Silberthorne's interactions with the Explorers, as the Inquisitor attempts to gauge their attitudes before introducing his Tau allies.

If the Explorers have not already encountered the Tau aboard the *Valorous Charge*, Silberthorne calls the xenos into the room at an appropriate time after explaining the basics of his plan. This can be at any point, depending on how Silberthorne anticipates the Explorers reacting, but a good time to bring them in is once one of the Explorers asks how they can find Modren's domain beyond the charted bounds of the Expanse. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Seven armoured figures enter in tight military formation. Their fully enclosing, form-fitting ochre armour is like nothing found within the Expanse, and the long-barrelled rifles rested across their shoulders are clearly of nonhuman origin. With a hiss of escaping air, the lead figure removes its helmet, revealing a xenos countenance; blue-skinned, with a thin, lipless mouth and a single, long braid of hair. "Shas'o," Silberthorne nods respectfully to the alien, who returns the greeting.

MORE THAN MERE COIN

Although Silberthorne has thus far been vague in his promises of a reward, most Explorers are likely to insist on cementing the details before embarking on a dangerous journey led by untrustworthy xenos. In addition to the wealth of the Modren Dynasty and possibly the salvage from the *Valorous Charge*, Silberthorne offers rewards personalised to each Explorer. Although most Rogue Traders find profit enough of a motivation, these rewards go beyond that, offering a unique opportunity for a priceless reward. In effect, these rewards should serve to ensure that the Explorers cannot decline Silberthorne's proposed plan. However, if the promise of the wealth from Modren's coffers is enough to earn the Explorers' commitment, the GM can consider additional rewards optional. The following are a few suggestions to help GMs determine appropriate rewards for their group, but GMs should not feel restricted to the recommendations here. After all, no one knows the desires of his Explorers (and players) better than their GM.

When personalising motivations, one place to start is with the Origin Path. Any intersections that two or more Explorers share are a potential basis for a reward. It is likely that the players and GM have already come up with backgrounds tying their Explorers together through a shared experience; if not, this could be a good time to invent a backstory with some unresolved conflict. The advantage of a shared background for two or more PCs is that it requires the GM to come up with fewer rewards, by allowing certain characters to benefit equally from a single prize. Possible rewards could include the identity of an unknown party that wronged the Explorer(s) in the past, or the whereabouts of such an enemy, if his identity is already known. If any of the Explorers have a question troubling them, Silberthorne could offer the answer, or at least an important clue to it. As a powerful and influential Inquisitor, Silberthorne can offer assistance to the Explorers in dealing with an enemy or potentially gaining new allies. Another way in which Silberthorne can leverage his authority and influence is to erase some crime or black mark from an Explorers' past, expunging records so that, in effect, it never happened. This could be anything from clearing an Explorer's name in connection to suspected smuggling, to removing a bounty on his head.

Of course, if the Explorers' group already includes a Tau Explorer, for this character, rescuing Ethereal Aun'Roh should be more than enough reward in itself. Still, Tau are not utterly without ambition, and any Fire Warrior involved in the rescue of an Ethereal could expect accolades and promotions in addition to the satisfaction of serving the Greater Good.

THE JERICHO REACH

Although it is yet another detail that Silberthorne prefers to keep to himself, there are several ways in which the Explorers could become aware that Silberthorne and his Tau allies have travelled from the Jericho Reach in pursuit of Modren. They could learn this fact from Captain Hesteron, who lacks experience in secrecy and duplicity. It is also possible that Explorers with knowledge of the Jericho Reach could come to the conclusion themselves based on the information available. While the Imperium tightly controls knowledge of the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate, Rogue Traders are among those individuals important and powerful enough to be aware of its existence. As with all large military campaigns in the Imperium, Rogue Traders support the Achillus Crusade, transporting supplies, ferrying personnel, and fighting the crusade's enemies. Even if the Explorers have not personally witnessed the Warp-Gate or received an invitation to join the crusade efforts, it is more than likely that they have learned at least some information from other Rogue Traders or other knowledgeable or influential individuals in the Koronus Expanse or Calixis Sector.

Silberthorne explains that the location of Modren's realm is unknown, and any attempts to locate it could take years. Although he himself does not understand quite how this is possible—although he has his suspicions—Silberthorne believes the Tau's claims that they can find Modren's realm, and understands full well that the assistance of Shas'o Ja'Vra and her Cadre represents his only realistic means of locating the traitor. Further, he believes that the threat Modren poses is more than enough to warrant an alliance with the xenos. If the Explorers express concerns or distaste at working with the Tau, Silberthorne hears them out, but he does not entertain the notion of continuing without the Tau.

Depending on the Explorers' attitudes and prior encounters with xenos, meeting the Tau could range from curiosity to a tension-laden experience that threatens to explode into violence. Most Rogue Traders are more tolerant of xenos than the average Imperial citizen, as their travels bring them into contact with all manner of strange beings. However, if the Explorers are decidedly hostile toward xenos, this encounter could require a delicate touch by the GM. Silberthorne can act as a peacemaker between the Tau and Explorers, explaining to the Explorers that Shas'o Ja'Vra and her Cadre pose no threat, and that he needs their assistance to complete his mission. If Silberthorne sees no other way to ensure the Explorers cooperation, he reveals his identity as an Inquisitor and relies on the authority it grants him. However, this is only a last resort, and prior to doing so, Silberthorne tries such approaches as reminding the Explorers of the great rewards that await them, or explaining that only the Tau know how to find Modren's remote domain.

Should the Explorers question the Tau's motivations for assisting Silberthorne, either he or Shas'o Ja'Vra, depending on how well the Explorers and Tau are getting on, explains that the Tau seek to

reclaim an object that Modren's servants stole from them. This is not entirely true, however. While Modren's agents did steal numerous items of Tau technology, the motivation for the Cadre to travel so far and risk so much is to rescue a kidnapped Ethereal, one of the mysterious leader caste that steers the Tau Empire and which all other Tau follow unquestioningly. If any of the players express scepticism, or if the GM wishes to increase the tension between the parties, relevant Explorers can attempt an Opposed Scrutiny Test against either Silberthorne or Ja'Vra's Deceive Skill. If the Explorer wins the Opposed Test, he detects that the other is not being completely forthright about the Tau's motivation.

THE ENDEAVOUR

In game terms, the mission to reach Modren's realm and kill the heretical Rogue Trader constitutes a Grand Endeavour, requiring 1500 Achievement Points to complete. Certain complications apply to this Endeavour due to the fact that Silberthorne attempts to conceal key facts about his mission, including the motivation behind it. Although the Tau seek only to retrieve Ethereal Aun'Roh, Silberthorne's goal is to stop Modren from unlocking the Tau's secrets. This can be accomplished through killing Modren, whether or not the Ethereal survives—although to reveal this to the Tau could compromise the mission, and would certainly strain relations. Because of the secretive nature of the Endeavour, it is possible for the Explorers to earn Achievement Points for objectives that they are unaware of, if their actions unwittingly accomplish Silberthorne's goals.

THE OPPOSITION

The Explorers are likely to ask Silberthorne about Modren's realm and the resources at the apostate Rogue Trader's disposal. While some information has filtered back into the Koronus Expanse, and into the ears of Silberthorne's hidden agents in Footfall, it is scant and often contradictory. What is known is that Modren has claimed a star system to serve his purposes, and has committed his efforts to building up his own empire, recruiting xenos, humans from beyond the Emperor's light, and renegades and outcasts from the Koronus Expanse and the Calixis Sector. While the exact nature and number of the forces at Modren's disposal is unknown, Silberthorne believes it to include a number of individuals with power and resources in their own right who have sworn allegiance to Modren. It is through this feudal system that Modren has grown his power so quickly, with the captains of numerous ships sworn as his vassals. It is for this reason that Silberthorne intends to infiltrate Modren's domain with guile, and for which he requires the Explorers. More information on Modren's domain and his vassals can be found in **Chapter II: The Whirling Realm**, beginning on page 32. However, Silberthorne's information is limited, and the Explorers must wait until they reach their destination to discover the identities of their potential allies and enemies within Modren's realm.

THE CADRE

The exact composition of Shas'o Ja'Vra's Hunter Cadre has been left to the GM's discretion, so that he can tailor it to suit the needs of his game. Aside from what the presence of this deadly military force means for combat situations, the GM should consider the space available on the Explorers' ship. If the Cadre numbers too many warriors and vehicles to reasonably fit within the confines of the Explorers' vessel, it could either stretch belief or lead to a frustrating exercise in space allocation. The Hunter Cadre should represent a significant force and, depending on the Explorers' own military resources, may equal or surpass them. The Cadre's presence should make a significant impact on the final battle against Modren's forces in the final battles of **Chapter III**.

It is recommended that the Cadre include a minimum of the following:

- Four teams of 12 Fire Warriors each
- Two teams of 12 Pathfinders
- Two teams of three XV8 Crisis Battlesuits
- Two XV88 Broadside Battlesuits
- One XV9 Hazard Battlesuit (Ja'Vra's own Battlesuit)

This is also a good time to introduce any Tau Explorers if any of the players express interest in playing a Tau Fire Warrior character as presented in the **Tau Character Guide**. This supplement provides all the rules necessary to create a Tau Explorer and include such a character in an ongoing **ROGUE TRADER** campaign.

Depending on the play style of the group, the GM might wish to allow a player to take on the role of a Tau Fire Warrior for the duration of this adventure while his "usual" character takes a backseat. It is even possible for all of the players to create Tau Fire Warriors, having a squad of Fire Warriors that they can switch to for certain relevant scenes. This is particularly appropriate if the Explorers are not a very combat-capable group; the players can use their normal Explorers for scenes of negotiation, diplomacy, and exploration, taking on the roles of their Tau Fire Warrior Explorers when the time for combat arises. Of course, if none of these options seem appropriate, or the GM feels it would be disruptive at this point, it is not necessary for any player to create a Tau Fire Warrior character. If any Explorer dies or otherwise becomes unplayable during the course of the adventure, that provides an ideal opportunity for one of the Tau Fire Warriors travelling with the Explorers to step forward. The player creates a new Tau Explorer, with the assumption that this Fire Warrior has actually been present the entire time, but previously remained in the background.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs play an important role in this part of **Chapter I**.

Diamnas Char

A servant of Silberthorne, Diamnas Char cuts an intimidating figure, tall and heavily muscled, with a steely gaze. Char has the appearance of a bodyguard, and while this is true, he is much more. Char is formerly of the Imperial Guard, with experience and specialised skills in missions of infiltration and covert operations. Char lends his expertise to Silberthorne's clandestine missions, as well as physically protecting the Inquisitor from harm. Particularly during initial encounters, Char keeps his attention squarely on the Explorers, observing them and prepared to act in Silberthorne's defence, if necessary. Char speaks seldom and generally acknowledges Silberthorne's directives with merely a nod.

Gulette Anhd

Gulette Anhd presents herself as Silberthorne's scribe, her true abilities concealed until such time as they prove necessary. Presenting quite a contrary appearance to the intimidating Char, Anhd is an unassuming, slight woman of advanced years. Though physically small, even frail, Anhd possesses a keen mind that commands potent psychic powers. Whereas Char's mere presence serves to deter hostilities against Silberthorne, Char acts as a secret weapon should the Inquisitor need to call upon her powers. During meetings between the Explorers and Silberthorne, Anhd effortlessly fades into the background, appearing to simply record the words of her master. Although Silberthorne prefers not to employ her powers except as a last resort, he sometimes calls on Anhd to use her telepathic abilities to pull back the lies and deceptions of alleged allies.

Shas'o Ja'Vra

Shas'o Ja'Vra is an experienced commander of the Tau Fire Caste, having led numerous missions in the area of space known to the Imperium as the Jericho Reach. In Ja'Vra's mind, this mission to rescue Aun'Roh represents a chance to redeem herself for a recent failure, a defeat at the hands of a Deathwatch Kill-Team. So determined is she to rescue the Ethereal and return triumphant with him to the Jericho Reach that she is willing not only to work with humans, but to tolerate, albeit grudgingly, Silberthorne's shadow games. As a warrior, Ja'Vra prefers a more direct approach, to encounter her enemies on the battlefield according to the Fire Caste's doctrines of war. Being in the position of passenger aboard the human vessels makes her quite uneasy. If anything, leaving the regimented Navy vessel for the ship of a Rogue Trader (a concept which, admittedly, she only partially understands) deepens her discomfort.

INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY

"To attempt a journey without reliable charts is to invite death. Or worse."

—Navigator Tolius Benetek

Having accepted Silberthorne's offer and met their new Tau allies, the Explorers must set off on a long and dangerous journey through uncharted territory to reach Modren's domain beyond the Koronus Expanse. Without any charts to guide them or clues as to its location, other than that it lies to the galactic South of the Koronus Expanse, the Explorers must rely on the guidance of the Tau. Even for Explorers with a tolerance of xenos, trusting aliens they have just met to guide them in such a way is likely to be an uncomfortable idea. Potentially compounding this unease is the fact that the Tau are either unwilling or unable to explain how they know the location of Modren's realm. Silberthorne eases any doubts the Explorers might have with a reminder that the Tau are their only way of finding Modren's domain—though this might be slim comfort.

With the Tau's guidance, the Explorers begin the journey to Modren's realm. The distance is considerable, and there is no stable Warp route available to them. Making matters even more complicated is the fact that the Explorers must exit the Warp frequently in order to allow the Tau to observe the ship's position in realspace and confirm they are on the right course, or make adjustments, as necessary. The process can be lengthy, leaving the Explorers waiting. Fortunately, or not, depending on the Explorer's view, several of these stopovers find them in the vicinity of either a potential hazard or potential source of profit. The GM can use these encounters in any order, as well as take the opportunity to drop in encounters of his own devising.



NAVIGATING THE UNCHARTED

With the possible exception of those outcast Navigators serving Modren and his vassals, no one possesses charts of the wilderness space between the Koronus Expanse and Modren's realm. The Explorers must rely on the Tau to guide them, while the ship's Navigator steers the vessel through the turbulence of the Warp. Depending on whether one of the Explorers is a Navigator, the process of following the Tau's route to Modren's realm can be handled either narratively or in more depth. If the Explorers rely on a NPC Navigator to steer their vessel, the GM can leave the process mysterious, having the Shas'o and a small number of the Tau commune with the Navigator behind closed doors. If the ship's Navigator is a Explorer, then the GM can present the process in more detail. The player of the Navigator is likely to want to know more about the Tau's method. While this is possible, ultimately, the fact of how the Tau can locate the missing Ethereal and Modren's domain remains a mystery. However, the Navigator must work closely with the Tau to ensure the vessel remains on course.

The ways of Warp travel are strange to the Tau, who can only navigate by the positions of celestial objects in reality. In order to ensure that they are staying on-course, the Tau require the Explorers' vessel to periodically exit the Warp and remain in reality for some time—generally at least a few hours—while the Tau make observations of the surrounding stars and consult xenos data-slates and other devices. Because time has no meaning in the Warp, this must be done frequently to avoid straying too far off course. The Tau are able to consult with the ship's Navigator to try and prevent unnecessary stops, but, as a basic rule, they must stop at least every second day, or risk veering vastly off course, and perhaps even lost. While the majority of these excursions into realspace pass without incident, on a number of occasions, the Explorers either find themselves under attack or otherwise in a dangerous predicament, or faced with an opportunity that their curiosity cannot pass up.

Depending on where the Explorers encountered the *Valorous Charge*, they could have a great deal of territory to traverse within the Koronus Expanse before reaching uncharted areas. During this leg of the journey, the Tau's assistance is less vital. So long as the ship's Navigator possesses the requisite charts or experience to reach the Trailing border of the Koronus Expanse, he can do so following the normal procedures, without the Tau's assistance. However, as the Explorers near the Accursed Demesne, the Tau should begin assisting to ensure the ship is headed in the right direction.

The journey to Modren's realm should have a base time of 120 days, although the Explorers have little idea what to expect. Except perhaps in the early stages of the journey, the Astronomican is unlikely to be visible. Due to the distance from Terra, even by the standards of the Koronus Expanse, the Navigator's Awareness Test to locate the Astronomican while en route to Modren's realm has a base difficulty of **Challenging (+0)**. If the Navigator is unable to locate the Astronomican, the Tau's assistance reduces the difficulty of the Navigation (Warp) Test to plot a course from **Hellish (–60)**

to **Hard (-20)**, so long as the Navigator agrees to exit the Warp frequently to allow the Tau to make their observations and calculations. In addition, if the Explorers include a Navigator amongst their number, the requirement to work with the Tau offers an interesting roleplaying experience. It is most likely that the Navigator is unaccustomed to accepting assistance with his work from aliens, and matters are further compounded by the fact that they have no common ground, as it were, on which to discuss the subject of Warp travel. The Navigator should get the impression that the Tau's understanding of the Warp is very unlike his own, and apparently inferior.

Each time the Explorers' ship exits the Warp, they might face one of the encounters described on the following pages. Such an event need not occur every time, but the Explorers should face at least five such encounters before reaching Modren's realm. Many of the encounters are related, directly or otherwise, to Modren and his activities. Consequently, the rate of such encounters should increase as the Explorers approach Modren's star system. These encounters can occur in any order, and the Explorers should not necessarily face them in the order presented here. However, some of the encounters are connected, and the GM should consider the results of related encounters that the Explorers have already faced. The GM can supplement the encounters here with events of his own devising, which could be related to Modren's activities, the GM's own ongoing plots, to foreshadow future adventures, or simply the unpredictable and unknown that Explorers so often find in the depths of the void.

DERELICT

Soon after exiting the Warp, a member of the crew alerts the Explorers that a routine augur-sweep of the surrounding void has detected what appears to be a derelict vessel only a few thousand kilometres from the ship's current location. This should be enough to pique the Explorers' curiosity. However, if not, Silberthorne can recommend moving in for a closer look, to at least confirm if the vessel is Imperial.

Focused augurs reveal the ship to be a Carrack-class transport. If the Explorers are still within the Koronus Expanse, this is not in itself notable; however, if this encounter occurs once the Explorers are closer to Modren's realm, finding an Imperial ship could be an unexpected occurrence. In the latter case, the Explorers might surmise the tides of the Warp carried the vessel off course, a fact which they can confirm should they restore power to the vessel's system and access its cogitator banks. Whether the vessel was already lost or was on-course somewhere in the Koronus Expanse, it fell prey to pirates of the worst sort—Chaos reavers. These particular reavers are actually marauding in the service of Vir Modren, paying a tribute from their spoils in exchange for safe harbour and the benefits of the heretek Magos Forczyk's creations.

Scans of the vessel show it to be in fairly good condition for a derelict, with only minimal battle scarring to its hull. It is obvious to the Explorers that the vessel could provide lucrative salvage. It might also occur to them that the transport could be another victim of Modren's renegade allies, a fact that exploration of the vessel confirms.



THE FALL OF THE HIPPOMANES

The *Hippomanes* is a Carrack-class transport ship that spent the last few years ferrying cargo and passengers between Footfall and the worlds of Winterscale's Realm. That is, until it fell victim to Orthos Korell, captain of the reaver vessel *Heart of Fire*, approximately six months ago. Finding itself far from its usual, relatively safe route, the *Hippomanes* was little match for the Chaos vessel as it fell upon the hapless transport ship. After a brief exchange of macro-cannon fire, the reaver ship launched a brutal and bloody boarding action on the *Hippomanes*, the ferocious Chaos renegades easily overpowering the transport's crew. After slaughtering the bulk of the crew and passengers, Korell and his reavers enslaved the rest, looted the ship of cargo, and stripped many of its systems before departing, leaving the dead ship to drift in the void.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

Seasoned Explorers look for danger everywhere, and might suspect that the derelict *Hippomanes* is intended as a lure for unwary victims, left by whomever raided the vessel to begin with. Although the encounter is not written with that assumption, GMs can easily combine this encounter with Orthos Korrell's ambush (see **Reavers**, on page 25), creating just such a trap. Some GMs might prefer to wait and see if their players suspect a trap, and either reward their cautious thinking, or undermine their expectations, accordingly.

EXPLORING THE HIPPOMANES

The *Hippomanes* is over two kilometres long, and exploring the vast, broken wreck presents quite a task. Shas'o Ja'Vra and her Cadre require hours to determine the ship's current position and make any necessary adjustments, affording the Explorers time for a modest investigation of the derelict. With the notable exception of the cargo bays, there are almost no corpses to be found aboard the *Hippomanes*. However, signs of relatively recent combat abound, from las-burns and bullet scars on bulkheads and glassteel, to dried blood on the deck. When the Explorers first board the *Hippomanes*, the GM should impress upon them the eerie silence and emptiness of the ship's corridors and chambers, as if the thousands of crew simply vanished. It is only after spending some time investigating the ship that the Explorers should detect signs of recent battle. In the meantime, they might also witness evidence of the abrupt nature of the fate that befell the crew, such as rotting food sitting out on tables in the galley.

The Explorers must contend with numerous hazards while exploring the derelict vessel, although these are of no surprise to characters who have experience in salvage operations. The once-mighty plasma furnaces of the *Hippomanes* are all but extinguished. While a determined Enginseer could likely stoke the engines back into life, for the time being the ship is almost entirely without power, and therefore without life sustainers. The Explorers' ship's augurs can detect this fact prior to boarding, warning the Explorers to don voidsuits or other void-sealed armour prior to boarding. If any of the Hunter Cadre accompany the Explorers onto the derelict—against Silberthorne's advice—the environmentally-sealed armour of any Battlesuits provides the pilot with several days worth of oxygen and can also operate in the vacuum, but these massive contraptions are obviously less suited to traversing the twisted and shattered passages of a warship's corpse.

The primary points of interest when exploring the *Hippomanes*, and likely the first places the Explorers investigate, are the crew quarters, cargo bays, bridge, and enginarium. Each of these locations is briefly described below, along with its notable features. These locations are also listed in order from prow to stern, and so the Explorers are likely to explore each location in this order, should they begin with the bridge.

Bridge

The bridge of the *Hippomanes* spreads out before a tall command throne, with a domed ceiling rising to a height of ten metres. Many of the cogitator terminal screens are cracked or shattered, and torn or cut cranial cables dangle from numerous crew stations. Other signs of violence include las-burns and bullet impacts on surfaces, and a particularly troubling dried blood stain on the backrest of the command throne.

While exploring the bridge of the *Hippomanes*, the Explorers should have the opportunity to find evidence of Vir Modren's involvement, for the raiders responsible are indeed allies of the apostate Rogue Trader. An **Ordinary (+10) Search Test** reveals a discarded, damaged lasgun marked with a noble crest. A **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Heraldry or Rogue Traders)** identifies the crest as that of the Modren Dynasty.



The Explorers can find some information about the *Hippomanes* here, but only after restoring power to the bridge systems, which can only be done from the enginarium. However, should they do so, the Explorers can access the cogitator terminals on the bridge. The data suffered damage because the systems lost power abruptly, without performance of the proper rites and rituals. However, the Explorers can discover the ship's identity, its departure point, and intended destination. These details are left to the GM, so that he can connect the ship to a location with some significance for the Explorers, be it one of their own colonies, or a world claimed by an ally or enemy.

Crew Quarters

The quarters for the *Hippomanes*' 18,000+ crew are cramped and utilitarian, consisting primarily of numerous large holds accommodating bunks for hundreds each. These crew quarters are located amidships, within a short distance of the cargo bays. Officers' quarters are located separately, toward the prow of the vessel and the bridge. These quarters are more spacious and comfortable, and, unlike the lodgings for the rest of the crew, housed objects of some value. However, the raiders stripped them bare, leaving behind nothing of note, only smashed furniture and shredded bedding. Even the lower deck crew quarters are thoroughly ransacked, as the raiders left no valuables or living souls behind. The holds are scattered with shredded mattresses, smashed footlockers, and discarded personal effects with no intrinsic value.

Cargo Bays

The cargo bays have been stripped almost bare of cargo, but in its place are the bulk of the crew members—or at least their bodily remains. After their takeover of the *Hippomanes*, Korrell's reavers dragged many of the crew, both the dead and the surviving combatants, to the cargo bays. Although some survivors were taken as slaves, those who fought against their fate the reavers deemed suitable sacrifices to their Dark Gods, to thank the gods for a successful raid.

The *Hippomanes* includes three large cargo bays. The first two are all but empty, while the last is a scene of utter horror. The expansive chamber is clear of cargo, but houses a grisly makeshift altar to the Gods of Chaos. The altar stands over three metres tall, and is constructed from smashed shipping containers, lengths of piping, and other scavenged materials from the vicinity of the cargo bay. The shape of the altar appears completely haphazard, its meaning only decipherable to those touched by the Dark Gods. A score of rotting corpses are lashed to the altar, held in place by nails, lengths of wiring ripped from the ship's walls, and even sinew. Dozens more are piled at the altar's foot, and splayed out on the floor around it, arranged in seemingly meaningless patterns.

Upon entering the cargo bay and witnessing this horrific sight, characters must make a Fear Test against Fear (2). If any character fails the Fear Test, this lapse of will is enough for a Daemon bound within the altar to emerge. The Daemon uses the Ebon Geist profile on 378 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook. If the Explorers are above Rank 3 or have significant assistance from NPCs, including the Tau, the GM should instead have one Daemon emerge for each character who fails a Fear Test, to a maximum of three, one at a time over the course of three rounds.

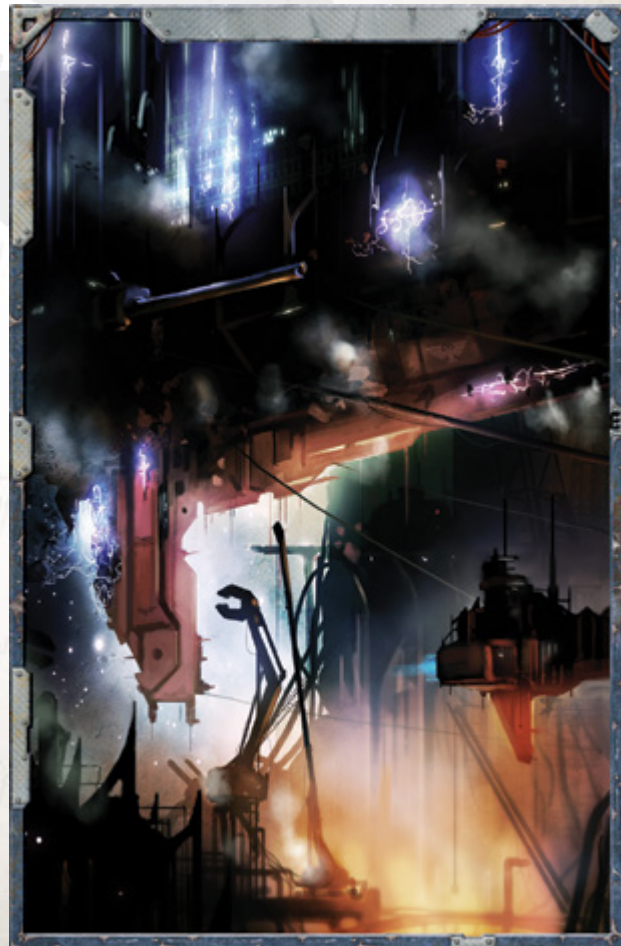
The cargo bay containing the altar is saturated with the taint of Chaos, and Astropaths or Navigators can sense this corruption as they approach. As the Explorers near the cargo bays, the GM should either call for each psyker to make a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test**, or roll the tests in secret. Characters who succeed sense the presence of the Warp nearby, with further degrees granting additional information, as described on page 84 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

Enginarium

Once home to dozens of Tech-Adepts serving under the watchful bionic eyes of their Tech-Priest masters, the enginarium is now deserted and lifeless. Many vital machine parts are gone, the raiders having scavenged them to replace components aboard their own vessels, to keep as spares, or simply as further plunder. Cogitator banks spill shredded wires and cables from forced-open panels, and numerous alcoves that once housed sacred technology now stand empty. The plasma generators that powered the *Hippomanes'* numerous systems and provided its mobility are dormant, and bear clear signs of damage.

While the raiders inflicted significant damage to the engines when they ransacked the enginarium, it is possible for an individual skilled in the ways of the Machine-God to reignite the vessel's fiery heart, although only at a fraction

of its original power. However, with the plasma engines having suffered such damage and missing numerous components, activating them could be extremely dangerous. Stoking life into the plasma furnaces requires a character to achieve three Degrees of Success on an extended **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test**, and takes at least one hour. Awakening the plasma engines without assistance is all but impossible, as numerous subsidiary systems must initialise at key times, some simultaneously. If the character does not have assistants whom he can direct, the difficulty of the Test increases to Punishing (-50) and takes a minimum of six hours. If successful, the character can restore minimum power to the enginarium and one additional component or area of the ship, such as the bridge, cargo bays, or the corridor of a particular section of a deck. If the character fails the Test by one Degree of Failure, the engines suffer additional damage, and must receive extensive repairs to have any hope of functioning again. If the character fails the test by four or more Degrees of Failure, the weakened containment systems fail, explosively venting plasma throughout the enginarium and, if bulkheads are unsealed, into the surrounding area. In this incidence, all characters in the enginarium suffer 3d10 Energy Damage, ignoring Armour. Characters can attempt a **Hard (-20) Dodge Test** to shield themselves behind a cogitator bank, inside an alcove, or behind some other form of cover, reducing the Damage to 1d10.



ANCIENT WEAPONS

In this encounter, the Explorers must contend with a debris field, the remnants of an ancient xenos battle. Amidst the smashed hulks and wreckage are a number of mines, still active after countless centuries. While it might be possible to avoid the debris field completely, the possibility of salvage and ancient technology should tempt the Explorers into at least moving in for a closer look.

After the Explorers emerge from the Warp, they find themselves dangerously close to the debris field. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Drifting ominously in the void ahead of your vessel, a field of debris fills the vista-port. Glittering shards of metal and ruined hulks of voidcraft point to some battle or calamity in the distant past. The debris field stretches over hundreds of kilometres, and while it is impossible to say what lies further within it, from the visible wreckage, it is clear that the ships are of xenos origin. Who the builders were, you cannot say.



The promise of salvaging xenos technology might be enough in itself to lure the Explorers into the debris field; however, upon further observation, they have no choice, as it surrounds their vessel on all sides. Further, due to the visual obstruction of the debris field, the Tau are unable to determine the ship's current position and the route to Modren's realm. Without this information, and with the ship beyond the light of the Astronomican, attempting to reenter the Warp would be reckless—without knowing their location, they risk ending up dangerously off course. While it is possible to enter the Warp for a brief period in order to clear the debris field, Warp travel is always dangerous, and doing so could be more hazardous than simply traversing the debris field. Additionally, in uncharted regions, even the briefest of time in the Warp could carry the ship vast distances; to do so without a sense of direction could leave the Explorers hopelessly lost. As such, simply attempting to move through the field to a better vantage point is most likely the safest option. This should be apparent to the Explorers, and the GM should feel free to explain the relative dangers of Warp entry as opposed to moving through the debris field. Of course, this assumes the Explorers are unaware of the mines lurking within the region.

COMPOSITION OF THE FIELD

The debris field consists of wreckage from a battle between xenos forces, innumerable centuries ago. While most of the debris is too damaged or small to give a clear picture of the original craft, some of the wrecked hulks are more intact. They are like nothing the Explorers or Tau have seen before, having an appearance more akin to stone than metal, with an oblong shape studded with numerous stalagmite-like protrusions. Most of the wrecks are in a poor state, having spent centuries under bombardment from debris, crashing into each other, and setting off the occasional mine. Focused augurs reveal only that the debris includes a number of alloys and materials that correspond to no record in the ship's cogitator.

NAVIGATING THE FIELD

Traversing the debris field poses a challenge for a vessel the size of an Imperial voidship, even disregarding the hazard of the active void-mines. To steer the ship safely amongst the wreckage, the helmsman must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test**. If the helmsman fails the Test by two Degrees of Failure or less, the ship hits some amount of debris, which, while nerve-racking, inflicts no serious damage to the ship's hull, only cosmetic scarring. However, if he fails the Test by three or more Degrees of Failure, the cumulative effects of striking numerous small objects or impacting a larger hulk that looms suddenly out of the debris field inflicts 1d10 Damage to the ship, ignoring void shields.

In addition to the effects described above, once the Explorers begin traversing the debris field, it is unavoidable that they activate one of the ancient void-mines. These large, spiky orbs of shimmering, transparent crystal are capable of detecting movement and heat nearby. Once one does, it moves toward its newly acquired target, with no obvious means of propulsion. These mines put off no heat or energy until they detonate, making them difficult to detect and, therefore, avoid. The Explorers can detect a mine with an **Arduous (-40) Scrutiny+Detection Test**, and avoid colliding with by making a **Hellish (-60) Pilot (Space Craft)+Manoeuvrability Test** with a +10 bonus for every Degree of Success scored on the Scrutiny+Detection Test.

Before exiting the debris field, the Explorers should have to contend with at least one such mine, and potentially more, at the GM's discretion. If the Explorers' vessel has already suffered substantial damage in prior encounters, or due to collisions with debris, the GM should limit it to a single mine so as to give the Explorers a reasonable chance of escaping the field alive. If the Explorers' vessel is in better condition, or if the GM simply wants to provide a Voidmaster or other PC at the helm with a challenge, and therefore a chance to shine, he should instead have the Explorers' vessel move into the vicinity of an intact minefield, thereby activating numerous mines at once.

SALVAGE

If the Explorers are able to board one of the more-intact hulks, they can salvage some equipment and possibly ship components. However, the weapons, technology, and machines are utterly unlike anything known to the Adeptus Mechanicus, and even figuring out a power source compatible with the xenos technology is an undertaking in itself. Even without the knowledge to utilise the tech, simply possessing artefacts of a heretofore unknown alien race has potential. The Explorers could trade the objects to collectors of xenos art and antiquities, or possibly to parties with more sinister motives. Successfully navigating the field and taking salvage from one of the hulks earns the Explorers 100 Achievement Points.

REAVERS

This encounter is strongly connected to **Derelict**, on page 21, but the two can be encountered in any order, or even combined into a single encounter (see the **Too Good to be True** sidebar on page 21). If the Explorers have already examined the derelict *Hippomanes*, then they have seen the handiwork of Korrell first-hand. If they encounter the derelict vessel after having already overcome Korrell's reavers, then it instead serves as a grisly example of the fate that awaited them had they failed. In either case, these two encounters should occur relatively close together, both in terms of stellar distance and time. While, generally, the Explorers exit the Warp numerous times without incident between encounters, in this case the two should occur within just a few such stops.

After exiting the Warp, as the Explorers wait for the Tau to finish their calculations and determinations so that they can resume their journey, the Chaos reavers of Orthos Korrell attack. The size of the attacking force should correspond to the Explorers' own ability. If the Explorers have only a single vessel under their command, the *Heart of Fire* is likely enough of a challenge alone. The *Heart of Fire* is a heavily modified cruiser, further twisted by the influence of the Warp. To represent the *Heart of Fire*, use the Lunar-class Cruiser from page 196 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.



EATERS OF THE DEAD

The mercenary xenos known as the Kroot do not appear to distinguish between employers, serving any who can pay well and tolerate their cannibalistic habits. As such, the Kroot can be found in the employ of any number of unsavoury and outright heretical individuals, including the apostate Rogue Trader Vir Modren. Alongside the pirates, renegades, and servants of Chaos marauding in Modren's service is the Kroot kindred led by the Shaper T'naak. The kindred has no respect for the rules of the Imperium, and either does not understand the threat of Chaos or does not care. In Modren's service, the Kroot attack his enemies and help him to carve out more territory for his domain. If the Explorers have already clashed with any of Modren's servants and left survivors, including the raiders they initially encountered attacking the *Valorous Charge*, then Modren might have specifically tasked the Kroot kindred with intercepting the responsible party and delivering retribution. If not, the encounter with the Kroot is simple chance. Unless the Kroot are actively seeking the Explorers, this encounter is best placed as one of the final ones before the Explorers reach Modren's domain, as Modren has tasked the Kroot with patrolling the surrounding space.

Shaper T'naak's Kindred inhabits a single Kroot Warsphere, a void-traveling home and battleship that allows them to pursue their mercenary lifestyle at their own discretion. The Warsphere is an immense and powerful vessel, heavily armoured and bristling with guns. There is a very good chance that the Warsphere outmatches the Explorers' vessel, if theirs is anything short of a true battleship. However, there is an equally good chance that the Explorers can come through the encounter without engaging in combat, or at least without seeing it through to the bitter end.

If the Kroot are following specific orders from Modren to hunt down those responsible for defeating his other servants, then they move quickly to engage the Explorers in combat upon encountering them. However, if the Kroot are simply patrolling, they first act to confirm that the Explorers are not servants of Modren—the outcast Rogue Trader has many in his service, and the kindred has an incomplete knowledge of their identities. In this latter case, the Kroot Warsphere first uses the Focused Augurs action to determine the nature of the Explorers' vessel. If this does not confirm whether the Explorers are or are not servants of Modren (which it should not, under normal circumstances), the Kroot vessel broadcasts a coded binary message. Heard over the vox system, the message sounds like a stream of horrendous static. The Kroot then wait approximately ten minutes for the Explorers to respond with the correct coded transmission and, when they do not, begin their attack.

In an attack, the Kroot Warsphere attempts to close with the Explorers' vessel while unleashing as much firepower as it can before initiating a boarding action. As powerful as the Kroot Warsphere is, the Kindred's strengths lie in close-quarters combat, and so they attempt to end ship battles with a brutal and overwhelming boarding action.

THE GREATER GOOD

While the Kroot are seemingly inseparable from their mercenary ways, there is a single thing that can trump any payment or deal—their loyalty to the Tau. Although the Kroot are spread throughout the galaxy, all feel a deep connection to their home world of Pech. Since Pech swore allegiance to the Tau Empire, all Kroot have respected this arrangement. No Kroot knowingly enter battle against their saviours and benefactors, the Tau, and this fact can work to the Explorers' advantage. Unsurprisingly, the Kroot do not expect to see Tau aboard a human vessel, nor do they have reason to believe any Tau are present in the Koronus Expanse. However, should the kindred become aware that the Explorers have an alliance with the Tau Cadre, and that its members are aboard their vessel, they immediately abort their attack.

How quickly the Kroot become aware of the Tau presence depends on how much the Explorers allow the Tau's involvement in the affairs of running the ship. Particularly if the Explorers' crew are made uneasy by xenos, Shas'o Ja'Vra is understanding of requests for the Tau to stay clear of the bridge. Even in this case, she desires to be kept aware of the vessel's progress, and of any potentially dangerous circumstances that might arise. If the Explorers choose not to respect her wishes, though, the Shas'o is limited in her responses. Silberthorne acts, as he often does, as a peacekeeper and intermediary between the Explorers and Shas'o Ja'Vra, if necessary. For his own part, Silberthorne likewise prefers to remain informed of all important happenings related to the ship's journey; it is, after all, his mission. If the Explorers take efforts of any kind to exclude Silberthorne, however, he responds with characteristic subtlety. Rather than try to force the Explorers to accommodate him, if they do not meet his requests, Silberthorne draws on the expertise of Diamnas Char to obtain intelligence through more covert means, such as recruiting spies from amongst the Explorers' crew—whether the crew members realise their new job or not.

Background information and the game profile for Shaper T'naak can be found on page 106.



EXODUS

In this scene, the Explorers encounter a transport ship carrying refugees fleeing Modren's domain. Led by a disgraced nobleman named Alistar Merinel, this ragtag collection of lords, ladies, vassals, servants, and even slaves banded together under the common goal of seeking escape from Modren's realm. For the most impoverished and oppressed of these individuals, it was an obvious choice. Others, such as nobles and other powerful individuals, discovered that Modren's realm was not what they had been promised, and offered no more freedom or opportunity than the Imperium they left behind, or they discovered how inhospitable life is on the worlds of Modren's realm. For others, including Merinel, the true extent of Modren's affiliations with xenos and darker powers was too much for his conscience once it became apparent.

Despite the promises Modren makes to the contrary, there is no leaving Modren's realm after one has settled there, and doubly so for those who swore oaths of fealty and loyalty to the heretical Rogue Trader. In order to escape, the refugees first made contact, covertly, with others of like mind, building a network of disenfranchised inhabitants. Finally, after many months, even years, of planning and careful bribes amongst the operators of the system defences, the refugees enlisted the aid of the *Pious Servant*, a Jericho-class Pilgrim Vessel (See page 194 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook) and her crew and made their escape. If a game profile is needed for Alistar Merinel, use the Free Trader Captain on page 371 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

When the Explorers encounter the *Pious Servant*, it is waiting for its Navigator to pinpoint the Astronomican so that it can reenter the Warp and resume its journey. The expatriates do not wish to stop or waste time, because they fear pursuit by Modren's forces. The feeling aboard the ship is nervous, with tension growing the longer it takes the Navigator to find the beacon of the Emperor's will.

If the Explorers scan the *Pious Servant*, they see that it is undamaged and with full power, but sitting stationary and very much exposed. The ship does not hail the Explorers, but if they hail it, Alistar Merinel responds. An **Easy (+20) Scrutiny Test** detects that Merinel is nervous, although it is not clear why. Merinel claims that the ship is a pilgrim vessel carried far off-course by an errant Warp squall, and that they will be returning to the Calixis Sector as soon as they are able. The Explorers might find it odd that a pilgrim vessel stranded so far from its destination is not requesting assistance, but instead Merinel is giving the appearance that the pilgrims wish to be left alone.

How the encounter with the refugees unfolds depends very much on the approach the Explorers take, and should be conducted primarily through roleplaying interactions with Merinel or the other refugees. Due to his (justified) paranoia that Modren has dispatched agents to hunt him, Merinel's disposition begins at Difficult (-10) (see page 293 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook). Any mention of Vir Modren elicits an obvious reaction from Merinel; if the Explorers are meeting with him face to face, they cannot but notice Merinel's face fall and grow pale at the name. If the conversation is instead being held over vox, an **Easy (+20) Scrutiny Test**

GM ADVICE: THE TAU IN COMBAT

Many of the encounters in this section of *Twilight Crusade* feature combat, or at least the potential for it. This requires additional consideration on the GM's part because, in addition to whatever forces they command, the Explorers have aboard their ship an entire Tau Hunter Cadre. For some Explorers, it is likely tempting to use the Tau's assistance, bringing their firepower to bear in any combat situation. In fact, this suits Shas'o Ja'Vra fine in most situations, as she is not used to sitting idly by on a voidship, and is restless for action. Although Shas'o Ja'Vra does not believe in risking the lives of her soldiers without good cause, any potential threat to her mission is a serious concern, and must be overcome for the Greater Good. However, Silberthorne advises caution for a number of reasons. Although he is not likely to say so directly, the Tau's lives are indispensable for his mission, more so than the Explorers, in fact. So long as he has a voidship and the Tau to guide him, Silberthorne can reach Modren's realm and complete his mission; while the Explorers are highly useful, they are not strictly necessary. As such, he does not wish to see the Tau risk their lives, and strongly recommends against deploying the entire Cadre, claiming that such would simply be overkill (which, indeed, it is in many cases). Another reason Silberthorne cautions against employing the Tau in combat is the risk of jeopardising their mission. There is simply no known Tau presence in the Koronus Expanse, and were Modren to learn of a Tau sighting in the area, he would more than likely identify it as a Tau response to his attack and theft committed against them. Other parties might also take an interest in the presence of heretofore unknown xenos.

Should the Tau enter into battle alongside the Explorers, the GM should take care to demonstrate the xenos' remarkable training and impressive technology without overshadowing the Explorers. As is often best with NPCs who are not directly attacking or being attacked by the Explorers, the GM can handle the Tau narratively in combat. When doing so, the GM should highlight the destruction wrought by the Tau's pulse weapons and other technology, but should also include the occasional description of a Fire Warrior falling to enemy firepower. As well-equipped and trained as the Tau are, the enclosed spaces associated with shipboard combat can also highlight some of their weaknesses, which is one way the GM can prevent the Explorers from feeling upstaged. The warriors of the Fire Caste seek to distance themselves from their barbaric ancestors, and one way they do so is to disdain hand-to-hand combat. Generally, the Tau's advanced weaponry and mobility ensures that they can avoid engaging their foes in melee; however, in the claustrophobic confines of a ship corridor, this is not always possible. Even so, point-blank pulse rifle fire should generally be enough to ensure that few enemies make it into melee, and those that do cannot survive long.

When including the Hunter Cadre in a combat encounter, the GM should increase the numbers of enemies accordingly. By including an appropriate amount of enemies for the Tau to engage, the GM can ensure that the Explorers still have an appropriately challenging number of enemies to engage. However, some groups of Explorers might focus their abilities on other than combat, relying more heavily on armsmen and other retainers. For such groups, the GM could allow the Tau to take a more direct role in defeating their enemies, allowing the Explorers the vicarious thrill of employing the abilities of the militaristic xenos, if even for a short time. Suitably impressed Explorers might petition for some of the Tau to remain with them after the mission is accomplished.

detects a telling pause in Merinel's speech and a change in his tone of voice. If the Explorers claim to be journeying to Modren's realm in order to join it, Merinel becomes even more uneasy and reserved. However, if the Explorers state the truth, that they are travelling to Modren's realm to destroy the heretic Rogue Trader, Merinel's attitude changes entirely.

Merinel feels a profound guilt that would likely never have affected him in his younger years, and he sees his affiliation with Modren as a grave crime against the Emperor. In Merinel's view, helping the Explorers to deliver justice on Modren is a worthy act that he hopes will redeem him for his sins. If he believes the Explorers to be sincere in their mission, he offers whatever assistance he can, short of travelling with them. As Merinel can explain, Modren commands an extensive fleet and numerous allies, and he is quite sure that were the *Pious Servant* to make a return to Modren's realm, it would not survive long, for Modren is not a forgiving man. Merinel also mentions the sophisticated sensoria network girding the system, that makes entering Modren's realm undetected such a difficult task. Merinel is glad to provide the Explorers with information about the lay of the system and the most notable power players (i.e. the rivals the Explorers must contend with in **Chapter II**). However, Merinel does not wish to tarry any

longer than necessary, and insists in departing as soon as the *Pious Servant's* Navigator finds the Astronomican. In effect, this encounter lasts for as long or as short a time as the GM wishes. If the Explorers roleplay well and ask appropriate questions, they could come away with a good deal of useful information that can help them later in the adventure. Finally, the Explorers might request guidance on reaching Modren's realm, which is something the refugee's Navigator can provide. However, any time he spends speaking with the Explorers or notating charts is time not spent locating the Astronomican. Therefore, Merinel is less eager to offer this form of assistance, and the Explorers must convince him with an appropriate Interaction Skill Test that achieves three or more Degrees of Success, after first raising his disposition to at least Easy (+20).

If the Explorers have not already dealt with Orthos Korrell's renegades, the GM might wish to have them arrive and attack as the Explorers are meeting the refugees. After learning of the refugees' flight from his domain, Modren sent word via Warp-witch to Korell, tasking the Chaos reaver with ensuring that the expatriates never return to the Imperium, or even to its outposts in the Koronus Expanse. Modren gave his blessing for Korell to deal with the "traitors" however he sees fit.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs play an important role in this part of **Chapter I**:

Shaper T'naak

As Shaper, T'naak puts the needs of his kindred above all others. T'naak has little understanding or interest in the political games humans play, and for him, Vir Modren is simply another employer. T'naak has no loyalty to Modren or stake in Modren's domain, and is certainly not willing to go into battle against the Tau for him. If T'naak believes the Explorers to be friends or allies of the Tau, he extends the proper respect and makes every effort to ensure that no harm comes to them.

Alistar Merinel

Lord Alistar Merinel is the de facto leader of the refugees fleeing Modren's domain aboard the *Pious Servant*. Merinel was once, many years ago, a promising scion of his family amongst the nobility of Landunder in the Calixis Sector.

Ambition and impatience drove a wedge between the young Alistar and his house, forcing him to undertake a period of travelling across the sector, before he was eventually seduced by Vir Modren's promises of power and freedom in a new land beyond the bounds of the Imperium. In recent years, Merinel became disgusted and horrified as he began to learn more and more of the depths of Modren's heresy, eventually banding together with like-minded individuals and resolving to flee, hoping that the Imperium would accept its wayward children upon their return.

Orthos Korrell, Captain of the Heart of Fire

Orthos Korrell is a pirate of the worst kind, a slave to the Dark Gods, marauding in their names. Each ship he captures, each victim he heaps on the pyre, Korrell dedicates to the Ruinous Powers in thanks for his victory. Korrell shows no mercy in combat, whether directing the macrocannons of the *Heart of Fire* or leading a vicious boarding action. Those who survive an encounter with Korrell and are taken prisoner soon learn to envy the dead, for toiling in the Daemon-haunted bilges of Korrell's fleet is a fate unimaginable to most.



CROSSING THE BOUNDARY

"Within the bounds of this domain, there is no law save that which I decree."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

After many months of travel and overcoming numerous perils and enemies, the Explorers finally reach the star system that Modren has claimed as his domain. Using their esoteric methods of navigation, the Tau are able to tell when the Explorers' vessel is drawing near once they are a few realspace layovers away. When the Explorers finally reach the system, they exit the Warp just beyond its outskirts, and the Tau proclaim that they are at the destination. From here, the Explorers must enter the system using their plasma engines.

Entering Modren's system has its own difficulties. Modren knows that there are many pirates and xenos raiders who threaten his domain and, while he thinks himself beyond the Imperium's reach, he knows that some other Rogue Trader might even seek to usurp him some day. Consequently, Modren has gone to great lengths to secure his domain and ensure that none can enter it undetected. The Explorers must either find a way to evade these security measures or announce their presence. If they choose the latter, the Explorers should first meet with Silberthorne and ensure that they have a solid plan and have made the necessary preparations. For more information and advice on formulating a plan, see **Silberthorne's Plan**, on page 36.

THE SENSORIA NETWORK

Scattered about the perimeter of Modren's star system are a number of automated sensor buoys, tasked with observing the surrounding void for any approaching voidships. The buoys represent an eclectic mix of patterns, with no two identical, having been variously purchased, salvaged, stolen, or repurposed. Most have undergone extensive modification, with a few being almost built from the ground up by the heretek Magos Forcyz. These autonomous orbitals feature dangerously independent machine spirits, elements of xenos technology, and other components that would horrify any true adherent to the Cult Mechanicus. While it is impossible for the buoys to completely cover the perimeter of the star system, they are situated at all of the most likely points of entry, and the Explorers are unfortunate enough to pass within range of one.

Before the Explorers can take measures to evade the sensoria buoys, they must first be aware of their presence. The buoys are relatively small, most of them being less than 20 metres across. To determine if the Explorers detect the sensoria buoy's presence before it detects them, the GM calls for an appropriate Explorer (or an NPC crew member if the Explorers do not deign to such tasks themselves) to attempt a **Difficult (-10) Scrutiny+Detection Test**. If the character passes the Test, he detects the presence of the sensor buoy before the Explorers' vessel closes within its own detection range. If the character fails the Test, he does not detect the presence of the sensoria buoys during routine monitoring of the surrounding vicinity. However, if the Explorers suspect that Modren has security measures in place and attempt to locate the presence of such through use of the Active Augury Action or other appropriate means, the GM should allow them another chance to detect the buoy. Of course, cautious Explorers might elect to proceed into Modren's realm under Silent Running (see page 218 of the **ROGUE TRADER Core Rulebook**) as a precaution, even if they have failed to detect the sensoria network.

If the Explorers do not detect the sensoria buoy, or once they decide to proceed past it either openly or in Silent Running, the GM should make an **Easy (+20) Scrutiny+Detection Test** to determine if the sensoria buoys automated augur systems accurately detect and register the presence of the Explorers' vessel. If the Explorers' vessel is operating under Silent Running, the Test is instead **Hard (-20)**. For purposes of detecting the Explorers' vessel, the sensoria buoys have an Awareness of 25, training in Scrutiny, and a Detection +10 rating. If a buoy senses the Explorers' vessel, it transmits a signal to alert Modren's forces to the potential intruder. With the patrol craft looking for intruders, it is extremely difficult for the Explorers to avoid encountering one.

PATROL

Depending on whether the Explorers have a plan ready and intend to announce their presence immediately, or hope to infiltrate and make their preliminary observations covertly, encountering a system patrol craft could be a problem, or not. As mistress of the fleet, the overall responsibility for void security within Modren's realm falls to Sabina Alsunet. Alsunet assigns patrol duties to a number of radically different ships under her command on a rotation, from former vessels of the Imperial Navy to assorted renegade craft. A patrol craft could use any ship hull from pages 194 to 196 of the **ROGUE TRADER Core Rulebook** smaller than a cruiser.

Ultimately, Silberthorne wishes to infiltrate Modren's realm peaceably in order to accomplish his mission objectives. The forces under Modren's command far surpass those available to the Explorers. Consequently, it is unlikely that the Explorers engage in combat with the patrol ship, as doing so would jeopardise this plan. However, if the Explorers are unable to evade or deceive the patrol, they might decide the best plan is to destroy it before it can warn Modren's other forces as to their presence or intentions.

REWARDS

The Explorers receive the following rewards depending on the outcomes of their actions and decisions throughout this chapter:

- 150 Achievement Points for rescuing Silberthorne and the Tau Cadre.
- 250 Achievement Points for preventing the destruction of the *Valorous Charge*.
- 100 Achievement Points for salvaging the wreckage of the *Valorous Charge*.
- 200 Achievement Points for successfully navigating the way to Modren's realm.
- 100 Achievement Points for each encounter completed on the way to Modren's realm (**Derelict, Eaters of the Dead, Reavers**, etc.).
- 100 Achievement Points for successfully passing through the Sensoria Network and reaching Modren's Realm.

EXPERIENCE

The Explorers have gone through a great deal to reach Modren's realm, and they will need the valuable lessons they have learned on the way to survive the twisted Rogue Trader's court of intrigue. The following list contains xp values for the trials the Explorers might have faced on their journey:

- Rescuing Silberthorne: 100 xp
- Rescuing the *Valorous Charge* intact: 100 xp
- Negotiating a deal with Silberthorne and Commander Ja'Vra: 50 xp
- Successfully navigating the course to Modren's realm: 200 xp
- Exploring the wreck of the *Hippomanes*: 100 xp
- Passing through the ancient mine field: 100 xp
- Encountering and dealing with the Kroot: 100 xp
- Fending off Orthos Korrell's reavers: 100 xp
- Aiding the refugees aboard the *Pious Servant*: 100 xp
- Passing through the Sensoria Network: 100 xp





THE WHIRLING
REALM

GAZETTEER:
MODREN'S REALM

•

THE DEN
OF HERESY

•

TRIAL BY FLAME



CHAPTER II: THE WHIRLING REALM

“Free yourself from the shackles of faith! A new life awaits you in the dark beyond. Live your life as you have always desired, in a rich new realm where power is the reward of those with the will to seize it.”

—From a heretical tract circulated amongst the spire nobility of Scintilla

In the second chapter of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, the Explorers enter the star system that the heretical Rogue Trader Vir Modren has claimed as his sovereign domain. In order to accomplish their mission of dealing with Modren and retrieving the Tau Ethereal, the Explorers must present themselves as would-be vassals and win their way into Modren’s good graces, to ensure both the opportunity to end the heretic’s life and to determine the location of the Ethereal. In order to accomplish this feat, they must navigate the political stage of Modren’s realm, jockeying for position alongside heretics, renegades, and xenos simply to gain a personal audience with the self-proclaimed lord. The Explorers must deal with the most dangerous threats to themselves and their success, in the form of Modren’s most trusted and powerful retainers. To do so, they must dispatch these rivals or else turn them against Modren, winning them to the Explorers’ cause.



GM’S BRIEFING AND CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

Modren’s self-styled domain functions on a feudal system, with myriad vassals, retainers, and lesser “lords” sworn to his service. While the Modren Dynasty itself commanded considerable resources, as one would expect of a Rogue Trader Dynasty, colonising an entire system in the wildest reaches of wilderness space requires resources, manpower, and defences beyond even those considerable means. Consequently, Modren expands his resources primarily through the acquisition of new vassals, who put their own resources at Modren’s disposal, either directly or indirectly. These range from outcast nobles from the Calixis Sector who arrive with nothing more than a purse of coins, nearly valueless so far from the law of the Imperium, up to mighty pirate kings and alien warlords, commanding entire armies and flotillas of powerful voidcraft. It is these latter with whom the Explorers must primarily concern themselves, as these powerful individuals have the means to bring the Explorers’ plans, and ship, crashing down. Together, these powerful servants and allies of Modren command overwhelming force that the Explorers cannot hope to overcome; only by defeating them individually, or turning them against Modren, can the Explorers complete their task.

The bulk of **Chapter II: The Whirling Realm** is concerned with the Explorers’ attempts to remove these rivals from the picture or turn them against Modren. There are five noteworthy rivals for the Explorers to deal with. While the Explorers do not necessarily need to succeed in vanquishing or overcoming all five, doing so puts the Explorers at a distinct advantage for the final push to destroy Modren. The five rivals, who are discussed in more detail beginning on page 61, are:

Magos Forcyz: The heretek magos is perhaps the most important rival, and the most difficult to overcome. Forcyz is, in fact, responsible for the imprisonment of the Ethereal. Forcyz’s only motivation is forbidden knowledge, and he is unconcerned with politics or status. Consequently, there is no way to sway him against Modren, for their current arrangement offers the heretek great freedom to explore his dark designs, and the resources he needs to do so. Similarly, the heretek magos’ laboratoria are located beneath Modren’s citadel on Scathe, ensuring that the Explorers are only able to truly destroy him and his blasphemous works in the events of **Chapter III: A Dynasty Falls**.

Fleet Mistress Sabina Alsunet: Formerly a captain in the Imperial Navy, Sabina Alsunet’s ambitions exceeded what she was offered within the Navy. Now, she commands Modren’s fleet, including the vessels of his dynasty, traitor ships from the Imperial Navy, and other renegade ships sworn to his cause. As one of Modren’s most loyal and influential servants, the Explorers must tread carefully when dealing with her. Simply attacking Fleet Mistress Alsunet would not only invoke Modren’s wrath, but force the Explorers to confront the bulk of his naval force. Attempts to turn Alsunet against Modren are also doomed to failure, as she owes him a great bond of loyalty. This leaves the most promising avenues as assassinating her or discrediting her in Modren’s eyes.

Pirate Captain Makara De'Soth: The pirate captain Makara De'Soth is truly loyal to none but himself, a fact that the Explorers can capitalise on. De'Soth is motivated primarily by avarice, and his loyalty to Modren only goes as far as it is profitable and personally advantageous. His desire for power and wealth leads De'Soth to regularly engage in the intrigues of Modren's court, where he is something of a regular. The Explorers' most promising methods for neutralizing De'Soth are to recruit him to their cause or reveal the tenuousness of his loyalty to Modren.

Freebooter Kaptin Gargoff 'Eadbreaka: The Freebooter Kaptin Gargoff 'Eadbreaka commands the largest ground-based fighting force in Modren's realm, in the form of the thousands of Boyz that crew his ships and their ramshackle vehicles, built for ground invasions and chaotic boarding actions. Even Modren is ignorant of the true number of barbaric alien warriors serving 'Eadbreaka, as their population has continued to grow at a rapid rate, as is so often the case with Orks. As a greenskin, 'Eadbreaka is unpredictable and violent. If the Explorers have dealt with Orks before, however, they might be able to capitalise on his brutal tendencies.

Eldar Corsair Alasiel Belanir: The Eldar corsair captain known as Alasiel Belanir is certainly the least loyal of Modren's allies, as he exhibits barely concealed contempt for the outcast Rogue Trader. Belanir's sole motivation for aiding Modren is the return of a number of spirit stones in the Rogue Trader's possession, which he is slowly ransoming back to the Eldar captain in exchange for his services. Belanir despises and distrusts all humans, so that despite his hatred for Modren, dealing with him is a considerable challenge in itself.

Further complicating matters is the involvement of the fanatically puritanical Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison, who has pursued Silberthorne from beyond the Expanse in order to deliver his vision of justice. Kaison represents a dangerous enemy with the potential to completely destabilise all of the Explorers', and Silberthorne's, efforts. As such, the GM should consider his inclusion optional, and might choose to delay his introduction until **Chapter III**.



GAZETTEER: MODREN'S REALM

"Yes, I escaped the tyranny of the Imperium, but only to find tyranny of a different sort."

—Sir Corias Speliar, prior to his disappearance from the hab-domes of Elysiar



The realm that Vir Modren has claimed as his own currently consists of a single star system, found on no charts known to the Imperium. After fleeing the bounds of the Imperium, Modren travelled for many months to find a suitable system for his ambition. The system he selected is perhaps not ideal—many of its worlds are inhospitable or completely uninhabitable for human life—but none of his vassals would dare voice such concerns in his presence, or anywhere that concealed vox-snoopers might pick up such musings. Despite its flaws, though, the system has relatively plentiful resources, and is home to ancient ruins that have formed a ready basis for Modren's own settlements. In the vision of the apostate Rogue Trader, this single system is only the beginning of his sovereign domain, which he has dubbed Modrennia. In time, Vir Modren intends to expand beyond the bounds of this system, claiming others nearby, or accessible by as-yet uncharted Warp routes.

From the relatively small number of colonists and servants aboard his original fleet that claimed the system, outcasts from the Imperium, heathens from beyond the Astronomican's light, stranded voidsmen, and even xenos have swelled the numbers of Modrennia's population. Some have come to it by chance, washed there by the tides of the Empyrean. Others have made contact with Modren's agents on Footfall and beyond, guided there with secret charts prepared at great cost and risk by renegade Navigators in Modren's service. For some of them, an oath of loyalty to Modren represents their only chance of survival in the dangerous void after fleeing from the Imperium's justice, while others see it as an avenue to follow their own ambitions. Within this realm, exiled nobles, heathen warlords, and xenos corsairs rub elbows at Modren's court, engaged in innumerable intrigues and power-plays.

Meanwhile, thousands of serfs, bonded labourers, and slaves toil doing everything from staffing the kitchens of Modren's palace-fortress to extracting resources from the inhospitable worlds of his domain.

THE WORLDS OF MODREN'S REALM

Although his ambitions are much larger, Vir Modren's realm currently comprises a single system, based around an ancient and bloated star of an unnerving, sickly purple colouration. This sun casts its violet light over all the worlds of the system, bathing them in perpetual twilight. Orbiting this bruised star are seven worlds, on four of which Modren has established holdings, as well as a number of smaller bodies such as asteroids, moons, and even artificial structures. The following are the worlds of Modren's realm, listed in order from the closest to the sun.

Victus

As the closest planet to the system's star, Victus is little more than a scorched ball of rock. Curiously, blackened ruins are visible on the surface. Despite the promise of ancient valuables, the intense heat and radiation has thus far prevented Modren from examining them any closer. From what is discernible, the ruined structures do not appear to correspond to those found on other worlds in the system, piquing Modren's curiosity and that of the xenoarchaeographers in his service.

Modren Prime

Modren Prime is the largest non-gaseous planet in the system. For this reason, Vir Modren has marked it out as the future capital of his domain, despite the fact that its caustic atmosphere renders it uninhabitable to humans. Modren has tasked his tech-adepts and bio-seers with finding a solution to this problem. While fully enclosed hab-structures show promise, Modren has eschewed such solutions, demanding that he be able to walk on the world's surface and inhale the air of his sovereign domain.

Scathe

Scathe is Modren's proclaimed capital world, pending the preparation of Modren Prime for settlement, as well as the site of his fortress-citadel. Scathe was the first world Modren settled when he claimed the system, and the extensive catacombs and ancient structures on its surface expedited settlement and establishment of a fortified stronghold. Scathe is by far the most heavily built-up and fortified of Modren's worlds, with a considerable amount of new construction built atop the ancient xenos ruins. Here, below the palace, the heretek Forcyz conducts his experiments in ancient halls of xenos stonework.

Elysiar

Elysiar was the second world settled by Modren's followers. On first appearance, Elysiar is verdant, green, and idyllic. However, early colonisation attempts soon found the world to conceal many dangers, from deadly, microscopic parasites, to toxic plant blooms, and voracious, carnivorous arthropods. While the world lacks the gargantuan beasts and carnosaurs associated with death worlds, its innumerable subtle dangers are no less deadly. Even setting aside such natural hazards, the ancient ruins that stand in the deep forests and beneath the soil house many traps and autonomous sentries, unlike anything encountered in the ruins on the other worlds of the system.

As such, rather than expediting colonisation as was the case on Scathe and elsewhere, the ruins have proven a constant hindrance and danger to settlers. Despite the hard-won knowledge to the contrary, Modren and his servants continue to describe Elysiar as a paradise world to potential vassals and settlers, leaving them to discover the truth too late.

The Cingula Asteroid Belt

An asteroid belt serves as a natural boundary between the inner worlds of the system and the planets further out. Beyond the asteroid belt, the worlds are cold and largely barren, and rely on constant resupplies of food and other resources from the inner planets. The Cingula itself includes objects varying in size from a few metres to well over a kilometre across. Many of the asteroids house valuable minerals, some quite rare. The pure concentrations of such rare materials are truly extraordinary. Many of Modren's geo-oracles and chymists believe the belt to be, at least in large part, the remains of a fabricated structure of truly monumental size, or perhaps the shattered remnants of an inhabited planetoid and its infrastructure. To facilitate the harvesting of these (un)natural resources, Modren has established several mining installations that double as observation posts to complement the sensoria network that encircles the system. The asteroid belt encompasses a huge volume of space, however, and alongside these primarily human-operated installations, Orks subservient to Gargoff 'Eadbreaka toil away, modifying asteroids with the addition of engines and weapons, converting them into voidborn attack fortresses known as Roks. While Ork Meks are never truly finished applying modifications to a project, which are in turn so haphazard as to have no definable end-point by human standards, at present three Roks are fit for use.

Pax

Pax is a massive gas giant that holds twenty-six moons of varying sizes in its gravitational pull. While Modren has established colony installations on several of the largest moons, Pax's most notable feature is an orbiting, artificial construct of ancient and unknown provenance. This structure, over five kilometres across, was found in much better condition than any of the ancient ruins on the planets' surfaces. Nonetheless, the ravages of time and stray impacts of space debris left it in no fit condition for service—in fact, Forcyz and the other outcast Tech-Priests in Modren's service were unable to determine if the station had ever truly been equipped to support life, or if such mechanical systems had been lost or stolen during the long millennia.

In order to use the Pax orbital, Modren's tech-adepts have expanded considerably on the original architecture, overlaying it with infrastructure from power cabling and pipes to cogitators and air-scrubbers. Beyond these changes, they have installed entire new sections, like muscle laid over the original skeleton of the structure. The Pax orbital comprises many kilometres of corridors, interspersed with large cargo holds, docking arms, and training facilities. The exterior is studded with turrets and macro-cannons, some of which are housed in ancient stonework domes, the original purpose of which is unclear.



It is here, aboard the Pax orbital, that Modren's fleet mistress, Sabina Alsunet, can usually be found. Her own vessel, the Imperial Navy cruiser *Sacrament of Judgment*, is typically docked here, departing only when Alsunet has a mission to accomplish for her lord.

Gruss

Expansive oceans and forests of petrified wood dominate the surface of the world of Gruss. Gruss's indigenous life lives only in the planet-spanning oceans, while the much-smaller continents are almost completely barren save for the petrified forests. The atmosphere is thin, but frequent wind storms rip through the forests, creating discordant wails as the wind passes through the hollow trunks. Modren has placed several floating installations on the oceans of Gruss, which work to harvest plant and animal life as food sources for the other worlds.

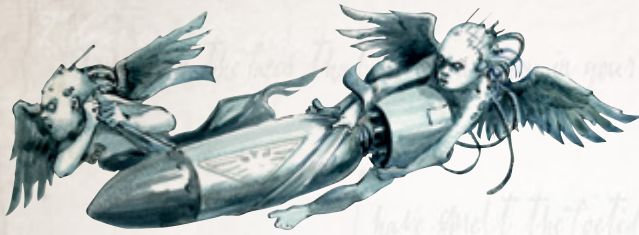
Pylar

A frozen ball of rock on the very outskirts of the system, tentative probing has thus far found little of interest on Pylar. Due to its frozen surface and near-lack of atmosphere, harvesting the moderate mineral resources has thus far proven more difficult than to be worthwhile for Modren. With no prying eyes to monitor his activity, the Eldar corsair captain Alasiel Belanir has found Pylar and its three small moons to be an ideal location to conceal his ship, the *Shadow's Edge*, remaining at comfortable distance from Modren's seat of power on Scathe.

THE DEN OF HERESY

"Honour. Duty. I heard these words often during my time in the Imperial Navy. I thought they meant something, but I was wrong."

—Fleet Mistress Sabina Alsunet



Having followed the Tau's route for many weeks or months, the Explorers finally arrive in the realm of the apostate Rogue Trader Vir Modren. Depending on whether or not the sensoria buoys surrounding the system detected them or not, the Explorers might have entered the domain unknown to Modren's forces, or might have already encountered a patrol ship. If the Explorers entered the system undetected it affords them the opportunity, should they choose to take it, to potentially learn more information about Modren and his domain before revealing themselves. In order to accomplish their mission to end Modren's dark ambitions and retrieve the Tau Ethereal, however, the Explorers must eventually reveal themselves to Modren, and even gain a modicum of his trust. Without doing so, they stand no chance of infiltrating his fortress world of Scathe and divining the Ethereal's location (see **Silberthorne's Plan**, below).

If the Explorers encountered a patrol prior to defining their plan, it could require some quick thinking and action to establish and maintain the ruse. Any story they provide to the patrol captain, they can expand on in order to provide a believable cover for entering Modren's realm. If the Explorers destroyed a patrol ship, the GM should assume that the Explorers acted quickly enough to prevent the ship from reporting its findings. Modren (or his subordinates) are likely to find the timing of the ship's destruction suspicious, which could present additional difficulty for the Explorers.

Exactly how and when the Explorers become known to Modren and first encounter his forces depends largely on their own actions. Unless the Explorers act brazenly to draw attention to themselves, the GM should allow this to occur at the Explorers' leisure. This gives the Explorers some time to finalise their plans, at least as much as is possible. However, if the Explorers seem hesitant to take the next step and make contact, Silberthorne suggests that they do so. If this is still insufficient to galvanise the Explorers to action, the GM should present an encounter with a patrol ship, just as if the Explorers were detected by the sensoria buoys (see pages 29-30). This can happen as a result of the Explorers moving in proximity to an inhabited world or the sensoria observatoria of the asteroid belt, or simply by chance.

SILBERTHORNE'S PLAN

At an appropriate time just prior to or shortly after entering Modren's system, if the Explorers do not initiate the conversation, Silberthorne approaches them to discuss his plan for infiltrating Modren's realm and finalise what details are possible. Silberthorne hears the Explorers out on whatever concerns or alternate proposals they might have, nodding silently or expressing scepticism with a raised eyebrow, as appropriate. If the Explorers offer valid proposals, Silberthorne considers these. Ultimately Silberthorne is insistent on the fundamentals of his plan, while leaving the specifics and implementation to the Explorers.

At its core, Silberthorne's plan is for the Explorers to pose as would-be vassals in order to gain access to Modren. To this end, guises of being refugees from the Imperium, spurned nobles and debauched scions of power who have left it behind in favour of new frontiers. The Explorers must forge a new reputation for themselves within Modren's realm by overcoming their most prominent rivals, who include traitors to the Imperium, xenos raiders, and worse. Once the Explorers gain some measure of Modren's trust and thereby access to his fortress on Scathe, they can launch their attack, assassinating the heretic Rogue Trader and recovering the "object" that the Tau seek.

Based on prior encounters with Modren's forces, the Explorers might propose that they have travelled to his realm with purpose, or might proceed with the claim that happening upon it was a matter of chance. Throughout the discussion, Silberthorne should guide the plan, while leaving details up to the Explorers. Depending on their own pasts and reputations, the Explorers might be comfortable proceeding under their actual identities. This is particularly appropriate if the Explorers have been known to engage in criminal or other activities that might put them at odds with the Imperial authorities. This approach has the advantage of requiring the Explorers to only conceal their true intentions, rather than maintain entire fabricated identities. However, even if the Explorers' reputations are such that a desire to leave the Imperium is believable, Modren is sure to be wary of other Rogue Traders. As Vir Modren knows the ambitions of Rogue Traders all too well, he is likely to suspect them of planning to usurp his rule, and so consequently might require additional effort for the Explorers to prove their loyalty and trustworthiness. If the Explorers instead assume false identities, this could smooth their entry, so long as they are able to maintain their cover stories convincingly.

Depending on the Explorers' identities and reputations, it might be that not all of them need maintain a false identity. If one of the Explorers, such as the Rogue Trader, acts as the face of the group with the others posing as servants, it is only necessary for the group's professed leader to maintain a convincing story. While Silberthorne and his servant Diamnas Char can offer advice and guidance, it is ultimately left to the Explorers to decide under what identities they will proceed, and how much detail they put into their stories.

Some groups of Explorers might favour a more direct approach, perhaps feeling that such duplicity does not play to their abilities. However, a forward assault on Modren is inadvisable for a number of reasons, and Silberthorne is adamant that such a move is doomed to failure. If necessary, Silberthorne

As such, rather than expediting colonisation as was the case on Scathe and elsewhere, the ruins have proven a constant hindrance and danger to settlers. Despite the hard-won knowledge to the contrary, Modren and his servants continue to describe Elysia as a paradise world to potential vassals and settlers, leaving them to discover the truth too late.

The Cingula Asteroid Belt

An asteroid belt serves as a natural boundary between the inner worlds of the system and the planets further out. Beyond the asteroid belt, the worlds are cold and largely barren, and rely on constant resupplies of food and other resources from the inner planets. The Cingula itself includes objects varying in size from a few metres to well over a kilometre across. Many of the asteroids house valuable minerals, some quite rare. The pure concentrations of such rare materials are truly extraordinary. Many of Modren's geo-oracles and chymists believe the belt to be, at least in large part, the remains of a fabricated structure of truly monumental size, or perhaps the shattered remnants of an inhabited planetoid and its infrastructure. To facilitate the harvesting of these (un)natural resources, Modren has established several mining installations that double as observation posts to complement the sensoria network that encircles the system. The asteroid belt encompasses a huge volume of space, however, and alongside these primarily human-operated installations, Orks subservient to Gargoff 'Eadbreaka toil away, modifying asteroids with the addition of engines and weapons, converting them into voidborn attack fortresses known as Roks. While Ork Meks are never truly finished applying modifications to a project, which are in turn so haphazard as to have no definable end-point by human standards, at present three Roks are fit for use.

Pax

Pax is a massive gas giant that holds twenty-six moons of varying sizes in its gravitational pull. While Modren has established colony installations on several of the largest moons, Pax's most notable feature is an orbiting, artificial construct of ancient and unknown provenance. This structure, over five kilometres across, was found in much better condition than any of the ancient ruins on the planets' surfaces. Nonetheless, the ravages of time and stray impacts of space debris left it in no fit condition for service—in fact, Forcyz and the other outcast Tech-Priests in Modren's service were unable to determine if the station had ever truly been equipped to support life, or if such mechanical systems had been lost or stolen during the long millennia.

In order to use the Pax orbital, Modren's tech-adepts have expanded considerably on the original architecture, overlaying it with infrastructure from power cabling and pipes to cogitators and air-scrubbers. Beyond these changes, they have installed entire new sections, like muscle laid over the original skeleton of the structure. The Pax orbital comprises many kilometres of corridors, interspersed with large cargo holds, docking arms, and training facilities. The exterior is studded with turrets and macro-cannons, some of which are housed in ancient stonework domes, the original purpose of which is unclear.



It is here, aboard the Pax orbital, that Modren's fleet mistress, Sabina Alsunet, can usually be found. Her own vessel, the Imperial Navy cruiser *Sacrament of Judgment*, is typically docked here, departing only when Alsunet has a mission to accomplish for her lord.

Gruss

Expansive oceans and forests of petrified wood dominate the surface of the world of Gruss. Gruss's indigenous life lives only in the planet-spanning oceans, while the much-smaller continents are almost completely barren save for the petrified forests. The atmosphere is thin, but frequent wind storms rip through the forests, creating discordant wails as the wind passes through the hollow trunks. Modren has placed several floating installations on the oceans of Gruss, which work to harvest plant and animal life as food sources for the other worlds.

Pylar

A frozen ball of rock on the very outskirts of the system, tentative probing has thus far found little of interest on Pylar. Due to its frozen surface and near-lack of atmosphere, harvesting the moderate mineral resources has thus far proven more difficult than to be worthwhile for Modren. With no prying eyes to monitor his activity, the Eldar corsair captain Alasiel Belanir has found Pylar and its three small moons to be an ideal location to conceal his ship, the *Shadow's Edge*, remaining at comfortable distance from Modren's seat of power on Scathe.

GUESTS OF THE HERETIC

Once they have agreed to at least a rough plan, complete with believable cover stories and identities, as appropriate, the Explorers must make contact with Modren's forces, offering their allegiance and service to the heretic Rogue Trader. Depending on the circumstances, initial contact might be through a patrol vessel, outlying planet, a monitoring station in the asteroid belt, or even by long-range vox or astropathic communication. So long as the Explorers do not act in a threatening manner, any of Modren's security forces, vassal lords, or other servants, with whom they make contact is likely to take the Explorers at their word; after all, they are not the first refugees from the Imperium to seek asylum in Modren's territory. Indeed, it is likely that any ship's captain or colony ruler with whom they make contact was once in the same position. Therefore, unless the Explorers behave in such a way as to arouse suspicion, no Skill Test is necessary to convince the welcoming party of their intent. If anything does threaten to alert the NPC, be it a slip of the tongue or some detail of the Explorers' ship, an Explorer can assuage the NPC's suspicions with some quick thinking, a suitable lie, and an **Easy (+30) Deceive Test**.

THE GUIDE

Once the Explorers have made contact and presented their story to Modren's forces, they are kept waiting for a period of a few hours as this information is relayed to Modren. As is typical with uninvited visitors, Modren is not willing to grant the Explorers free run of his domain. While their cover story is believable, Modren realises that he has many enemies both within the Imperium and beyond, and is appropriately suspicious. He assigns a trusted servant by the name of Auberon Sheol to act as a liaison and guide for the Explorers. While Sheol does fulfil both of these functions, his true task is to vet the Explorers, ensuring both that they are sincere in their desire to join Modren's growing empire and that they have the potential to be valuable allies, or at least resources. Background information and the game profile for Auberon Sheol are located in the **NPC Appendix**, on page 108.

Ferried to the Explorers' vessel aboard one of the many ships serving in Modren's makeshift fleet, Sheol requests to come aboard. Sheol is accompanied by a pair of armsmen in the livery of House Modren, although he is willing to dismiss them if the Explorers object to their presence. In all things, Sheol presents the appearance of subservience and a desire to assist the Explorers however he can. In truth, of course, his primary goal is to observe and gauge the Explorers, while also introducing them to the ways of Modrennia. In his role as guide, Sheol answers any basic questions the Explorers have about the worlds and history of Modren's realm, as well as its denizens. This includes the powerful vassals and allies who serve as the Explorers' primary rivals. The GM can use Sheol to first make the Explorers aware of these individuals and the power they wield.

While accompanying the Explorers, Sheol politely answers questions and also volunteers information, as appropriate. Amongst other topics, Sheol respectfully informs the Explorers as to the limits of what and where they can travel. Most notably, only those whom Modren grants access are

GM GUIDANCE: EMPLOYING SILBERTHORNE'S ACOLYTES

Throughout this chapter, the Explorers face many challenges that could stretch their abilities and resources. Fortunately, in addition to their own abilities, their crew, and the other resources usually at their disposal, the Explorers have access to Silberthorne and his acolytes. Both Diamnas Char and Gulette Anhd have very specialised skills that could prove invaluable at numerous points throughout this section of the adventure. Diamnas Char is an infiltrator and saboteur of unparalleled skill, and Gulette Anhd is a potent telepath. Silberthorne is willing to go to almost any lengths to ensure that his mission succeeds and Modren meets his end. However, Silberthorne also keeps such information secret unless it becomes necessary to divulge it, as he does his true identity as an Inquisitor. Depending on the Explorers actions and their willingness to trust him, Silberthorne might have already been forced to reveal some of this information. Otherwise, at the GM's discretion, Silberthorne can recommend the talents of his "servants" if the need becomes apparent, or if the Explorers voice the need for similar skills. The GM should take care to ensure that the acolytes do not overshadow the Explorers' own efforts, but instead complement them.

permitted to travel to his fortress world of Scathe. As Sheol cordially explains, it is simply a necessary precaution, and although he would gladly permit the Explorers access, it is beyond his power.

As well as the instructions Sheol offers, Fleet Mistress Alsunet and the commanders of Modren's ground security forces on the various worlds take efforts to monitor the Explorers' whereabouts and activities. As long as the Explorers do not behave in a manner as to cause suspicion, however, these observations are made from a distance, without directly interfering in their affairs.

Under Scrutiny

Depending on the GM's intentions and the actions of the Explorers, the involvement of Modren's security forces might vary greatly. Unless the Explorers give reason for Modren's forces to mark them as a risk, they conduct their observation discreetly and from a distance. This consists primarily of tracking the movements of the Explorers' ship as it travels between the worlds of Modren's domain. This monitoring could pose a problem for the Explorers, depending on their own actions at this point. Once Auberon Sheol is convinced of the Explorers' intentions to serve Modren, the enhanced observation ceases, allowing the Explorers more leeway to conduct their operations.

Until the Explorers convince Sheol, and through him, Modren, of their loyalty, they must either pursue Silberthorne's plan more circumspectly, or delay pursuing it, lest they sabotage themselves by revealing their intent prematurely. As long as Sheol is aboard their ship, the Explorers should

GM GUIDANCE: USING AUBERON SHEOL

Beneath his well-groomed robes and polite smile, Auberon Sheol is a manipulative and self-serving individual. With serpent-like patience, Sheol waits at the beck and call of his supposed betters, whether that be Modren himself or the Explorers. While Sheol has little care what fate ultimately befalls the Explorers, he does his duty in guiding them through Modren's realm. The GM can use Sheol as a valuable tool for advancing the plot during this stage of the adventure and laying the groundwork for the Explorers' dealings with their rivals. All of the rivals are key figures in Modren's domain, and as such it is natural for Sheol to discuss them. If the Explorers do not take the initiative in pinpointing potential rivals and allies, the GM can have Sheol introduce the names of these NPCs in answer to tangentially related questions; for instance, any questions about the defence of the realm could lead to discussion of Sabina Alsunet, or even Gargoff 'Eadbreaka.

watch what they say and do. It is likely that Sheol's role as an observer is obvious to the Explorers, but if not, either Silberthorne or Diamnas Char can point this out to them.

In particular, the Explorers should take pains to conceal the Tau's presence from Sheol. Should Modren learn of the Tau's presence in his realm, he is certain to associate it with his recent theft of Tau technology and the Ethereal Aun'Roh. The importance of keeping the Hunter Cadre's involvement secret should be clear to the Explorers; if they do not realise it themselves, Silberthorne underlines the point for them. Because Sheol must walk a fine line between snooping and displaying respect for the Explorers, simply confining him to certain areas of the ship is an effective way of concealing the Tau. However, Sheol is a consummate dissembler and gossip, and if he has access to crew members who are aware of the Tau presence, he stands a good chance of learning of it without the crew members realising the importance of the information. Through seemingly innocuous and even unrelated questions, Sheol can encourage, even deceive, crew members into revealing the information. The Explorers can avoid this by denying Sheol such an opportunity. They can do this by ensuring that one of them, or at the least a trusted NPC servant, is always present when Sheol has access to members of the crew.

AUDIENCE WITH THE TRAITOR

In order to accomplish their goals and complete Silberthorne's mission, the Explorers must ultimately gain access to Modren's fortress on Scathe and to the apostate Rogue Trader himself. However, until they can both prove their loyalty and earn Modren's respect, he denies any requests for a face-to-face audience. In part, this is a matter of caution; however, Modren's unchecked ego is far too great for him to countenance the idea that anyone could truly threaten him on his capital world, surrounded by his loyal retainers and guards. Perhaps the greater reason for his refusal to meet is simply to show that he can, that regardless of what power and authority the Explorers commanded in their former lives as Imperial citizens, they are now in Modren's sovereign domain, where he is the sole and ultimate power. As such, refusals are likely to be curt and delivered through intermediaries, in order to make sure the Explorers receive the underlying message. For their part, repeated requests could weaken the Explorers' position in Modren's eyes, as implies desperation, which he despises.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs play key roles as the Explorers first infiltrate **The Den of Heresy**:

Auberon Sheol

A trusted servant of Vir Modren, tasked with vetting new arrivals and potential vassals. Sheol acts as a sort of guide for the Explorers, while primarily observing them in order to take their measure. If the Explorers hope to win Modren's favour, the first step is impressing Sheol. Though he is loathe to discuss his past, Modren himself and certain other powerful players are aware that Auberon Sheol is a former member of the Adeptus Administratum. His ambition and greed drove Sheol to violate numerous edicts and protocols. When his superiors discovered his crimes and bureaucratic heresies, he saw little choice but to flee the Calixis Sector.

BUILDING A STRATEGY

When it comes time to approach the five rivals, it certainly pays off if the Explorers take time first to strategise. Of course, no plan survives contact with the enemy, but going in without a good plan risks failure or worse—exposing their plot to Modren prematurely. Fortunately, the Explorers have valuable advisors on hand in the forms of Inquisitor Silberthorne and Shas'o Ja'Vra, who are both ready to offer their often contradictory views. In addition, Silberthorne's servant Diamnas Char is an expert in infiltration and covert operations. If the Explorers think such an approach could be advantageous, Char is available to offer his expertise, or even accompany them on such a mission. The GM can use Silberthorne and Ja'Vra to guide his players on the best path or to introduce additional challenge, as the Explorers must weigh the advice of one against the other and make their own decision. In any case, these interactions with Silberthorne and Ja'Vra should provide interesting opportunities for roleplaying, as both the shadow games the Inquisitor favours and the militaristic tactics of the xenos commander are likely outside of the Explorers' typical methods of operation.

TRIAL BY FLAME

"I care not what title you bore in the Imperium, or on your world of birth. I only care that you get results, and that you are loyal to my cause."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

Having been accepted, at least tentatively, into Modren's domain, the Explorers must prove their worth as potential vassals. While this is par for the course in the cutthroat world of Modrennian politics, the Explorers, of course, have true goals that are far more than simply earning the recognition of the outcast Rogue Trader. In order to set the stage for their eventual assault on Modren, the Explorers must take pains not only to earn his trust but also to weaken his own power base. In addition to removing his most powerful supporters from the picture, the Explorers can even turn some against him. If the Explorers succeed in swaying any of their would-be rivals to their cause, it can greatly aid them in the final confrontation when they put Silberthorne's plan to the test. The Explorers must either defeat, ally with, or otherwise overcome at least three of these rivals if they are to have a chance at succeeding in their mission and escaping with their lives.

How the Explorers go about laying the groundwork for their final attack on Modren is very much left to their own discretion. Of the many hundreds of lesser lords and nobles who pay fealty to Modren, there are five who pose the most threat to the Explorers. Like the Explorers, these individuals command great power in the form of armed voidships and thousands of crew, retainers, and armymen or other fighters. It is these individuals with whom the Explorers should concern themselves, both for practical reasons and to hold up their cover story. Were the Explorers truly hoping to live out their lives in Modren's realm, it is these powerful individuals who would be their chief rivals. Consequently, in order to convince Modren, and his servants, of their intentions, they must compete with these de-facto rivals. Whether the Explorers replace, disgrace, destroy, or even recruit these powerful players, each victory further diminishes Modren's ability to call on support once the Explorers move against him. In this way, doing so fulfils the double function of strengthening the Explorers' position and weakening Modren's, without the apostate Rogue Trader realising the latter until it is too late.

There are five prominent rivals in Modren's realm with whom the Explorers must concern themselves: the heretek Magos Forcyz, Fleet Mistress Sabina Alsunet, the pirate captain Makara De'Soth, the Ork Freebooter Kaptin Gargoff 'Eadbreaka, and the Eldar Corsair Captain Alasiel Belanir. Each of these individuals commands great resources in the form of voidships and numerous subjects, from the treacherous Navy crew serving Sabina Alsunet to the thousands of barbarous Boyz following 'Eadbreaka.

The Explorers can deal with these rivals in any order, depending both on their own actions and the GM's preference. It is not necessary that the Explorers successfully overcome each rival, but doing so puts them at a distinct advantage during the events of **Chapter III**.

The remainder of **Chapter II** consists of the Explorers dealing with their various rivals in Modren's realm as they see fit, culminating, should they succeed well enough, in an invitation to Modren's palace-citadel on Scathe. These encounters can be approached in any order, as both the timing of the events and the manner in which the Explorers encounter their rivals depend on the Explorers' chosen strategies and how prior events unfold. Nor is it strictly necessary for the Explorers to meet or overcome all of their potential rivals at this stage, depending on the

GM's preference and the Explorers' own intentions. However, the more rivals the Explorers successfully deal with at this stage, the greater their advantage when they finally make their move against Modren in **Chapter III: A Dynasty Falls**.

In the following pages, each of these rivals is examined in more details, along with recommendations for GMs on the most promising approaches to overcoming each, as well as those strategies that are likely to be less than successful, or even backfire. It is, of course, possible that Explorers might come up with approaches that are not covered here. In this case, the GM should use the information available about each rival and what he knows about the chances of various approaches, and his own good judgment to guide the encounter. So long as the Explorers formulate a plan that seems reasonable, the GM should afford them the opportunity to succeed.

Of course, if the plan has serious faults, or if the Explorers simply achieve catastrophic failures on key Skill Tests, things could backfire and cause further complications.



PREPARATIONS

Before the Explorers can tackle the various rivals, Silberthorne should deliver the basic information he has on each. This allows the Explorers to more carefully plan their strategy, including which rival to start with. It is even possible that the Explorers may devise ways to affect multiple rivals in one swoop, or even turn them against each other. Such creative and ambitious ideas should be encouraged, although should also include attendant dangers and increased difficulties, with the risks commensurate to the reward.

The information Silberthorne possesses is included under each entry below. In addition, the GM can read aloud or paraphrase the following to quickly introduce the Explorers to their rivals, providing further information as they question Silberthorne about each:

"I do not know how many traitors now owe fealty to Modren, but I do know of five in particular of whom you must be wary. From what information I have gathered, these individuals are key to Modren's social and military order. Without them, he will come toppling down from his self-made pedestal once we exert the proper pressure.

"The first is a woman by the name of Sabina Alsunet. In the past, she was a captain of an Imperial Navy ship of the line. It is my understanding that she now serves the master of Modren's ragtag fleet. Remove her, and we can take advantage of a reduction in his fleet's organisation and efficiency.

"Next is a pirate by the name of Makara De'Soth. You may have heard his name before, as he has been a bane to the Koronus Expanse for many years. Despite his pretentious bearing, he is a dangerous and cunning captain. His own forces supplement those commanded by Alsunet, and we can greatly reduce our opposition if we remove him from the picture.

"Not all of the scum serving Modren are human. I am sure you have encountered the barbarous xenos greenskins, and it may dismay you to learn that a potent Ork pirate captain—known as a Freebooter—named," Silberthorne wets his lips at this and scrunches his face as he attempts to pronounce the name in the guttural language of the Orks, "Gargoff, or the 'Eadbreaka' as he is called among his people." Silberthorne smiles sardonically, "He commands a flotilla of his own, and Emperor-knows how many Ork warriors. Don't let the appearance of their ramshackle vessels fool you, they are a great boon to Modren's forces.

"Most curiously, Modren has somehow enlisted the aid of a corsair captain of the xenos race known as the Eldar. I know little about this individual or their arrangement, but he is known as Alasiel Belanir. If we can discover what Modren has to offer such an individual, it may go a great ways toward removing his assistance. I have dealt with xenos of this type before, and their intentions are often inscrutable."

"Finally, there is the matter of the arch-heretek Forcyz, a fallen magos of the Adeptus Mechanicus. This heretek is one of Modren's most trusted servants, and a key part of his power base. I also believe he is directly involved in the heist of the Tau equipment, and may even now be engaged in unholy work with the xenos technology."

Silberthorne's information comes from a variety of sources, and much of it has been filtered through multiple intermediaries. As such, there is no guarantee of its accuracy, and some GMs might add additional difficulties for the Explorers by interspersing inaccurate or misleading information. This might take the form of a fallacious weakness or even a misunderstanding as to their loyalty to Modren.

Once Silberthorne has briefly introduced the rivals, he can attempt to answer any questions the Explorers have. Silberthorne's information is incomplete and fragmentary, so the Explorers might ask questions that are beyond his knowledge. In general, Silberthorne's knowledge is at least a few years out of date, and he is unaware of more recent developments, and of the finer points of the different NPCs' relationships with Modren. If Silberthorne does not know the answer to a question, he simply shakes his head and states as much, or, alternatively, arches an eyebrow. His response is similar if the Explorers ask a question that he is unwilling to answer, such as questions about the important "object" stolen from the Tau.

THE FALLEN MAGOS

The arch-heretek and fallen magos known as Forcyz is one of Vir Modren's most influential and trusted servants. In truth, Forcyz does not so much serve the apostate Rogue Trader as he does his own ambition. Supervising the maintenance and construction of the many technological systems that underpin the workings of Modren's realm and providing the apostate Rogue Trader with ever more esoteric and blasphemous weapons provides the heretek with the resources and opportunity to pursue his own profane research.

Unlike other rivals the Explorers must contend with, Forcyz is uninterested in politics. He already holds a position of power and influence second only to Modren himself, yet his own motivation is not power, but forbidden knowledge. Consequently, Forcyz is more straightforward to deal with than the other rivals. Ironically, this can actually make things more difficult for the Explorers. It is not possible for the Explorers to convince Forcyz to betray Modren; their arrangement is ideal for the heretek, and he has no ambitions to rule. In fact, Forcyz holds immense sway over Modren as things stand, for the heretic Rogue Trader relies on the fallen magos to keep his realm operating. As such, Forcyz could very much steer the direction of events in Modrennia, if he cared to. Forcyz benefits greatly from their relationship in a number of ways. Modren provides Forcyz with a location to conduct his forbidden research far from the prying eyes and vengeful grasp of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Modren additionally supplies Forcyz with resources, infrastructure, assistants, and all the test subjects he requests. In turn, Modren benefits from the fruits of Forcyz's illicit research, including deadly servitors, blasphemous weapons, and unnameable perversions of science.

Forcyz is guilty of tech-heresy of the worst kind, employing the dark forces of the Warp in his pursuit of knowledge and ever-more unique and bizarre inventions. It is entirely possible that, were it not for Forcyz's influence, Modren's ambition and treachery might have stopped short of communing with the Ruinous Powers.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

Forcyz is well-known in certain circles with ties to the Adeptus Mechanicus, as his crimes against the order were, and continue to be, quite exceptional. Consequently, Silberthorne has some knowledge of the heretek that he can pass on to the Explorers. As always, Silberthorne advocates a cautious approach in dealing with the heretek. If the Explorers come to Silberthorne for input, the GM can read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Silberthorne nods his head knowingly, "Yes, the arch-heretek. Forcyz fled the wrath of the Lathe World's masters many years ago, seeking refuge with the outcasts and heathen worlds of the Koronus Expanse. His assistance has been instrumental in Modren's rise to power and conquest of his self-proclaimed domain. Forcyz is a very canny individual, and you must be careful in dealing with him. Like many of his kind, Forcyz is driven only by the desire for knowledge. In his case though, this is a thirst for the forbidden and unholy. It is rumoured that he is in league with the Dark Powers. Until we know the extent of this, I would advise caution. Forcyz commands great influence over Modren, and a direct assault risks undermining everything we have worked for so far."

Should the Explorers seek the advice of Shas'o Ja'Vra, her advice is decidedly unlike Silberthorne's. In addition to her standard preference for the direct route, Ja'Vra is aware of Forcyz's direct involvement in the kidnapping of Ethereal Aun'Roh, and desires to rescue the Ethereal from Forcyz's less-than-tender mercies. When the Explorers broach the subject with the Shas'o, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

At the mention of Forcyz, Ja'Vra blinks once and looks off to the side. Although her xenos expressions are difficult to read, it seems that the subject of the heretek stirs up some strong emotions in the fiery commander. "It pleases me to hear that you are targeting this criminal. I am prepared to put the full force of my cadre at your assistance for the attack. I only ask that we make the attempt to capture him alive; I believe he can lead us to the precious object taken from us."

If the Explorers express a disinclination to wage a full-scale assault, Ja'Vra's disappointment is evident, although she reasserts her offer to aid in such an attack. Although such an approach troubles her, Ja'Vra is willing to provide the Explorers with examples of Tau technology if they prefer to gain Forcyz's favour with a gift of technology. She sees such a sacrifice as temporary, for the end result is to destroy Forcyz and reclaim all he has taken.

Silberthorne holds very strong suspicions, which are accurate, that Forcyz is directly responsible for the capture of the Ethereal Aun'Roh. Forcyz is currently engaged in hideous experiments as he attempts to unlock the secrets of the control Ethereals evince over their species. While this research is of interest to Modren, it is secondary in his eyes to the potential of the Tau technology. For the heretek, however, it has become an obsession.



ENCOUNTERING THE HERETEK

Magos Forcyz spends much of his time sequestered in his laboratoria deep beneath Modren's palace-citadel on Scathe. It is here that the heretek conducts his many lines of blasphemous research, and here that he is holding Ethereal Aun'Roh and the stolen Tau technology. Because the Explorers have not yet gained Modren's trust enough to step foot on Scathe, they have no way of breaching the heretek's abode. Instead, the Explorers must either concoct a plan to deal with Forcyz remotely, arrange to encounter him while he is away from Scathe, or somehow lure him out.

Although Forcyz does sometimes take excursions in order to oversee various operations taking place across Modrennia, he most often leaves such matters to subordinates. If the GM decides to give the Explorers a lead in dealing with Forcyz, he can present them with just such an occasion. There are a number of ways by which the Explorers can learn of such an excursion by Forcyz. If the Explorers are still in contact with Auberon Sheol, they can elicit such information from him. Depending on their plan, it might be preferable to do so without alerting Sheol to their interest. Fortunately, Sheol's tendency to talk makes it a relatively simple matter to obtain such information. An Explorer can make a **Routine (+10) Charm or Inquiry Test** to steer the conversation onto Forcyz and his current whereabouts and activities. If the Explorers fail the Test by two Degrees of Failure or less, he still obtains the information, but in the process Sheol becomes suspicious of the Explorer's reasons for broaching the subject. The exact consequences of this are left to the GM and should be

strongly influenced by the interactions between the Explorer and Sheol, but at the very least Forcyz should be expecting potential trouble from the Explorers, and prepare accordingly with additional guardian servitors or other precautions.

Alternatively, the Explorers can arrange a meeting with Forcyz, or attempt to lure him into a situation where they can make their move. Forcyz's greatest motivation is the desire for forbidden knowledge, and the promise of such is an effective means of securing his attention. Xenos technology, archeotech, or any form of rare technology or data is enough to pique Forcyz's interest. Any knowledge or artefact that would be of interest to a loyal member of the Adeptus Mechanicus is likely to be of interest to Forcyz, although forbidden knowledge or technology is even more intriguing. If the Explorers can offer any information or specimens of this sort, whether they actually possess it or are merely bluffing, they stand a good chance of drawing Forcyz away from his fastness on Scathe. Whether contacting him through an intermediary or directly by long-range vox (complete with a noticeable delay), a Skill Test is not necessary to convince Forcyz to meet, as long as the Explorers' story seems reasonably plausible.

In a face-to-face encounter, Forcyz is a disturbing individual. The arch-heretek displays no emotion, yet simultaneously radiates malevolence. Many whom speak with Forcyz get the disturbing feeling that he is mentally dissecting them as he observes them with his cybernetic eyes—and they are right. Forcyz is typically very blunt and straight to the point; if he believes someone is acting foolishly, he tells them so in no uncertain terms.

NEUTRALISING FORCYZ

After discovering Forcyz's location or arranging a meeting, the Explorers can put their plan into action. While players could devise any number of plans, which the GM should consider, the most fundamental approaches are to attack Forcyz, attempt to distract him in order to remove him from the picture, or attempt to turn him against Modren. This last approach is doomed to fail, and the Explorers should have opportunities to learn of this before committing to such a course of action, either through speaking with Silberthorne, Auberon Sheol, or otherwise investigating the heretek's position within Modren's domain.

Because Forcyz cannot be turned against Modren, and killing the arch-heretek at this stage would assuredly draw Modren's ire, one promising avenue for the Explorers is to concentrate on gaining Forcyz's favour, which in turn will secure favour from Modren. If the Explorers have any unusual or rare technology to offer Forcyz, this is an almost guaranteed method of giving him a good impression of them. This could include xenos technology, archeotech, or unsanctioned technology of any kind. The most effective means is to actually gift the physical object to Forcyz, but allowing him to study an item of technology in the Explorers' possession could be effective, as well. Schematics, tech-lore, ancient data-scrolls, or any other means of conveying technological data that could be

of interest to Forcyz is also effective. Mundane information has little effectiveness, although Forcyz does recognise it as a gesture of goodwill. However, if the Explorers can provide Forcyz with something of true interest, they gain his favour, and can be considered to have successfully dealt with Forcyz, as the heretek bestows his blessing in the eyes of Modren.

Attempts to eliminate Forcyz should be extremely difficult, and his considerable defences should work to dissuade Explorers from such a course of action. At all times, Forcyz is accompanied by four corrupt servitors and two lesser hereteks (see page 110 for the Servitor profile and page 95 for the Heretek profile).

Forcyz plays an important part in the events of **Chapter III**, so it is important that he survives this portion of the adventure. If the Explorers do decide to attempt to kill Forcyz at this stage, it might be that he Burns one of the Fate Points provided by his Touched by the Fates Trait. In this case, the Explorers might believe Forcyz to be dead, only encountering him again one they reach Scathe. In any case, the Explorers receive the opportunity to deal with the heretek permanently in **Chapter III**. Further information and the NPC profile for Magos Forcyz can be found on page 95 of the NPC Appendix



MASTER OF THE FLEET

Fleet Mistress Sabina Alsunet is amongst Vir Modren's most loyal servants, ever since Modren's intervention saved Alsunet's ship, the Navy cruiser *Sacrament of Judgment*, from a xenos raiding force that far outnumbered her own. Alsunet blamed her superiors in the Navy for the incident, harbouring a resentment that led her to forsake her duty to the Imperium and ally herself with Modren, taking her ship and crew with her. Most of Alsunet's officers were loyal to their captain and wilfully followed her into treason; those who refused to betray the Imperium were dealt with harshly. Due to her expertise and her unflinching loyalty, Modren granted Alsunet command of his fleet while he concerns himself with the business of ruling a star system. The fleet consists of his own vessels of the Modren Dynasty, treasonous ships formerly of the Imperial Navy, and a ragtag assortment of outcasts, pirates, and renegades.

If the Explorers can remove Alsunet, it would be a great boon when the time comes to strike against Modren. Without the leadership of the steely fleet mistress, Modren's fleet would lack organisation and be unable to focus a concerted counterattack against the Explorers. The Explorers can accomplish this goal by actually killing Alsunet, or by ensuring that she loses her position. To achieve the latter result, the Explorers can either frame her as a traitor in Modren's eyes, or show that she is unfit to lead his void forces.

Alsunet commands great resources and influence within Modren's realm, making her a highly dangerous opponent. However, should the Explorers succeed in removing her from her position, it provides a proportionate advantage during the events of **Chapter III**. Unlike some of the other rivals, under no circumstances is Alsunet willing to ally herself with the Explorers.

Modren's fleet, and therefore its master, Sabina Alsunet, is based out of the orbital station above the world of Pax. The facility is heavily defended, presenting a formidable challenge for the Explorers. A frontal assault on the orbital is unlikely to succeed, due to its own defences and the numerous ships docked there at any given time. Further, such an assault is sure to provoke Modren's wrath, marking the Explorers out as enemies prematurely.

Further background information and the game profile for Sabina Alsunet can be found in the **NPC Appendix**, on page 97.



ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

Silberthorne's research has left him well-acquainted with Captain Alsunet's history. As a former servant of the Imperium, records are available regarding her illustrious career and fall from grace, at least for someone with Silberthorne's authority. Consequently, he knows more about her, at least prior to her alliance with Modren, than he does of any of the other rivals. If and when the Explorers come to Silberthorne for advice regarding Alsunet, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Silberthorne sets down his glass of amasec and furrows his brow. "Sabina Alsunet," he begins, "is a traitor to the Imperial Navy. Formerly the rightful captain of the Sacrament of Judgment, she took her ship with her when she defected to Modren's nascent kingdom. Alsunet credits Rogue Trader Modren's intervention with saving the Sacrament of Judgment from a xenos enemy that far outmatched the Imperial Navy forces present. This newfound loyalty to Modren apparently surpassed hers to the Navy. From all evidence, she is extremely loyal to Modren, and I do not foresee attempts to sway her allegiance as being successful."

The GM should allow the Explorers an opportunity to discuss their potential options for dealing with Alsunet, and to pose questions of Silberthorne. In response to the Explorers' ideas, of if they are at a loss, Silberthorne offers the following suggestions to either assassinate Alsunet or discredit her. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"We cannot risk moving openly against her," Silberthorne announces, "but we must remove her from the picture. We cannot fight our way through Modren's entire fleet to get to Scathe, nor do I favour the idea of fighting past it once our mission here is done. If we can eliminate Alsunet, it would leave Modren's fleet without coordinated leadership. Of course," Silberthorne smiles, "you must ensure that her death cannot be traced back to you. You must proceed how you see fit, but I would recommend discussing such a course of action with my associate Diamnas Char. He has certain... experience in such matters."

Another option that Silberthorne can suggest if the Explorers need guidance, is to falsify evidence that Alsunet is planning to betray Modren. This method could be less dangerous for the Explorers than attempting an assassination, as it is less likely to cast suspicions on them, but with a similar end result. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Well, if you prefer to keep your hands clean," says Silberthorne, "perhaps there are other ways. Although Alsunet's loyalty to Modren is ironclad, convincing Modren otherwise might be just as effective as actually turning her against him. Modren demands utter loyalty from his subjects, and to bring Alsunet's into doubt will likely provoke a severe reaction."

Shas'o Ja'Vra advises a different approach. However, her expertise in combat, while encompassing all arenas to an extent, is far less tailored to Naval engagements, an area of which the finer points fall to the Air caste. Being much less familiar with the practices of the Imperial Navy and its officers, her advice is more limited in comparison to Silberthorne's, and she

recognises her limitations. However, she advises a more direct approach. Because of Modren's fickle favour, recognising only strength and effectiveness, Ja'Vra correctly reasons that proving Alsunet ineffectual would be enough to decrease her status in Modren's eyes, while also serving to impress him with the Explorers' abilities. If the Explorers approach Ja'Vra for advice, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As always, the alien commander's expression is difficult to read, but you get the impression she is pleased that you have sought her advice. "In my culture, a commander who outlives her effectiveness is removed from duty," says Ja'Vra, "I believe the same principle holds true here. Perhaps you can prove your superiority and dishonour her by defeating her in battle." Ja'Vra ponders for a moment before continuing, "You cannot simply attack her, but perhaps there is a way to provoke her into moving against you?"

If the Explorers consider the route of assassination, Diamnas Char is able to offer his expertise in the matter of infiltrating Alsunet's orbital station. If the Explorers request it, Char can even accompany them in such a mission. Otherwise, he can offer advice, counsel, or even specialised equipment that can aid the Explorers in the attempt. For more information, see **Assassination** on page 46.



ENCOUNTERING THE FLEET MISTRESS

The Explorers are most likely to encounter Alsunet on the Pax orbital, the base of operations for Modren's fleet. Alsunet spends most of her time aboard the Pax orbital, although she undertakes semi-regular sojourns to Modren's court on Scathe. Her duties keep her quite busy, as she takes a personal hand in almost all matters of system defence. In addition to her visits to Scathe, Alsunet has been known to enact surprise inspections of orbital defence facilities across the breadth of the system, from the asteroid belt to the perimeter sensoria buoys. She sees the performance of all the ships under her command as her personal responsibility, and ensures that all of the captains meet her own exacting standards. She is usually found aboard the Pax orbital, reviewing reports and logs, supervising ship maintenance, and organising system defence patrols. More specifically, she is most often found either in her quarters and adjoining officio, or in the station's command centre, a hub of bustling activity where numerous servitors, crew, and specialists oversee the many operations and technological systems of the orbital.

Depending on the Explorers' plan, they might enter the orbital openly, or attempt to covertly infiltrate the facility. The Pax orbital comprises many kilometres of twisting corridors, with recent additions intersecting with ancient and inscrutable

construction of stonework and strange alloys. Simply gaining access to the orbital is a feat in itself, as it is one of the most heavily defended locations within Modren's realm. It is a hub of voidship traffic, as ships of Modren's fleet come and go with regularity. Alsunet's Navy background has contributed to the efficient and comprehensive security features that gird the orbital. The Explorers can attempt to arrange to bring their vessel in close proximity to the orbital or even to dock with it. Although they have not yet fully proved themselves in Modren's eyes, if they indicate an interest in serving in Modren's fleet, Fleet Mistress Alsunet might be willing to accommodate them. It would not be irregular for the Explorers to bring their vessel in for Alsunet's teams to inspect prior to formal acceptance into the fleet; although, whether or not the Explorers are comfortable with unknown hereteks and traitors crawling over every metre of their ship is a different matter entirely. If the Explorers choose this course of action, they might need to take precautions to ensure the Tau Hunter Cadre is not discovered, or anything else they desire to keep unknown to Modren.

Another option is to request a personal meeting with the Fleet Mistress. This option is more challenging, as Alsunet is a busy woman; however, the Explorers are individuals of some import and can offer potentially valuable resources, including a ship for her fleet. Arranging a meeting with Alsunet requires suitably impressing her subordinates so that they are willing to vouch for the Explorers. To do so, one of the Explorers should make an **Easy (+20) Charm Test**. A successful test leads to a meeting with Alsunet, although the Explorers could be kept waiting for some time; time which they might make good use of if they have plans to sabotage the orbital or frame Alsunet for being disloyal to Modren. If the Explorer fails the test, they are informed that Fleet Mistress Alsunet's duties will not allow her the time for a meeting at present.

Arriving at the Pax orbital should be an intimidating experience; the structure bristles with turrets and macrocannons and the Explorers must pass under the watchful augurs of the battleships of Modren's fleet. If the Explorers have been cleared to dock, a traffic-control technomat contacts them via vox to guide their approach, including broadcasting appropriate codes and trajectory data.

Should the Explorers attempt to bring their vessel close to the Pax orbital without making arrangements for an expected arrival, things go quite differently. A vessel entering the orbit of Pax without clearance is first subject to harsh warnings by vox. If this is not enough to dissuade the intruder, the warnings are quickly followed up with fire from weapons batteries and picket ships.

Once aboard the orbital, the Explorers are assigned a security detail "for their own protection." If the Explorers hope to pursue whatever plan they have to defeat Alsunet, they must either eliminate or lose these guards. The number of armsmen in the security assignment should roughly be equal to those in the Explorer's party. These guards are straightforward and unimaginative, and it is likely that the Explorers can evade them through some clever thinking, such as splitting the group, inviting along additional servants of their own, or any number of other ruses.

NEUTRALISING THE THREAT

There are three likely methods for dealing with Sabina Alsunet, although the GM should consider whatever other plans the Explorers might come up with. Based on the guidance of Silberthorne and Ja'Vra, the Explorers might attempt to assassinate Alsunet, discredit her in Modren's eyes, or implicate her as a traitor. Each of these methods has its own difficulties and pay-off, and each is discussed separately below.

Assassination

With a frontal assault ill-advised, the Explorers could decide to eliminate Alsunet by assassinating her. To do so requires the would-be assassins to sneak past guards, evade automated defences, and then escape without being caught once the deed is done. Such a task is by no means guaranteed to succeed, and the Explorers would do well to plan carefully for this. Failure not only leaves Alsunet for the Explorers to contend with later, but risks exposing their intentions.

There is first the matter of slipping onto the Pax orbital. One way to do so is to obtain an invitation, as described under **Encountering the Fleet Mistress**, on page 45. If the Explorers are unable to do so, or prefer to remain at a distance, it is also possible to board the orbital with a long-range shuttle. Doing so requires a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Space Craft) Test**. The defence protocols of the Pax orbital owe much to Sabina Alsunet's Navy background, and familiarity with these procedures is helpful for a pilot attempting to duck patrols and bluff observers. If the pilot of the shuttle possesses the

Common Lore (Imperial Navy) Skill, the difficulty of the Pilot (Space Craft) Test is Easy (+20), instead.

Whether they are invited aboard the orbital or board it covertly, once on board, the Explorers must be able to move about undetected if they are to assassinate Sabina Alsunet and escape once again. Traversing the station undetected primarily means evading armsmen patrols, as the station interior features few automated security features. Locating Alsunet requires the Explorers to pass a **Challenging (+0) Navigate (Surface) Test**. The number of Degrees of Success resulting from the test indicates how quickly the Explorers are able to reach Alsunet's chambers, and therefore how many potential encounters with guard patrols they must deal with. Three Degrees of Success or more indicates a single potential encounter and a successful Test with no additional Degrees of Success indicates three possible run-ins. It is possible for the Explorers to evade the patrols by succeeding in an **Opposed Silent Move Test** against the armsmen's Awareness. To represent the armsmen, use the profile for Modren's Guard on page 110. If the armsmen detect the Explorers, their reaction depends on whether the Explorers are known to be aboard or not. The guards attempt to subdue or kill intruders, whereas if the Explorers have been invited aboard, it might be possible for them to convince the armsmen that they have simply become separated from their guides. Depending on the feasibility of the Explorers' story, the GM should call for appropriate Deceive Tests.

It is possible that the Explorers might decide it would be better to send a servant, ally, or hireling in their place, rather than risk their own lives and reputation. Silberthorne



is certain to agree with such a plan, as this is typically how he conducts his own operations. While the Explorers certainly have many thousands of crew at their disposal, it is unlikely that any possess the specialised skills necessary for such a mission, it is not impossible. As always, the Explorers should be aware of the risks involved in delegating to subordinates who might not be tried and tested. If the station's security were to capture a would-be assassin, or even a successful one, who can be linked to the Explorers, Rogue Trader Modren would certainly perceive the action as an attack against him.

Employing another to assassinate Alsunet is a legitimate route to accomplishing the goal, and the GM should not overly penalise the Explorers for taking such an approach. At the same time, he should be careful not to make the feat too easy, or divorce it from the Explorers' own actions and abilities. Among other reasons, the Explorers should not feel that they can solve all their problems by delegating them (and such a tactic should definitely not work for slaying Vir Modren himself in the final chapter). The GM has certain options for handling this so as to keep the Explorers involved and to ensure the outcome is dependent on their own actions and abilities. One method is to require the Explorers to succeed at a Profit Factor Test in order to determine if their hired assassin, loyal servant, or erstwhile ally fulfils their task. This test represents the Explorers properly employing their resources to accomplish their goal, whether that be selecting from the most skilled assassins in an on-board death cult, hiring an outside agency, or even convincing Silberthorne to lend the talents of Diamnas Char to the task. The GM should base the difficulty of the Profit Factor Test on the amount of thought and effort the Explorers put into the deed. For instance, if the Explorers think to secure plans of the orbital, plot out a detailed insertion route, and go over other variable and possible aspects with the assassin, they should receive a significant bonus to the test.

Dishonour

Vir Modren values power, results, and action. Consequently, disgracing Sabina Alsunet and showing her to be unfit to lead his fleet could see him remove her from her position, leaving a temporary power void that the Explorers can take advantage of. This approach represents a very broad category, and the GM should consider any plots the Explorers come up with. If the Explorers heed Shas'o Ja'Vra's advice, they might attempt to engineer a situation in which Fleet Mistress Alsunet launches an unjustified attack against them, allowing them the opportunity to defeat her, showcasing their own abilities and diminishing her own, without leaving themselves culpable for the skirmish.

Sabina Alsunet prides herself on her accomplishments, and values her position due in large part to the fact that she sees it as well-earned. One quick way to tempt her wrath is to imply that she has obtained her position through luck, favouritism, or nepotism. However, Alsunet's pride in her professionalism also ensures that any attempt to raise her ire is difficult. Any Interaction Skill Tests made to provoke Alsunet into violence should have a base difficulty of at least Hard (-20), further modified based on the circumstances and good roleplaying on the players' part. In order to galvanise Alsunet to action, the Explorers must obtain a cumulative total of five Degrees

of Success on appropriate Interaction Skill Tests; multiple Explorers can contribute to this total, although the GM should not permit a particular Explorer to test using the same skill multiple times except under compelling circumstances.

If the Explorers succeed in luring Alsunet to attack them and defeat her in a ship battle, Modren sees this as a failure on Alsunet's part. Rather than blame the newly arrived Explorers for their part in the skirmish, he sees it as an indicator of their skill and ability. Simultaneously, he views Alsunet's failure as a sign that she might no longer be fit to command his fleet. In fact, if the Explorers defeat Alsunet's ship soundly enough, Modren might even consider one of them as a replacement for her; a topic which he could broach when they finally meet him in person on Scathe (see **Eye to Eye With the Traitor** on page 67). It is not necessary for the Explorers to destroy Alsunet's ship for this to be a victory. In fact, as Modren has a vested interest in wasting as few resources as possible, retaining the *fair* and showing that the Explorers are capable of capturing a ship intact adds further credibility in Modren's view.

False Evidence

In spite of the misgivings Alsunet feels about Forcyz's continued descent into malevolence and his influence on Modren, she would never betray the apostate Rogue Trader. The Explorers can actually use this fact to their advantage, as Modren is well-aware of Alsunet's devotion; making it all the more effective if the Explorers can somehow convince him that her loyalty is false. Should the Explorers succeed in planting such false evidence, Modren's emotions are likely to blind him to Alsunet's pleas of innocence, and result in her being stricken from her lauded position and thrown in the deepest of Scathe's dungeons, or worse.

The specifics of framing Alsunet as a traitor to Modren are dependent on the Explorers' plans, and could vary drastically. Such a plan is also likely to involve multiple stages, if it is to be successful. Simply spreading rumours is not, in itself, enough to ensure Alsunet's swift removal from power, but could be an effective basis for later expansion with falsified documents, sworn testimony by false witnesses, and other items of false evidence. Additionally, ambitious subordinates provide a potentially useful resource for the Explorers to draw on. Many captains, commodores, and sub-admirals would gladly lie through their teeth in order to see Alsunet's position become available and themselves move up the hierarchy. Ironically, this is exactly the sort of underhanded dealings that helped to sour Alsunet against her fellow officers in the Imperial Navy many years ago.



THE PIRATE PRINCE

The pirate captain known as Makara De'Soth is a paradoxical figure, displaying an air of sophistication undercut by a vicious brutality. Yet, despite his many crimes and atrocities, De'Soth is no reaver or servant of the Dark Gods, but an ambitious man motivated by greed and a deep-seated loathing of any authority that is not his own. It is these latter qualities that the Explorers can put to their advantage if they seek to make De'Soth an ally and turn him against Vir Modren.

De'Soth clawed his way up from humble beginnings to his current position of power, and his ambition is not yet sated. In Captain De'Soth's eyes, his arrangement with Vir Modren is by no means permanent, but endures only so long as it proves fruitful. De'Soth is a relatively recent arrival to Modren's realm, having made his allegiance to the treasonous Rogue Trader fewer than three years ago. Thus far, Modren has provided De'Soth with a safe haven from which to launch his piratical attacks, amongst other advantages and resources. Modren has provided De'Soth with valuable targets throughout the Koronus Expanse and beyond, while declining to reveal his own sources of such information. To date, this arrangement has suited both men well, although De'Soth's resentment of the sway Modren holds over him continues to grow each day. The pirate captain jealously eyes Modren's wealth, power, and the obedience he commands from his subjects. With an eye to increasing his own wealth and influence, and perhaps even greater ambitions, De'Soth spends much of his time while in Modren's realm at court, engaging in intrigues with a subtlety that belies his origins and violent past. More and more, De'Soth's attire and mannerisms reflect the culture of the outcast nobility who comprise Modren's courtiers and a substantial number of his lesser vassals.

De'Soth refuses to act under the direction of Fleet Mistress Alsunet, as bowing to her authority, even to a small degree, rankles with him endlessly. Instead of coordinating with Modren's fleet proper, De'Soth undertakes his own raids, attacks, and other endeavours either completely independently, or acting on information Modren supplies. In this way, the Rogue Trader points De'Soth at those targets he wishes eliminated, or simply which he sees as a profitable target. Under the terms of their gentleman's agreement, De'Soth pays a portion of all his takings in exchange for Modren's support and safe harbour, while paying a more generous portion of his earnings taken from targets Modren provides.

Vir Modren's own pride demands that all of his vassals and allies pay homage and swear loyalty, and this extends even to the irrepressibly independent Makara De'Soth. The pirate captain swore his oath, but holds no meaning in it, having learned from a young age the emptiness of such expressions of devotion. Whether through a genuine lack of foresight or wilful blindness, Vir Modren seems unaware of De'Soth's insincerity. Although he recognises De'Soth's independent streak, his pride convinces him that De'Soth would never dare move against him. If anything were to convince Modren that De'Soth plotted against him, it would doubtless provoke the full extent of his rage.

Background information and the game profile for Captain Makara De'Soth can be found on page 99 of the **NPC Appendix**.



ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

As with the other rivals, Silberthorne can provide the Explorers with valuable advice and guidance, should they seek it. Even if the Explorers do not approach Silberthorne about the issue, the GM might wish to have Silberthorne appear to broach the subject, perhaps displaying an unsettling degree of awareness as to the Explorers' private discussions on the matter. Once again, Silberthorne advises a cautious approach in dealing with the pirate captain. If the Explorers come to Silberthorne for input, the GM can read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Yes, I am familiar with the exploits of the pirate De'Soth," Silberthorne says, before setting down the data-slate he was consulting and looking at you. "Although I must say, I half-expected that his alliance with Modren would have dissolved by now. Like many pirates, De'Soth is notoriously independent, and I am sure that obeying Modren's dictates does not sit well with him. In fact, I expect that De'Soth could be convinced to join our effort against Modren. He may be a vicious killer, but De'Soth is no servant of the Dark Powers. At least, so my sources tell me."

If the Explorers seek the advice of Shas'o Ja'Vra, her advice is, as usual, diametrically opposed to Silberthorne's. When the Explorers come to Ja'Vra about the matter of the pirate captain, or when she approaches them, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You find Shas'o Ja'Vra going over matters of Tau battle philosophy with some of her squad leaders. It is clear that she is uncomfortable at the prospect of you hearing such matters, and she quickly dismisses them as she waits for you to explain your reason for visiting her. "If this man is a pirate," she says, after you explain, "then he has no honour. I would not advise an alliance. If he is willing to betray his current allies, then how can you trust him? No, better to destroy him now, so that he cannot strike against us later."

As well as the information Silberthorne and Ja'Vra can provide, it is entirely possible that the Explorers are also aware of De'Soth's reputation. Any Explorer who succeeds at a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Pirates) Test** knows the name Makara De'Soth, captain of the *Gilded Claw*. For each Degree of Success on the test, the Explorer knows some additional information about De'Soth's history. Knowing such information about De'Soth should not diminish the value of Silberthorne and Ja'Vra's advice, although it might put the Explorers in a better position to contribute their own points.

ENCOUNTERING THE PIRATE

There are several situations under which the Explorers could encounter Captain De'Soth, depending both on their own actions and the GM's preferences. It is recommended that the GM allow the Explorers some time to discuss their options with Silberthorne and Ja'Vra and formulate some sort of a plan first. Depending on how greatly the GM desires to challenge the Explorers, he can then either provide them with a meeting opportunity that feeds directly into their plan, or confront them with a situation that works against their plot, forcing them to adapt and perhaps fall back on the advice of whichever of the two NPCs they had previously decided against.

While within Modren's domain, De'Soth usually keeps his small fleet at orbit above Scathe, rather than docked at the Pax orbital. De'Soth's refusal to follow Fleet Mistress Alsunet's command as a formal or even informal element of Modren's fleet has bred some degree of bitter enmity between the two. While not on the surface, in Modren's palace-fortress, De'Soth bides his time primarily aboard his command vessel, the Iconoclast-class vessel *Gilded Claw*.

This, of course, represents a problem for the Explorers, as Modren has not yet invited them to his capital. However, approaching Scathe at a distant orbit and setting foot on its fortified surface are different matters, and it is possible for the Explorers to meet with De'Soth so long as they do not test their luck and attempt a landing of any kind.

Alternatively, the GM could delay the encounter with De'Soth until the Explorers have dealt with their other rivals sufficiently to secure an invitation to Modren's court. As De'Soth is often found at Modren's court, they can encounter him as they are introduced. This option is particularly appropriate if the GM intends for De'Soth to act as an ally for the Explorers. The Explorers might already have information pointing to De'Soth as willing to turn against Modren, or they might feel this out for themselves through speaking with other courtiers or with De'Soth himself. In this way, De'Soth can serve as the final piece of the puzzle to fall into place prior to the Explorers launching the final stage of Silberthorne's plan, and thus beginning **Chapter III: A Dynasty Falls**.

If the GM prefers for the Explorers to encounter De'Soth prior to this, he might wish to have the Explorers meet De'Soth at a safe distance from Scathe. Some groups might be sorely tempted to launch their attack on Modren prematurely, an act which not only might skip much of this chapter, but could backfire disastrously. If the GM deems it more appropriate, he can provide the Explorers with the opportunity to encounter De'Soth as his fleet leaves for or arrives from one of their frequent excursions to prey on shipping in the Koronus Expanse. It is even possible that De'Soth approaches the Explorers directly, hoping to gain a feel for these newcomers and potential rivals for power and influence in Modren's court. It is also possible for the Explorers to contact De'Soth remotely and arrange a meeting, although they must provide a compelling reason for him to depart from Scathe.

Although the adventure assumes that the Explorers initiate any conspiracy against Modren, if the GM wishes to expedite

matters and provide them with some guidance, he could choose to have De'Soth approach them with such a proposal. This has the potential to significantly reduce the challenge of this portion of the adventure, but, of course, only if the Explorers can really trust De'Soth. Exposing the treacherous intent of Modren's newest would-be vassals could provide a great deal of favour for De'Soth, and the temptation to do so might strike him as a more effective means of profiting than engaging in a risky coup d'état.



NEUTRALISING THE THREAT

There are several means by which the Explorers might deal with De'Soth and put the situation to their advantage. Unlike Magos Forcyz or Fleet Mistress Alsunet, De'Soth holds no true loyalty to Modren, a fact which the Explorers can exploit in more ways than one. Fundamentally, the Explorers can either attempt to enlist De'Soth as an ally against Modren, or expose his disloyalty, thereby eliminating him and securing their own position in Modren's eyes.

Perhaps the most effective way of dealing with De'Soth is to recruit him as an ally to act against Modren. While this does not have a large immediate impact on their standing in Modren's realm, it provides them with a significant advantage during the final chapter. Although Modren's fleet greatly outnumbers De'Soth's, the pirate captain's forces can nonetheless provide a great deal of assistance in fighting it off as the Explorers complete their mission and make their escape. This is doubly true if the Explorers effectively deal with Sabina Alsunet, in which case the fleet is left disorganised and splintered, greatly evening the odds for De'Soth.

De'Soth's primary motivation is greed, and the key to securing his assistance is to convince him that allying with the Explorers is a more profitable prospect than continuing to serve Modren. Aiding the Explorers in such persuasion is De'Soth's ingrained hatred of authority and any who would command him. If the Explorers approach De'Soth as equals, or even place themselves in a subordinate role (whether true or not), it greatly works to their favour in negotiations.

Alternatively, the Explorers might reveal the tenuousness of De'Soth's loyalty to Modren, placing him as a traitor. This method is similar to framing Fleet Mistress Alsunet (see page 47), but with the added advantage of being based on fact, for De'Soth is indeed only a hair's breadth away from turning on Modren. Although this course of action eliminates De'Soth as a potential ally for the Explorers, it garners them a great deal of appreciation on Modren's part, and dissipates any suspicions he might already hold against them.

An Alliance with the Pirate

Forging an alliance with Makara De'Soth requires circumspection and discretion on the Explorers' part, and on De'Soth's as well. Whoever proposes an alliance against Modren must, of course, reveal their intention to betray the Rogue Trader, an act which could sign their death warrant if they have misjudged their potential co-conspirator. As such, this course should begin with both parties trying to gain the measure of the other and feel out their intentions and attitudes toward Modren.

After making initial contact (see **Encountering the Pirate**, on page 49), the Explorers might already harbour strong suspicions that De'Soth is liable to turn against Modren. However, they should also know the dangers in revealing their intentions before being sure of De'Soth's amenability to them; if the Explorers do not seem aware of this on their own, Silberthorne should caution them against acting rashly. Initial discussions with De'Soth could take a number of forms. For his part, De'Soth is likely to fall into familiar form patterned after the behaviour of nobility at court; this could include a variety of seemingly mundane subjects such as vintage amasec, the virtues of different patterns of duelling pistols, or even the politics of the Calixis Sector. Explorers who succeed at an Opposed Scrutiny Test against De'Soth's Deceive Skill realise that De'Soth's cultured conversation and mannerisms are forced, the result of intentioned study rather than lifelong exposure. Explorers with the Peer (Nobility) Talent gain a +10 bonus to this test. Explorers who reveal this information gain some additional insight into De'Soth's motivations, and gain a

+10 bonus on future Interaction Skill Tests targeting De'Soth. De'Soth has cultivated his noble mannerisms to feed his own pride, and any compliments the Explorers offer De'Soth, or humility on their own part, further inclines him to assist them.

The Explorers can benefit from De'Soth's enmity toward Fleet Mistress Alsunet. If the Explorers have previously taken action against the fleet mistress, including defeating her in battle or framing her as a traitor to Modren, they gain a +10 bonus to Interaction Skill Tests against Makara De'Soth. Additionally, upon meeting De'Soth, the pirate captain applauds their actions against Alsunet, making clear his dislike for her. This gives the Explorers an "in" with De'Soth, which they can use to lay the groundwork for their relationship. If the Explorers have not already acted against Alsunet, but the fleet mistress's name comes up in conversation, any Explorer who passes an **Easy (+20) Scrutiny Test** detects the clear hostility in De'Soth's tone and words. The Explorers can then capitalise on this. De'Soth is eager to assist the Explorers in any plot to remove Alsunet from her position; from this topic, it is a relatively small leap to begin discussing a plan to act against Modren himself.

Ultimately, De'Soth's motivation is avarice. While other factors, such as stroking his ego or appealing to his hatred of Sabina Alsunet, are certainly effective, the key to securing De'Soth's assistance is to convince him that allying with the Explorers will provide him with more wealth and power than continuing in his current arrangement with Modren. There are a number of ways the Explorers might accomplish this. If the Explorers are not openly identifying with their dynasty, then confiding in De'Soth that one of their number is a Rogue Trader, and therefore carries the same sort of power and influence as Modren, is one way. The Explorers might seek to regale De'Soth with stories or hard examples of their influence, wealth, and accomplishments. Offering De'Soth a share of the spoils once Modren's domain comes crumbling down is another effective tactic.

Regardless of the form negotiations take, the Explorers must obtain a cumulative total of eight Degrees of Success on appropriate Interaction Skill Tests in order to convince De'Soth to ally with them. De'Soth has not gotten where he is by trusting strangers, and his disposition begins at Difficult (-10), unless the Explorers have already acted in such a way as to secure his esteem, such as defeating Alsunet (see page 293 of the **ROGUE TRADER Core Rulebook** for more on dispositions and Interaction Skill Tests). Different Explorers can use the same Interaction Skill, but the GM should only allow a particular Explorer to attempt the same Skill more than once if he changes his approach or topic. Skill Tests should not replace roleplaying in dealing with De'Soth, and the GM should only call for Skill Tests when the Explorers present a good argument for their cause or say something to suitably impress De'Soth.

While Modren is primarily impressed only by concrete accomplishments, he nonetheless does consider the opinions and advice of his favoured courtiers. If the Explorers forge an alliance with Makara De'Soth, the pirate captain is sure to praise them in Modren's presence, adding in a small way to their growing reputation within Modren's realm.





Exposing De'Soth

De'Soth is a murderous pirate, and it is very possible that the Explorers have no wish to ally themselves with such an individual. Rather than enlist De'Soth's aid against Modren, the Explorers can expose the fickleness of De'Soth's loyalty to Modren, resulting in the elimination of their rival and increasing Modren's trust in them. Unlike Sabina Alsunet, De'Soth truly is contemplating reneging on his vows to Modren, and the Explorers need only acquire evidence of this, or even convince Modren or a trusted aide of the fact.

Obtaining evidence of De'Soth's disloyalty could play out very similarly to gaining his assistance, if the Explorers choose to do so by convincing De'Soth to let down his guard and speak of his true intentions. In either case, the Explorers must earn De'Soth's trust, or at least convince him that they are potentially sympathetic to his troubles with Modren. If the Explorers go this route, the same approaches and Skill uses as described under **An Alliance With the Pirate**, on the previous page, are appropriate. Once they convince De'Soth to let slip his true feelings toward Modren, it is most effective if the Explorers can somehow preserve evidence of this. A vox- or vid-capture is, of course, effective evidence. If De'Soth is aboard the Explorers' ship, it is a simple enough task to conceal a recording device somewhere prior to his arrival. If the Explorers are instead meeting with De'Soth on board his own ship or on neutral ground, they must bring an appropriate device with them, and ensure that De'Soth remains unaware of its presence. It is likely that the Explorers have access to a servitor, servo-skull, or even voidsuit that incorporates a recording device, as such are often employed when

examining derelict vessels or in other explorations of unknown environments. If they do not have ready access to such a device, Silberthorne is able to provide them with an unassuming data-slate that in fact incorporates a sophisticated vox- and vid-suite (keen-eyed Explorers might recognise the data-slate as identical to one Silberthorne used in early conversations with them).

Simply exposing De'Soth is not enough, however. After revealing De'Soth's disloyalty, the Explorers must defeat the pirate, either in a ship battle or in-person. There are two ways this might come about, depending on how the Explorers exposed the pirate. The first is that Modren asks the Explorers to eliminate the treasonous pirate. The second is for De'Soth to come after the Explorers, seeking revenge. Alternatively, if De'Soth learns of the Explorers' intent before they can pull the trigger on their plan, he attempts to intercept them, either in the halls of Modren's citadel, or in the void, as appropriate. Although he prefers to fight from the bridge of his flagship, De'Soth is not afraid to engage in personal combat, assisted by his subordinates. Except while in Modren's court, De'Soth is nearly always accompanied by at least three of his fellow pirates. When attending a meeting with the Explorers aboard their ship or on neutral ground, De'Soth should have with him a number of pirates equal to that of the Explorers. If the Explorers meet with De'Soth aboard his own ship, he meets with them privately, trusting that they would not dare to strike against him when there are thousands of his followers aboard. To represent De'Soth's pirates, use the Renegade profile on page 373 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

THE GREENSKIN

While Sabina Alsunet commands Modren's naval forces and holds responsibility for the defence of his realm, the Ork Freebooter Kaptin Gargoff 'Eadbreaka leads the single largest contingent of warriors in the system, as well as a sizeable fleet of ramshackle Ork ships. In fact, no one realises the true number of Orks under 'Eadbreaka's command, as the number has grown exponentially since the greenskins first settled the Cingula asteroid belt. Modren would likely be quite surprised, and not in a positive way, were he to learn of the rapid growth in his domain's Ork population.

Modren is well aware that he can never trust 'Eadbreaka's loyalty. Even more so than his other vassals and servants, Modren views the Ork Kaptin as a tool to be used so long as its benefits outweigh the dangers. In his overconfidence, however, Modren has not monitored 'Eadbreaka's activities as well as he should. In addition to the massive increase in the number of Orks infesting the Cingula asteroid belt, Ork Meks in 'Eadbreaka's forces have been about the task of converting several of the large asteroids into Roks. A Rok is little more than an asteroid to which the Orks have added engines, thrusters, and weapon systems, hollowing it out to provide room for these systems and for the thousands of Orks to crew the it. Fortunately for the Koronus Expanse, Gargoff 'Eadbreaka's Roks are not Warp-capable. Consequently, they largely pose a threat only to Modren's realm. Although the Roks could conceivably serve as an additional, potent means of defence of the realm, it is more likely that boredom on the Boyz' part or a command from 'Eadbreaka will see the Roks turned against Modren.

Gargoff 'Eadbreaka is less of a vassal to Modren and more of an uneasy ally. Modren's strength, enhanced by the dark arts of Magos Forcyz, won 'Eadbreaka's respect, but it is the promise of plunder and combat that keeps him serving at Modren's whim. And Modren does deliver on these promises, providing the Freebooters with ample targets to devastate, and even supplementing their loot when necessary with gifts of weapons, vehicles, and other tech, which the Orks happily go about "improving." Modren fails to realise, however, that despite his best efforts, the growing Ork population will eventually reach a tipping point. When that point arrives, the greenskins will vent their savage fury on the worlds of Modrennia. If Gargoff 'Eadbreaka is not the one to lead the Orks on this inevitable rampage, then another Kaptin will replace him as "Boss," one who is willing to do so.

The threat posed by the Orks is too much for the Explorers to ignore. If they do not do something about it prior to making their move against Modren, the greenskins will fall upon them in an overwhelming tide. Although assassinating Modren would not provoke 'Eadbreaka out of a sense of loyalty or vengeance, it takes only a small spark of violence to set the Ork horde in motion. Further, so long as 'Eadbreaka's Ork horde is a weapon

in Modren's hand, it is one that the apostate Rogue Trader can set against the Explorers once he learns of their intentions.

The Explorers have more than one effective option for dealing with the Orks, and, as usual, the GM should consider the feasibility of any plans the Explorers prepare. The most promising options are for the Explorers to either defeat Gargoff 'Eadbreaka in single combat, thus earning his respect and allowing them to enlist his aid, to assassinate the Kaptin and plunge the Orks into chaotic infighting for succession, or to simply hire the

Orks out from under Modren with coin and the promise of battle.

Background information and the game profile for Gargoff 'Eadbreaka can be found on pages 100-101 of the **NPC Appendix**.



ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

'Eadbreaka carved out a reputation in the Koronus Expanse long before accepting Modren's offer of service. Explorers who pass a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** recognise the name of Kaptin 'Eadbreaka. Additional Degrees of Success grant further information, and Explorers might be familiar with 'Eadbreaka's encounters with Navy forces, his many raids on Imperial interests in the Expanse, and the fears that 'Eadbreaka would amass a Waaagh! and turn it against the Calixis Sector. An Explorer who achieves two or more Degrees of Success further knows that 'Eadbreaka's attacks came to an abrupt end several years ago, and most believed him dead, slain in a confrontation with Imperial forces, or possibly at the hands of a rival Ork boss.

As with the other rivals, Silberthorne is able to offer information and advice for the Explorers. If the Explorers do not seek Silberthorne's advice, the GM might wish to have Silberthorne instead approach the Explorers. However, Silberthorne does not intend to dictate the Explorers' actions, and so long as they do not ignore the threat posed by 'Eadbreaka, he is willing to simply observe as they handle it in their own way. Should the Explorers come to Silberthorne about the Ork Freebooter, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Silberthorne clears his throat and gestures for his scribe to leave. "Yes, the Ork warlord. I did hear rumours that Modren had employed the services of Freebooters, but I was not certain if it was the same Gargoff 'Eadbreaka who had so recently plagued the Expanse. I am sure you have encountered the Orks previously, there is seemingly nowhere untouched by their predations. Orks have no sense of loyalty, and it is rare indeed to find one serving a human master for more than a single job or so. Modren must be paying extremely well to have retained the services of the Freebooters, or else have some other leverage over 'Eadbreaka. In either case, we must ensure that Modren cannot count on the his support. Perhaps you could even turn him against Modren, if you can offer a better deal. Knowing Orks, though, you might have to impress him first." Silberthorne smiles mirthlessly.

Shas'o Ja'Vra has strong feelings against hiring or otherwise allying with 'Eadbreaka, or any Ork. The greenskins have long been mortal enemies of the Tau Empire, the thought of fighting alongside the barbarous xenos appals her. If she catches wind that the Explorers are considering such a strategy, she comes to them to advise strongly against it. If the Explorers seek out Ja'Vra's advice, or she learns of their intention to utilise the Orks, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Even writ on her alien features, Ja'Vra's anger is apparent. "Orks cannot be reasoned with," she says haltingly. "If this Ork pirate is really serving our enemy, it only shows further how monstrous he is. I cannot believe that the Orks would willingly join his community; there must be some power of control he is exerting over them. We cannot hope to use the Orks against him, it is too dangerous. We must destroy them, or allow them to destroy themselves. In my experience, if the Ork leader is killed, the subordinates turn against each other in a fight for dominance." Ja'Vra shakes her head in disgust at the thought of the Orks' chaotic hierarchy. "Yes, there are too many for us to fight, but a careful strike against their leader could remove them as a threat, at least long enough for us to finish our mission and depart this wretched place."

ENCOUNTERING THE SAVAGE

Gargoff 'Eadbreaka and his Freebooter fleet make their home amidst the Cingula asteroid belt. Here, they are largely isolated from the rest of Modren's realm. Their closest neighbours are the staff of the observatoria that Modren has established amongst the asteroids. The observatoria staff are careful to keep their distance from the Orks, after a handful of unpleasant incidents. Despite the close proximity, the dense clusters of rock make it difficult for the observatoria to accurately scan within the asteroid belt itself, their augurs effective only when turned outwards. Thus, despite being so uncomfortably close to the Orks, they have no idea of the true scale of the Ork population, or the construction of the Roks.

Although the exact numbers and resources of the Orks are impossible to detect from a distance, it is equally impossible to approach the asteroid belt without becoming aware of their presence. Ork vessels crowd the space around and within the belt, with their ramshackle ships coming and going with some frequency. Dozens of greenskin vessels of varying sizes, up to and including the Killkroozers and Terror Ships, make up 'Eadbreaka's Freebooter fleet, leaving aside the Roks concealed within the asteroid belt.

Once the Explorers enter the asteroid belt, they should have a chance to detect the Ork Roks. If the Explorers perform a Focused Augury action while within the Ork territory, they automatically detect them. If they do not take such an action, the GM should have an appropriate Explorer, or NPC crewman, attempt a **Ordinary (+10) Awareness+Detection Test**, with success detecting the Roks' presence. The Explorers might not realise just what the Roks are, although any Explorer with the Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Skill should be familiar with the concept. What their augurs show are asteroids featuring considerable technological components, including some recognisable as ship components, albeit of xenos origin. From this, the Explorers can draw their own conclusions. What is clear is that the Roks are heavily armed and are equipped with plasma engines, making them a dire threat to anything in the system that the Orks choose to turn them against. This is further reason for the Explorers to ensure 'Eadbreaka is not a threat to them, and possibly further inspiration to enlist 'Eadbreaka's aid against Modren.

Obtaining a position to speak with 'Eadbreaka is a challenge in itself, for it requires travelling into the chaotic and dangerous domain of the Orks. Although 'Eadbreaka commands his Boyz to "not smash da 'umies" while within Modren's domain, Orks do not typically do well with orders, especially orders that contradict their violent nature. As the Explorers approach and enter the asteroid belt, they should feel the constant threat looming over them, as Ork ships scan them and even follow them at an uncomfortably close distance. If the GM wants to add additional challenge at this point, he might choose to throw one or even more than one combat at the Explorers. Once within the asteroid belt, the Explorers are fundamentally on their own; even if Modren's fleet became aware of their plight, they would be unwilling to risk entering the asteroid belt and intervene against the Orks. The benefit of engaging in space combat with the Ork forces is that it brings 'Eadbreaka to the Explorers. Any significant violence within his territory attracts 'Eadbreaka's interest,

doubly so if it involves Modren's forces. After a suitable amount of time has passed, or once it becomes apparent that the combat is going to end poorly for the Explorers, 'Eadbreaka's flagship *Deffstorm* makes its appearance, ordering the other Ork vessels to stand down. Backing down from a fight does not come naturally to Orks, and not all of the Ork ships involved in the fight immediately cease their hostilities on command. If the GM desires to underscore the chaotic and violent methods of the Ork chain of command, *Deffstorm* begins to attack any Ork ships that continued their assault on the Explorers' vessel. After one to two further Strategic Rounds, if the assailant ship is not destroyed, it is at least heavily damaged, and limps away from the combat.

The fight over, 'Eadbreaka is eager to know who these intruders in his territory are, and he hails the Explorers over vox, demanding to know their identity in the guttural tongue of the Orks. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The vox crackles and a deep, booming, and bestial voice comes through. "Dis is Kaptin Gargoff 'Eadbreaka talkin' to da 'umie ship. You lot betta' say wot's the deal, or I'll shoot you outta da sky." The massive Ork Kroozer looms before you in the void, and you have no doubt the Freebooter Kaptin will not hesitate to make good on his threat.

Eadbreaka is unusually willing to parley for an Ork, which might explain how he came to serve Vir Modren. The Freebooter Kaptin listens to whatever story the Explorers present. If the Explorers are convincing enough, 'Eadbreaka is willing to meet face to face. Regardless of how the Explorers plan to deal with 'Eadbreaka, they must first succeed at a **Routine (+10) Charm or Deceive Test** in order to keep his attention. Alternatively, an Explorer can attempt an **Opposed Hard (-20) Intimidate or Command Test** opposed by 'Eadbreaka's Willpower.

OVERCOMING THE BEAST

Although Gargoff 'Eadbreaka presents a formidable challenge to the Explorers, the fact that Ork motivations, his included, are relatively simple is certain to work to their advantage. The most promising means of dealing with 'Eadbreaka are to enlist his aid against Modren, or to kill him, creating a power vacuum and leaving the Orks leaderless.

At the GM's discretion, it could also be possible to simply sway 'Eadbreaka with the promise of loot. As a Freebooter, 'Eadbreaka does fight for money and plunder. However, Modren has paid very well and given great shares of spoils, so hiring the Ork out from under him takes a considerable sum, potentially draining the Explorers' resources (and diminishing their Profit Factor gained from the adventure). If the Explorers are able to convince 'Eadbreaka to leave Modren's employ for theirs, it takes a truly exorbitant cost, placing a noticeable drain on the Explorers' resources. To represent this, the Explorers do not gain any Achievement Points for recruiting 'Eadbreaka, as they would had they earned his allegiance through a proper show of strength. The Explorers do still gain the advantages of the Orks' assistance in **Chapter III**, however.

Might Makes Right

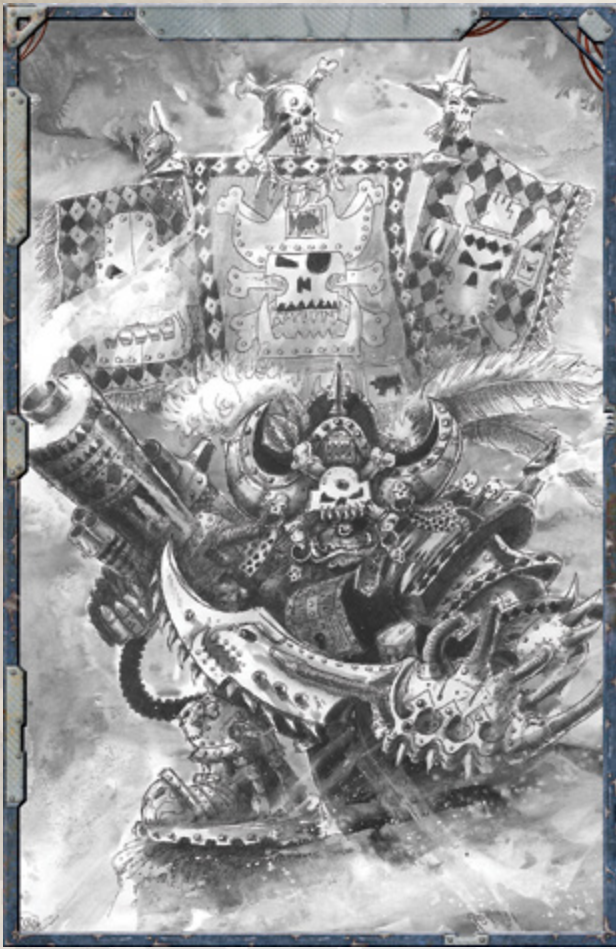
If the Explorers hope to turn 'Eadbreaka's Orks against Modren and his forces, they must first prove their superiority. The only real way to do so is to do just what Modren previously did—defeat Gargoff 'Eadbreaka in single combat. Explorers who have some awareness of the intricacies of Ork "kultur" might already expect the necessity of such a show of strength. Any Explorer who passes a **Routine (+10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** anticipates that the Explorers must prove they are more worthy of the Orks' allegiance than Modren is, and the only criterion Orks understand is strength.

Orks do not appreciate subtlety, and the Explorers must approach 'Eadbreaka in a very different way than Makara De'Soth or Alasiel Belanir. Attempts to broach lightly the issue of turning against Modren are likely to simply befuddle 'Eadbreaka, possibly provoking his rage. When the Explorers first plainly state their recommendation that 'Eadbreaka join them in their attack against Modren, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The hulking Ork lets out a harsh, guttural laugh, his fearsome tusks splitting into a wicked grin. "Why shud 'Eadbreaka 'elp you? I know Modren strong, I dum know nuffin' 'bout you. Modren not like other 'umies, 'e's as tuff as an Ork, an' he proved it."

In order to prove they are worthy of 'Eadbreaka's respect and assistance, the Explorers must show that they are at least as strong as Modren. In order to do this, one of their number must defeat Gargoff 'Eadbreaka in one-on-one combat. Orks think little of such concepts as "honour," and there are no limits on the weapons and gear the Explorer can use during the fight—Eadbreaka uses his normal equipment. The Explorer's goal should be to defeat 'Eadbreaka, or fight him to a standstill, but not to kill him. Killing 'Eadbreaka draws down the wrath of the attendant Orks, although once the Explorers fight their way free, the effects are much the same as an assassination (see **Da King is Ded**, below). The Explorers are free to select which of them will face 'Eadbreaka, but any interference from other characters during the fight is seen as a sign of weakness. Although skill and strength in melee combat impresses the Orks more, the chosen Explorer is free to use





any ranged weapons he possesses. However, backing away from 'Eadbreaka in order to continue shooting is likewise viewed as cowardice. In order to impress the Orks and gain 'Eadbreaka's assistance, the Explorer must face him unflinchingly and overcome him in battle, or at least prove himself a worthy adversary.

If the Explorers defeat 'Eadbreaka in a duel, or suitably impress him with their combat prowess, he is willing to hear them out. Assuming the Explorer won the fight, it should be all but assured that 'Eadbreaka accepts whatever offer the Explorers make regarding an alliance against Modren. However, the GM might require them to succeed at one or more appropriate Interaction Skill Tests, depending on how appealing their offer is. Gargoff's disposition for such tests should begin (after the battle) at Ordinary (+10), or perhaps even higher if the Explorers really impressed him or gave him an enjoyable fight (see page 293 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook for more on dispositions and Interaction Skills.)

Da King is Ded

Dozens or more lesser Kaptins covet 'Eadbreaka's position of leadership, although so far none have been able to successfully challenge him. Those that have tried have invariably met their end under 'Eadbreaka's power claw. However, if an outside agency were to facilitate 'Eadbreaka's death, the ensuing power void would provoke a chaotic struggle for supremacy amongst the Kaptins and Bosses of the Freebooter fleet. During this time, the Orks would be leaderless and fragmented, and therefore unable to prevent the Explorers from accomplishing their mission. Even once a single leader were to unify the Orks again, should such a feat even be possible, there is no reason that the new leader would honour 'Eadbreaka's previous arrangements with Modren. In either case, the Ork forces would effectively be removed from amongst Modren's resources.

The key difference between killing 'Eadbreaka and defeating him to earn his respect, other than the end result, is the means available to the Explorers. Whereas one of the Explorers must triumph over 'Eadbreaka in a one-on-one fight in order to earn his respect, there are no such constraints if the Explorers are simply trying to kill the Ork warlord. The Explorers can and should employ whatever means are at their disposal, which might include Shas'o Ja'Vra's Hunter Cadre. Ja'Vra is willing to assist with this, particularly if the Explorers are following on her suggestion to do so.

Gaining the opportunity to kill 'Eadbreaka presents a challenge in itself. An outright assault against the Orks would be suicidal, as their forces vastly outnumber the Explorers'. Additionally, Modren would most likely perceive such an action as an act of aggression against him, effectively undermining the Explorers' work thus far. More viable is arranging a peaceful meeting with 'Eadbreaka, at least as peaceful as is possible when Orks are involved, or somehow infiltrating the Ork territory undetected.

The real challenge might not be killing 'Eadbreaka, but escaping alive after doing so. Should the Explorers slay 'Eadbreaka in a direct confrontation, the other Orks view this as a challenge for authority, and therefore see the Explorers as a threat to their own dominance. In this case, the Explorers must fight their way past whatever Ork forces are present or nearby in order to escape. One positive side to this is that 'Eadbreaka is the only Ork who truly communicates with Modren's forces, so it is unlikely that Modren will learn the Explorers were responsible for his death. While Modren might realise that the Orks are fighting amongst themselves, he cannot know the Explorers are to blame, and probably assumes 'Eadbreaka was killed by one of his fellow Orks. Even once another Ork does emerge triumphant, there is no reason for him to honour 'Eadbreaka's agreement with Modren. Thus, killing 'Eadbreaka, whether in a direct assault or through covert assassination, effectively ends the Orks' alliance with Modren.

THE ENIGMA

The most enigmatic and mysterious of Modren's apparent vassals, and rivals to the Explorers, is the Eldar corsair Alasiel Belanir, captain of the *Shadow's Edge*. Belanir serves at the behest of Vir Modren not out of loyalty, greed, ambition, or any of the other motivations that drive the other rivals. The reason Belanir follows the dictates of the Rogue Trader is that Modren holds a cache of Eldar spirit stones from Belanir's home craftworld, long since destroyed by Chaos marauders. Modren defeated this Chaos fleet, claiming its dark relics for himself, along with the spirit stones. Since that day, he has held the xenos artefact ransom, delivering them back into Belanir's safekeeping at a painfully slow rate so long as Belanir continues to grant his assistance. Modren has made clear that only Belanir's continued cooperation can guarantee the spirit stones' safety, and that a strike against Modren would lead to the destruction of the precious stones. It is to preserve the spiritual remains of his forebears that Belanir serves Modren, to keep them from the terrible fate that awaits in the Warp should their material vessels be destroyed.

Unlike the other rivals presented in this chapter, Belanir does not command a fleet, vast forces of troops, or the ear of Vir Modren. What he does command is a powerful xenos warship with an elite crew of Eldar corsairs. The *Shadow's Edge*, an Aurora-class light cruiser, is a deadly vessel, sporting powerful pulsar lances and protected by inscrutable Eldar technology. Unlike the other rivals, Belanir does not lead a flotilla that outnumbers the Explorers' vessels, although it is certainly possible that the *Shadow's Edge* outguns and outclasses their own vessel. This means that the Explorers could stand a good chance of simply defeating Belanir. However, this would be a waste of resources and potential. Vastly moreso than any other rival, Belanir despises Modren with an intensity that few humans could even contemplate, and relishes the opportunity to exact vengeance on the apostate Rogue Trader. This, combined with the potency of his ship and crew, makes him invaluable as a potential ally.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

As usual, Silberthorne is available to offer information and advice to the Explorers for dealing with the Eldar corsair. Likewise, Silberthorne seems to possess a great deal of information about this rival, although he is vague at best as to how he has come to possess such information. If the Explorers come to Silberthorne for advice, or when the GM decides to have Silberthorne approach them, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Silberthorne straightens his robe and thinks for a moment before speaking. "You may not realise this, but it is quite... unusual for an Eldar corsair to ally with a human, let alone serve one. There must be some exceptional reason for Alasiel Belanir to serve Modren in this manner. The most likely explanation seems to be that Modren holds some leverage over Belanir. If you can discover the nature of this leverage, then perhaps you can sway the Eldar captain to assist us against Modren, or at least remove it so that we have one less potential enemy to contend with."

It should be clear to the Explorers that Ja'Vra tires of the games and back-stabbing of Modren's realm, and, as always, prefers a more direct solution. However, she knows to respect the military competency of the Eldar, and believes that picking a fight with Belanir could end up being a foolish waste of resources.

"It surprises me to find an Eldar serving this human. The Eldar are a prideful race; they have even refused to consider joining our great empire," says Shas'o Ja'Vra. "I would advise caution. In my experience, these Eldar can be difficult to judge, and their actions impossible to predict. Unless this Belanir is truly loyal to our enemy, as unlikely as that is, I recommend against attacking him. It is impossible to guarantee that we will come through such a conflict without loss, and unless such a battle is unavoidable, I would consider it a waste of resources; something that we cannot afford."



ENCOUNTERING THE ELДАР

Making contact with Alasiel Belanir stands to be a challenge in itself. The Eldar remains at arms' length from Modren as much as possible, appearing in Modren's court only when the Rogue Trader demands it. As much as Belanir would prefer to remain in the webway (or better yet, leave Modren's realm entirely), he must remain where Modren is able to contact him in order to honour the terms of their agreement. Nonetheless, Belanir insists on keeping his distance from Modren, and his vassals, as much as possible. Consequently, while awaiting instructions from Modren, Belanir can usually be found aboard the *Shadow's Edge*, concealed behind one of the moons of Pylar. However, this is far from common knowledge within Modren's realm.

Belanir generally deals only with Modren himself or certain highly placed intermediaries. One of these intermediaries is Modren's seneschal, Auberon Sheol. Although Sheol might no longer be aboard the Explorers' vessel, they should have little trouble contacting him. Of course, Sheol is unlikely to discuss such delicate matters of state as the relationship with the Eldar corsair. However, if the Explorers are appropriately circumspect, they can bluff Sheol into disclosing information. If the Explorers pose a suitable question or ruse, such as an incorrect assumption about the Eldar's location, and pass a **Challenging (+0) Deceive Test**, Sheol lets slip that the "arrogant alien" often bides his time within the realm behind the moons of Pylar, "rudely declining our invitations, even for the most esteemed banquets." Getting Sheol to arrange contact with Belanir is even more difficult, although not impossible. Sheol's starting disposition for determining the difficulty of any Interaction Skill Test should depend on the Explorers previous interactions with the seneschal. If they have been cooperative (or given the appearance of being so) and impressed the seneschal with their manners and actions, the difficulty could start as low as Easy (+20). Conversely, if the Explorers have been obvious in their efforts to restrict Sheol's access to their ship or otherwise led him to distrust them, the difficulty could be as high as Very Hard (-30), due to the sensitivity of the issue. If the Explorers concoct a convincing reason that they need to contact the Eldar, a reason that works in Modren's favour, the GM should grant a suitable bonus to the requisite test. Deceive and Charm are the most likely Skills to be used, others are also possible, such as Intimidate, or even Blather, in order to confuse Sheol long enough to acquire the necessary information.

If the Explorers are not on good terms with Sheol, there are other means of obtaining information as to Belanir's whereabouts. As the person responsible for overall void security of Modren's realm, Sabina Alsunet makes every effort to be aware of all activity coming and going to the system. Although Belanir's preternatural ability to evade or somehow bypass the perimeter sensoria network causes her no end of frustration, Alsunet has made additional efforts to monitor his presence within the sector, and her scouts have traced the Eldar to the moons of Pylar. If anything, Alsunet is even less willing to share information about the Eldar than Sheol might be. However, the Eldar corsair's obvious dislike of Modren is something that Alsunet finds appalling.



Further, she continues to feel uncomfortable about the Eldar's mysterious comings and goings to the system. If the Explorers think to play on these concerns, they can convince Alsunet to share information about Belanir, so long as she believes she is doing so for the good of Modrennia. As with Sheol, the difficulty of any Interaction Skill Tests should be based on the Explorers previous' interactions with her.

With some creative thinking, the Explorers might come up with other ways to obtain the information, such as utilising Diamnas Char's skills as an infiltrator or Gulette Anhd's skill as a telepath. Similarly, the GM might wish to seed clues through other encounters, if the Explorers target other rivals before going after Belanir. For example, the Explorers might find documents detailing Belanir's activities in Sabina Alsunet's chamber, or learn of it through discussions with Makara De'Soth.

Explorers who are familiar with the ways of the Eldar, including Dark Eldar Explorers (created using the rules found in **THE SOUL REAVER**) have the best chance at contacting Belanir without going through Modren's channels. Characters who have established experience with the Eldar in their background can attempt a **Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. If the Explorers also possesses the Tech-Use Skill, the difficulty is instead Challenging (+0). If successful, the Explorer knows how to configure their vessel's vox systems to broadcast a signal tailored to draw the attention of any Eldar ships in the area. Depending on the distance involved, it could take hours or days for Belanir to detect the signal, but once he does, he contacts the Explorers.

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Before the Explorers can utilise the knowledge of Modren's ransoming the spirit stones to gain Belanir's assistance, they must first learn of this fact. This information is not something that Modren advertises widely, nor is Belanir eager to speak of it, for he sees it as an immense shame, one which he has no desire to share with mere humans.

If the Explorers do arrange to meet with Belanir prior to learning of the spirit stones, they can learn directly from him, although Belanir reserves the details as much as possible. However, if the Explorers are gracious and appropriately respectful, Belanir is willing to explain that Modren has stolen something of great importance from him, and only his continued cooperation ensures its safety. For Belanir, this is less humiliating than the idea that he would truly swear loyalty to a mere human. Once the Explorers promise to retrieve the object from Modren, Belanir explains the appearance of the gems, which Explorers recognise as spirit stones if they pass a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**.

The Explorers can also potentially learn about the spirit stones from those select few of Modren's servants privy to the information. Notably, these include Auberon Sheol and Magos Forcyz. As well, Makara De'Soth has learned of the spirit stones through his own intrigues in Modren's court, and gladly provides the information if he and the Explorers have already struck an alliance. Obtaining the information from Forcyz or Sheol requires the Explorers to either present a very convincing reason to share the information, or somehow deceive the character into revealing it. In addition to a reasonable plan and good roleplaying, the Explorers must succeed at an appropriate Interaction Skill Test, with a difficulty based on their previous interactions with the NPC in question and the effectiveness of their plan.

Belanir despises humans, and so will only choose to ally with the Explorers over Modren if they can promise a swifter return (and the safety) of the spirit stones. Even then, he is perfectly willing to betray them if it means obtaining the stones sooner, or if he perceives the Explorers to be using the spirit stones as leverage in the same manner.

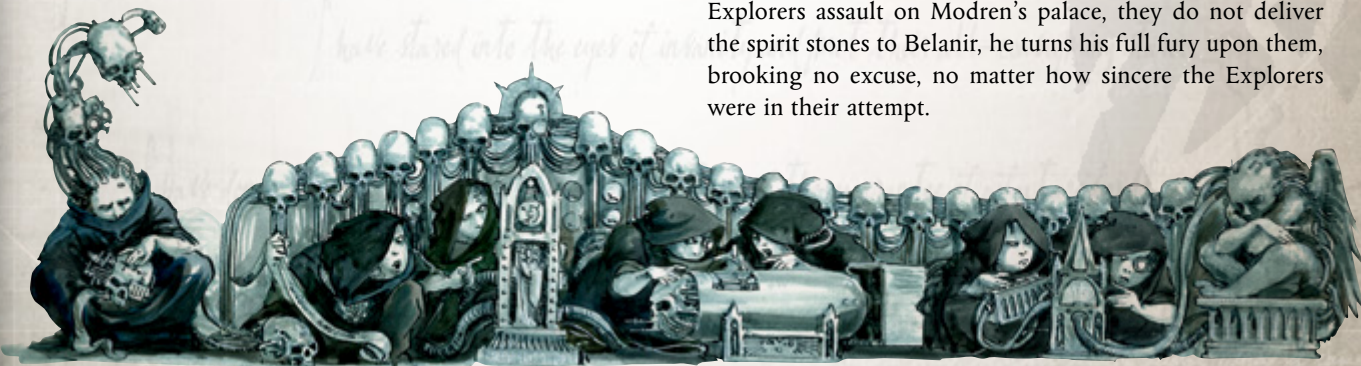
Guaranteeing the Ransom

Once the Explorers have learned of the spirit stones and made contact with Belanir, they must convince the aloof Eldar that they are sincere in their promise to return the spirit stones to him if he assists them against Modren, and that they can guarantee the spirit stones will not be destroyed in the forthcoming violence. Alasiel Belanir despises and distrusts all humans, but his overwhelming hatred for Modren ensures that he is inclined to hear the Explorers' out and to accept the veracity of their statements so long as their plan does not feature obvious flaws. Before agreeing to help them, Belanir requires the Explorers to explain the intricacies of their plan in as much detail as possible, including the part they expect him to play in it. As part of their plan, the Explorers must promise him that once they infiltrate Modren's palace, they will secure the spirit stones prior to acting against Modren.

During the negotiations with Belanir, the GM should require the players to let him know if the Explorers are sincere in their promises to Belanir. If not, he should call for an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Deceive Test** against Belanir's **Scrutiny Skill**. The GM should grant the Explorer a bonus to the test for good roleplaying. In addition, Belanir suffers a -20 penalty to his Scrutiny Test. This represents the fact that Belanir naturally assumes all humans to be liars, and under the circumstances he is wilfully forcing himself to grant the Explorers the benefit of the doubt, so strong is his desire to finally act against Modren and retrieve the spirit stones.

On the few occasions Belanir has been within the walls of Modren's palace-citadel, he was under constant observation, and unable to make any attempts to retrieve the spirit stones. However, based on what little information he has been able to gather, he believes the stones to be held in the sub-levels of the palace. This is, in fact, correct, as Modren has placed the spirit stones in the hands of Magos Forcyz, at the arch-heretek's request. Were Belanir to suspect the horrendous (if unsuccessful) experiments Forcyz has conducted using the spirit stones, his rage would swell to heights unseen.

Whether or not the Explorers are sincere in their promise to recover the spirit stones and deliver them to Belanir, the Eldar Corsair holds them to their word. If, after the Explorers assault on Modren's palace, they do not deliver the spirit stones to Belanir, he turns his full fury upon them, brooking no excuse, no matter how sincere the Explorers were in their attempt.





II: THE WHIRLING REALM

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE FANATIC

Silberthorne's unconventional strategies have earned him the name of radical among certain more puritanically minded Inquisitors. One such Inquisitor is Jyrano Kaison, a staunch Monodominant who tolerates no dealings with foul xenos. Kaison learned of Silberthorne's liaison with the Tau in the Jericho Reach and was able to follow him through the Warp Gate and, using the abilities of a Navigator in his service, track the Explorers to Modren's realm. To accomplish the journey, Kaison drew on his many contacts to requisition the services of the Imperial Navy vessel *Gift of Hatred*. If game characteristics for the *Gift of Hatred* are necessary, use the profile for a Tempest-class strike frigate from page 195 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

It is possible to turn Kaison's wrath against Modren, as the Inquisitor would savour the opportunity to deliver the Emperor's righteous judgment upon the apostate Rogue Trader. However, so far Kaison has not recognised the true threat posed by Vir Modren, as his attention has been absorbed with heresies in the Jericho Reach, and in particular the perceived heresies of his fellow Inquisitors. When he first arrives, Kaison is truly obsessed with delivering retribution on Silberthorne for his perceived blasphemies. This results in a kind of tunnel vision that makes it difficult for Kaison to recognise the full scale of the threat posed by Modren's heresy, even as it stares him in the face.

Kaison's brash approach stands to severely foul up all of the Explorers carefully laid plans and work thus far. As such, the GM should consider the inclusion of Kaison as an optional encounter. If the GM chooses to include Kaison, he can insert the event at a number of points. In the final stages of **Chapter II** is one possibility, but the GM could conceivably stage Kaison's arrival at almost any point, including after the Explorers have dealt with Modren and believe their Endeavour accomplished. In this latter case, Kaison's arrival does not stand to throw the Explorers' carefully laid work off the rails, but instead poses one final, and unexpected, challenge before they can claim their rewards.

The GM should decide how best to use Kaison in his own game, or whether the Explorers have enough to deal with without also facing the firebrand Inquisitor. There are a number of factors and potential complications to consider when introducing Inquisitor Kaison, and the GM should consider the fact that the militant Inquisitor faces the same challenges when entering the system that the Explorers did. Kaison is unlikely to try to evade the sensoria buoys, and thus it is possible that he might encounter Modren's forces before catching up to the Explorers. If the Explorers have already plunged Modren's fleet into disorder by removing Sabina Alsunet from her position, however, the GM should assume that the now-disorganised patrols are too slow to intercept Kaison before he reaches the Explorers. Should Modren's forces confront Inquisitor Kaison, however, he does not hesitate to state his authority as an Imperial Inquisitor, or the fact that he is hunting a heretic who recently arrived. Unless given evidence to the contrary, Kaison assumes Modren's realm to be an ordinary Rogue Trader colony, and so expects the cooperation of the inhabitants.



ENCOUNTERING INQUISITOR KAISON

When Kaison does find the Explorers, he immediately hails them to present his demands. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A strong, authoritative voice booms forth from the vox-terminal: "This is Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison, acting commander of the vessel Gift of Hatred. You are to immediately heave to and surrender to my custody the heretic Silberthorne and his xenos accomplices, and to await my judgment regarding your complicity or guilt in his crimes against the Imperium. By the authority of the Emperor, I expect your immediate cooperation." The transmission abruptly terminates as the heavily armed vessel continues to draw near.

If Silberthorne has not yet revealed his identity as an Inquisitor, he has no choice but to do so now. Although he prefers not to discuss such matters as intra-Inquisition conflict, Silberthorne explains the bare minimum regarding the philosophical differences between himself and Kaison to sate the Explorers' curiosity. Silberthorne also explains, if it is not obvious to them, that Kaison will hold the Explorers accountable for providing transportation to the Tau Hunter Cadre. In Kaison's eyes, cooperating with aliens is an unforgiveable heresy. In fact, as Silberthorne explains, although Kaison has hounded him for some time, it was his alliance with the Tau that drove the puritanical Inquisitor to declare Silberthorne a heretic and vow to destroy him personally.

DEALING WITH KAISON

Although the situation with Inquisitor Kaison is certainly dire, the Explorers do have options. The most obvious is to fight him. After all, the Explorers are far from the Imperium and Kaison has no support to fall back on. The *Gift of Hatred*, while formidable, is unlikely to overwhelmingly outclass the Explorers' own vessel. If necessary, Silberthorne promises the Explorers that he will ensure there are no repercussions for destroying Kaison, and that the importance of his own mission justifies the act.

The Explorers might also be able to call upon the aid of any allies they have made in Modren's realm, as these individuals hold little respect for representatives of the Imperium, even Inquisitors. Modren himself has no patience for a self-righteous Inquisitor in his domain, and if the Explorers can reveal this to Modren without giving away Silberthorne's presence or identity, they can even stand back as Modren's fleet falls upon the *Gift of Hatred*, destroying it with overwhelming firepower.

Of course, the idea of destroying an Inquisitor and his vessel with thousands of Imperial servants on board, or allowing Modren to do so, might not sit well with the Explorers. It is possible, although difficult, to negotiate with Kaison. If the Explorers can convince Kaison of the facts of Modren's heresies, the brash Inquisitor might be willing to grant a brief reprieve for Silberthorne (and the Explorers) until after Modren receives his punishment. In any negotiations, Kaison's disposition begins at Very Hard (-30). The most appropriate Interaction Skills for use with Kaison are Charm and Deceive. Intimidate Tests are possible; although threats drive Kaison furious, he cannot escape the fact that he is currently far from the Imperium and completely surrounded by enemies. Any attempts to use the Command Skill against Kaison bring negotiations to an abrupt halt.

As much as Silberthorne's methods are anathema to Kaison, if the Explorers can convince him that continuing in their current mission is the only way to destroy Modren's heretical domain, the Inquisitor agrees to give them a brief span, no more than a few days, to accomplish their goal. Achieving this result requires good roleplaying, convincing arguments, and a cumulative total of six Degrees of Success on appropriate Skill Tests.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following recaps the major NPCs of this section in the adventure, described in more detail in the preceding pages.

Magos Forcyz

Magos Forcyz holds some considerable loyalty to Modren, but more so to his own desire for forbidden knowledge. Modren provides protection and resources to allow the Magos to conduct his terrible research, which is the foundation of his loyalty. Forcyz's motivations are too dark and sinister for the Explorers to easily manipulate him or turn him against Modren, but they can distract him or at least win his esteem, making their entry into Modren's court easier.

Fleet Master Sabina Alsunet

Sabina Alsunet is amongst the most loyal of Modren's servants because he saved the lives of her, her crew, and her ship when Navy command threw her into an unwinnable predicament. This experience "opened her eyes" to the callousness and foolishness of the Imperium, and cemented her loyalty to the Rogue Trader. Alsunet is ruthlessly professional, and takes her duties to defend Modren's realm very seriously. She tentatively welcomes any offers of assistance on the Explorers' part, but reacts with suspicion or hostility to any talk or action she views as insubordinate or disrespectful of Vir Modren.

Captain Makara De'Soth

Captain De'Soth's alleged loyalty to Modren hangs by a thread, as he desires only wealth and survival. He could be led to betray Modren or even join the Explorers if it seems more profitable or advantageous. De'Soth presents a sophisticated and even foppish appearance, despite his violent and ruthless nature. Yet amongst the aliens, heretics, and Chaos worshipers who populate Modren's realm, De'Soth might be amongst those most hospitable to the Explorers.



Gargoff 'Eadbreaka

The fearsome Ork Freebooter Kaptin holds only a tenuous loyalty to Vir Modren, motivated by greed and violence more than by concepts of honour. 'Eadbreaka respects strength and power, and if the Explorers can demonstrate such, they can potentially win him to their cause. Any "negotiations" with 'Eadbreaka should be marked by violence, or at least the constant threat of it. However, just as 'Eadbreaka is quick to react violently, so is he quick to forgive it, viewing a life-and-death struggle much as a human might view a friendly tussle. In fact, one of the best ways to get 'Eadbreaka in a good mood is to provide some violence.

Corsair-Captain Alasiel Belanir

The Eldar Corsair despises all humans, feelings that stem from the loss of his Craftworld. Among all humans, though, he particularly despises Vir Modren, and is ready to assist the Explorers if they can guarantee the safety and return of the spirit stones Modren holds captive. Even in the face of an alliance, the Explorers cannot hope to win Belanir's respect or camaraderie, and he departs as soon as their mission is accomplished. Should Belanir think the Explorers intend to betray him or unduly endanger the spirit stones, he does not hesitate to exact vengeance upon them.

Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison

Jyrano Kaison is no servant of Modren's, and his appearance in Modren's realm is simply the result of following Silberthorne's trail. The fiercely puritanical Inquisitor seeks to destroy Silberthorne for the perceived heresy of consorting with xenos, and there is little the Explorers can do to dissuade him from this goal. Even if the Explorers do convince the Inquisitor to grant them some additional time, they must eventually contend with his wrath. It is highly unlikely that anything good can come of Kaison's involvement. At most, the militant Inquisitor might be of assistance once the Explorers make their move and Modren's realm dissolves into violence.

REWARDS

The Explorers earn Achievement Points toward completion of their Endeavours for the following accomplishments:

- 25 Achievement Points for concocting a plan with Silberthorne.
- 50 Achievement Points for meeting with Auberon Sheol.
- 100 Achievement Points for each rival dispatched, turned, or deceived.
- 25 Achievement Points for each rival dealt with in a definitive fashion.
- 50 Achievement Points for eliminating the threat posed by Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison.

EXPERIENCE

Surviving Modren's court is no small task, and the Explorers have likely learned valuable lessons if they managed to make their way into the renegade Rogue Trader's inner circle without losing their heads. Below is a list of experience values for the ordeals they might have faced:

- Planning with Inquisitor Silberthorne: 50 xp
- Meeting with Auberon Sheol: 50 xp
- Investigating and Deceiving Magos Forcyz: 100 xp
- Dealing with Captain Makara De'Soth: 150 xp
- Dealing with Fleet Master Sabina Alsunet: 150 xp
- Dealing with Gargoff 'Eadbreaka: 150 xp
- Dealing with Corsair-Captain Alasiel Belanir: 100 xp
- Winning Corsair-Captain Alasiel Belanir's aid: 50 xp
- Dealing with Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison (by killing him): 100 xp
- Dealing with Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison (without killing him): 150 xp





A DYNASTY FALLS

INTO THE
SERPENT'S LAIR

•
ON TAINTED
GROUND

•
SILENCING
THE FORGES

•
SILENCING
THE SIGNAL

•
A RECKONING

•
NPC &
ADVERSARY
APPENDIX

CHAPTER III: A DYNASTY FALLS

"I have achieved what no other man has, save the Emperor himself—immortality. So long as this domain that I have established endures, I will live on. And bear me well, it will endure."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

In the final chapter of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, the Explorers finally make their way to the seat of Vir Modren's power, his fortress-palace on the world of Scathe. Here, the Explorers are invited to join Modren's court of aliens, traitors, and heretics. Using the groundwork they have laid previously, and drawing on any new allies from amongst Modren's vassals, the Explorers launch the final stages of their plan. They must either fight or sneak their way into the depths of Modren's palace, confronting the arch-heretek Magos Forcyz and discovering the true extent of his heresies, in order to rescue the Tau Ethereal Aun'Roh and halt Forcyz and Modren's dark designs. The Explorers must then escape Forcyz's blasphemous army, reconvene with their vessel, and defeat Vir Modren.

GM'S BRIEFING AND CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

In **Chapter III: A Dynasty Falls**, the Explorers enact the final parts of their plan in order to accomplish Silberthorne's goal of halting Modren's heresy permanently. The Explorers finally receive their invitation to attend Modren's court on his fortress world of Scathe. If everything has gone according to plan so far, this affords them with safe access to Modren's citadel, where they must slip away from the courtiers and make their way to Forcyz's laboratoria to rescue Aun'Roh. However, if Modren has become aware of the Explorers' perfidy, this invitation is in fact a trap from which they must escape. In either case, the Explorers find themselves face-to-face with the insane Modren, a dark reflection of the ambition all Rogue Traders possess. From Modren's throne room, they must either fight their way or sneak into the sub-levels, ancient tunnels of xenos construction, that are home to Forcyz's many laboratoria, workshops, and soul-forges. Here, they find the tortured Ethereal Aun'Roh, who has been subject to countless horrors at Forcyz's cold, steel hands.



After rescuing the Ethereal and slaying the arch-heretek Forcyz, the Explorers must contend with the most unholy and deadly of the Magos' creations—dread Daemon Engines, impossible fusions of machine and Daemon-flesh. Pursued by these indefatigable monstrosities, the Explorers must fight their way across the surface of Scathe to a second facility, a vox-shield emitter that prevents them from contacting their vessel awaiting in orbit. Once they deactivate or destroy the vox-shield emitter, the Explorers learn that Modren is fleeing aboard his flagship, the *Ardent Bane*, and that Silberthorne is aboard it. If they hope to claim the rewards he promised them, the Explorers must rescue Silberthorne. This is the time for the Explorers to call in any allies they made in **Chapter II**. The Explorers must either cripple Modren's ship before he escapes, or board it and deal with him personally. With Modren's defeat, the Explorers fulfil their bargain with Silberthorne. The Inquisitor makes good on his promises, delivering the rewards for which the Explorers risked so much.

INTO THE SERPENT'S LAIR

"Keep your allies close, and your enemies within striking distance."

—Ancient Terran maxim

Once the Explorers have received the opportunity to deal with their rivals, they must await an invitation to Modren's court. Depending on how successful they have been, and what other actions they have taken to impress Modren, this wait could be days. When it finally arrives, it comes in the form of a vox-courier that travels to the Explorers' ship. Once the Explorers have let the vox-courier aboard, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Before you stands a servant of Vir Modren, clad in finely tailored servant's clothing in the colours of the Modren Dynasty. The man's mouth has been replaced with a vox-grille, and numerous cranial plugs, wires, and cables trail down from his scalp to an assortment of blocky technical devices arrayed about his person. The courier bows to you and, with a click, begins playback of a vox message. From the courier's vox-grille, the voice of another issues forth, a voice that can only be that of Vir Modren. "Honoured newcomers, I welcome you to my realm and regret that I have been unable to meet you personally as of yet. To remedy this unfortunate situation, I invite you to visit my court this evening, on Scathe. I look forward to welcoming you properly." The recording ends and the courier patiently awaits your reply.

The vox-courier waits until one of the Explorers provides a response, then plays it back for approval. The vox-courier then returns to the shuttle that brought it and departs for Scathe. The Explorers now have only a few hours before they must travel to Scathe during which they can finalise their plans and make any additional preparations. As well as going over the details of their mission with Silberthorne, the Explorers might also wish to contact any allies they have made amongst Modren's vassals and ensure that everyone knows their part in the coming actions.

Unless one or more Tau are accompanying the Explorers to the surface, at this time either Silberthorne or Ja'Vra should explain the nature of the precious "object" they are seeking, and that it is, in fact, an individual—a Tau Ethereal called Aun'Roh. If the Explorers are speaking privately with Silberthorne about this, the Inquisitor states that retrieving the Ethereal is important, but more important is halting Forcyz's research. If it is impossible to escape with the Ethereal, the Explorers must make sure to destroy Forcyz's lab, including his research, experiments, and captives.

If the Explorers speak with Ja'Vra about the mission, she stresses the utmost importance of retrieving Aun'Roh, and that all other goals are secondary. Ja'Vra feels that the rescue of Aun'Roh is her responsibility, and the only way she can atone for her previous failure. As such, Ja'Vra strongly argues for the inclusion of herself and some part of her Cadre in the infiltration, or assault, on Modren's citadel. The Explorers

might be hesitant to simply bring a heavily armed Fire Warrior Team with them, of course. One possibility, which Ja'Vra can recommend, includes hiding herself and possibly a small number of additional Fire Warriors aboard the Explorers' shuttle, only emerging to aid in the recovery of Aun'Roh once the Explorers have ascertained his position. Another option is for an element of the Hunter Cadre to stand by, ready for a drop to the surface using an appropriate vehicle in order to enact the rescue once the Explorers are ready. It requires a successful Interaction Skill Test to convince Ja'Vra to willingly stand aside as the Explorers conduct the operation, such as a Charm Test to convince her that the Tau's presence would jeopardise Aun'Roh's safety, and that it is safer if the Explorers go alone.

ARRIVAL

When they are prepared (or time is up) the Explorers travel to Modren's capital planet of Scathe. As the Explorers approach Scathe, a patrol monitor hails them to verify their identities. After an interminable pause, the security ship responds and assigns an orbit berth for the Explorers' vessel and the coordinates for the landing pad assigned to their shuttle. After attaining their assigned orbit, the Explorers can take one of their own shuttles or landers down to the surface, where a landing platform jutting from the upper floors of Modren's citadel awaits them. A pair of elite guards in tabards depicting the heraldry of the Modren Dynasty greet the Explorers as they disembark (see page 110 of the **NPC Appendix** for profiles of Modren's guard). One of the guards extends a welcome and invites the Explorers to follow him to his master.

What the Explorers find when they enter Modren's citadel depends on previous events. There are two basic possibilities, depending on whether the Explorers succeeded in their objectives and managed to conceal their true intentions. If the Explorers impressed Modren with their actions, the invitation is legitimate, and they find themselves amidst the traitors and renegades of Modren's blasphemous court. This outcome is described under **A Court of Heretics**, on page 66.

However, a very different situation awaits the Explorers if Modren is suspicious of their motivations and goals. In dealing with their rivals, there are a number of ways the Explorers' actions might have betrayed them to Modren. Any rival that the Explorers failed to deal with appropriately presents a potential exposure. Even if the Explorers successfully defeated a rival, if they were careless about it or failed to adequately hide their actions, it might have tipped off Modren. This is ultimately down to the GM's discretion, but unless the Explorers' actions were quite blatant, it is preferable to allow the Explorers to visit Modren's court. The GM should also consider the preferences of his players; if he predicts that an ambush would be more exciting and satisfying for them, he might go that route, whereas if the players might feel frustrated to find that their previous hard-won victories were for nought, it might be best to overlook small errors, assuming that, in his pride, Modren did not heed the warning signs. If the GM decides that the events of **Chapter II** were sufficient to alert Modren, the resulting encounter is described under **The Trap is Sprung**, on page 67.

A COURT OF HERETICS

Assuming the Explorers handled their rivals effectively and with circumspection, they impressed Modren enough to receive a true invitation to his court. This represents an additional test that Modren subjects all of his would-be vassals to. Guests must conduct themselves appropriately and show that the unconventional membership of Modren's court does not overly trouble them. Modren also intends to engage the Explorers in conversation in order to gain the measure of them and determine for himself if they are worthy additions to his realm.

When the Explorers enter Modren's throne chamber, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Even before reaching the throne room, you hear laughter and overlapping voices intermingling. As you pass under the arched doorway, you see before you a large chamber in the high Imperial style, ornate columns travelling upward to support the domed ceiling high overhead. Objects d'art from a score of worlds and dead xenos cultures adorn the walls and pedestals, some of them quite terrible to gaze upon. Dozens of courtiers and vassals throng the chamber, attended by servants, valets, and servitors scurrying to and fro delivering drinks and other refreshments. Among the assembled courtiers are men and women with the demeanour and fashion of Scintillan nobility, rakish pirates, and individuals of many contrasting appearances. Men in priestly robes rub elbows with grotesque mutants, while aberrant xenos hold conversations with corpulent merchants from Footfall. Most distressing of all, several of the assemblage openly wear signs of their devotion to the Dark Gods. At the head of the room, Vir Modren himself sits atop a gilt throne, looking down on his supplicants.

The Explorers should know immediately that they are far from the conventions of the Imperium. Even in such lawless locales as Footfall, such a shameless display of heresy would invite the fiery retribution of more righteous souls. If they did not realise it before, the Explorers should now see clearly that there is no vice or blasphemy beyond Modren.

The majority of the guests are permanent members of Modren's court or vassals drawn from the worlds of his domain. In addition to these are a number of visitors. It is not uncommon for Modren to receive guests from across the Koronus Expanse, including sympathetically-minded fellow Rogue Traders, pirate lords, smugglers, Stryxis merchants, and many more besides. Any of the Explorers' rivals from **Chapter II** could be present as well, depending on previous events. Makara De'Soth is almost certain to be present, unless the Explorers have taken actions to prevent this. Alasiel Belanir is the only rival who is quite unlikely to be present, and he should only be here if the Explorers' actions have something to do with it, such as requesting his presence as part of their plan.

In addition to physical visitors, the court is awash with rumours pertaining to the Koronus Expanse and beyond. If the Explorers show an interest in taking time to explore Modren's court, the GM is encouraged to use this as an opportunity to introduce the seeds of future plots and adventures. The Explorers might also



encounter familiar faces of NPCs, whether erstwhile allies or sworn enemies, potentially adding further complication to the Explorers' mission, especially if the Explorers are operating under assumed identities and come face to face with someone who recognises them for who they actually are.

Depending on the players' interest, the Explorers' time at Modren's court can last for as long or short as the GM prefers. If the Explorers seek to obtain additional allies, information, or opportunities for profit, or the players are simply enjoying the roleplaying opportunities of interacting with the myriad other guests, this scene could take up a great deal of gameplay time. Conversely, if the Explorers are anxious to put their plan into motion, they can sneak out or otherwise make their move whenever they are ready. In either case, however, the GM should ensure that the Explorers have an opportunity to speak with Modren, after which they can continue to carouse with the other guests, if they prefer. If the Explorers do not approach Modren's throne of their own accord, a servant comes to them and explains that Lord Modren has requested to speak with them.

If the Explorers have not already discovered the location of the Ethereal, this scene presents a good opportunity to do so. Modren and several of his most trusted vassals know that the Ethereal is held in Forcyz's laboratoria beneath the citadel. Of course, in order to convince them to reveal such information, the Explorers must be tactful and cautious. Additionally, the GM might call for an appropriate Skill Test, such as Charm or Deceive.

EYE TO EYE WITH THE TRAITOR

Eventually, the Explorers meet Vir Modren himself. How this meeting unfolds should depend on previous events, as the Explorers' exploits and accomplishments, or failures, colour Modren's opinion and attitude toward them. On Modren's part, the purpose of the conversation is to gain the measure of these newcomers and decide if they are suitable vassals. If he has any reasons to be suspicious, Modren carefully tests the Explorers' loyalty and sincerity, but if the Explorers' previous actions in his realm have put him at ease, the conversation is more hospitable.

When the Explorers first approach Modren, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The traitorous Rogue Trader himself, Vir Modren, sits before you atop a gilt throne, his arms resting atop two silver-etched skulls. Modren smiles as you approach, and wipes a few beads of sweat from his brow with a finely embroidered silk handkerchief. Modren settles back in his seat and smiles, "Ah, so good to finally meet you. I am Lord Vir Modren, but, of course, you knew that."

Modren generally speaks with a carefully cultured affect of feigned politesse and condescension. However, his precise attitude is dictated by the Explorers' actions prior to the conversation and their behaviour during it, and his temperament could shift to barely concealed disdain or outright rage if the Explorers provoke him. While Modren tests the Explorers, questioning their reasons for seeking his realm, their pasts, and what sort of service they can offer him, the Explorers can also use this opportunity to discover more about Modren, his ambitions, and his realm. If they are cautious about it, the Explorers might even be able to convince Modren to reveal information about the Tau objects he stole along with Aun'Roh.

Depending on what the Explorers are trying to learn or conceal, the GM should call for appropriate Interaction Skill Tests. Modren's starting disposition (see page 293 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook) should depend on his appraisal of the Explorers based on previous events. If they have impressed him with their exploits, it could begin as high as Easy (+20), while if he perceives them as troublemakers or potential enemies, it might dip as low as Very Hard (-30).



THE TRAP IS SPRUNG

If, through the Explorers' actions or inaction, Modren has learned of the Explorers' perfidy, the invitation he extends is in fact a trap with which he plans to end the Explorers' lives. Modren is also very curious as to the Explorers' reasons for planning to betray him, and he intends to find some answers before killing them. In the following encounter, Modren has given his guards orders to take the Explorers alive if possible. Modren plans to throw the defeated Explorers in his dungeon and interrogate them for answers, after which he will hand them over to Forcыз to do with as he will.

In this situation, the Explorers are still escorted to the throne room, only to find it empty except for Modren and his guards. When the Explorers reach the throne room, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you pass under the arched doorway, you see before you a large chamber in the high Imperial style, ornate columns travelling upward to support the domed ceiling high overhead. Curiousos from a score of worlds and dead xenos cultures adorn the walls and pedestals, some of them quite terrible to gaze upon. Elaborate banners depicting the Modren Dynasty heraldry and the great victories of its scion are hung about the chamber. Yet, where you expected to find a court of traitors and heretics, you see only a number of guards clad in fitted armour and a rotund man in garish and elaborate finery seated upon a throne of gold. As the guards who escorted you step back and raise their weapons, Vir Modren stands from his throne with a wicked smile spreading across his jowls. "Welcome to my world," he says.

Modren's throne room is a rectangular chamber roughly 40 metres across by 70 long. At the outset of the encounter, the Explorers are likely just inside the entrance, while Modren stands before his throne near the far end of the chamber. There are a number of guards present equal to twice the number of Explorers, including the two guards who escorted the Explorers (see page 110 for the profile of Modren's guards). The two guards take up position behind the Explorers, blocking their exit, while the others are fanned out in a semi-circular arrangement, leaving the Explorers more-or-less surrounded. If the Explorers are Rank 5 or above, particularly combat-capable, or have support with them or close at hand, such as Ja'Vra's Tau or other allies, the GM should increase the number of guards appropriately, or have additional guards arrive one to two rounds following the arrival of the Explorers' backup.

Unless the Explorers move to attack, Modren's guards do not immediately engage in combat. Instead, Modren takes the time to speak with the Explorers, both to gloat over their predicament and to determine what their motivations and goals are. This conversation can go on as long as the Explorers cooperate, but when Modren decides he has learned enough, or they anger him, he gives the order for his guards to attack. However, if the Explorers are cooperative, the conversation can play out not terribly unlike it would have under more pleasant circumstances (see **Eye to Eye with the Traitor**).

THE RIVALS

The way in which events unfold during this part of the adventure should depend greatly on the Explorers' previous dealings with their major rivals in Modren's realm. Each of these individuals' death or continued involvement should factor into the final chapter to a greater or lesser degree. The most obvious effects become apparent during the Explorers' visit to Modren's court, for the events with the rivals influence Modren's perception and treatment of the Explorers, and certain actions can even result in the Explorers walking into a deadly trap (see **The Trap is Sprung**, on page 67). One simple way to show the effects of the Explorers' actions is to include them as a topic of conversation amongst Modren's courtiers. The Explorers might overhear, or become directly involved in, conversations about the events and their consequences, whether or not the Explorers are known to be involved. The GM can also seed some confusion with inaccurate rumours or outright fabrications created by certain parties in an attempt to bend events to their benefit.

Following are some ideas based on the most likely outcomes, but GMs must ultimately decide the effects based on the events of their own game.

MAGOS FORCZY

The heretek Forczyk is not a frequent visitor to Modren's court, as politics bore him. He is much more likely to be found in his forge beneath the palace, working on his latest blasphemous research. However, if Forczyk has taken an interest in the Explorers for any reason—perhaps because they offered him an interesting item of technology or knowledge—he does make an appearance for the occasion. His reason for being present might be simply to observe the Explorers, or to continue their discussions regarding technology, forbidden lore, or even the Tau.

SABINA ALSUNET

Although she despises politicking and intrigues, Fleet Mistress Alsunet visits the court when her master bids her to. The arrival of new vassals, particularly those who command a powerful ship, is precisely the sort of special occasion that warrants her presence. If the Explorers arranged an attempt on Alsunet's life that met with failure, she might bear the recent scars of the ordeal, and might also eye the Explorers with suspicion. If Modren has discovered the Explorers' treachery, Alsunet is instead aboard her ship, leading the fleet to attack and capture the Explorers' vessel, even as Modren's trap closes in on the Explorers.

MAKARA DE'SOTH

Makara De'Soth is a fixture at Modren's court, all-but guaranteed to be present unless the Explorers have requested otherwise as part of their alliance.

If the Explorers recruited De'Soth as an ally, there are a number of ways he might assist them at this point in the adventure. In the event that Modren set a trap for the Explorers, De'Soth might learn of it through the rumours of the palace, perhaps arriving moments too late to warn the Explorers, but bringing with him some of his trusted crew to aid the Explorers in the fight. De'Soth can likewise be of assistance if the Explorers are genuinely invited to visit Modren's court, acting as a guide and helping them to navigate the complex web of fealty, favour, and vendetta that drives court politics.

GARGOFF 'EADBREAKA

Gargoff 'Eadbreaa is not usually a welcome guest in Modren's court, for obvious reasons. If the Explorers killed 'Eadbreaa and plunged the Orks into anarchy, this is a major point of conversation at court, for many individuals are greatly concerned of the possible results should an Ork come to power who sees Modren's realm as a ripe source of plunder.

If the Explorers recruited 'Eadbreaa to their cause, he and his Orks can provide a great boon to the Explorers in the latter events of this chapter, battling both in the void and on the ground of Scathe against Modren's forces.

ALASIEL BELANIR

Alasiel Belanir has been a guest at Modren's court on only a few occasions, when the Rogue Trader found it amusing to subject the proud Eldar to the experience. Belanir could travel to Scathe, however, as part of a plan agreed to with the Explorers, perhaps in order to recover the spirit stones personally while the Explorers deal with Modren and Forczyk.



ON TAINTED GROUND

Modren has a part to play yet in the adventure, and it is important that he survives this encounter. If it becomes clear that the Explorers are gaining the upper hand in the fight, Modren flees through a concealed panel behind his throne. If necessary, Modren can Burn a Fate Point to survive wounds the Explorers inflict on him.

If the Explorers capture any of the guards alive, they can convince them to reveal the Ethereal's location. A successful use of the Intimidate Skill is enough for a defeated guard to explain where to find Aun'Roh and how to get there. However, in the wake of the battle, the citadel is on high alert, and if the Explorers tarry overlong, more guards arrive.



KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Depending on the circumstances, any of the Explorers' rivals or other NPCs they encountered in Modren's realm could contribute to this part of the adventure. Additionally, the Explorers finally have the opportunity to meet the man responsible for all of this.

Rogue Trader Vir Modren

Rogue Trader Vir Modren is a traitor and a heretic, and the self-proclaimed master of the star system in which the Explorers now find themselves. Modren is intelligent, ambitious, ruthless, and sadistic. Even if he knows one of the Explorers to be a fellow Rogue Trader, he still views them as beneath him, seeing himself as superior to his one-time peers. Modren looks for usefulness and potential in his would-be vassals, but he also simply enjoys being the liege of individuals who command respect in their own right. How he views the Explorers, and how he behaves toward them, depends on how well they have impressed, or angered, him so far. At best, he views them as potential allies and advisors; at worst, as enemies to be crushed for daring to plot against him.

"Future generations will consider this sacred ground, the stone where the legendary Vir Modren first set foot on this world and claimed it as his own."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

Eventually, the Explorers must leave Modren's throne room in order to pursue their mission (quite soon, if the invitation was a trap). If the Explorers have not already obtained the information, this entails discovering the location of the captured Ethereal. Depending on whether or not the Explorers know their destination and how to get there, this scene might entail a swift journey directly to Forcyz's lab-forge, or could instead see the Explorers fighting their way throughout the corridors of Modren's palace-citadel, blindly searching for the imprisoned Ethereal while surrounded on all sides by foes.

Within Modren's palace-citadel winds a veritable maze of intersecting corridors, chambers, and great halls. With ample time, it is not greatly challenging to familiarise oneself with the layout of the palace. However, the Explorers are likely to be rushing through the corridors, either because Modren's guards are in pursuit, or because they hope to find the forge before Modren realises what they are up to. Once the Explorers leave the gathering at Modren's court, it is only a matter of time before the apostate Rogue Trader grows suspicious.

While the Explorers might have finally won their way to the heart of Modren's domain, the outcast Rogue Trader is not generous with his trust. During their first visit to Scathe, the Explorers are permitted only in certain areas of the palace—the throne room and adjoining chambers. Other than these rooms, the Explorers are expected only to traverse the halls on a direct path to or from the landing pad containing their shuttle. If the Explorers are found anywhere else in the palace, it immediately raises the suspicions of the palace guard. Certain locations, such as Modren's chambers or the sub-levels, are completely forbidden, and discovery in such locales instantly prompts the alarm.

Within the palace, the Explorers find a strange combination of architecture in the high Imperial style, although bereft of common symbols of Imperial loyalty such as the Aquila, and ancient xenos construction that is remarkably well-preserved. The older construction is more prevalent the closer one comes to the surface level, and this ancient masonry dominates once beneath the planet's surface. The upper levels of the palace proper are adorned with displays of opulence, from lavish carpets hand-stitched by the slaves and vassals of Modrennia, to tapestries, clayware, and various artworks imported from across the Koronus Expanse and beyond. Amidst these shows of wealth are monuments to Vir Modren's ego, from idealised portraits of the Rogue Trader to statues depicting him in a deified manner, alongside trophies of his many conquests, from strange xenos weapons and skulls to the sceptres of feudal kings and uniforms of Imperial Navy officers, held in crystal cases or, for his most valued possessions, protected behind shimmering stasis fields.

The environs surrounding the palace are barren and largely artificial, although this is not necessarily immediately obvious. Although partially concealed by layers of shifting silicate, the area surrounding Modren's palace is made up of the same ancient xenos building materials as the lower palace levels and sub-levels. Scattered amidst the sands are crumbling obelisks and even a few concealed entrances to the tunnel systems below.

NAVIGATING SCATHE

In making their way through the halls of Modren's palace, and beyond, the challenge facing the Explorers depends in large part on their level of preparation. By now, the Explorers have met with several opportunities to discover the location of Forcyz's dark laboratoria, such as through coordinating with a newfound ally, questioning the guests at Modren's court, or perhaps even discussing the matter with the heretek himself. Although any information the Explorers obtained is unlikely to include the precise location of Forcyz's lair, it should be enough to know that it is somewhere in the levels beneath the palace. In fact, over time, Forcyz's laboratoria have expanded to encompass ever more of the sub-levels, and an exploration of the catacombs beneath the palace is certain to reveal Forcyz's works.

Even if the Explorers have not yet learned the location of Forcyz's forge, a thorough exploration of the palace eventually brings them to the sub-levels. However, the Explorers could face a number of additional encounters as they make their way circuitously through the palace, potentially including several encounters with guards, if the palace is on alert (see **Palace Security** on the following page).

If the Explorers do not possess detailed information pertaining to Forcyz's location, the GM might wish to require the Explorers to complete an Exploration Challenge with a complexity of Taxing, requiring a total of six Degrees of Success (see page 263 of the **ROGUE TRADER Core Rulebook**). If the Explorers know to head toward the sub-levels, the complexity should instead be Simple, requiring three Degrees of Success. The most appropriate Skills for the Test are Navigation (Surface) and Awareness, but the GM should consider other skills as well. For instance, the GM might permit the Explorers to make a **Challenging (+0) Common Lore (Tech)** or **Tech-Use Test** in order to follow the signs of Forcyz's advanced and heretical technologies, or even Forbidden Lore (the Warp or Daemons) or Psyniscience to detect the traces of Forcyz's use of the Warp and its unholy denizens. Additionally, the GM can punctuate these Skill Tests with the optional encounters described under **Into the Darkness** on page 74. Once the Explorers accumulate the required Degrees of Success, they soon stumble on the outermost chambers of Forcyz's lair.

As the Explorers make their way through Modren's palace, and especially as they descend lower and enter the lair of the arch-heretek, further signs of tech-heresy and other blasphemies confront them. Amidst Modren's trophies and decorative items are objects clearly touched by the influence of the Dark Gods, from the battered breastplate of a warlord that clearly displays the eight-pointed star of Chaos, to profane idols taken from the worlds of the Heathen Stars, to tomes of malefic knowledge sitting proudly in display cabinets, their open pages marked with runes and sigils that pain the eye to look upon.



MODREN'S CHAMBERS

Although their mission does not require them to do so, the Explorers might visit Modren's personal chambers, either intentionally or by sheer chance as they explore the palace. Unsurprisingly, Modren's chambers take up a great deal of space in one of the highest towers of the palace. The Rogue Trader's chambers consist of several connecting rooms, including a personal library, a well-furnished study, a sitting room, and an expansive and lavish bedchamber.

Modren's study is a large chamber, its ferrocrete walls carved with elaborate frescoes and panelled with imported wood. Bookshelves line the walls, laden with tomes from a thousand worlds, alongside astrographic charts, data-slates, maps, globes, skulls both human and alien, and other curiosities. Against the far wall, situated directly behind a large and finely crafted desk, is a floor-to-ceiling armourglass window with a commanding view of the surrounding area. Amongst various documents, an auto-quill, and other sundries, a gilt and highly decorative box sits on his desk. Within this box, on a bed of velvet, is one of the Eldar spirit stones that Belanir seeks. When Modren handed over the spirit stones to Forcyz for "safekeeping," he kept one for himself as a curio.

PALACE SECURITY

If the Explorers were lured into a trap, or if they initiated violence in order to attack Modren or for any other reason, the citadel is now on alert, with guards combing the halls for the Explorers and under orders to kill them on sight. This should substantially increase the challenges facing the Explorers as they navigate the halls of Modren's palace, as they must evade or fight patrolling guards. If violence erupted in Modren's court, the Explorers might also have to contend with Modren's vassals and their servants, as they attempt to subdue the Explorers in order to curry favour with their liege.

Even if the Explorers managed to slip away from the court without violence, any chance encounters with patrolling guards pose a potential difficulty, especially if they occur in areas off limits for guests, such as Modren's chambers or the lower levels.

If the palace security forces are not on alert, any encounters with patrolling guards should consist of only a single guard or a pair. The GM should feel free to insert one or more such encounters as the Explorers make their way through the palace. One way to do so is to have the Explorers come across patrolling guards each time they achieve two or more Degrees of Failure on a Skill Test related to the Exploration Challenge to find Forcyz's labs (see page 70). Unless the Explorers obtain five or more Degrees of Failure, indicating that they blunder directly into a guard patrol, the GM should allow the Explorers to attempt a **Challenging (+0) Concealment** or **Silent Move Tests** to hide from the guards before being detected. However, should the guards win these Opposed Tests, their suspicions might be aroused by the sight of the Explorers attempting to conceal themselves. Alternatively, depending on where the Explorers' skills lie, they might instead prefer to talk their way out of it, either feigning that they are simply lost, or claiming to have special dispensation from Modren himself. Such an attempt requires a Deceive Test opposed against the guards' Scrutiny.

If the Explorers are known enemies of Modren, either due to escaping from an ambush or themselves initiating an attack, Modren's guard patrol the palaces in groups equal to the number of Explorers plus two. If the Explorers are particularly combat capable or Rank 5 or above, or have assistance from allies, the GM might wish to increase this number further, or include one to two guards with Tau weapons in each group, keeping in mind that the Explorers might take these powerful weapons for themselves after defeating their foes. In the time since stealing the Tau equipment from the Jericho Reach, Forcyz and Modren have selected a number of particularly skilled guards for training and equipped them with these powerful xenos weaponry. Any guard equipped with Tau weapons should be assumed to possess the appropriate Exotic Weapon Proficiency Talent. The most likely weapons for the guard to use are pulse rifles and pulse carbines, although if the Explorers have shown themselves to be extremely dangerous, more powerful weapons such as burst cannons and rail rifles could also appear.

If the guards are actively searching for the Explorers, encounters should be more frequent than if the Explorers are operating with stealth. The GM should seek to challenge the Explorers, but not to completely overwhelm them, keeping in mind that even greater dangers await once they reach Forcyz's lair. In addition to encountering guards upon failing an Exploration Skill Test, as described on the previous page, the Explorers should face at least one unavoidable combat encounter while en route to Forcyz's laboratoria.

The profile for Modren's guard can be found on page 110.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Throughout the Explorers' time on Scathe, communication with their ship proves difficult for a number of reasons. While within Modren's palace-fortress, vox communication is problematic due to the intervening layers of ferrocrete, plasteel, and adamantine that form the armoured shell and superstructure of the palace. While within Modren's palace, any long-range vox-communication requires a successful **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** to successfully establish a connection. The GM might modify this difficulty depending on the sophistication and power of the equipment in question. If an Explorer attempts a use of vox equipment that would require a test under normal circumstances, he instead suffers a -20 penalty to the test.

Once the Explorers enter the sub-levels in order to access Forcyz's forge, however, vox-communication becomes all but impossible. The numerous layers of dense material above them, including the ancient crust of the world itself, combine with the strange energy emissions of Forcyz's blasphemous experiments and tech-systems to ensure that only the most powerful vox transmissions have any hope of escaping. While within the palace sub-levels, any Explorer attempting to contact the ship by vox or other non-psychic communication must pass a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**, and any use of vox equipment that would require a test normally instead suffers a -40 penalty.

At some point during their actions on Scathe, the Explorers become aware that a signal is interfering with their own vox broadcasts, and making communication with their ship in orbit impossible. This is, in fact, the result of Modren's vox-shield emitter, which the treacherous Rogue Trader activates once it becomes apparent that he is under attack.

Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, the Explorers should become aware of the interference upon emerging from Forcyz's forge-labs and onto Scathe's surface. However, if the Explorers reveal their intentions earlier, Modren might activate the vox-shield as a precaution, particularly if the Explorers have already taken actions to weaken his own naval forces. Ultimately, Modren activates the vox-shield once it becomes clear that the Explorers are a threat that he cannot easily contain. This could be after the Explorers successfully fight their way free from the ambush Modren lays in his throne room, after they defeat Forcyz and bring his forge crashing down, or at another time, depending on how events unfold.

For more information on the vox-shield emitter, see page 82.

RIVAL INTERFERENCE

Depending on the Explorers' previous actions, and the GM's discretion, one or more of their rivals from **Chapter II** (and potentially current allies) could influence the events during this part of the adventure. This is most appropriate if the Explorers struck a bargain with one of these NPCs, arranging for them to assist in the attack on Modren's facilities. Conversely, if the Explorers attempted to eliminate a rival and failed, or if the Explorers' actions have now revealed their previous treachery, this is an opportune time for revenge.

MAGOS FORCYZ

Unless presented with a very good reason not to, upon signs of violence by the Explorers, or their disappearance from the court, Magos Forcyz descends to his lair to ensure his defences are prepared should the Explorers seek to enter his malefic sanctum. Forcyz is a cunning opponent, but if the Explorers are extraordinarily stealthy or have a suitably impressive plan, they might even be able to follow Forcyz down through the halls of the palace into the subterranean forge-complex. Eventually, the Explorers must confront and defeat Forcyz in order to retrieve the Ethereal and escape from the corrupt laboratoria, the details of which are described on the following pages.

SABINA ALSUNET

Fleet Mistress Alsunet's abilities and strengths lie in the void, and she is unlikely to feature prominently in the Explorers' journey through the palace. However, if she was present at the court when the Explorers' revealed their intentions, or upon realising they have snuck off suspiciously, Alsunet's loyalty to Modren and desire to prove herself could very well lead her to engage the Explorers in combat. The GM can assume she has proper reinforcements available in the form of Modren's elite guard or her own naval security detail.

MAKARA DE'SOTH

Makara De'Soth is almost certainly present at Modren's court when the Explorers arrive; his next steps depend entirely on his previous interactions with the Explorers. If they have earned his enmity, or if he suspects that subduing them will advance his career in Modren's realm, De'Soth goes after the Explorers with a few of his finest crew, intending to slay or capture them and hand them over to Modren. If De'Soth is neutral toward the Explorers, the GM could even decide that De'Soth takes advantage of the chaos the Explorers' actions cause and launches his own assault on Modren. However, if the Explorers have enlisted De'Soth's aid, there are a number of ways he might assist them during this period, depending on the nature of their arrangement. Although De'Soth could help the Explorers directly by fighting alongside them through the palace, such an open act of aggression risks bringing down the wrath of Modren's fleet on his own ships prematurely. In order to delay tipping his hand, De'Soth might instead help the Explorers more subtly. If the Explorers have gone the route of sneaking their way through the palace, De'Soth can accompany them as a guide. Although he has not traversed every metre of the palace, he has spent a great deal of time in it, and has questioned others and gathered information as to its layout and defences in preparation for his own possible eventual betrayal of Modren.

GARGOFF 'EADBREAKA

The monstrous Ork Kaptin is generally unwelcome in the palace, and Gargoff 'Eadbreaka is unlikely to be present unless the Explorers have enlisted his aid and specifically requested it. Depending on the arrangement struck between the Explorers and 'Eadbreaka, the Ork could be assisting elsewhere while they conduct their extraction of the Ethereal. 'Eadbreaka's sizeable Ork fleet is a serious contender for Alsunet's fleet, and as events come into motion, the Freebooters could make their attack against Modren's own fleet, catching it off-guard. This might be according to the Explorers' plan, or it might be the Orks getting overly excited at the prospect of battle and launching the assault prematurely.

ALASIEL BELANIR

His contempt for Rogue Trader Modren ensures that the Eldar Alasiel Belanir sets foot on Scathe only when the terms of their arrangement compel him to. However, should the Explorers invite Belanir to accompany them in their mission to infiltrate Modren's palace, the corsair captain is certainly eager to personally ensure the recovery of the spirit stones, so long as he and the Explorers can prepare a plan that ensures a good chance of doing so before Modren becomes aware and has the opportunity to destroy the stones. Belanir's presence on Scathe is likely to arouse Modren's suspicions, unless the Eldar presents a convincing reason or can slip in undetected, perhaps stowing away aboard the Explorers' landing craft.

SILENCING THE FORGES

"The difference between creation and destruction is merely one of perspective, but the view afforded us by the Warp renders such distinctions meaningless."

—Magos Forcyz

After either fighting their way past Modren's guard or sneaking through the palace, the Explorers eventually reach the sub-levels that house Magos Forcyz's heretical forges and laboratoria. It is here that the Explorers find the prize the Tau Hunter Cadre has travelled so far to retrieve—the Ethereal known as Aun'Roh. Shas'o Ja'Vra is only satisfied with the outcome of the Explorers' excursion if they successfully rescue Aun'Roh. However, Silberthorne's primary concern is only that they halt Forcyz's dark research; the Ethereal's survival is a secondary concern. Before the Explorers can rescue the captive Ethereal, however, they must face down the heretek Magos Forcyz, who fights to the death to protect his research and the all-important Ethereal. Should the Explorers defeat Forcyz, they face an even greater threat, as the dying heretek unleashes his deadliest weapons—Daemon Engines.

THE LAIR OF THE HERETEK

Whereas Modren's palace is a lavish display of wealth and opulence, studded with disturbing evidence of the fallen Rogue Trader's heresies, the laboratoria and forge-complexes of the heretek Magos Forcyz are a realm of nightmare. Even Vir Modren is unaware of the true extent of Forcyz's descent into Chaos, as he seldom visits the sub-levels, content to allow the heretek to conduct his work however he sees fit, so long as Modren benefits. The Warp-tainted artefacts that launched Modren's apostasy have become Forcyz's obsession. As the heretek Magos has explored ever deeper into the mysteries of Chaos, he has shared less and less of his findings with Modren, seeing the Rogue Trader as undeserving of such potent knowledge. The ultimate result of Forcyz's experimentations in the realm of Chaos has been to unlock the secrets of the Warpsmiths—the methods to construct and birth Daemon Engines, unholy fusions of machine and Daemon.

As the Explorers enter the sub-levels of the palace, where Forcyz conducts his dread work, they witness ever more displays of tech-heresy and the influence of Chaos. These include cogitators fused with disturbingly organic and fleshy components, machinery and tech-systems daubed in blood with sigils painful to look upon, and profane altars set atop banks of machinery.

CALLING IN THE CAVALRY

As is often the case when facing potentially overwhelming forces in personal combat, the Explorers are faced with the decision of whether to rely on their own wits and weapons, or call in the support of their armymen and other servants to assault Modren's palace. In addition, the Explorers currently have another potent resource upon which they can call, Shas'o Ja'Vra's Hunter Cadre. Ja'Vra always prefers the direct route and is desperate to see Aun'Roh rescued. Consequently, she is more than willing to commit the entire Hunter Cadre to the task. In fact, she volunteers to do so most insistently, even if the Explorers do not broach the topic. Silberthorne is more cautious, advising the Explorers to infiltrate Modren's palace covertly and retrieve the Ethereal. Ultimately, the question is left to the Explorers themselves. Bringing in the Hunter Cadre at the outset of the Explorers' descent to Scathe undoes any progress they have made in earning Modren's trust, ensuring that what might have been a cordial reception at his court becomes a bloodbath. A more promising plan is to arrange for the Tau to descend, either in their own landing craft or those of the Explorers, at a set time or upon a prearranged signal, intervening to support the Explorers as they breach Forcyz's sanctum.

Depending on the nature of the Explorers plan, a potential complication arises should Modren learn of the Explorers' treachery and activate the vox-shield emitter, rendering communication with the Explorers' ship, and the waiting Tau, impossible. However, should the ship lose contact with the Explorers, Ja'Vra assumes the worst and decides to launch her assault. While it is possible that Silberthorne or the Explorers' crew could dissuade her from this course of action, the GM should probably proceed with Ja'Vra's assault unless it obviously contravenes the previously stated wishes of the Explorers. An ideal time for the Hunter Cadre to make its appearance is just as the Explorers seem set to be overwhelmed by Modren or Forcyz's forces, arriving just in time to turn the tide of battle.

DEFENCES

Within the laboratoria and forges, Forcyz sees largely to his own defence. While some particularly hardened veterans amongst Modren's guard are stationed in the sub-levels, the primary defenders consist of corrupt servitors, automated systems, and, to a lesser extent, Forcyz's heretek disciples. It is these the Explorers must contend with in order to breach deep into Forcyz's lair and rescue Aun'Roh.

As well as the encounters described under **Into the Darkness**, below, the GM might wish to include additional encounters with servitors, Forcyz's disciples, and Modren's guard. The profiles for Heretek Disciples and Modren's guard can be found in the **NPC Appendix**, on page 110. To represent the corrupted servitors in Forcyz's service, use the Combat Servitor and Servitor Drone profiles on pages 374-375 of the **ROGUE TRADER Core Rulebook**.

INTO THE DARKNESS

Before they can reach the cell holding the captive Ethereal, the Explorers must deal with the hazards and horrors of Forcyz's sanctum. The Explorers must overcome the following encounters while travelling through Forcyz's labs and forges. Some of these represent deadly foes and obstacles they must overcome, while others merely display the horrors of Forcyz's work, and some even present potential resources the Explorers can use against their enemies, if they are willing to flout Imperial conventions. If the GM wishes to extend this portion of the adventure, he could include additional encounters of his own devising. Conversely, if the Explorers are already badly wounded or running low on resources, the GM might wish to exclude encounters that feature primarily combat.

The arch-heretek's lair is a bewildering maze of chambers and corridors set amidst the tunnels of an ancient xenos structure, conforming to no apparent logic. As the Explorers make their way through, they should never be completely certain of their position or if they are moving in the right direction, happening across seemingly familiar sights as if travelling in circles, but with just enough difference to cast a doubt. In keeping with the chaotic nature of the sub-levels, the following encounters can occur in whatever order the GM sees fit.

SOULLESS KILLERS

Amongst the defences of Forcyz's laboratoria and forges are automated systems including auspex scanners, sentry guns, and other systems slaved to sinister machine-spirits conjured by the arch-heretek. These systems are interlinked, and together display a frighteningly, and doubtless heretically, sophisticated awareness. If the Explorers are not careful, these malevolent machine-spirits can even track their progress based on each encounter or detection, funnelling this information to Forcyz and the lesser hereteks in his service. These dangerous machine-spirits also control, or have the ability to influence, numerous secondary and primary systems, everything from ventilation systems and electronic locks to emergency blast-doors and fire-containment systems. The GM can use these systems to give the Explorers the very real feeling that the very structure around them is an enemy, as doors seal shut to block retreat, light sources shut off abruptly, and the ventilation systems blast them with scorchingly hot or painfully cold air.

At appropriate points during the Explorers' journey through the sub-levels, the GM can confront the players with one or more of the following challenges from the defence system machine-spirits. These events can be used in isolation, or combined with one another or with other encounters to increase the challenge and excitement.

One capability of the systems that features in several of the following events, and that the GM can also incorporate into other encounters or simply use as an obstacle in itself is the systems' ability to seal and lock many of the doors within the labs and forges. These doors are not unlike the bulkheads of a voidship, and are built of heavy armaplas or plasteel, and possess an Armour Value of 30.

Inflicting a total of 60 points of damage in excess of the door's Armour creates a breach large enough for a creature of Average Size to squeeze through. The electronic locks can be overridden with a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test** or the doors forced open with a **Hellish (-60) Strength Test**.



Foul Air

While moving down one of the many corridors that connect Forcyz's forges and labs, bulkhead doors seal shut at both ends, trapping the Explorers. Almost immediately, toxic gas begins pumping into the hall through ventilation ducts set high in the walls. Each round while exposed to the gas, any character who is not protected by environmentally sealed armour or a rebreather must make a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test**. Respirators provide a +20 bonus to this test, as normal. A character who fails the test suffers 1d10 Energy Damage, not reduced by Armour. To escape from this trap, the Explorers must either bypass the doors or somehow block the vents or neutralise the gas.

Gun-Spirits

Sentry guns are positioned at certain crucial corridor junctions and the entrances to Forcyz's most important lab- and forge-chambers. These sentry guns are driven by malignly intelligent machine-spirits, and some even show signs of daemonic sentience. Although Forcyz could mount conceivably any weapon in these devices, most are armed with a twin-linked heavy stubber (Heavy; 120m; -/-/10; 1d10+5 I; Pen 3; Clip -; Reload -; Twin-Linked). The sentry turrets have an Armour Value of 15 and are destroyed after suffering a total of 30 Damage. The sentry turrets possess a Ballistic Skill of 35. In most instances, the sentry turrets come in pairs, affixed at each side of a doorway or hallway.

Containment Protocols

This event is most appropriate when the Explorers are in a lab-facility or forge-complex. The machine-spirits that serve Forcyz are capable of initiating emergency procedures to contain dangerous events that are all-too-common in the pursuit of Forcyz's dark research. The systems must be able to deal with anything from an explosion, to a fire, to a rampaging daemonic entity. Consequently, the containment protocols are severe, and often fatal to any menials or lesser hereteks unfortunate enough to be caught in the area. Once the machine-spirits recognise the Explorers as a threat, they can override the normal precautions and initiate these containment protocols, not for their intended purpose, but simply to trap, injure, or kill the Explorers.

As the Explorers make their way through the room, all of the exits abruptly seal as red flashing lights and blaring alarm klaxons begin. The Explorers have only seconds to prepare before one of the following occurs:

Incineration: Normally used only in the most extreme cases, this protocol seeks to destroy everything within the compromised chamber. Within moments of the doors sealing, the Explorers hear a harsh, rattling sound emanating from vents and grates set into the ceiling, followed by a sound like roaring flames as excess plasma from the reactors heads for the chamber. The effect lasts only for a moment, but that is more than enough time to destroy the chamber and kill anyone inside. The Explorers have three Rounds to act before the chamber is awash in all-consuming flame. This is a dire situation, and the GM should be open to whatever ideas for escape the players come up with. An Explorer can force the electronic locks and open the doors with a successful **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**, although he must also take care to seal the door immediately behind them lest the Explorers be caught in the blast regardless. If the Explorers are in a forge area, there are a number of adamantine containers built to withstand the ultra-high temperature smelting processes required for certain materials. Explorers who conceal themselves in one of these with a successful **Ordinary (+10) Agility or Strength Test** are protected from the coming inferno. If in a lab area, the Explorers can conceal themselves in one of the plasteel and armourglass specimen containers, requiring a **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** to properly seal the glassteel tube. Any character caught unprotected by the venting plasma suffers 4d10 Energy Damage with Pen 6 and must pass a **Hard (-20) Agility Test** or catch fire.

Fire-control: This event should occur when the Explorers are within one of Forcyz's many labs or workshops, although not one of the large forges. Without warning, the doors to the lab seal and, with a hiss of air, pumps hidden behind grates in the walls or ceiling begin siphoning the oxygen from the chamber. This effect is intended to douse a fire, chemical or otherwise, by removing all oxygen from the chamber, but it can kill living things just as surely. Until the Explorers can overcome the sealed doors, any characters without an oxygen source, such as a rebreather, are subject to the effects of Suffocation (see page 261 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook).

Bio-Purge: Designed for swiftly ending the lives of Forcyz's more ill-gotten experiments, this system exposes a chamber to a powerful acid calibrated to destroy organic tissue while leaving other matter unharmed. This feature should be encountered in one of Forcyz's labs, most suitably one of the genetis labs (see page 76). After the doors to the chamber seal, a number of nozzles within the ceiling begin to shower the area in this acid. Every Round a character is exposed to the acid, he suffers 1d10 Energy Damage with the Toxic Quality. Characters with the Machine (5) Trait or higher suffer no damage. Characters can avoid exposure to the acid by seeking cover beneath operating tables or within supply cabinets. The acid does not accumulate, as it escapes, along with dissolved biological matter, through drains set in the floor.



DISCIPLES OF THE HERETEK

When Forcyz betrayed the Adeptus Mechanicus, he took a number of his fellow Tech-Priests with him. Since that day, other heretekes and fallen Tech-Priests have come to Modrennia, seeking to research under the guidance of the arch-heretek. Although not front-line combatants, these lesser heretekes are willing to fight viciously to protect their research and labours from any threat. The Explorers should face at least one attack by such heretekes, and could face more in any number of the labs and forges. The Explorers might come across these heretekes engaged and distracted by their work, or lying in wait, depending on whether the Explorers are infiltrating by stealth or fighting their way through. If the heretekes are expecting trouble or actively seeking the Explorers, they should be encountered in groups equal to the number of Explorers, and accompanied by an equal number of corrupt servitors. See page 110 of the **NPC Appendix** for the Heretek Disciples, and corrupt servitors use the Combat Servitor profile on pages 374 and 375 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

THE XENOS ARMOURY

As they draw closer to their goal, the Explorers come upon a massive armoury chamber containing the large part of Modren and Forcyz's stock of stolen Tau equipment, as well as weapons and ammunition of human origin. The door to the armoury is sealed, and can be overcome as described on page 75. As an additional option, the GM could include a key to the armoury on a Tech-Priest or guard in the vicinity, allowing the Explorers a further means of gaining entry. Above the door is the label "Armoury IV." Once the Explorers enter the armoury, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Opening the thick, plasteel doors, you see a massive chamber, rising to a height of three storeys, containing numerous ammunition crates and racks upon racks of weapons and armour. Among the familiar sights of lasguns, autoguns, and bolters is a massive arsenal of xenos equipment, which you instantly recognise as Tau in origin, identical to the armaments and armour of Shas'o Ja'Vra's Cadre. As you step into the room, your eyes are drawn to the most impressive contents of the armoury, located at the very far wall of the chamber—Tau Battlesuits resting in specially fabricated armour-cradles.

Although they might not possess the relevant talents to properly use the Tau technology, the Explorers are nonetheless likely to want to make use of them. After all, the Tau weapons are devastating enough that the players might be willing to deal with the -20 penalty to attack tests for using a weapon without the proper talent. If there are any Tau Fire Warriors amongst the Explorers, this is an ideal opportunity to resupply and even reequip with more potent weaponry for the coming battles.

While the exact contents of the armoury are subject to the GM's discretion, the Explorers could potentially find all manner of Tau equipment. At a minimum, the armoury includes ten pulse rifles, ten pulse carbines, three rail rifles, ten pulse pistols, three ion rifles, several dozen Tau photon grenades and plentiful ammunition for any of these weapons (see the **Tau Weaponry** sidebar on page 114 of the **NPC Appendix** for full details of these weapons). In addition, there are two XV8 Crisis Battlesuits (see page 77) and a single XV88 Broadside Battlesuit (see page 78) in proper working condition. As well as the Tau equipment, the Explorers can also find ammunition for any human weapons they are carrying.

THE GENETIS LABORATORIA

Forcyz's territory includes a great number of laboratoria devoted to numerous different functions and specialisations. Amongst these are the genetis laboratoria, those equipped with the facilities and equipment for studying biological life forms of all varieties. In recent times, these have been dedicated to the study of the Tau, as Forcyz attempts to unlock the secrets of the Ethereals and the control they hold over all other Tau. The function of the genetis laboratoria is clear; as well as strange machines and systems with a purpose known only to those schooled in the ways of the Adeptus Mechanicus, there are operating tables and racks of surgical tools that clearly identify the purpose of the lab.

Forcyz's grisly work is evident in the genetis laboratoria. As well as blood stains around the drains set in the floor and dried or even fresh blood on the tables, there are corpses of Tau, some openly displayed on gurneys, others in cold storage. Many of the Tau bodies show signs of incisions, and others have been dissected and left on display. Additionally, vid-captors in the laboratoria have recorded some of these experiments, and the grisly video plays on a loop on cogitator screens.

An Explorer who takes the time to investigate the cogitator records and succeeds at a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus or Xenos) Test** understands that the purpose of Forcyz's experiments upon the Tau, both before and after death, is to learn the secret of the Ethereals' control over the other Tau. The Explorer also gains one Insanity Point. However, it is unclear how much progress Forcyz has made in his research.



XV8 CRISIS BATTLESUIT

The most iconic of the Tau Empire's many mobile weapons of war, the mass production model XV8 Crisis Battlesuit has carried countless battles for the Tau Empire. Its mobility, resilience, and the overwhelming firepower it can mount all make the XV8 one of the deadliest weapons platforms available, and almost all members of the Fire caste aspire to reach the lofty ranks of those entrusted with such machines. Many of the greatest heroes of the Fire caste won their names in these armoured war machines, though to even reach the rank of Shas'ui to become a pilot is a gruelling task to which few are equal. Still, the prestige associated with piloting a Crisis Battlesuit is not unfounded; ensconced in this armour, a warrior becomes far more than he once was, a force of destruction capable of standing toe-to-toe with some of the deadliest warriors in the galaxy and not merely surviving, but winning.

Armour Points: 10 All

WEAPON SYSTEMS

One suit is equipped with two burst cannons, the other is equipped with a plasma rifle and a flamer:

Burst Cannon: Based off the same plasma pulse generation technology as the pulse rifle and its associated variants, the burst cannon is a multibarrelled assault weapon capable

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special
Burst Cannon	Basic	60m	-/3/6	2d10+3 E	4	40	2 Full	
Flamer	Basic	20m	S/-/-	1d10+4 E	2	6	2 Full	Flame
Plasma Rifle	Heavy	90m	S/2/4	2d10+4 E	10	16	Full	

CUSTOMISED SYSTEMS

While piloting a XV8 Crisis Battlesuit, an Explorer gains the following benefits:

Blacksun Filtration Systems: This system gives the Explorer the benefits of a blacksun filter (see page 112).

Enhanced Motive Systems: While piloting the battlesuit, an Explorer's Strength Characteristic counts as 55 and he gains the Size (Enormous) and the Auto-Stabilised Trait. If for any reason this Primary System becomes disabled, the battlesuit cannot move until it is repaired.

Environmental Seal: So long as the suit's power source is viable and the seal remains intact, the XV8 Crisis Battlesuit provides the Explorer piloting it with breathable air and full protection from the elements.

Jet Pack: An Explorer can make a **Routine (+20) Pilot (Personal) Test** to make a safe, guided fall from any height or a short jump over intervening terrain (or foes), landing at the end of the move. The Explorer can also make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Personal) Test** as a Half Action to gain the Flyer (12) Trait for up to one minute (or 1d5+10 Rounds in Structured Time).

Multi-tracker: The Explorer may fire a weapon with each hand as if he had the Two-Weapon Wielder Talent. If he possesses this Talent already, he gains an additional +10 bonus when making an attack with a weapon in each hand.

Vectored Retro-Thrusters: The Explorer may make a Disengage Action as a Half Action.

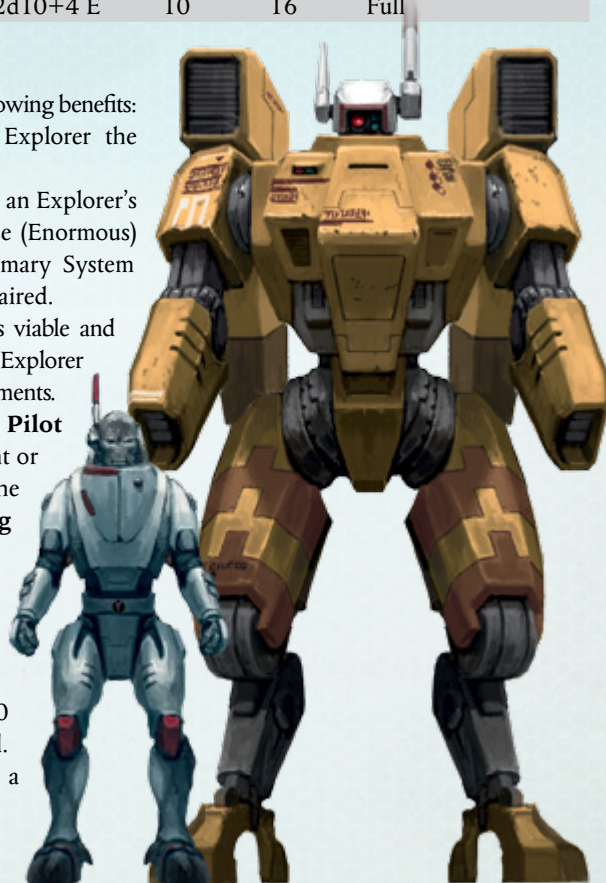
of very high rates of fire. Usually mounted on the Tau Stealth battlesuit, the relatively short range of this gun is outweighed by its capacity to inflict massive casualties on lighter armoured troops.

Flamer: Whether by coincidence or the truth of its design, the flame-weapons used by the Tau Empire function similarly to the flame-weapons of the Imperium of Man. Essentially a simple mechanism for projecting an ignition fuel, this weapon is mostly used for close-order anti-personnel support.

Plasma Rifle: Using similar principles to Imperial plasma weapons, a Tau plasma rifle uses a concentrated burst of super-heated plasma to destroy its target. Tau plasma weapons are, in general, safer than their Imperial equivalents, sacrificing a modicum of firepower by lowering the overall temperature of the plasma. This has led to an elimination of the critical overheating problems that plague little-understood Imperial archeotech relics such as plasma weapons, but has also resulted in a weapon with slightly less damage output overall. These weapons are only ever mounted on Tau battlesuits, which can wield such bulky armaments with ease.

NANOCRYSTALLINE ARMOUR

Battlesuits are, above all, a very advanced form of armour. A battlesuit behaves as a suit of worn armour in all ways, and also provides a number of other benefits, detailed below.



XV88 BROADSIDE BATTLESUIT

Built to mount massive weapons such as the heavy rail rifle and high-yield missile pods, the bulky XV88 Broadside sacrifices manoeuvrability and speed for raw destructive power. These large battlesuits are frequently positioned far from the front lines, for they can bring their deadly armaments to bear upon almost any target within their line of sight, even at incredible range. To compensate for their lack of mobility, Broadside's are also

incredibly durable, and can shrug off all but the most piercing shots with their heavy armour.

Armour Points: 15 All

NANOCRYSTALLINE ARMOUR

Battlesuits are, above all, a very advanced form of armour. A battlesuit behaves as a suit of worn armour in all ways, and also provides a number of other benefits, detailed below.

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special
Twin-Linked Heavy Rail Rifle	Heavy	300m	S/-/-	4d10+8 I	12	12	2 Full	Felling, Proven (3), Tearing, Twin-linked
Twin-Linked Smart Missile System	Heavy	150m	S/-/6	2d10+4 X	4	48	2 Full	Twin-linked

WEAPON SYSTEMS

The XV88 battlesuit is equipped with the following weapons:

Twin-linked Heavy Rail Rifle: The larger and more brutal cousin of the rail rifle, the heavy rail rifle is an anti-armour cannon, used to demolish enemy vehicles from long range or tear massive creatures limb from limb from well outside their effective range. This devastating weapon is often mounted on XV88 Broadside's, for only these modified variants of the XV8 Crisis Battlesuit can effectively fire such colossal weapons.

Twin-linked Smart Missile System: Utilising missiles with simple AIs based on those used in drones, the Earth caste has created a self-guiding weapon. A Smart Missile System lets a warrior engage foes that he cannot even see, provided he knows their rough location. This gives a pilot an incredible amount of tactical flexibility, helping him force entrenched foes out of cover and obliterating ambushes before the would-be attackers can even spring them.

So long as an Explorer wielding a Smart Missile System knows his opponent's location, he does not require line of sight to fire this weapon upon it. To hit a target out of his line of sight, he makes a **Challenging (+0) Intelligence Test** in lieu of any Ballistic Skill Tests he would make as part of the Attack Action.

Early Warning Override: Once per Encounter, the Explorer may make an Overwatch Action as a Reaction.

Multi-tracker: The Explorer may fire a weapon with each hand as if he had the Two-Weapon Wielder Talent. If he possesses this Talent already, he gains an additional +10 bonus when making an attack with a weapon in each hand.

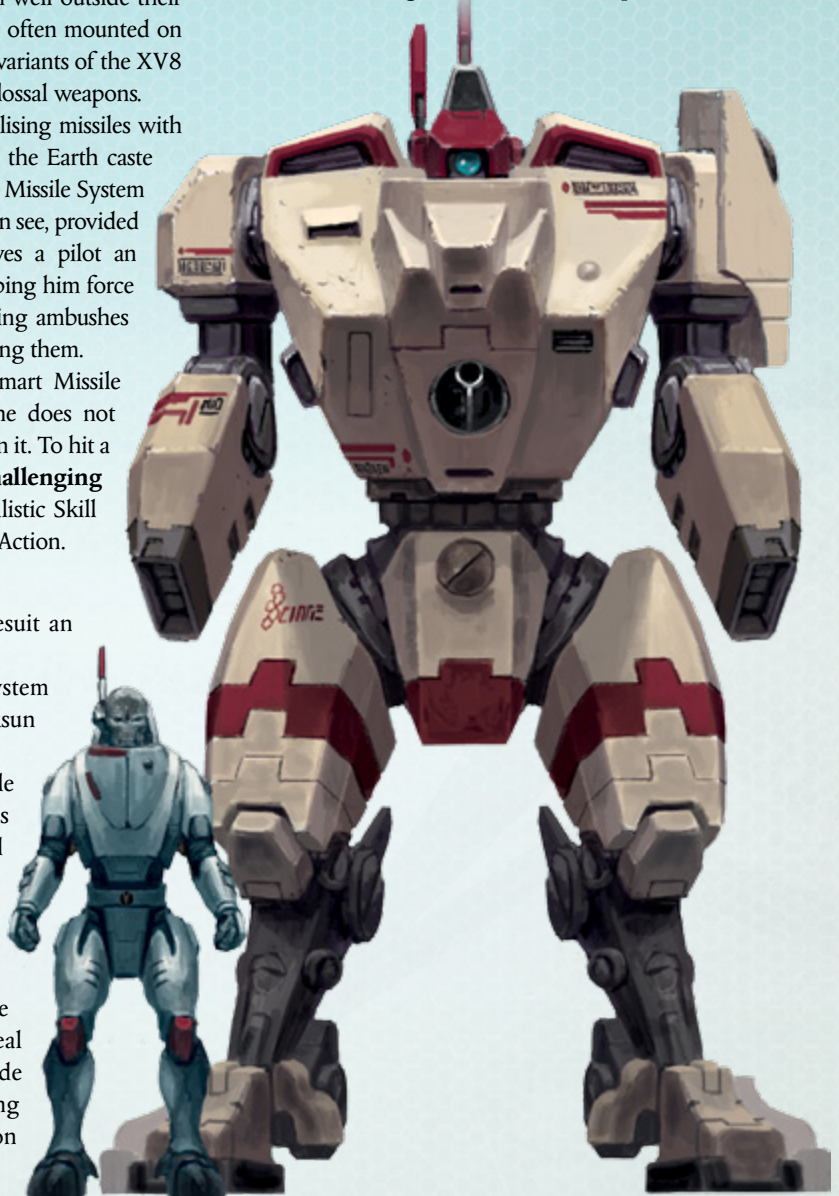
CUSTOMISED SYSTEMS

While piloting a XV88 Broadside Battlesuit an Explorer gains the following benefits:

Blacksun Filtration Systems: This system gives the Explorer the benefits of a blacksun filter (see page 112).

Enhanced Motive Systems: While piloting the battlesuit, an Explorer's Strength Characteristic counts as 65 and he gains the Size (Enormous) Trait and the Auto-Stabilised Trait. If for any reason this Primary System becomes disabled, the battlesuit cannot move until it is repaired.

Environmental Seal: So long as the suit's power source is viable and the seal remains intact, the XV88 Broadside Battlesuit provides the Explorer piloting it with breathable air and full protection from the elements.



THE SOUL-FORGES

Forcyz's greatest accomplishment to date, the Soul-Forges are specialised and unspeakably profane facilities where the arch-heretek creates his masterpieces, the Daemon Engines. Although the products of the Soul-Forges are stored elsewhere and the Explorers should not yet be aware of them, they should gain some inkling of the depths of Forcyz's heresy merely by viewing the places of their creation. The Soul-Forges are massive chambers, shrouded in darkness penetrated only by a sickly, unnatural light. Gargantuan machinery looms overhead, similar to that used in the great manufactoria of the Imperium, but twisted and corrupted, studded with spikes and bone-like protrusions, glistening with flesh-like tendrils. Everywhere, sigils and marks of Chaos adorn the machinery, the furnaces, and the very walls. Great bellows heave with a disturbingly breath-like quality, and cyclopean furnaces glow from within with unearthly fire. Metal catwalks and gantries crisscross the chamber above massive lathes and smelters.

While within the chamber of the Soul-Forges, the Explorers experience a number of disturbing, unnatural phenomena. Harsh, malevolent voices whisper on the edge of consciousness, while the burning flames of the furnaces cast impossible shadows resembling daemonic forms. Even though the Soul-Forges are currently empty and dormant, the air is heavy with the evil of what has transpired and the apparatus of construction are imbued with the fell energy of the Warp. Upon entering the Soul-Forges, the Explorers must make a Fear Test as if confronted with a Fear (1) creature, causing Warp Shock. In addition, any character with the Psyniscience Skill should attempt a **Routine (+20) Psyniscience Test**. Success reveals that the presence of the Warp clings heavy in this area, and that the veil is dangerously weak and the tools and furnaces emanate the stink of Chaos. The Explorers should feel uneasy and seek to quickly hurry on, rather than linger in the area.



THE ETHEREAL

Finally, after many trials and travails within the sub-levels, the Explorers reach the holding cells where Forcyz held the captive Tau. This large corridor is lined with cages, extending for over fifty metres before terminating at a massive, sealed plasteel door. Now, the others are dead at the less-than-tender mercies of the arch-heretek, leaving only Aun'Roh alive. Forcyz holds the Ethereal captive in a secure cell deep in his forge-complex, when not subjecting the captive Tau to horrendous experiments. The Ethereal is weak and in poor health from months of perverse experimentation, as Forcyz attempts to unlock the secrets of the unswerving loyalty that Ethereals command from all other Tau. When the Explorers first come upon the Ethereal's cell, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Along a row of otherwise empty holding cells, a solitary Tau sits slumped behind a cage door. Barely clad in tattered rags and blood-soaked bandages, its blue skin is unhealthily pale, and numerous, fresh scars are evident all across its frame. The figure weakly raises its head at your approach, and states, "You are not servants of the torturer."

Any Tau characters present, including Tau Explorers or Shas'O Ja'Vra or members of her Cadre are utterly mortified and overcome with rage at the sight of an Ethereal in such condition. It is a sight that no Tau could ever expect, and upon seeing the sight of the brutalised Ethereal, Tau characters must make a Fear Test against Fear (1). Tau who pass this Test gain a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill Tests against Magos Forcyz or any of the lesser hereteks serving him, exactly as if they possessed an applicable Hatred Talent (this bonus is not cumulative with the effects of the Hatred talent).

Aun'Roh's reactions are subdued, as he is extremely weak from his months of imprisonment and torturous experimentations. He does not display joy or excitement at the prospect of rescue, but neither does he exhibit sorrow or defeat from his circumstances, but only projects an aura of calm and control. Nonetheless, the prospect of rescue does please Aun'Roh greatly, for he desires to return to his service of the Greater Good. If any Tau are present with the Explorers, Aun'Roh is greatly relieved to see them, although this is only minimally perceptible. If there are no Tau present, Aun'Roh is cautious. However, because he does not recognise the Explorers as servants of Forcyz, he trusts them without argument or question once they explain that they intend to rescue him.

If the Explorers do not already understand the nature of the precious "treasure" they must recover for the Tau, it should become apparent when they discover the Ethereal Aun'Roh. Even if the Explorers do not understand the significance or position of Tau Ethereals, the sight of a single Tau prisoner kept alive for these many months should be enough to indicate his importance.

Opening the Ethereal's cell requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test** or a **Very Hard (-30) Strength Test**.

THE HERETEK ATTACKS

As the Explorers free Aun'Roh from his cell and make to leave, Magos Forcyz appears with a retinue of three Heretek Disciples and a number of servitors equal to one less than the number of Explorers. If the Explorers have allies such as Ja'Vra's Cadre or others, Forcyz should be accompanied by an additional number of Disciples, servitors, and Modren's guard (see page 110) sufficient to engage the Explorers' allies, leaving the Explorers to deal with Forcyz himself. Forcyz's profile can be found in the **NPC Appendix**, on page 95. Forcyz's servitors use the Combat Servitor profile on page 374 of the **ROGUE TRADER Core Rulebook**.

When Forcyz makes his approach, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Flanked by hulking combat servitors, their flesh traced with malefic symbols, the arch-heretek Forcyz approaches you. Clad in the red robes of a Tech-Priest, but defaced with profane sigils and marks of the Dark Powers, the largely cybernetic Forcyz is a fearsome sight. Mechadendrites waving in anger, Forcyz's harsh, mechanical voice issues forth from his vox-grille. "You are quite resourceful to have come this far, your initiative is impressive. Perhaps you could have been useful servants; it is unfortunate that you chose this path. Regardless, perhaps I can find use for you yet."

After the trouble the Explorers have caused him, Forcyz has no interest in striking any sort of a deal, although he suspects the Explorers could make for interesting test subjects if they are left in suitable condition. One thing that Forcyz is unwilling to risk is the Ethereal. Forcyz has made some progress in his research, and he requires the Ethereal alive in order to continue. As such, Forcyz and his servants do not take any actions that might endanger the Ethereal. The Explorers might realise this and use it to their advantage, although any Tau characters present refuse to allow Aun'Roh to be used as a hostage or shield, or otherwise endanger him.



SECRET WEAPONS

Depending on what allies the Explorers have with them, the battle against Forcyz could be a brief skirmish or a protracted battle. Eventually, one side must triumph. If the Explorers fail, they would be better off dead, for any wounded are dragged to Forcyz's labs to be subjected to unconscionable experimentation. Should the Explorers defeat the Magos, he has one final weapon to employ in vengeance, one that might prove as dangerous to Modren's forces as to the Explorers.

When the Explorers defeat Forcyz, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As the arch-heretek lies dying, his cybernetic systems failing and sputtering, a grating, mechanical sound vaguely resembling a laugh escapes from his respirator grille. "You will never leave this place. My creations will rend you apart and consign your souls to tortures you cannot begin to imagine." With that, Forcyz emits a deafeningly loud shriek of machine-code, a discordant wail audible within the binary signal. From somewhere below your feet, an unearthly roar bellows forth, followed by another, and another. The ground trembles beneath your feet, and an icy feeling of illogical dread descends over you.

Even if the battle is still raging, upon his own defeat Forcyz activates this contingency plan, caring little for the fates of his servants. With a screech of corrupt binary code, Forcyz calls out to his masterworks, the Daemon Engines, rousing them from a fitful slumber. After a few moments of distant roaring and pounding, the heavy doors at the end of the corridor shudder violently, buckle outward, and burst open as a Maulerfiend tears its way through (see page 111 for the Maulerfiend profile). The Maulerfiend immediately moves toward the Explorers, intent on rending them apart with its powerful claws and maw. The Daemon Engine swiftly dispatches anyone in the way, including Tau allies or Forcyz's own servants, either dashing them against the wall with its forelimbs of lasher tendrils, or picking them up and tossing them with its jaws.

If the Explorers face down the Daemon Engine and destroy it, within moments another Maulerfiend comes through the same doorway, followed by a Forgefiend. At this point, it should be clear that the Explorers' best option is to flee, as they cannot otherwise ensure Aun'Roh's safety. At the GM's discretion, the Explorers might have no option but to retrace their route through Forcyz's domain and back through the palace. Alternatively, he can allow the Explorers to find a different route, or return to one previously identified, such as an elevator, stairwell, or winding passage up to the surface, emerging a short distance away from the palace.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs play important roles during this part of the adventure.

MAGOS FORCYZ

The fallen Magos is utterly corrupted by the forces of Chaos, having given up what little remained of his humanity in exchange for the secrets of the creation of Daemon Engines. Forcyz wants to see the Explorers suffer for the damage they have done to his research. Once mortally wounded, Forcyz unleashes the Daemon Engines he has toiled so long to create, caring not for the damage they are sure to inflict upon Modren's palace.

ETHEREAL AUN'ROH

Whether the Explorers previously realised it or not, the Ethereal known as Aun'Roh is the motivation that has brought the Tau Hunter Cadre so far, and the reason they have complied with the demands of the Explorers and of Silberthorne. Aun'Roh is enigmatic and serene, and shows very little concern for himself, despite the danger and the horrors suffered at Forcyz's hands. While his will remains strong, Aun'Roh's body is wrecked by months of experimentation by Forcyz, leaving the Ethereal weakened and barely able to even move. Although Aun'Roh does not fear death, he would nonetheless prefer to live, that he might continue to do the work of the Greater Good.



SILENCING THE SIGNAL

"None shall speak against my glory and right to rule."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

Accepting that they stand no chance at defeating the many Daemon Engines released by Forcyz, the Explorers must flee the forges and laboratoria and seek to escape Scathe's surface. They soon realise, however, that they are unable to contact their ship, the only reliable method they have to destroy the Daemon Engines. In order to reestablish contact so that they can request extraction or a bombardment of the Daemon Engines, the Explorers must locate and deactivate the vox-shield emitter that is preventing them from communicating with their ship. All the while, they must contend with the ravaging Daemon Engines pursuing them.

FROM BAD TO WORSE

As the Explorers flee back toward the surface, they eventually attempt to contact their ship waiting in orbit, most likely either to request a rescue shuttle, or to prepare a bombardment for the Daemon Engines once they are exposed on the surface, having no other option for dealing with the large number of monstrous machines. While establishing vox contact has been problematic for the duration of the Explorers' time in Modren's palace and even more difficult in the sub-levels (see **Communication Breakdown** on page 71), the Explorers now find it completely impossible to send or receive any communication.

Upon exiting to the surface, any doubts that the Explorers' are being purposefully jammed are put to rest, as they are still unable to establish any vox contact whatsoever. Any Explorer can attempt an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use** or **Logic Test** to determine that an outside signal is causing the interference. Three or more Degrees of Success on the Tech-Use Test or a further successful Tech-Use Test utilising a vox-caster or other appropriate item of equipment shows the source of the interference to be a large facility studded with antennae and vox-dishes, located only a few kilometres from Modren's palace. Once the Explorers are on the surface and the vox-shield facility is visible, the Explorers can also discern its importance with a successful **Challenging (+0) Logic** or **Awareness Test**, with other Skills possible at the GM's discretion. Regardless of how they reach the conclusion, it should be clear to the Explorers that they must travel to the vox-shield emitter and disable it.

Reaching the vox facility is further complicated by the pursuing Daemon Engines. The Explorers can buy themselves some time by using corridors too small for the Daemon Engines to traverse or even by stationing allies or servants to hold them off, but there are far too many, and Daemon Engines quickly erupt onto the surface, emerging from hidden entrances to the sub-levels and bursting forth from the palace itself, driving waves of panicked courtiers and servants before them. As Maulerfiends and Forgefiends

rampage across the ground, Helderakes perch on the parapets of Modren's palace, circling the towers and attacking any who draw their attention.

Travelling to the vox-shield emitter on foot is a difficult prospect, as the Explorers are unlikely to be able to outrun the Daemon Engines, and certainly not the Helderakes that now soar overhead. The area surrounding Modren's palace consists of a thin layer of sand over ancient xenos streets, with tumbling ruins projecting forth that can provide some measure of cover. Travelling on foot sees the Explorers fighting back the pursuing Daemon Engines while making use of cover.

Another option is to commandeer a vehicle from Modren's palace, or even take the shuttle in which the Explorers originally travelled to the surface. In the case of a shuttle, the Explorers might be tempted to attempt to reconvene with their ship directly. However, in the current situation, the palace-fortress's anti-aircraft turrets are prepared to shoot down any unauthorised craft, and without communication with their ship, they cannot rely on it for assistance. If the Explorers pursue this route anyway, the GM should make it clear that the firepower directed at them is too much, and they can only survive by assuming a lower altitude. If this does not deter them, a series of hits cripples the shuttle, forcing the pilot to make a **Difficult (-10) Pilot (Flyers) Test** to achieve a crash landing. As the Explorers remove themselves from the wrecked shuttle, they see that they have, fortuitously, crashed near the vox-shield facility.



THE VOX-SHIELD EMITTER

The vox-shield emitter is housed in a large, sturdy structure approximately six storeys high. It is a functional, solidly built structure, lacking the alien mystique of the palace-fortress. The facility is studded with antennae, grounding spokes, and a number of large vox dishes project from the highest level. Exterior stairwells encircle the building, connecting the second through sixth floors. Unless the Explorers have access to a flyer or jet pack (such as a Tau Crisis Suit), they must enter the structure and make their way up floor by floor.

While Modren's forces are aware by this point of the Explorers activities and the danger they pose, the vox facility has not yet come under assault, and so it is possible for the Explorers to infiltrate it and ascend to the top levels using stealth. Twenty guards are stationed within the facility (use the Modren's Guard profile on page 110), with at least five patrolling the outer walkways at any time. Getting past these guards requires the Explorers to make a successful **Challenging (+0) Opposed Concealment Test** to evade detection and a **Hard (-20) Security or Tech-Use Test** to open the sealed exterior doors.

The control systems for the vox array are located in the upper levels of the facility. However, the lower levels do house a number of arcane tech-systems, including the plasma generators that power the facility. In disabling the vox-shield emitter, the Explorers have a number of options. The two most likely options are to either deactivate the plasma generators, cutting power to the vox emitters, or deactivate the vox array directly. The former can be done from the lower levels, the latter from the upper levels. Deactivating either system requires the Explorers to succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**. If the Explorers are unable to soothe the machine-spirits and deactivate the system in the proper manner, another option is to disable the systems by simply inflicting damage. This option is certain to attract the attention of any guards remaining in the facility, forcing the Explorers to fight their way out. An Explorer with the proper equipment can attempt a **Challenging (+0) Demolition Test** to destroy the vox systems, or the Explorers can simply attack the systems with whatever weapons they carry. The consoles, data-pipes, and other subsidiary systems of the vox array have an Armour Value of 10, and the Explorers must inflict a total of 100 Damage to the various systems in order to disable the vox-shield. Within two Rounds of any weapons fire, the first three guards arrive, with an additional 1d5 guards arriving each Round until all are accounted for.

Meltdown

Disabling the plasma generators through demolitions or attack is a risky proposition. Unless the plasma generators are properly shut down, their containment fails, unleashing a massive explosion. If the Explorers are able to plant a demolition charge on the plasma generators and flee prior to its detonation, this results in a satisfying fireball that brings the entire vox-array facility crashing down. If the Explorers are still present when the plasma containment fails, either as a result of their own actions or the devastation wrought by a marauding Daemon Engine, they have only moments to get some distance between themselves and the release of massive energy.

The plasma generators have an Armour Value of 25, and a catastrophic containment breach occurs once any of the generators (which are interconnected) suffer 20 or more points of damage in a single hit, or receive three hits that deal any amount of damage in excess of Armour. Once breached, alarm klaxons blare as coolant hisses forth from the damaged generator, and monitor-screens flash red warning runes as pressure levels drop. Any Explorer who succeeds at an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use** or **Common Lore (Tech) Test** realises that the Explorers have as little as half a minute (10 Rounds) before the plasma generators lose containment. When this happens, all characters within the structure or within 100 metres of it suffer 5d10 Energy Damage with a Penetration of 9. In addition, the massive blast brings the entire structure toppling down, almost certainly slaying anyone inside.

IMPENDING DOOM

Depending on how challenging the GM wishes to make this portion of the adventure, he can have the Daemon Engines present either merely as a narrative threat, or as a very real danger. If the Explorers are having difficulty dealing with the guards and deactivating the vox emitter, simply reminding them that Maulerfiends are tearing at the walls outside and Helderkes soaring overhead could be enough to raise the tension. However, to ramp up both the tension and the challenge, the GM can have one of the Daemon Engines breach the walls of the facility and begin rampaging within. While the damage the Daemon Engine does to the facility might actually work to the Explorers' advantage, it does not lessen the danger to their own lives. As Maulerfiends are especially suited for breaching fortifications, one such monstrosity is perhaps the best choice for this encounter. They are also able to scale sheer surfaces, meaning that it can reach the Explorers regardless of how high they climb. Instead of, or in addition to, a Maulerfiend, a Forgefiend positioned outside can also threaten the Explorers, either entering the bottom level and obliterating interior walls with volleys of cannon fire and plasma blasts, waiting outside to rake the exterior stairs and walkways with weapon fire as soon as the Explorers emerge, or even focusing fire to blast holes in the exterior walls.



OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: DEATH FROM ABOVE

The GM can insert this optional encounter to extend this scene and provide the Explorers with an unexpected challenge. After succeeding at an appropriate Skill Test or inflicting sufficient damage to the systems to seemingly shut down the vox-array or the plasma generators, a cogitator terminal nearby begins flashing a message stating that auxiliary backup systems have activated. The only way to shut off the vox-shield emitter now is for the Explorers to climb onto the very roof of the facility and do so manually.

The roof is accessible from the exterior stairs and from a ladder leading to a hatchway in the ceiling of the uppermost floor. The roof is a treacherous morass of wires, cables, power couplings, antennae, and massive vox-dishes. Terminating the array requires an Explorer to once again access the proper system panel and succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** or inflict sufficient damage to the bases of the vox-dishes to bring them tumbling down. The vox-dishes have an Armour Value of 15, and are destroyed once they receive 30 Damage.

This task is not so simple as it might at first appear, for as soon as the Explorers reach the roof, they are met with a blood-curdling shriek-roar, as a Helderke (see the Helderke profile on page 111) descends from the sky to attack them. The rest of the Explorers must fend off the flying Daemon Engine as one of them disables the vox-shield, or they must first destroy the horrid creature.

COMMUNICATION RESTORED

With the vox-shield emitter disabled, the Explorers can restore communication with their ship, and with any allies they have made in Modren's realm. Depending on prior events and the plans struck between the Explorers and their allies, these NPCs might be awaiting a signal or already engaged in battle. It might even be that one of these allies rescues the Explorers from the Daemon Engines.

As the Explorers emerge from the vox facility, they see the remaining Daemon Engines converging on their location, presenting an utterly overwhelming force. The Explorers' best chance for survival is to call upon their ship either to destroy the Daemon Engines with a lance strike or bombardment, or to retrieve the Explorers with a shuttle or lighter.

With the Daemon Engines destroyed, or at least left behind, the Explorers have one more unpleasant surprise in store. A number of events have transpired while the Explorers were conducting their mission in Forcyz's lair and dealing with the Daemon Engines. As it became clear that Scathe was no longer safe from attack, Vir Modren teleported aboard his flagship, the *Ardent Bane*, using a teleportarium located in the upper levels of his palace-fortress. The vessel is now attempting to flee to ensure Modren's safety while his servants and remaining allies fight against the attackers. Further complicating matters, Silberthorne is aboard the *Ardent Bane*, having boarded it with his servants Gulette Anhd and Diamnas Char in order to complete his investigation into Modren's heresy. The Explorers can learn of these events from a trusted servant or ally, or from Silberthorne himself. In the latter case, the Explorers receive a garbled vox transmission from Silberthorne, who requests that they stop Modren's ship from escaping.



A RECKONING

"I find there is no surer way to gain the measure of a man than to face him in combat."

—Rogue Trader Vir Modren

In the final act of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, the Explorers must halt the *Ardent Bane* before it flees the system and Modren escapes justice. The Explorers have two primary options for doing so. The Explorers can return to their ship and intercept the *Ardent Bane*, leading to a space battle, or they can return to Modren's palace-fortress and use the teleportarium there to teleport directly aboard the *Ardent Bane*, facing the heretical Rogue Trader blade-to-blade. Meanwhile, events unfold across the system in keeping with the Explorers' actions in **Chapter II**. Depending on the Explorers' savvy and success, this might mean Modren's forces are faced with overwhelming firepower as the forces of the Eldar Corsair Alasiel Belanir and the pirate captain Makara De'Soth engage the disorganised remnants of Modren's fleet, and Gargoff 'Eadbreaka's Orks rain destruction upon Scathe and the other worlds using the Roks they have constructed. Or, it might mean that the Explorers face overwhelming force as their bitter rivals all seek to personally destroy them, leaving the Explorers with little hope of escaping the system alive unless they hatch a clever plan.

If the Explorers show any hesitation to engage the *Ardent Bane*, the GM should remind the players (perhaps through an appropriate NPC), that unless they rescue Silberthorne from Modren's ship, they will not receive the rewards he previously promised.

In addition to Modren's flagship, the heavily modified Ambition-class cruiser *Ardent Bane*, the other forces involved in the fight, either allied with the Explorers or with Modren, will depend on the Explorers' actions in **Chapter II**, and which rivals they destroyed, lured to their side, or simply convinced to stand aside. Likewise, if the Explorers board the *Ardent Bane*, the opposition and allied forces battling for control of the vessel will again depend on their previous arrangements and actions.

If the Explorers choose to return to their ship and engage the *Ardent Bane* in battle, refer to **Battle in the Void**, below. If, instead, the Explorers board the *Ardent Bane* to face Modren directly, refer to **Duel with Damnation** on page 86.

BATTLE IN THE VOID

If the Explorers return to their ship, they must rush to intercept the *Ardent Bane* before it flees the system with Silberthorne aboard. Depending on the alliances struck with the other faction leaders of Modren's realm, the Explorers might receive assistance in bringing Modren's ship to heel (see the **Rivals and Allies in the Final Conflict** sidebar, following). The Explorers have backed Modren into a figurative corner, however, and the apostate Rogue Trader is not willing to surrender without a fight. Immediately as the Explorers' ship comes within range, the *Ardent Bane* opens fire on them. Once engaged in

RIVALS AND ALLIES IN THE FINAL CONFLICT

As Modren's realm devolves into anarchy and unchecked violence, there are myriad possibilities for the involvement of the Explorers' rivals and allies, based on the resolution (or not) of prior encounters. Some of these possibilities might place these NPCs directly against, or alongside, the Explorers during the final battle against Modren, while others might see the NPCs engaged in activities on the far side of the system, but nonetheless with a significant impact on the outcome of the adventure. The following are just some of the more likely options, and the GM should modify or ignore these, as appropriate, based on the Explorers' actions during **Chapter II**.

MAGOS FORCYZ

More likely than not, the arch-heretek is dead at this point, his body lying in the depths of the palace sub-levels on Scathe. However, the effects of Forcyz's influence continue to impact events both directly and indirectly. Although the Explorers might have destroyed most of the Daemon Engines, it is unavoidable that a few remain and continue to sow terror on the surface of Scathe. In the case of Helderakes, these beasts can even reach vessels in low orbit to wreak havoc. In addition, the GM might wish to have Forcyz Burn a Fate Point in order to survive his seeming demise, so that he can reappear in future adventures to further trouble the Explorers.

SABINA ALSUNET

It is not possible for the Explorers to enlist Sabina Alsunet's aid against Modren, but her continued involvement has a great impact on the effectiveness of Modren's fleet. If the Explorers saw to Alsunet's demise or disgrace during **Chapter II**, then Modren's fleet is disorganised and suffering from a lack of leadership. This leaves the fleet as a much lesser threat than it would otherwise be, especially if the Explorers have allies with voidships of their own. However, if Alsunet still commands the fleet, then it presents a united and highly organised force that is greater than the sum of its individual ships. If Alsunet still holds her position as Mistress of the Fleet and the Explorers do not have the assistance of either 'Eadbreaka, De'Soth, or Belanir, then their only chance is to dispatch Modren quickly and then flee before Alsunet's fleet closes in on them with overwhelming force. However, the balance tips further in the Explorers' favour for each ally they have recruited.

MAKARA DE'SOTH

If the Explorers recruited Captain Makara De'Soth as an ally, his pirate fleet provides a great boon during the battle for control of the system, being able to engage and inflict damage against a significant portion of Vir Modren's fleet. Because De'Soth's ships orbit Scathe itself, they are in an ideal position to launch a preemptive strike against Scathe, prepare a defence against the fleet led by Sabina Alsunet, or intercept the *Ardent Bane* as it attempts to escape.

GARGOFF 'EADBREAKA

The Ork Freebooters led by Gargoff 'Eadbreaka represent the largest single faction within Modren's realm, and their actions have immense potential to decide the outcome of events. However, being Orks, they are also amongst the most disorganised and unpredictable forces, and are unlikely to adhere to any plan more complicated than "attack the enemy." If the Explorers can turn 'Eadbreaka's Orks against Modren, this is enough to all-but neutralise Sabina Alsunet's fleet. The Ork vessels on their own would be enough to occupy the full attention of Modrennia's defenders, but the inclusion of the Roks is enough to tip the system into anarchy.

If the Explorers did not recruit 'Eadbreaka to their cause, they must contend with the onslaught of Ork Kroozers. However, if the Explorers have recruited Alasiel Belanir or Makara De'Soth, this creates a confusing swirl of combat as former allies fire upon one another in a multisided battle. In this confusion, it does not take much for the Orks to gleefully begin attacking whatever targets present themselves, whether ostensibly allies or not. In this way, the Ork fleet can become something more akin to a force of nature, unpredictably firing upon any and every other ship indiscriminately.

ALASIEL BELANIR

Although the Eldar corsair captain commands only a single vessel, it is amongst the most dangerous ships within the system, and can single-handedly tip the battle. If the Explorers have not yet dealt with Belanir, the *Shadow's Edge* attacks their own ship, seeking to cripple it before the Explorers' meddling results in the destruction of the precious spirit stones. However, if the Explorers have made good on a promise to help Belanir retrieve the spirit stones, the *Shadow's Edge* instead intercepts the *Ardent Bane*, Belanir seeking to enact his vengeance upon Vir Modren.

combat, Modren no longer attempts to flee, even against his better judgment, instead seeking to vent his rage on the Explorers, whom he perceives as the reason for his downfall. As such, the encounter swiftly becomes a fight to the finish, with Modren even attempting to pursue the Explorers should they retreat.

The battle against the *Ardent Bane* is the culmination of the adventure's events, and should be suitably dramatic and tense. For this reason, the fight should come down to a one-on-one ship duel between the Explorers' vessel and the *Ardent Bane*. If the Explorers have allies attempting to assist them, the GM should describe that the allies' ships become entangled with other vessels in Modren's service nearby, unable to reach the Explorers to offer assistance (See the **All-Out War** sidebar for more on narrating the massive fleet battle around Scathe).

If necessary, the GM should remind the players that Silberthorne is aboard the *Ardent Bane*, and they should be seeking to cripple the ship, rather than destroy it. As an additional option, the Explorers can enact a Hit and Run Action during the battle in order to retrieve Silberthorne. This follows the normal rules for Hit and Run on page 218 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook, except that, if successful, the Explorers rescue Silberthorne and return him to their ship, rather than damaging a component aboard the enemy vessel.

The profile for the *Ardent Bane* can be found on page 116.

DUEL WITH DAMNATION

The most direct route to board the *Ardent Bane* is the same method Modren used, the teleportarium located near to the throne room in his fortress-palace. Depending on how events are unfolding, the Explorers might be able to make their way without difficulty to the teleportarium, passing groups of fleeing and panicked courtiers, or they might have to contend with more of Modren's guard. Once they reach the teleportarium—a high-domed chamber smelling of incense and ozone—the Explorers must activate the arcane and ancient machinery of the teleportarium. Doing so requires several minutes of preparation and a **Difficult (–10) Tech-Use Test**. An Explorer with the Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) Skill receives a +30 bonus to this Test. The teleportarium is linked to a corresponding chamber just off of the bridge of the *Ardent Bane*, allowing the Explorers to bypass the ship's defences and to teleport there directly even as the *Ardent Bane* speeds away from Scathe.



ALL-OUT WAR

Although the exact force disposition depends on the Explorers' previous actions, including damage done and alliances struck, there is almost certain to be a massive space battle occurring for control of Modren's system as the Explorers deal with Modren himself. Again, depending on the circumstances, this battle could be concentrated in the skies around Scathe, or dispersed across the entire star system. If the battle is centralised around the Explorers' own location, the GM could choose to use the rules for Squadrons or even Ground Wars found in **BATTLEFLEET KORONUS**. If the GM does not possess a copy of that supplement, or simply wishes to keep the focus on the Explorers' actions, the battle is best handled primarily narratively. In this approach, rather than concern himself with the profiles and actions for each ship involved, the GM focuses only on the Explorers' vessel and any vessels directly affecting, or affected by, it. Rather than making attack and damage rolls for two NPC ships firing on one another, the GM consigns such activity to the background, describing the battle in broad strokes and highlighting particularly momentous events, such as the destruction of a particularly powerful ship, while keeping the detail centred on the Explorers. The GM can base the outcome of the battle on the success of the Explorers, or he might wish to consider more carefully the various forces involved. For instance, if the Explorers and their allies are drastically outnumbered, the Explorers might defeat Modren only to find themselves facing the remains of his loyal fleet, with retreat as the best option.

The teleportarium can accommodate only ten human-sized creatures at one time, and requires approximately fifteen minutes to cool down between uses. This means that if the Explorers have any allies with them, such as Shas'o Ja'Vra's Hunter Cadre, they must carefully choose who will accompany them. It also means that, once aboard the *Ardent Bane*, the Explorers are effectively cut off from reinforcements.

When the teleportarium activates, coruscating energy envelopes the platform momentarily before the Explorers experience a gut-wrenching sensation as they are shunted beyond the veil and through the Warp. The journey lasts mere seconds, but this seems an eternity as the Explorers pass through the nightmare realm of the Immaterium and emerge in a similar teleportarium chamber aboard the *Ardent Bane*. Opening the single bulkhead door that exits the teleportarium, the Explorers reveal the bridge of the ship, where Vir Modren is preparing to face them, having been alerted to their arrival by the activation of the teleportarium.

THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

The bridge of the *Ardent Bane* is a large, tiered chamber, with Modren's command throne and the doorway to the teleportarium both located on the uppermost level, looking out over the scores of crew, servitors, and serfs manning the control consoles. An unmistakable power surge has already informed Modren that someone has used the teleportarium, and he stands facing its doors with his weapons drawn, flanked by a number of guards equal to twice the number of the Explorers and their allies (see page 95 for Vir Modren's profile and page 110 for the Modren's Guard profile). At the sight of the Explorers, Modren is overtaken by rage, unbelieving that such individuals could bring crashing down everything he has worked so hard to build. As the Explorers exit the teleportarium chamber, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The figure of Vir Modren stands before you as you exit the teleportarium, his face red and twisted with unbridled fury, weapons in hand. "You," he rages. "You will pay for your unforgiveable crimes. How dare you seek to destroy my great works? You are fools! History will remember my greatness, and you will be naught but a footnote, a minor setback in my unstoppable ascent. Do not think to surrender, I will see you all dead, spitted on my blade."

So overcome with fury is he that the normally cautious Modren personally moves to engage the Explorers, backed by his elite guard and trusting in his skill to protect him. Once he suffers Damage, however, Modren realises his peril and seeks to disengage and fall back behind his guards, taking cover behind his command throne. If the Explorers overcome his guards, Modren seeks to flee the bridge and make for a salvation pod. If the Explorers need assistance in the fight, the GM can have Gulette Anhd and Diamnas Char storm onto the bridge, followed by Silberthorne, surprising Modren and his forces. Once Modren and his personal guard are dead, the bridge crew surrender to the Explorers, many of them secretly praying that their new masters will be less cruel.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs play important parts during this part of the adventure. In addition, any of the rivals encountered in **Chapter II** could potentially play a vital part in the dramatic finale of the adventure, depending on what alliances or vendettas they now hold with the Explorers.

ROGUE TRADER VIR MODREN

With his empire crumbling around him, Vir Modren is a desperate and maddened individual. Torn between his desire for self-preservation and the desire to see the Explorers dead for their actions, Vir Modren's normally controlled behaviour is now erratic. Even more than his own life, however, Modren hopes to see his realm survive, and if he believes killing the Explorers can halt the chain of events now in motion, he takes every chance possible to do so.

INQUISITOR SILBERTHORNE

Not expecting Modren to flee from his own domain at the sign of trouble, Inquisitor Silberthorne and his acolytes took a shuttle from the Explorers' vessel to board the *Ardent Bane*, seeking further clues to Modren's fall to heresy. When the vessel began moving, Silberthorne patched into the ship's vox systems to contact the Explorers. Afterward, he conceals himself with his acolytes, waiting for the Explorers' retrieval. Silberthorne and his acolytes are, of course, highly competent agents, and can take actions to assist the Explorers, either directly or even by sabotaging the *Ardent Bane*.



CONCLUSION

With Modren's defeat at the Explorers' hands, the GM must decide how the remainder of the battle unfolds. Modren's armies were held together primarily by the traitorous Rogue Trader's force of personality, promise of reward, and threat of retribution. With his death or capture, it is entirely possible that the remaining forces splinter and seek to flee the system, surrender, or even swear allegiance to the Explorers. The method by which this plays out should, again, depend on the alliances and vendettas between the Explorers and the various NPCs. Of all Modren's servants, only Sabina Alsunet is loyal enough to continue the fight in order to avenge the Rogue Trader. If the Explorers, or an ally, have not already dealt with Alsunet, the Explorers might now have to face her ship, the *Sacrament of Judgment* (see page 117 for the *Sacrament of Judgment's* profile).

Gargoff 'Eadbreaka's Orks are a special case. Once on the warpath, there is little that can deter them, and despite any alliances or deals struck, the Orks are most likely to continue rampaging across the system until there is nothing left. Depending on the Explorers' own plans for the system, they might simply seek to leave before the Orks turn against them, or might seek to halt the Orks' rampage, so that they can recover what remains of Modrennia's infrastructure.

In the aftermath of the battle, a small, sleek Tau spacecraft arrives to retrieve Aun'Roh and the Hunter Cadre. Aun'Roh politely thanks the Explorers for their assistance, as does Ja'Vra. In addition, if the Explorers impressed Ja'Vra with their skill and integrity, she might leave behind members of her Cadre to assist the Explorers and act as advocates for the Greater Good in the Koronus Expanse. This presents another opportunity to introduce Tau Explorers, or a pool of potential characters to draw from in the future.



SILBERTHORNE'S PROMISE

Once more pressing concerns such as hostile forces have been dealt with, Silberthorne approaches the Explorers and fulfils his word as to the invaluable rewards he promised at the outset of the adventure (see the **More Than Mere Coin** sidebar on page 17). Depending on the nature of the rewards, this might be as simple as privately meeting with an Explorer to answer some profound questions or providing a data-slate with information pertaining to a verdant world ripe for conquest. Some rewards might not be immediately effective, such as Silberthorne using his authority to purge Calixis Sector records of some crime an Explorer previously committed, or drawing on his extensive network of informants and contacts to track down an old foe or ally. Depending on the nature of the promised rewards and the GM's preference, Silberthorne might part ways with the Explorers upon their return to civilisation, never to be seen again, or he might become a semi-regular contact, and even a source for future Endeavours.

If it has not already come to light, Silberthorne also finally reveals his true identity as an Inquisitor, thanking the Explorers for their service to humanity. Although, as always, he declines to share information unless strictly necessary, Silberthorne believes that Modren and Forcyz represented a dire threat to Mankind. While he might hint at this, Silberthorne does not share the details of his true thoughts, although the Explorers should certainly get the impression that their actions might have averted a true catastrophe.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Owing to the scale of events in this adventure, resulting in an entire star system with several occupied planets now rendered masterless, it is not conceivable that every thread can be neatly tied up. While the Explorers might be content to settle their bargain with Silberthorne and leave Modren's realm behind, there are also numerous opportunities for further adventure and profit within the star system that Modren poured so many resources into colonising. The following are just a few possibilities for further adventures and endeavours:

- Depending on prior events and the surviving NPCs, there could still be a war waging in the skies and on the planets of Modren's realm. This could range from planet-bound colonists fighting for survival against the rampaging Ork hordes, to an extended fleet engagement between forces loyal to the apostate Rogue Trader and those seeking to plunder his domain. The Explorers might honour their alliances with the major NPCs, but they might also find their allies betraying them in the name of profit.
- The star system claimed by Modren is home to numerous xenos ruins of ancient and unknown provenance. In the years since Modren settled the system, only a miniscule fraction of these have been investigated, with some planets completely unexplored. For Explorers willing to brave the dangers, ancient treasures could await, or merely death.
- With Modren's demise, former courtiers and vassals seek to divvy up Modren's realm amongst themselves in a fit of back-stabbing and politicking. The Explorers could seek to aid one faction or another, or might attempt to even claim the system for themselves, assuming Modren's place as rulers. Doing so requires them to once again assert their dominance over rivals, while also contending with treacherous sycophants. Could the Explorers succumb to the same temptations that drove Modren into damnation?

Even if the Explorers take their leave of Modrennia at this time, leaving the system's fate in the hands of others, the GM can use the setting in future adventures. Perhaps a former ally, or enemy, who now rules the system contacts the Explorers for aid, or the Explorers discover an ancient chart indicating a hidden treasure trove amongst the planets of Modren's realm. Regardless, should the Explorers return, the residents are certain to remember them—whether with reverence or with hatred, the GM must decide.



REWARDS

The Explorers earn Achievement Points toward completion of their Grand Endeavour for the following accomplishments:

- 300 Achievement Points for killing or capturing Vir Modren.
- 200 Achievement Points for defeating Forczyk or destroying his forge-labs.
- 200 Achievement Points for rescuing Ethereal Aun'Roh.
- 100 Achievement Points for returning the stolen spirit stones to Alasiel Belanir.
- 100 Achievement Points for disabling the vox-shield emitter without destroying it.
- 100 Achievement Points for defeating Modren's forces *without* allowing 'Eadbreaka's Orks to destroy the infrastructure of the colonies (including by defeating the Orks).
- 100 Achievement Points for taking the *Ardent Bane* intact.
- 50 Achievement Points for claiming Forczyk's entire cache of Tau equipment (despite the wishes of Shas'o Ja'Vra).
- 50 Achievement Points for forging a lasting alliance with the pirate captain Makara De'Soth.

If the Explorers obtain the required 1500 Achievement Points to complete, over the course of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, the Grand Endeavour, they earn 6 Profit Factor, plus an additional +1 Profit Factor for every excess 100 Achievement Points over the required amount. If the Explorers somehow fail to obtain enough Achievement Points to complete the Endeavour, but succeed in slaying Modren and destroying Forczyk's dark research, they gain 2 Profit Factor as a result of gaining the favour of an Inquisitor and for their fearsome reputation as destroyers of fallen dynasties.

In addition to these rewards, the Explorers might claim a number of tangible rewards from the ruins of Modren's realm. These include any Tau weapons or battlesuits taken from Forczyk's armoury, as well as salvage from the many ships involved in the final battle, and the infrastructure established on the settled worlds of Modren's system. What access the Explorers can claim to such resources depends on the aftermath of the battle and what other rival claimants remain. Even allies such as Makara De'Soth might still betray the Explorers if it seems advantageous, and the treasures of Modrennia are a tempting prize indeed.

EXPERIENCE:

If the Explorers have survived the events of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**, they have likely won great renown and learned a great deal—perhaps at a terrible cost indeed, perhaps without having to sacrifice anything irreplaceable. The following xp values are associated with completing particular feats throughout this chapter:

- Surviving the collapse of Modren's realm: 200 xp
- Slaying Heretek Forczyk: 150 xp
- Personally defeating any other rival who survived **Chapter II**: 100 xp
- Defeating Modren personally or in a ship battle: 200 xp
- Rescuing Ethereal Aun'Roh: 100 xp
- Vanquishing a Daemon Engine personally: 100 xp (to a maximum of 500 xp for 5 Daemon Engines)

NPC APPENDIX

"The greatest strength an Inquisitor can ever possess is knowledge of his enemy."

—Inquisitor Silberthorne

This section contains a number of the important characters who appear within the adventure. Some act as allies to the Explorers, though they may have their own motives. Others are dangerous foes who must be overcome, lest they threaten the Explorers' wealth and wellbeing. Of course, some may be both, depending on the actions taken by the Explorers throughout the adventure.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following characters make up the primary cast of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**. These men, women, and xenos each have a stake in the events of the adventure and their involvement and attitudes are included throughout the text of the preceding chapters.

INQUISITOR SILBERTHORNE

Born on Malfi in the Calixis Sector, the man who would one day become Inquisitor Uriah Silberthorne began life as little more than a street thug. Running with the gang-clans of Malfi's underhive—at the time, bearing the name Nihilus Wolfe—the future Inquisitor was just another stubjack in a sea of killers, racketeers, and would-be kingpins. The complex and labyrinthine political system of the sub-sector capital meant very little to him in his early years, but it was to become the crucible of his rebirth.

During a botched raid against a rival gang-clan, Silberthorne was abandoned by his fellows and left to his fate. What the gang did not realise was the vault they had been attempting to penetrate belonged to the Karskt family, one of Malfi's most sinister and vicious noble houses. The rival gang-clan had been employed to provide security while House Karskt moved some sensitive materials down hive and away from the prying eyes and greedy fingers of its fellow noble houses.

Fearing the raid was sponsored by one of their political rivals, House Karskt took a personal interest in Silberthorne and others captured during the raid and sent a delegation to interrogate them. Sensing an opportunity, the young Silberthorne quickly turned on his allies, claiming he was in command of the raid and his gang-clan had been employed by none other than House Belasco. He spun a web of lies and deceit about the gang-clan and offered all manner of false information in return for his life. Somehow, through clever words, charm, or sheer force of personality, Silberthorne convinced his captors and offered them the services of his supposed underlings in the coming conflict. In exchange, House Karskt gave him access to the darkest secrets of their ancient vaults with which to wage the war against House Belasco—though Silberthorne has never spoken of the heretical technologies or dread rituals he may have witnessed in the techno-catacombs beneath House Karskt. He emerged in possession of some terrible new knowledge, but with his ambitions untempered.

FORCE FIELDS

When a character wearing an active Force Field is hit by an attack, roll 1d100. If the result is lower than or equal to the field's Protection Rating, the attack is nullified and has no effect on the protected character. Fields can also Overload. Compare the 1d100 roll to deflect the attack to **Table 4-1: Field Craftsmanship**. If the result is lower than or equal to the listed number, the field Overloads—it deflects the hit, but then ceases to function until it is recharged or repaired (which requires a successful **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test**, the use of the Luminen Charge Talent, or another appropriate action).

TABLE 4-1: FIELD CRAFTSMANSHIP

Field Craftsmanship	Overload Roll
Poor	01-20
Common	01-10
Good	01-05
Best	1

The following months were some of the bloodiest in the Malfian underhive's history. Silberthorne swiftly rose to a leadership position within the gang-clan, turning the murderous rabble into a deadly organisation with nought but his mind and his words. Once firmly ensconced within the gang-clan, he turned his attentions to the other denizens of the underhive. He orchestrated vicious feuds between rivals—leading to the destruction of both parties—led enemy raids into cunningly concealed ambushes, collapsed previously thought safe hive domes onto gang-clan camps and workshops, and tricked countless bounty hunters into believing various other chieftains were tremendously valuable fugitives. No one could stand against him and his gang-clan when they stepped up to fill the resulting power vacuum. Meanwhile, Silberthorne's influence over House Karskt grew as he used his keen insight to manipulate its gangers to undermine House Belasco's holdings. To Silberthorne and no other, it seemed all but certain that he alone would rule underhive and the spire alike within a decade.

Everything Silberthorne had claimed for himself burned in a single day. Like the Emperor's judgement from a clear sky, the legendary Inquisitor Loquacious Thule fell upon House Karskt. Long suspected of dealing in proscribed tech and devices of an unholy nature, House Karskt was purged utterly by the Inquisitor and the forces he commanded, reduced to ash and foul memories. All members of House Karskt died that day, as did the vast majority of Silberthorne's subordinates.

Nihilus Wolfe died that day too, for it was amidst the flaming wreckage of the Karskt estate, looking at his shattered works and seared dreams, that Silberthorne was truly born. The conversation that transpired between Silberthorne and Inquisitor Thule is one of Silberthorne's most guarded secrets, but when it ended, he began his service as one of Thule's acolytes. Silberthorne proved himself an incredibly

skilled infiltrator in Thule's service, adept at placing and manipulating agents in enemy organisations.

While working within the various cults and heretical organisations, Silberthorne began to realise that many of the Enemy's weapons could be turned against them. Although he would never advocate ownership of a Chaos tainted relic or any type of proscribed or forbidden technology, he did see the merit in using these devices to bring their owners misfortune. He also began to form connections with a number of dubious organisations, even going so far as to employ a xenos hunter-tracker to help track down a particularly evasive recidivist in the Hazeroth Abyss.

Since ascending to the position of Inquisitor after his parting of ways with Thule, Silberthorne has tracked and killed a great many heretics, aliens, mutants, and worshippers of the Ruinous Powers in and around the Calixis Sector and the Koronus Expanse. A subtle man, Silberthorne favours a measured approach to his work, often utilising other forces outside his own moderate team of acolytes. His typical modus operandi is a lengthy campaign of observation and careful intelligence gathering, followed by a period of infiltration and careful manipulation, misdirection, and even mental re-programming to move all the pieces into place. Once his conditions are cleared, Silberthorne prefers to orchestrate a battle of misfortune against his target, setting up "accidents" or causing internecine strife within his target's circle of allies. If the resulting chaos resolves the situation without him having to draw a weapon, so much the better. Often Silberthorne's work is accomplished without anyone ever being aware of an Inquisitor's involvement.

Although his career thus far has been highly successful, his methods have earned him a considerable number of enemies—including other Inquisitors. In particular, Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison frequently finds himself at odds with Silberthorne, and the two Inquisitors have worked at cross purposes on numerous occasions, and even made several attempts on each other's lives. Because of this continued pressure, Inquisitor Silberthorne has recently begun operations in the far off Jericho Reach; however, his fateful encounter with Shas'o Ja'Vra and subsequent discovery of Rogue Trader Vir Modren has necessitated his return to the Koronus Expanse.

Inquisitor Silberthorne



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
58	51	42	44	48	59	57	62	59

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 14

Armour: Concealed mesh (3 Body, Arms, Legs) **Total TB:** 4

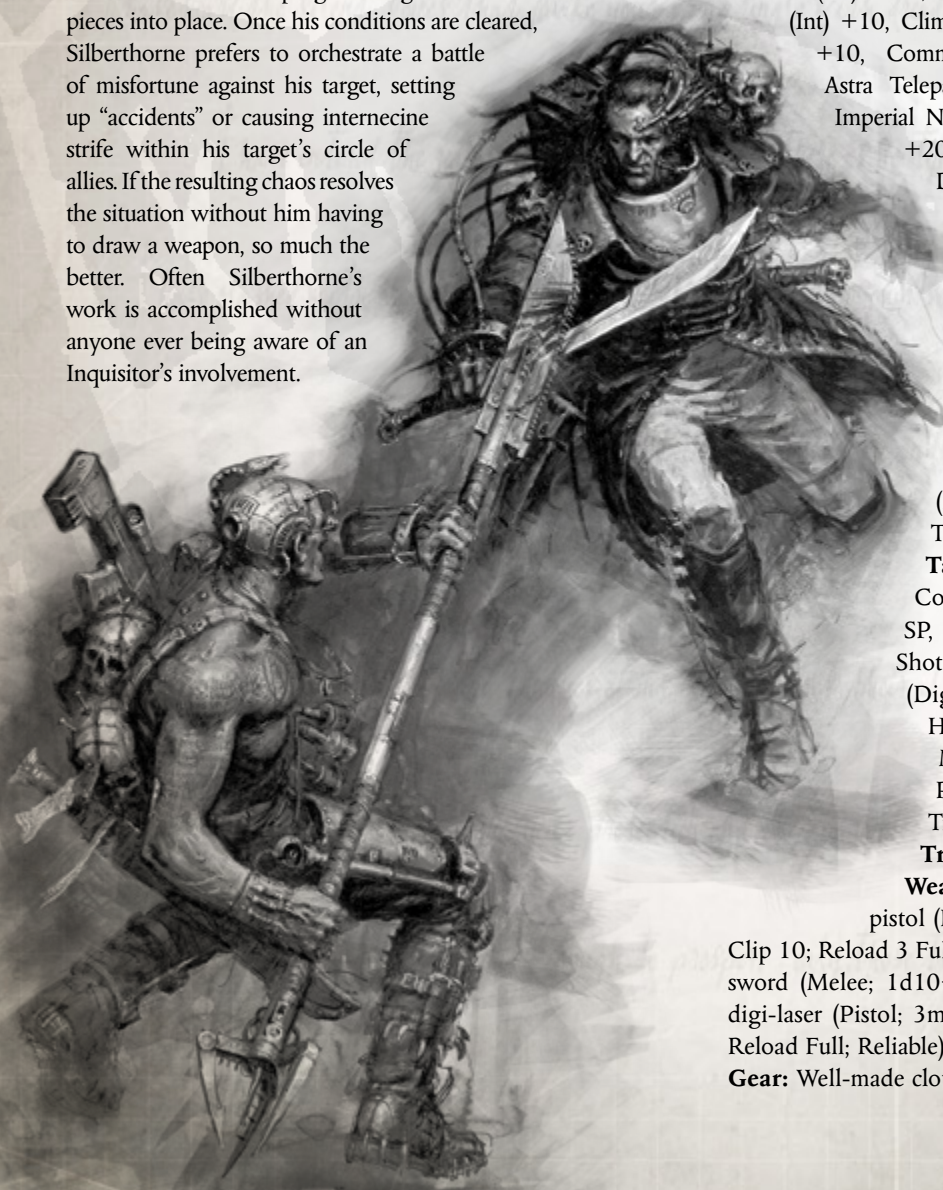
Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Barter (Fel), Blather (Fel) +10, Charm (Fel) +20, Ciphers (Inquisition, Personal Codes) (Int) +10, Climb (S), Commerce (Fel), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Administratum, Imperial Creed, Imperial Navy, Imperium) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Disguise (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Ground Vehicle, Skimmer) (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Heresy, The Inquisition) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Psykers, Xenos) (Int), Inquiry (Fel) +20, Interrogation (WP) +20, Literacy (Int) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Archaic, Bureaucracy, Cryptology, Occult) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) (+20), Secret Tongue (Inquisition) (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Swim (S), Tech Use (Int)

Talents: Air of Authority, Armour of Contempt, Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Bolt, Plasma), Chem Geld, Crack Shot, Die Hard, Exotic Weapon Training (Digital Weapons), Fearless, Foresight, Hatred (Heretics), Jaded, Light Sleeper, Melee Weapon Training (Power, Shock, Primitive), Paranoia, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Unremarkable

Traits: None

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship plasma pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+6 E; Pen 6; Clip 10; Reload 3 Full; Overheat), Best Craftsmanship power sword (Melee; 1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Power Field, Balanced), digi-laser (Pistol; 3m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 7; Clip 1; Reload Full; Reliable)

Gear: Well-made clothes, reload for plasma pistol



SHAS'O JA'VRA

Commander Skyroar, named Shas'o Ja'Vra in her native Tau dialect, was born to be a soldier and fire is her blood. Belonging to the Fire caste was merely the beginning. Like every other member of the Tau warrior caste, her training in the martial skills of her people started shortly after her birth. Raised in constant conflict, she was drilled in weapons use, tactics, discipline, and command during every waking moment of her life. Although an excellent student, she was passed over for the position of Shas'ui by her instructors—some said because of her unwillingness to see the bigger picture, others claiming that she sought glory for herself rather than seeking to serve the Greater Good. Whether or not these allegations held a grain of truth, she bore them with the grace and patience expected of a soldier, showing no sign of turmoil within.

Her Cadre first saw battle on the fringes of the Tau Empire during the latter days of the Damocles Crusade. It was on these battlefields that Ja'Vra's supreme devotion—one echoed in all Tau—to the Ethereal caste became apparent. Tasked with providing supporting fire while an Ethereal and his bodyguard withdrew from an insecure fire zone, her team was charged by Imperial assault troops. The Shas'ui was cut down in front of her and her unit broke, risking a flank attack on the withdrawing Ethereal. Ja'Vra saw the danger and immediately moved to him. Rallying the shattered remnants of her squad, she led a counter-attack on the charging Imperial forces, catching them in a deadly fusillade of pulse fire and grenades. Despite the bedlam of the battle, the Ethereal sought out the valiant Ja'Vra and offered her his hand. Touching the offered hand, Ja'Vra was suddenly filled with an undeniable sense of purpose; the lessons of her training and the stories of the Empire's greatest heroes and glory of the Tau Empire flowing together. She saw her position in the Tau Empire with crystal clarity.

For the remainder of the campaign she was at the forefront of the action. Promoted in the field to Shas'ui, she led her team in the Ta'lissera, the Bonding Knife Ritual, the night after her encounter with the Ethereal. Although each skirmish brought fresh casualties to her squad, they never forgot their vows to one another and never withdrew from a battle again. Her promotions were steady and came with an almost inevitable predictability. Never a prodigy, she was tireless, determined, and above all flexible. Her tactical acumen gave the Tau offensive many victories, although her reliance on always seeking a military solution raised a few concerns amongst diplomatic groups involved in the campaign.

Following her successes in the Second Sphere Expansion War, Ja'Vra was promoted to Shas'o and given command of a Breakthrough Contingent involved in the fighting in the Jericho Reach, under the oversight of the Ethereal Aun'Roh. Commander Skyroar's tactical acumen and dogged determination saw her gain a great many victories, but also her greatest defeat.

Her contingent was engaged against a seemingly small Imperial force comprised mostly of Guardsmen and some artillery support. Seeing the size and dispositions of the enemy, Ja'Vra gave the command for a Mont'ka, or "Killing Blow," an aggressive and decisive all-out attack against the Imperials. She determined that her force's greater range, superior numbers, and

greater mobility would win the day with fewer casualties than a long, drawn-out series of guerrilla strikes or an attempt at drawing the enemy from their fortifications. She was wrong. A Deathwatch Kill-Team had been observing her tactics, and knew that a frontal attack was the most likely course of action they would take when faced with a force of this disposition. A squad of deadly veteran xenos hunters in drop pods deployed behind them. Trapped between the unstoppable killing power of the warriors of the Adeptus Astartes at close quarters and artillery of the Guardsmen, Ja'Vra's forces were devastated. The attack was over before it began. Furious at her impending defeat, but unwilling to let her warriors die in vain, Ja'Vra assaulted the Kill-Team herself to buy her retreating forces time to withdraw, intending to stop them at the cost of her life. Only at the personal order of the Ethereal Aun'Roh did Commander Skyroar break off her assault, limping her badly damaged XV9 Hazard Battlesuit away from the Angels of Death before she suffered a mortal blow.

The Tau high-command placed no blame on Ja'Vra, but she took the defeat as a personal blow. Although she continued to serve in a command position in the field, her confidence had been shaken and she longed for a way to redeem herself. When Aun'Roh was taken by Rogue Trader Modren, Commander Skyroar saw this as her own failure, and swore to be the one to return him to the Tau Empire. With the blessing of several other Ethereals, Ja'vra embarked on her perilous mission into untamed space.

Since meeting with Inquisitor Silberthorne and seeing his methods first hand, she is no longer convinced that this is the correct course of action, but fears that faltering at this point would be worse. A soldier born and bred she considers his tactics of deception and misdirection an affront to her honour and argues that a more straight forward, military solution to the problems they face is a better and more efficient way of achieving their objective.



Commander Skyroar

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	59	32	36	35	49	47	54	50

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 16

Armour: Tau combat armour (6 All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Ciphers (Tau Military) (Int) +20, Climb (S), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Jericho Reach, Tau Empire) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Skimmer) (Ag), Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Logic (Int), Medicae (Int) +10, Pilot (Personal) (Ag) +10†, Scholastic Lore (Tau War Doctrine) (Int) +20†, Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Tau) (Int) +10, Survival (Int), Swim (S)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Blessing of the Ethereals†, Bonding Ritual†, Combat Formation, Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Disciple of Mont'ka†, Duty Unto Death, Fire Caste Weapon Training†, Iron Discipline, Last Man Standing, Marksman, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Mighty Shot, Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Supporting Fire

CUSTOMISED XV9 HAZARD BATTLESUIT

The XV9 Hazard Close Support Armour—the XV9 Hazard Battlesuit in shorthand—is one result of the Earth caste’s research into large battlesuits. Though each XV9 is a considerable investment to construct, these battlesuits have proven their worth to many Fire caste Commanders time and time again. The XV9 is extremely adept at engaging foes at close range, searing them apart with incredibly potent armaments while using its photon casters and vectored retro-thrusters to stay just out of reach. Its larger size also provides its pilot with a greater degree of protection.

Commander Skyroar has made a number of customised modifications to her armour and makes use of a number of systems not usually integrated into an XV9 battlesuit.

Armour Points: 14 All

NANOCRYSTALLINE ARMOUR

Battlesuits are, above all, a very advanced form of armour. A battlesuit behaves as a suit of worn armour in all ways, and also provides a number of other benefits, detailed below.

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Commander Skyroar’s XV9 battlesuit is equipped with the following weapon systems:

Phased Ion Gun: This weapon represents an attempt to downscale the vehicle-mounted Ion Cannon and thus create a mass-production version of the cyclic ion blaster for use on battlesuits. These double-barrelled guns are usually underslung from the XV9’s arms, and can be extremely deadly against armoured infantry and vehicles alike.

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	kg	Availability
Phased Ion Gun	Heavy	40m	S/4/8	1d10+9 E	4	150	2 Full	Overcharge (6)†	35	Near Unique

†See the *Tau NPC’s sidebar* on page 112.

CUSTOMISED SYSTEMS

While piloting her Customised XV9 Hazard Suit, Commander Skyroar gains the following benefits:

Blacksun Filtration Systems: This system gives Ja’Vra the benefits of a blacksun filter (see page 112).

Enhanced Motive Systems: While piloting the battlesuit, Skyroar’s Strength Characteristic counts as 65 and she gains the Size (Enormous) Trait. Further, she gains the Auto-Stabilised Trait. Finally, if for any reason this Primary System becomes disabled, the battlesuit cannot move until it is repaired.

Environmental Seal: So long as the suit’s power source is viable and the seal remains intact, the XV9 Hazard Battlesuit provides Ja’Vra with breathable air and full protection from the elements.

Jet Pack: Ja’Vra can make a **Routine (+20) Pilot (Personal) Test** to make a safe, guided fall from any height or a short jump over intervening terrain (or foes), landing at the end of the move. The Tau commander can also make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Personal) Test** as a Half Action to gain the Flyer (12) Trait for up to one minute (or 1d5+10 Rounds in Structured Time).

Shield Generator: Skyroar has a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 40.

Target Lock System: This system gives Ja’Vra the benefits of a Target Lock (see page 112).

Vectored Retro-Thrusters: Commander Skyroar may make a Disengage Action as a Half Action.

Photon Casters: As a Half Action or Reaction, Ja’Vra may make a **Routine (+20) Ballistic Skill Test** to use the photon casters to blind her foes. If she succeeds, the battlesuit fires a charge that explodes with the effects of a Tau photon grenade (see page 114), centred on itself. Note that the pilot of the XV9 Battlesuit is not affected by her own Photon Casters, thanks to the Blacksun Filtration System.

Traits: Exemplar of Unity†, For the Greater Good!†

Weapons: Pulse carbine (Basic; 60m; S/–/3; 2d10+2 E; Pen 4; Clip 24, Reload Full; Gyro-Stabilised†), pulse pistol (Pistol; 40m; S/–/–; 2d10+2 E; Pen 4; Clip 16; Reload Half; Gyro-Stabilised†), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0; Primitive)

Gear: 2 reloads for pulse carbine, 2 reloads for pulse pistol, 6 Tau photon grenades†, blacksun filter†, bonding knife†, field rations, Customised XV9 Hazard Battlesuit††

†See the *Tau sidebars* on pages 112–114.

††**Customised XV9 Hazard Battlesuit:** When the situation allows, Commander Skyroar prefers to take the field in her Customised XV9 Hazard Battlesuit (see sidebar above), thundering in to meet her foes personally at closer range and blinding them with her battlesuit’s photon casters so her cadre can tear them apart with sustained fire.

VIR MODREN

House Modren was never a prosperous one, its Warrant of Trade little more than a footnote in a long list of minor warrants issued during the early stages of the Angevin Crusade. Alongside such luminaries as Haarlock, Winterscale, and Aquairre, the foundling house could do little to establish itself and was resigned to the fact it would always be a lesser power. Centuries later, little about House Modren had changed, their activities limited to short trading runs beyond the Maw and the occasional dalliance with the various xenos denizens of the Expanse. All this changed when a chance encounter with a heavily damaged pirate raider brought Vir Modren into contact with the Ruinous Powers.

At this time, Vir was a scion of his house. His father gave him command of a small flotilla of vessels and sent him to earn his right to the Modren Warrant. Bored by the tasks assigned him and irritated by his father's insistence that he prove his worth, the young Vir was eager for glory when his flag officer informed him of the pirate vessel. Vir's fleet swiftly defeated the heavily damaged raider and a party was sent aboard to claim the vessel and any cargo it may be carrying. Vir was toying with the idea of keeping the vessel and operating a side-line in piracy when the boarding party requested that he come aboard the raider. It appeared that the raider's crew were a cult of some kind, blasphemous symbols and profane altars scattered around the decks. Each of the raider's surviving crew members bore a plethora of ritual scars and many possessed the dark gifts of Chaos as mutations

and minor wyrdling powers. Vir had them all put to the torch, but the raider's cargo deck held one last surprise for the young scion.

Within the sealed holds and locked vaults, Modren's men had discovered a number of hideous artefacts, relics of the Chaos powers. Several of the boarding party had died because of them, driven to suicide or berserk slaughter when they laid eyes upon them. Modren surveyed the carnage these simple idols and tomes had caused and knew that this was real power.

Extracting data from the raider's central cogitator, Modren learned that this vessel was actually part of a larger force, tasked with delivering these relics to a rendezvous point not far from the mouth of the Koronus Passage, near a region of space known as the Screaming Vortex. Modren immediately formed up his fleet and moved to intercept them. Arriving at the rendezvous point, Modren saw the Chaos fleet was not much larger than his own and arrayed in poor formation.

Clearly the renegades were not expecting any kind of trouble. Using the element of surprise, Modren's fleet swept down on them in a maelstrom of lance batteries, plasma fire, and

vicious boarding actions. The action cost him many men and ships, but Modren secured victory and, more importantly, more of the relics the Chaos vessels were carrying.

Modren began plotting a course to return to his father's fleet, sure that the capture of these relics and the destruction of a Chaos fleet would easily earn him his inheritance. During the long journey, Modren and his seneschals pored over the captured relics, attempting to discern their true powers and how to access them. When the fleet's Astropath approached him, warning of dire portents he saw in the Warp and giving cryptic messages of a doom to come, Modren listened to everything he had to say and swore to no longer pursue his research. The Astropath was moved to another ship to convalesce and Modren resumed his work. The more about these relics Modren discovered the more he understood they should not be turned over to his father. Why did this man who had done nothing with the house warrant deserve the relics he had fought for? Modren decided that once he reached his father's fleet he would not simply turn the relics over like some simpering fool. Instead, he would claim their power for his own, and with them, bind the dynasty to his will.

As his fleet exited the Warp, the vessels spread into a wolf pack formation. Each vessel carried one of the heretical relics. He closed all vox channels and jammed all pict-casts, cutting his fleet off from any attempt from his father to bargain or plead for his life; then, the killing began. The remnants of Modren's fleet were all hardened killers, tempered in battle during their conflict with the Chaos reavers. Using the power of the relics and bold words, Modren had convinced even the most loyal captains in his fleet that his father's rule must come to an end for the dynasty to truly prosper.

The vessels moved swiftly and surely, crippling the other craft with pin-point lance blasts and finishing them off in brutal boarding actions, actions the Rogue Trader fleet was powerless to repulse as the invading men bore the terrible Chaos relics ahead of them. Modren led the assault to capture his father's flagship himself, storming the bridge on a tide of blood and steel. The reunion between father



and son was lethal and final. The two struck at each other deadly blows, but Modren alone rose from the blood-soaked steel, his father's weapon still embedded in his chest—some whisper that it pierced his heart.

After seizing control of his father's fleet and the house warrant, Modren retreated into the trackless depths of the Koronus Expanse. Concerned about the effect the relics were having on his crew and worried he did not truly understand the powers he was manipulating, he founded a domain deep within the far reaches of unexplored space. He drew about him a court of Warp-dabblers and seers, Hereteks and killers, aliens and mutants. Making occasional forays into darkest parts of the Koronus Expanse for supplies or research materials, Vir Modren has not been seen in person for decades, but his presence has been felt nevertheless. In this latest gambit, his forces have captured a Tau Ethereal, one of the species' enigmatic leaders, together with a sizeable haul of Tau technology and weapons. Once these resources have yielded up their secrets, his court will be one step closer to Modren's true goal. His heart hungers for conquests greater still, and the Koronus Expanse is a fertile place to begin a new empire that could threaten the Calixis Sector and beyond.



Vir Modren

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	49	4I	43	50	56	48	57	5I

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Armour: Carapace chest plate and mesh cloak (6 Body; 4 Arms and Legs)

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel) +10, Blather (Fel) +10, Carouse (T) +20, Charm (Fel), Chem-Use (Int), Ciphers (Rogue Trader, Mercenary Cant, Underworld) (Int), Commerce (Fel) +20, Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperial Navy, Imperium) (Int), Common Lore (Koronus Expanse, Rogue Traders) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Evaluate (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Heresy, The Warp, Xenos) (Int) +10, Gamble (Int), Literacy (Int), Navigation (Int), Pilot (Space Craft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Heraldry, Imperial Warrants, Occult) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Secret Tongue (Rogue Trader) (Int) +20, Speak Language (Eldar, High Gothic, Low Gothic, Traders Cant) (Int), Tech Use (Int), Trade (Explorator) (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Ag)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Dark Soul, Decadence, Disarm, Exotic Weapon Training (Needle Pistol, Tau Weaponry), Hard Bargain, Hip Shooting, Inspire Wrath, Jaded, Master & Commander, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Polyglot, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic, Melee)

Traits: None

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship officer's cutlass (Melee; 1d10+4 R; Pen 0; Shocking), Belasco duelling pistol (Pistol; 45m; S/—/—; 1d10+5 E; Pen 4; Clip 1; Reload Full; Accurate), needle pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/—/—; 1d10 R; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reload Full; Accurate, Toxic)

Wounds: 15

Total TB: 4

MAGOS FORCYZ

Unlike his one-time brethren in the Adeptus Mechanicus, Magos Forcыз is a man consumed by his passions. Forcыз spent his education and much of his life on the Lathe Worlds, delving into the arcane mysteries of the Machine Cult with great vigour. His progress toward higher rank and induction into the deeper obscurities of the Adeptus was slow, however. Although diligent and attentive, Forcыз showed an almost wilful abundance of emotion.

Unable to fully disconnect from his base desires, Forcыз's work and conduct was frowned upon by his superiors. Although he was appreciated for his zeal, his drive to know more than his station permitted and his obsessive, almost gleeful, fascination with human biology made a great many of the Tech-Priests deeply uncomfortable. Forcыз showed great promise, but could only realize that promise if he could curb his instincts and comport himself in a more appropriate and logical way. This was not to be.

Forcыз's appetites grew ever more insistent. He began studying without supervision, poring over ancient dataslates filled with half-forgotten lore. He conducted clandestine experiments on the indentured workers tithed to the Lathes and sought access to the great Info-tombs beneath the worlds' surface. Any of these acts, if discovered, would have spelled the end for the Tech-Adept, but somehow he always managed to evade detection.

Seeing no end to Forcыз's irrepressible hungers, the Arch-Magos Lazarus Usuyk assigned Forcыз to one of the Explorator Fleets heading out into the Koronus Expanse. The explanation given was that Forcыз's desires for learning would be best served beyond the borders of Imperial space in the uncharted regions of the galaxy. In reality, Usuyk just wanted rid of the unnerving Forcыз. What better way to do so than make him someone else's problem?

The first few years aboard the fleet gave Forcыз several new avenues to explore in his quest for knowledge. Fascinating new technology, tantalising glimpses at the ancient history of Man, fragments of lore from the great Dark Ages before the rise of the Emperor, and blasphemous, but seductive, xenos artefacts all served to occupy him. But still he was driven to push beyond the boundaries of his station. Despite several reprimands from his superiors and more than one narrow escape from discovery, Forcыз could not stop.

It was during a seismic survey of a series of particularly dense moons that Forcыз and Vir Modren crossed paths for the first time. Forcыз and a skeleton crew of servitors and indentures had been left aboard the great Explorator vessels while the survey teams and senior Tech-Priests conducted their assessment of the moons. Alerted to the presence of a second group of vessels approaching his position, Forcыз at first dismissed the incoming group of ships as little more than a band of pirates. He believed they would soon move on once they realised the scope of the force they faced. Instead of giving the order to form a defensive position, Forcыз idly began a detailed scan of the arriving ships in order to log their classifications and report their whereabouts. Something about the design of these vessels gave him pause. These were not stock hulls, nor were they simple modifications and upgrades on a recognisable class. At first, Forcыз assumed

they were a small Rogue Trader fleet. He knew the wildly flamboyant and independent Rogue Traders loved their unique ship designs, but there was something more, something he couldn't place. His cogitations were soon interrupted by the first volley of weapons fire. Throughout the engagement, Forcyz remained rooted to the sensorium, absorbing every detail of the attacking craft. He noted their unorthodox tactics and their reliance on agility over armour. He saw their use of non-standard weapons batteries and marvelled at their seamless integration of Imperial and heretical technologies. The desire to learn how this symbiosis had been achieved overcame all thoughts of organising a battle plan or even issuing orders to flee. The Mechanicus fleet was swiftly overwhelmed, despite their greater numbers and superior firepower.

As luck would have it, the raiders were more interested in capturing the stricken Tech-Priest vessels than destroying them. The boarding party that seized Forcyz's ship found him waiting for them. Forcyz had commanded the crew to stand down and the ship was taken with very little bloodshed. After identifying himself as the senior Mechanicus on-board, Forcyz was taken before the fleet commander, Modren himself. Forcyz pleaded with Modren to allow him to study the vessels that had so expertly defeated his fleet.

He offered the Rogue Trader everything; the Explorator vessels, the crew, all their research data thus far, everything. If only he could be allowed to join his forces and learn what secret Modren had uncovered to build such ships. Realising the benefit to having a Tech-Priest as part of his court, Modren agreed.

Since then Forcyz has delved ever deeper into the forbidden secrets first discovered by Vir Modren. Working from his own corrupt Mechanicus forge deep beneath Modren's domain, the self-proclaimed Mago has achieved awful success. His experiments and designs have granted Modren many weapons with which to achieve his dreams of conquest. Despite the many successes Forcyz has achieved, Modren has begun to fear the sinister Mechanicus. A cold dread has crept into all his dealings with the Mago and he has begun to believe that maybe Forcyz is withholding information about the relics from him. The truth is far worse.

Forcyz has become utterly corrupted by the relics gifted to him for study. Unbeknownst to Modren, Forcyz has successfully captured Warp Entities in his terrible machines and has begun to build an army of his own. An army that, when unleashed, may well spell doom for Modren's entire domain.



Magos Forcyz

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
47	39	49	58	29	60	44	52	18

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 22

Armour: Carapace plating and Machine Trait (10 Body and Legs, 4 Arms and Head)

Total TB: 5

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Chem-Use (Int) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Tech) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +10, Drive (All) (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Heresy) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (The Warp, Xenos) (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int), Interrogation (WP) +10, Intimidate (S) +20, Literacy (Int) +20, Logic (Int) +20, Medicae (Int) +10, Pilot (All) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Archaic, Chymistry, Occult) (Int) +20, Secret Tongue (Tech) (Int) +20, Speak Language (Explorator Binary, Low Gothic, Techna-Lingua) (Int) +20, Tech Use (Int) +20, Trade (Armourer, Chymist) (Int) +20

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Chem Geld, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Energy Cache, Enhanced Bionic Frame, Fearless, Feedback Screech, Ferric Lure, Flame Weapon Training, Foresight, Gun Blessing, Infused Knowledge, Iron Jaw, Jaded, Last Man Standing, Logis Implant, Luminen Blast, Luminen Charge, Luminen Shock, Machinator Array, Master Chirurgeon, Mechadendrite Use, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Orthoproxy, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Prosanguine, Rite of Awe, Rite of Fear, Rite of Pure Thought, The Flesh is Weak, Total Recall, True Grit

Traits: Mechanicus Implants, Machine (4)

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship inferno pistol (Pistol; 10m; S/-/-; 2d10+8 E; Pen 13; Clip 3; Reload Full), ommissionian axe (Melee; 2d10+8 E; Pen 6; Power Field; Unbalanced)

Equipment: Two Best Craftsmanship bionic arms, Best Craftsmanship bionic respiratory system, good craftsmanship auger array, 2 ballistic mechadendrites, calculus logi upgrade, medicae mechadendrite, utility mechadendrite, 3 inferno pistol reloads



FLEET MASTER SABINA ALSUNET

At one point in her life, Fleet Master Sabina Alsunet had a promising career in the Imperial Navy. She came from good stock and her family's history and position ensured her acceptance into the prestigious naval academy at Hydraphur. She studied hard, showing a natural gift for command and graduated in the top five percent of her class. She should have earned a place in the naval elite, but it was not to be.

Her first post was a junior officer on the *Sacrament of Judgement*, a light cruiser out of Port Wrath in the Calixis Sector. It was here that a young Sabina first discovered that life aboard a military vessel of the Imperial Navy was, in fact, vastly different than her training at the academy said it would be. As a junior officer, her duties were mainly collation and distribution of various reports from around the ship—a task so menial and mind numbing that at times Sabina thought she had failed to graduate and this was her punishment.

As she learned her way around the vessel, she began to plumb the baroque and highly convoluted social structure of the other officers. Each of the officers above her was bound up in a tightly knit and labyrinthine web of personal prestige, favours, and outright bullying. Every officer coveted the position above him and worked clandestinely to achieve it while ruthlessly suppressing any and all officers below. Instead of a perfectly ordered military machine, strutting fops surrounded Sabina, preening over their lineages while casting barbed insults at one another.



Nevertheless, she endeavoured to progress and over the years managed to claw her way up to Flag Officer and a place on the bridge. During her ascent, Sabina gained considerable political acumen and an unending contempt for those people who hid their ineptitude behind a shadow of administrative obfuscation. Despite her high position within the command of the vessel, she was unable to make any real changes to the way the ship was run and vowed that once she achieved command things would be different.

Her chance came sooner than expected. The *Sacrament of Judgement* was assigned to a battlegroup heading out in support of the Imperial colonisation of the Koronus Expanse. A number of Rogue Trader craft were seconded to the group and amongst these various warships and supply vessels were a small group commanded by the Modren line. Sabina was appointed as liaison between the Imperial vessels and the Rogue Traders, and, although instructed to keep them at arm's length, developed a working relationship with the then scion Vir Modren. She saw in him some of the same travails she had encountered in the fleet. Held back by an overbearing, underachieving commanding officer Alsunet was stymied at every turn by an incomprehensible maze of social standing and familial history.

The battlegroup ran into trouble the moment they breached Warp heading into the Maw. Violent Warp storms beset the clutch of ships and, although the Gellar fields held and the physical damage was light, several of the fleet's Navigators and Astropaths did not fare so well. The battlegroup was forced to make an emergency exit from the Immaterium in order to tend to their raving and, in many cases, heavily wounded psykers. The *Sacrament* fared particularly badly, their Navigator locked in seizure that would surely end in his death and two of the ship's three Astropaths had already taken their own lives. As the battlegroup struggled to repair and reorganise, the raiders came.

Dozens of sleek, black craft slid silently from the void. They came at the stricken battlegroup from all sides, darting between the wounded vessel while unleashing a terrible toll of destruction. Plasma batteries poured liquid fire onto the Imperial ships' shields as blindingly bright lance beams sliced into armoured flanks, tearing away great portions of hull. It was a massacre.

The order was given for the *Sacrament of Judgement* and a handful of other vessels to engage the raiders, thus buying the remainder of the fleet time to get underway and make Warp. Sabina's life and the lives of countless crew were to be sacrificed so the pompous and pointless senior officers could escape. Determined that this would not be her end, Sabina contacted Vir Modren and asked for his assistance. The Rogue Trader's ships were already some distance away when they received Sabina's distress call. Despite the risks, Modren came about and moved to engage the raiders hounding the limping *Sacrament of Judgement*. The surprise counter attack took the raiders off guard, buying Sabina and her attending escort ships enough time to disengage. Together with the Rogue Traders' ships they conducted a fighting retreat. More concerned with the ships they had already crippled and the plunder to be found therein, the raiders did not pursue.

Following their successful flight from the ambush, Sabina discovered that she was the highest-ranking officer on board to have survived. She assumed command of the ship and began a bloody cull of the weak and ineffectual officers beneath her. Shortly after completing her coup she was contacted by Vir Modren. The scion had lost a great many of his ships in his rescue effort and was interested in forming an alliance with the newly minted captain. Sabina laid down her terms of acceptance. She was to be given free rein to command her ships as she saw fit, appointing only those officers who proved their worth and ignoring all conditions of birth or bloodline. Modren eagerly agreed. At that moment, Sabina Alsunet turned her back on the Imperium forever.

Since their agreement, Sabina has proven her loyalty and commitment to Modren time and time again. She was there when he cast down his father and seized the Warrant of Trade, she stood by him during the retreat to the uncharted zones of the Expanse, and she supported him when he began to amass his court of killers and aliens. In return, Modren has made her his Fleet Master, giving her command of his entire fleet, a job that she performs with admirable skill. Lately, the arrival of the Tech-Priest Forczyk and the nature of his experiments have given her a deeply unsettling feeling in the pit of her stomach, but she will stand by Modren no matter what the cost. After all, she owes him her command and her life.



Fleet Master Alsunet

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
49	48	42	40	43	44	47	50	49

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Armour: Flak coat (3 Body, Arms, and Legs)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperial Navy, Imperium, Koronus Expanse) (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Pirates) (Int), Gamble (Int), Intimidate (S), Literacy (Int), Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +10, Pilot (Spacecraft) (Ag) +20, Scholastic Lore (Astromancy, Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Navis Nobilite) (Int), Secret Tongue (Military, Underdecks) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Ag)

Talents: Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Combat Sense, Counter Attack, Disarm, Duty Unto Death, Inspire Wrath, Into the Jaws of Hell, Iron Discipline, Master & Commander, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Quick Draw, Void Tactician

Traits: None

Weapons: Boltgun (Basic; 90m; S/2/4; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 24; Reload Full; Tearing), Best Craftsmanship mono sword (Melee; 1d10+4 R; Pen 2; Balanced)

Equipment: 2 boltgun reloads, Imperial Navy uniform, flask of Best Craftsmanship Amasec



CAPTAIN MAKARA DE'SOTH

Born in the crowded depths of a pilgrim vessel, Captain Makara De'Soth has always had a ship's deck beneath his feet. His parents were zealous adherents to the Imperial Creed, believing the Emperor watched their every move and judged their actions accordingly. As a result, Makara's first years were the gruelling and oft times severe life of a pilgrim, and sins—perceived or real—were met with harsh reprisals.

From an early age, Makara was a skilled manipulator. By the time he entered adulthood, he had drawn a loyal army of disaffected outsiders around him. They explored every inch of the ship; crawling through ducts, climbing across creaking bulkheads, and creeping through the ship's vast and dark vaults. United by their growing hatred of the ship's authorities, they banded together for protection and to vent their pent up anger the only way they knew how—with violence.

All pilgrim vessels contain various social groups, many of which do not see eye-to-eye on a great many subjects. This vessel was no different, religious differences often spilling over into forceful confrontations. Surrounded by this crucible of simmering tension and raised on a steady regime of physical cruelty, Skirmishes and brawls became commonplace on the lower decks of the ship. Many of the ship's crew tried to intercede, or stop the near-constant fighting, but their methods were crude and brutal, leading only to an increase in altercations and a greater feeling of mistrust between the youths and any authority figure. It is possible the situation might have blown up into an all-out rebellion had not the pilgrims come under attack from an entirely different source.

The slavers attacked the pilgrim ship not long after it exited Warp on the fringes of Maccabeus Quintus. The vessel was not built for combat, carrying very little in the way of weaponry, and its long journey through the Immaterium had wrought extensive degradation of its primary systems. The battle was swift and merciless. Crippled by salvos of weapons fire, the pilgrim vessel was boarded by a horde of pitiless slavers and those who did not submit were cut down. Makara and his gang of thugs ran and hid. Using their expert knowledge of the ship's bowels, Makara and his allies took the fight to the invaders.

They conducted a campaign of guerrilla attacks and ambushes, wounding and killing a dozen slavers. But, one by one the recidivists were captured or killed. Makara fought to the last, and it was only his natural cunning and his utter determination that stayed the slavers hand from killing him. After nearly two days, the pilgrim ship was finally scuttled and the slavers slipped away into the void.

The long journey out into the Koronus Expanse was fraught with danger. The slavers were even more brutal masters than the pilgrims. They tortured their cargo with a callous dispassion, as though simply bored and wishing to pass the time. When the captured pilgrims could not withstand the cruel ministrations of the slavers, their corpses were left to rot in the cells, packed in with terrified and starving captives. Not long into the journey Makara's erstwhile masters began pitting slaves against each other in mock battles. These vicious pit fights were supposedly to first blood so as not to lose too many of the prime stock, but when the slavers' blood was up, often only a kill would satisfy them.

Makara was a favourite in these fights. He was quick and clever, and his early years had made him vicious and tough. He fought well and soon earned a reputation amongst the slavers.

Away from the fights, Makara plotted. Although separated from many of his former gang, his easy charm and quick fists helped him find allies quickly. The boredom of the long journey was beginning to affect the slavers, making them lazy and careless. Makara knew it was only a matter of time before his chance would come, and opportunity arose during a particularly vicious bout. Makara had swiftly felled his opponent in the match and, as the jaded slavers called for him to finish the job, he struck. Vaulting out of the makeshift fighting pit, Makara launched himself at his captors. On this signal, the others rose up, casting off their restraints and seizing whatever weapons they could find. Using every trick and tactic they knew, Makara and his allies fought the slavers back to the holding pens. Several of the pit fighters rushed ahead freeing the hundreds of captive slaves. When the desperate slavers retreated into the cavernous vaults, they were surrounded and butchered. Makara left none alive.



Following his victory, Makara set about establishing command of the slavers' ship. Many of the vital crew members were slaves themselves and eagerly joined Makara when he offered them their freedom. Of the remaining pilgrims, dozens tried to sway Makara to return to Maccabeus Quintus so they could continue their holy trek. The newly established ship's captain flushed them from the airlocks, watching their writhing bodies twist silently in the aching cold of the void.

Makara and his crew headed out into the Koronus Expanse, away from the stifling rigidity of the Imperium. Here was a place where he could do as he pleased, where no man had command over him and no god judged him. He took to the pirate life with considerable ease, striking across the length and breadth of the Expanse, and, soon enough, profit began to drive his every endeavour. His path crossed Vir Modren's not long ago. The reclusive Rogue Trader, long thought dead, contacted the now flamboyant and capricious captain with an offer: work for him no questions asked, and Makara would double his current profits, guaranteed. So far, the arrangement has been a profitable one. Makara is content to work alongside the shadowy Rogue Trader for now. The increased profits he earns outweigh the discomfort he feels with some of Modren's courtiers, though he may leave Modren's service if this changes.

Makara De'Soth



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
53	32	45	44	4I	32	34	3I	47

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 19

Armour: Blood-stained
armoured uniform (4 All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Dodge +10 (Ag), Intimidate +10 (S), Pilot (Voidship) (Ag), Scrutiny (Per), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag)

Talents: Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Battle Rage, Berserk Charge, Blade Master, Crushing Blow, Jaded, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Swift Attack, Two Weapon Wielder (Melee), Wall of Steel

Traits: None

Weapons: Chainaxe (Melee; 1d10+8 R; Pen 2; Tearing), pitaxe (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 0; Toxic), shot-raker gun (Basic; 20m; S/-2; 2d10 I; Pen 1; Clip 10; Reload Full; Scatter)

Equipment: Trophies, stolen command sceptre, torn fine coat, flask of rum

GARGOFF 'EADBREAKA

Like all Orks, Gargoff Eadbreaka lives for war. The savage joy of battle, the primal thrill of victory, and the fierce glee of an enemy's death are the only things that matter, and his alliance with Rogue Trader Vir Modren grants him that in abundance—for now. Eadbreaka is an outcast from the notorious Undred Undred Teef he and his mob fled the vengeful clan following an unsuccessful coup and became Freebooterz of their own accord.

Never a species to particularly care about why they are fighting, Gargoff and his boyz swiftly fell in with a group of pirates. Acting as muscle for the pirates' raids they indulged their lust for mayhem at every opportunity. However, a battle-fuelled Ork is a difficult thing to control and soon the collateral damage Gargoff and his mob inflicted began to eat into the pirates' profit. As the body count rose and the plunder fell, the pirate captain decided to cut his losses and dispense with the Orks, intending to maroon them on a moon they were raiding. It was a decision he did not live to regret. Believing the pirates were fleeing the fight, Gargoff promptly attacked the turncoat pirates, slaughtering all of them in a frenzy of gunfire and chopppa blades. In the aftermath of the attack, Gargoff discovered he now owned a starship and the entire Expanse was his to fight.

He wasted no time in setting his boyz to work, refitting the vessel to make it properly "Orky," and setting out on an odyssey of destruction and fire. The newly titled kaptin Eadbreaka found battle at every opportunity, raiding fledgling colonies, attacking Imperial fleets and convoys, and battling the other Ork and alien denizens of the expanse. As his exploits continued, his fame grew drawing more and more Freebooterz to his side. Each new Kaptin that arrived was personally vetted by Gargoff. If the newcomers could not stand against him in a duel, they were killed and their ships seized as plunder. With an ever-growing army at his back, Gargoff began to eye bigger prizes. His attacks on Imperial and alien worlds and shipping became ever greater, soon threatening the outposts at the edge of the Maw. Imperial tacticians began to plan for what they believed would soon develop into a full Waaagh! It was a threat that never materialised. Many of the long patrol officers of the Imperial Navy believed the Waaagh! blew itself out, after Gargoff had been slain by a rival and his amassed horde fractured and dissipated. The truth is far worse.



Following a successful raid of an Imperial convoy carrying weapons and supplies, Gargoff was approached by Vir Modren. The Rogue Trader offered the kaptin a chance to voyage beyond the Maw and lead a mighty attack on the Calixis Sector. Gargoff gave the human the same chance he gave all his kaptins, duel him or die. Modren used sinister technology created by Magos Forcыз to defeat the raging Ork. As Gargoff stared up at the ominous human, unsure of how he had been brought low by such a creature, Modren offered him the deal again. This time, Gargoff accepted.

Gargoff led his fleet and army back to Modren’s domain beyond the explored depths of the Expanse. He has led many raids in Modren’s name, gathering supplies and more esoteric technology for the Rogue Trader. But, following Modren’s instructions, he is careful to not advertise his presence or allow the hated Imperium to believe that any of the ships he sends out are part of a bigger, more deadly force. No one can know how big his army is—yet.

Although unhappy he was defeated by a mere human, Gargoff serves Modren well. The Rogue Trader provides a steady supply of battle to placate his war-like tendencies, and the promise of an attack on the worlds beyond the Maw is all the Ork needs to stay loyal.

Gargoff ‘Eadbreaka

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
61	19	52	(8) 49	33	28	31	35	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 19

Armour: Scavenged plates (5 Body, 3 Arms, Legs) **Total TB:** 8

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Carouse (T) +20, Command (Fel), Common Lore (Koronus Expanse, Ork), (Int), Intimidate (S) +20, Navigation (Surface, Stellar) (Int), Survival (Int) +20

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Berserk Charge, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Dual Strike, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Resistance (Cold, Heat), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Ork) (Int), Swift Attack, True Grit, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Unarmed Master, Unarmed Warrior

Traits: Brutal Charge, Mob Rule†, Sturdy, Unnatural Toughness (x2)

Weapons: Choppa (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Tearing; Unbalanced), power claw (Melee; 2d10+5 E, Pen 10; Power Field, Tearing, Unwieldy)

Equipment: Grisly trophies, shiny medals, battered “uniform”
 †**Mob Rule:** Orks grow in confidence and brutality in the company of their own kind. For every additional ork within 10m, the Ork’s Willpower is increased by +10 to resist the effects of Fear and Pinning.



ALASIEL BELANIR

Alasiel Belanir is an Eldar consumed by a single drive—revenge. His every waking moment is filled by thoughts of fiery retribution upon those that have wronged him. His very essence is now built upon the need to exact vengeance. But it was not always like this.

Alasiel spent his youth, like many Eldar in the region, drifting between the stars aboard a long-forgotten Craftworld, one of the magnificent floating cities constructed by the Eldar to house their race, last trace of their once great culture. He learned about his race's hubris, the fall from grace into gross profligacy, and the truth of She Who Thirsts. He was taught how his people would deny the endless hunger of the Warp using spirit stones, and how, through rigid self-discipline, they could avoid the mistakes of the past. For a time, at least, he thought he knew how he would spend the rest of his days.

Like a great many Eldar before him, Alasiel walked numerous paths, learning statercraft, art, and warfare. He bent his talents to mastering each of these disparate fields; he knew the risks in delving too deeply into any one path and strove to maintain balance in all he did. It was a battle he often struggled to win. Whenever he felt himself slipping towards one discipline or another, he would walk amongst the great wraithbone gardens at the heart of the craftworld. Alasiel felt a deep kinship with the infinity circuit and the souls bound therein. He often wondered what wisdom they could bestow on him if only he possessed the talents to stand near them.

As he grew, Alasiel found the struggle to remain balanced becoming more and more difficult. Even his meditations amongst the spirit stones of his ancestors could not help him. Afraid of becoming subsumed by one path or another, Alasiel, and a crew of like-minded Eldar, elected to leave the confines of the craftworld and travel the stars alone. Reasoning that travel and time away from his people would help give him perspective, he journeyed far and wide, visiting many strange and disparate worlds and encountering many species whom Alasiel dismissed as primitive and without merit. He returned to his craftworld occasionally to trade or swap stories with his old companions. The life of a wanderer suited him, and for a time he believed himself content.

Several centuries ago, Alasiel and his crew returned to the craftworld after an extended voyage into the depths of the Koronus Expanse. He was in good spirits and looked forward to seeing familiar faces and spending time with his ancestors in the gardens. As his vessel exited the webway, he was confronted with a scene of carnage. The blackened structure of the shattered craftworld drifted aimlessly through the void, clouded in debris. As swiftly as he could, Alasiel drew nearer the wrecked craft, searching desperately for any sign of life. His search proved fruitless as he found no survivors. Finally he left his ship and entered the now-ruined place of his birth. Instead of a craftworld filled with life, Alasiel found only death. Ragged corpses populated the streets and the once graceful towers and domes lay shattered and broken. Amongst the dead, Alasiel saw people he recognised, people he had once called friends or kin. He also saw strange new bodies, lumpen and clumsy. They were shaped like Eldar but lacked all refinement and grace. Dressed in odd scraps of armour and possessing weapons of murderous power, there



was little doubt these must be the creatures responsible for the attack of his world. As he explored, a sudden, utter terror gripped Alasiel's heart and he began to run. His crew called after him, chasing him through the ruined streets until eventually they found him in the wraithbone gardens. Alasiel stood, motionless amidst the ruins of his once beloved gardens, surrounded by the remains of the devastated infinity circuit. Dozens of spirit stones lay strewn about him, many of them cracked and broken, their light forever snuffed. As Alasiel stood and wept, he realised that many, perhaps most, of the stones were missing; taken by the hateful creatures who had wrought this carnage. Slowly, the sorrow that consumed him was replaced by anger, a righteous fury that burned with the heat of a star.

Alasiel and his crew left the remains of the craftworld much as they found it, an echoing tomb of former glories. Searching the debris around the wreck, he discovered more evidence of the race that performed this violation. He saw wrecks of vessels that looked familiar, ships belonging to a supremely primitive and unutterably arrogant race called humans. Knowing his prey, Alasiel set off in pursuit of his vengeance.

He tracked the attackers across the stars, catching their ships in twos and threes. Wherever he found them, he annihilated them utterly, leaving no trace of their existence. Throughout his campaign, he drew ever closer to his true prize: regaining the lost spirit stones of his craftworld.

By chance, he discovered the ships carrying the stones were due to meet up with a larger fleet just beyond the rim of the Screaming Vortex. He raced to intercept them, fearing they would be lost to him forever should they flee into that

nightmarish realm, but he was too late. The vile perpetrators had not fled, but had instead been cut down by another force of humans. Knowing he was too weak to tackle the newcomers alone, he bided his time, shadowing them as they moved away through the Warp. He watched as days later they engaged a second, larger group of human vessels, eventually defeating and subsuming them. Thinking them nothing more than pirates with little knowledge of the treasures they carried, Alasiel approached the lead ships, offering to pay handsomely for the stones. He was greeted by a counter offer. A pompous and self-important insect calling itself Vir Modren offered to return the stones to Alasiel if he would help him better understand some relics he carried in his hold. With little alternative, Alasiel agreed. The relics turned out to be trophies of the Ruinous Powers, monstrous totems of the ancient evils dwelling beyond the veil. Realising what manner of creature he now dealt with, Alasiel feared for the safety of the stones, but was powerless to move to rescue them.

Since that day, Alasiel has become trapped by the abhorrent Modren, bound to perform certain tasks for him in return for the continued safety of the stones. Resentment and hatred burn deep in the Eldar's heart, and given the chance, he will gladly murder Modren and his entire race for the unspeakable crimes they have perpetrated against his people. But for now, he must think of his ancestors and wait for his time to strike.



Alasiel Belanir

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	50	32	37	⁽¹⁰⁾ 57	44	48	44	30

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 13

Armour: Xenos mesh armour
(5 Body, Head; 4 Arms, Legs)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Climb (S), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Eldar, Koronus Expanse) (Int) +20, Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Pirates, Psykers, The Warp, Xenos) (Int) +10, Literacy (Int), Logic (Int), Navigation (Stellar, Warp) (Int) +20, Pilot (All) +20, Scholastic Lore, (Astromancy, Numerology, Occult) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag) +10, Speak Language (Eldar, Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (Voidfarer)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Basic Weapon Training (Las), Blademaster, Catfall, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Deadeye Shot, Disarm, Exotic Weapon Training (Shuriken Catapult, Shuriken Pistol), Hard Target, Heightened Senses (All), Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Power, Shock), Pistol Weapon Training (Las), Polyglot, Precise Blow, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Sharpshooter, Step Aside, Sure Strike, Void Tactician, Wall of Steel

Traits: Unnatural Agility (x2)

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Eldar power sword (melee; 1d10+7 E; Pen 8; Power Field, Balanced), Best Craftsmanship shuriken pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+2 R; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full; Reliable)

Equipment: 3 reloads for shuriken pistol, sombre clothing, xenos cloth bag containing three Eldar spirit stones

CAPTAIN ONTKEAN HESTERON

Commanding the Navy cruiser *Valorous Charge* in the tumultuous Jericho Reach would be a challenge for any Imperial officer, but not Captain Ontkean Hesteron. A dedicated and successful Navy officer, Hesteron lived his life by a simple set of rules: adore the Emperor, defend the Imperium, and suffer not the enemies of Mankind to live. From the moment he first stepped aboard a Navy vessel he knew just who those enemies were, and how to deal with them. Since meeting Inquisitor Silberthorne, Hesteron's simple rules have been thrown into question.

Contacted by the Inquisitor, Hesteron agreed to transport him, his acolytes, and a number of other select persons, in secret, across the void to the Koronus Expanse. During the voyage, Hesteron discovered the true nature of his passengers. Alarmed and confused by what he found, only the direct intervention of the Inquisitor stopped Hesteron from alerting his crew and killing the entire Tau entourage. Instead, he has sworn to keep Silberthorne's secrets and aid the Inquisitor however he can.

Despite his oaths to the Inquisitor, Hesteron is deeply unsettled by the presence of xenos on his ship, and Silberthorne's insistence it remain a secret. He doesn't like lying to his crew and would much prefer to operate openly. However, as a Navy captain he takes his oaths very seriously, and will not betray the trust Inquisitor Silberthorne has placed in him.



Captain Hesteron

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
41	37	33	35	29	40	39	44	39

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 14

Armour: Flak coat (3 Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Carouse (T), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Navy, Imperium Jericho Reach), Dodge (Ag), Literacy (Int), Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +10, Pilot (Space Craft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Heraldry, Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Secret Tongue (Military), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Ag)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Die Hard, Iron Discipline, Master & Commander, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Peer (Imperial Navy), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal)

Traits: None

Weapons: Naval pistol (Pistol; 20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reload Full; Tearing), officer's cutlass (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Shocking)

Equipment: 4 reloads for naval pistol, ceremonial dress uniform, respirator

DIAMNAS CHAR

The battlefields of the Imperium breed two distinct types of soldier; survivors and corpses. Diamnas Char is a survivor. Thrown into battle across countless theatres of war, Diamnas excelled at stealth and recon work, his squad often being called on to perform intelligence gathering operations that would have spelled doom for any other unit.

During a vicious engagement with Chaos-polluted forces on the edge of the Jericho Reach, Diamnas' squad was assigned to escort who they thought was an intelligence officer deep into enemy territory. The mission was going to be a challenge, and Diamnas was sure the officer would never be able to keep up. To his surprise, their charge showed great skill and the squad was soon within striking distance of their objective.

The unit came upon a profane altar deep within enemy-held territory, the air swimming with barely controlled energy. Diamnas saw loathsome shapes glide through his peripheral vision and felt razor edged claws scrape at his skin. To his horror, he saw the officer creep ever closer, and he looked to be reaching out to touch the hideous tableaux. Dumbfounded by what he saw, Char barely registered the translucent forms gathering about the groping officer. He cried out a warning, but by then it was too late. Vile creatures emerged, screaming, from tears in reality. All about him men howled in fear and pain as the monstrous entities swarmed down upon them. Diamnas fought bravely, firing his lasgun into the foul things over and over again. Finally, the mysterious commander succeeded in casting the altar to the ground and the Warp spirits withdrew. Casting about him, Diamnas saw that many of his squad were dead or dying, his anger boiled up and he moved to confront the officer who had caused this. His action was cut short as dozens of enemy troopers spilled into the room. Diamnas and the officer fled for their lives.

What followed was a deadly chase through the depths of the Chaos encampment. Ambush followed counter ambush, at times Diamnas was both stalker and prey, and both he and the officer took many traitorous lives that day. Only the supreme skills of Diamnas and his companion saw them return to Imperial lines alive. Arriving back at the Imperial Guard headquarters, Diamnas' mystery officer revealed he was actually an agent of the Holy Inquisition.

He explained the purpose of the mission was to remove a vital weapon from the enemy's arsenal, one that none of Diamnas'

superiors knew existed. It would therefore be better for Diamnas' long-term survival if he were thought to have perished along with his team in a failed recon mission. Still reeling from the shock of what he had witnessed, Diamnas agreed to leave with the Inquisitor and entered into his service.

Having now served with Inquisitor Silberthorne for many years, Diamnas Char has become an expert in infiltration, assassination, and extraction. Always one to prefer the shadows, he works tirelessly for the Inquisition as a living scalpel, ever willing to cut out the taint of heresy with little or no trace of his passing.



Diamnas Char

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
41	45	40	42	38	31	39	30	29

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 16

Armour: Storm Trooper Carapace (6 All)

Total TB: 4

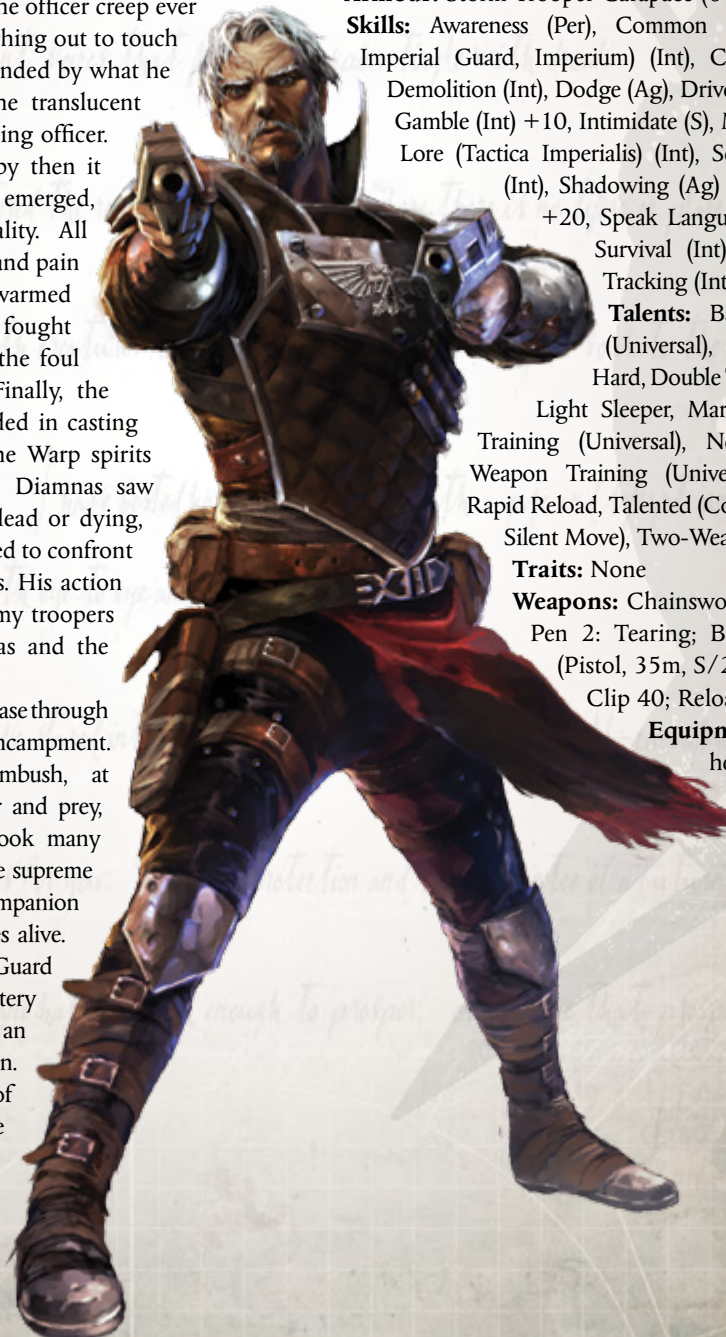
Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium) (Int), Concealment (Ag) +20, Demolition (Int), Dodge (Ag), Drive (Ground Vehicle) (Ag), Gamble (Int) +10, Intimidate (S), Medicae (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Secret Tongue (Military) (Int), Shadowing (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int), Tracking (Int)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Blind Fighting, Die Hard, Double Team, Duty Unto Death, Light Sleeper, Marksman, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Rapid Reaction, Rapid Reload, Talented (Concealment, Shadowing, Silent Move), Two-Weapon Wielder (Ballistic)

Traits: None

Weapons: Chainsword (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2: Tearing; Balanced), 2 hellpistols (Pistol, 35m, S/2/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full)

Equipment: 4 reloads for hellpistols, dark clothing, lucky charm



GULETTE ANHD

A powerful telepath in the service of Inquisitor Silberthorne, Gulette Anhd should command fear and respect in everyone she meets, but the aging Psyker has taken a different path. Discovering her talents in her childhood, Gulette spent much of her early life enduring the painful instruction of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Lucky to be found both powerful and disciplined enough to live with her gifts, she was sent to train at the Scholastica Psykana, developing her powers to better serve humanity.

Her greatest strengths lay in the realm of telepathy. Mind reading and thought control came as easily to her as walking or breathing. Gulette had no desire to see out her days as a Primaris Psyker in the Imperial Guard, risking her life under alien suns. Nor did she relish the thought of joining the legion of Astropaths, blind and crippled by the torturous Soul Binding ritual. So she took care to never appear too strong or too weak, by turns hiding or exaggerating her abilities. As the end of her instruction approached she was taken for the Rite of Sanctioning, fear gnawing at her soul as to what her ultimate fate would be when time at the Scholastica ended. As the robed and hooded adepts descended upon her, their electro-needles and branding irons held before them, a whispered voice pierced the gloom of the chamber. The voice decreed that, following the rite, she was to be taken from the chamber and given over to the custody of an Inquisitor. A thrill of terror shot down her spine, all thoughts of the agony she was to endure at the hands of Scholastica adepts forgotten. An Inquisitor: one of those most feared and secretive of all the Imperium's dread agents. A thousand thoughts scabbled in her head: did

they know? Had they perceived



her futile attempts at subterfuge? What would they do to her? How many further torments would she endure before the sinister Inquisitors snuffed out her life?

When the blazing pain of the Sanctioning had faded, Gulette was led to a simple, unadorned room. Within was a seemingly normal, unassuming middle-aged man. He explained that the Scholastica instructors had informed him of her attempts to mask her powers; her skill at misdirection was good, but there was definitely room for improvement. He offered her the opportunity to increase her skills while hunting and tracking the enemies of Mankind. She could perform the Emperor's work not on the front lines or from within a sightless and ruined body, but from the shadows; a secret and deadly weapon in the hands of the Inquisition. Scarcely believing it to be possible, Gulette accepted the offer.

Since that day, Gulette has worked with Inquisitor Silberthorne on countless missions. Her preferred tactic is to assume the role of a humble scribe or adept working for whatever false personality Silberthorne has conjured up. In her experience, many people immediately dismiss the lowly data-slate wielding scribe as insignificant. From this position of anonymity she is free to discretely scan the thoughts and intentions of all around her, secretly feeding her master the hidden knowledge she has gleaned. If necessary, she can become a deadly combatant, one capable of directly influencing the actions of others or boiling their brains within their skulls, though given her advancing years she has used these powers less and less.



Gulette Anhd

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
24	22	30	29	31	40	37	48	19

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Armour: None

Total TB: 2

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Forbidden Lore (The Inquisition, Psykers, The Warp) (Int) +10, Invocation (WP) +20, Literacy (Int) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int)

Talents: Improved Warp Sense, Light Sleeper, Meditation, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Paranoia, Pistol Weapon Training (Las, SP), Psy Rating 4, Psychic Discipline (Telepathy, Telekinesis), Resistance (Psychic Techniques), Rite of Sanctioning, Strong Minded, Warp Sense

Traits: None

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30, Reload Full; Reliable), mono knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 2)

Equipment: 1 reload for laspistol, adepts robes, Psykana Mercy Blade, Imperial Aquila (psy focus)

Psychic Techniques: Short Range Telepathy, Mind's Eye Mind Link, Mind Probe, Mind Scan, Psychic Scream, Delude, Compel, Force Bolt, Telekinetic Weapon, Storm of Force

SHAPER T'NAAK

As Shaper to his kindred, T'naak enjoys a position of great spiritual and temporal power. He has led his kindred in the depths of the Expanse for many years and felt the many highs and lows of their mercenary lifestyle. Recently, however, the kindred has entered the employ of Vir Modren.

Caring little for the human culture and knowing even less about Modren's true affiliations and concerns, T'naak and his Kroot act as sentries and hunters for their new employer. Tasked with guarding the approach to Modren's realm and bringing down those who would oppose him, T'naak has found great favour with the Rogue Trader, leading his kindred in many successful battles.

T'naak's loyalty to Modren is adequate for now. As long as the Rogue Trader continues to allow his Kroot to vent their battle lust as they see fit and to take their fill of the plunder, in both goods and sustenance, he sees no reason to alter their arrangement.

Although born and raised far from Pech, T'naak, like all Kroot, feels a deep spiritual connection to the world of his species' birth and has led his kindred to revere this connection and the oaths they swore to the Tau Empire.



T'naak

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	42	(6) 39	48	42	29	(8) 48	36	22

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Armour: Thick Beast Furs
(2 Arms, Body, Legs, Primitive)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per) +10, Barter (Fel), Climb (S) +10, Common Lore (Koronus Expanse Tau Empire), Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Navigation (Surface, Stellar), (Int), Shadowing (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Kroot, Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int) +10, Tracking (Int)

Talents: Assassin Strike, Blind Fighting, Counter Attack, Exotic Weapon Training (Kroot Rifle), Furious Assault, Hard Target, Leap Up, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Resistance (Fear), Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Takedown

Traits: Natural Weapons (Beak), Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Perception (x2)

Weapons: Kroot rifle (Basic/Melee; 110m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 E/1d10+6 R; Pen 1/0; Clip 6; Reload 2 Full; Balanced)

Equipment: 1 reload for Kroot rifle, ritual carving knife, various bone charms and talismans



ORTHOS KORRELL

Korrell has always been a vicious and ruthless man, leading his pirate crew across the length and breadth of the Expanse. His career could have ended, as many have, as a twisted wreck lost in the icy, emptiness of the void were it not for a chance encounter with a Chaos reaver vessel.

Korrell's ragtag fleet mistook the Chaos worshippers for a simple trading vessel and attacked, little realising the peril they faced. The traitor warship tore the attacking ships apart, its firepower obliterating the pirates. Seeing the danger he was in, Korrell ordered his ship to board the Chaos vessel. He declared that if he was to die, he would at least die with a chainsword in his hand and blood in his teeth. Despite the best efforts of the Chaos gunners, Korrell's ship weathered the storm and crashed into the cruiser. Charging across the boarding umbilical, Korrell hurled himself with abandon into the massed ranks of the defenders.

The fight was long and brutal. Finally, after hours of bloody combat, Orthos and the handful of men that remained with him stormed the cruiser's control decks. Consumed by battle lust, Orthos hacked away at any and all defenders. Driven by blind rage, he ripped men apart, severing limbs and chopping down any who tried to flee. His rampage only ceased when he realised there was no one left on the bridge to fight him. Somehow, Orthos Korrell had succeeded and captured the ship.

After his victory over the ship's crew, he claimed the Chaos warship as his own. He knew something about this vessel had aided him in his battle to capture it. Some hidden presence, deep within the bowels of the ship, perhaps even bound within the very hull itself, had lent him its strength. But in return, it wanted

blood. The remainder of his crippled fleet were the first sacrifices he made to his new master.

Korrell is now an unholy terror, prowling the Koronus Expanse murdering and looting where he pleases. He has recently forged an alliance with Vir Modren, lending the Rogue Trader his formidable military strength in return for access to the tainted technology of Magos Forcyz and the tainted artefacts in his possession.



Orthos Korrell

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	21	40	38	30	19	26	41	08

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: Carapace chest plate and flak coat

Total TB: 4

(6 Body, 3 Arms, Legs)

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Ruinous Powers), Intimidate (S) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Bolt, SP), Battle Rage, Berserk Charge, Chem Geld, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Frenzy, Furious Assault, Hatred (Servants of the Imperium), Iron Jaw, Last Man Standing, Lightning Attack, Resistance (Psychic Techniques), Swift Attack, True Grit

Traits: Brutal Charge

Weapons: Chainaxe (Melee; 2d10+8 R; Pen 2; Tearing; Unwieldy)

Equipment: Skull trophies, respirator



AUBERON SHEOL

Ambition and a callous disregard for human life define Auberon Sheol. Until he entered into Vir Modren's service, Auberon was a senior Administratum adept in the exhaustively complex law courts of Solomon in the Calixis Sector.

Auberon possesses a crafty and attentive mind, ever watchful for the slightest misstep by another that might lead to his betterment. It was these talents, and his natural gift for lying, that enabled him to achieve his lofty position within the vaunted halls of bureaucracy. He gleaned the secret failings of his peers through subterfuge, paid off scribes to lose the work of his superiors, and engineered campaigns of misinformation to discredit and smear anyone looking too closely at his own work. His rise to prominence was indeed meteoric, but it was this pre-eminence that also led to his downfall.

Savant Jarvik Koskic had watched Sheol's ascent with great interest and knew that it was only a matter of time before the grasping adept made an attempt on his own position. His pre-emptive strike was devastating. He turned the dozens of minions in Sheol's employ against their erstwhile master. When he was quite certain that Auberon could not move against him, he publicly revealed the secrets of Sheol's successes. In the ensuing scandal, no less than four attempts were made on Sheol's life by disgruntled colleagues. Draining what little wealth was left to him, Sheol chartered a merchant vessel to carry him out of the Sector and into the wilds of the Koronus Expanse.

His money ran out shortly after his arrival in the Expanse, and he was unceremoniously given to a slave ship to pay off his debt. The slavers were bound for Vir Modren's burgeoning domain, and Sheol quickly ascertained the power structure of his new home. He began to make himself irreplaceable to the taskmasters, spying on his fellow slaves and selling information for better treatment. When he uncovered a plot concerning a riot and possible assault on the holdings of Modren himself, the price he claimed was his freedom and a place in Modren's court.

Sheol currently acts as Modren's seneschal, running the day to day affairs of the Rogue Trader's household, all the while building his own power base and spying on his master's courtiers. Several potential coups have been stopped before they even began thanks to Sheol's skills.

Auberon Sheol hides his true nature under a clever disguise. Fawning and obsequious to Modren and his inner circle while haughty and imperious to the lesser members of Modren's court, few suspect the true extent of his knowledge.



Auberon Sheol

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
27	30	29	31	35	42	39	26	44

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Armour: None

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Barter (Fel) +10, Blather (Fel), Ciphers (Rogue Trader, Underworld), Commerce (Fel), Common Lore (Administratum, Imperium, Koronus Expanse), Deceive (Fel) +20, Evaluate (Int), Inquiry (Fel) +10, Literacy (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Archaic, Bureaucracy, Heraldry) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Secret Tongue (Administratum, Rogue Trader) (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int)

Talents: Pistol Weapon Training (Las), Unremarkable, Whispers

Traits: None

Weapons: Compact laspistol (Pistol; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+1 E; Pen 0; Clip 15; Reload Full, Reliable)

Equipment: Smart clothes, data slate, scribe servo skull

INQUISITOR JYRANO KAISON

Inquisitor Jyrano Kaison has been a staunch and unbreakable defender of humanity all his life. Raised in the Schola Progenium like countless other Imperial orphans before him, Jyrano was schooled endlessly about the glory of the Emperor, and his duty to lay down his life for him if it were required.

He was selected to join the ranks of the elite Imperial Guard Storm Trooper training program upon his graduation, impressing his instructors with his fervent zeal and righteous hatred. He was swiftly elevated to the rank of sergeant and given a squad to command in humanity's wars across a dozen worlds.

During a citizen uprising, later found to be the work of the loathsome race of xenos known as Enslavers, Kaison's squad was seconded to Inquisitor Du'Carth. Their mission was to purge a series of hab blocks, believed to be where the xenos had formed their living gates. Kaison and his men carried the day, allowing the attendant Inquisitor time to utterly destroy the Enslaver gate and severely weakening the invading xenos. Struck by the officer's courage when faced with the hideous forms of the Enslavers, Inquisitor Du'Carth took Kaison under his wing. Over the coming years, Du'Carth imparted a great deal of wisdom to the young Kaison, teaching him the methods and secrets of the Holy Ordos. He impressed upon Kaison that the greatest threat to face the Imperium was not the alien, nor was it the rogue psyker, nor even the Daemon scratching at the fabric of reality. The greatest threat humanity faced was the heretic willing to work with these abominations. No foe could be so terrible as the man who turned his back on his fellow man.





ETHEREAL AUN'ROH

None can fathom the mind of an Ethereal, and Aun'Roh is no exception. Since his incarceration by Modren and despite the numerous atrocities committed on him by Magos Forcyz, Aun'Roh has remained calm and serene.

His impenetrable resolve is a constant frustration to his captors, and he believes it is only a matter of time before their vexation forces them to take his life. Aun'Roh does not fear death, however; he knows that whatever fate awaits him is merely another step toward the Greater Good.



Aun'Roh

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
30	29	32	27	16	57	52	60	58

When Du'Carth was killed in action by marauding Dark Eldar, his dying wish was that Kaison continue his crusade as an Inquisitor. Jyrano Kaison did not disappoint his master. Adopting an ultra-puritanical stance, Kaison stalked heresy in all its forms for many years. He first came across Inquisitor Silberthorne during a combined operation to destroy a death-cult they believed to be in league with the Ruinous Powers. Appalled by Silberthorne's methods, Kaison swore to never work with Silberthorne again. The situation would have ended there if Kaison had not later discovered that one of the death-cultists was an acolyte of Silberthorne's, tasked with causing dissent amongst the cult's leadership. Kaison saw in his fellow Inquisitor all the evils the late Du'Carth had warned him of.

Now, Inquisitor Kaison hunts Silberthorne, convinced he has found a greater enemy to Mankind than any petty Warp-dabbler or conjurer.

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Armour: None

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Common Lore (Tau Empire Charm (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel) +20, Logic (Int) +10, Medicae (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Speak Language (Tau, Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int)

Talents: Master Orator, Resistance (Fear, Psychic Techniques)

Traits: None

Weapons: None

Equipment: None

Wounds: 9

Total TB: 2

Jyrano Kaison



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
51	53	42	48	30	45	49	51	33

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 17

Armour: Light power armour (7 All)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium) (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, The Inquisition, The Warp, Xenos) (Int) +20, Inquiry (Fel), Interrogation (Fel) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Search (Per), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Survival, (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int), Tracking (Int) +10

Talents: Air of Authority, Armour of Contempt, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Cleanse and Purify, Combat Sense, Fearless, Flame Weapon Training, Inspire Wrath, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Prosanguine, True Grit

Traits: None

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship power sword, (Melee; 1d10+10 E; Pen 5; Power Field; Balanced), Flamer (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 2; Clip 6; Reload 2 Full; Flame)

Equipment: Auto-senses and preysense helmet upgrades, Auto-injector with 6 doses of stimm, 2 stun grenades, 2 frag grenades



SUPPORTING CAST

Besides the notable characters who play a major role in this adventure, several minor adversaries, allies, and various other functionaries take part in the plot of **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**.

COURTIERS AND VASSALS

Vir Modren has surrounded himself with a court of petty heretics, murderers, aliens, and rogues. GMs should feel free to populate his court with any appropriate antagonists from the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook (see pages 370–374). The Oathsworn Bodyguard, Renegade, Void Pirate Captain, and Warp Witch are particularly appropriate.

MODREN'S GUARD

These elite killers are the personal guard of Vir Modren. Each of them is unswervingly loyal to the Rogue Trader, willing to lay down their lives for him. They are well trained and equipped, and in a fight will use solid military tactics to suppress and outflank their enemies.

Modren's Guard

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	45	40	40	35	20	35	40	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: Enforcer light carapace (5 All)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Koronus Expanse) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Medicae (Int)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Guardian, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Quick Draw, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel

Traits: None

Weapons: Boltgun (Basic; 90m; S/2/4; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 24; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Tearing), hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Reload 2 Full)

Equipment: 2 reloads for boltgun, 1 reload for hand cannon, micro-bead, 2 frag grenades

SERVITOR

Magos Forcyz has constructed a number of gun and combat servitors to aid the defence of his laboratory and manufactorum complex. These servitors serve as Forcyz's bodyguards and will fight fearlessly and to the death. GMs can use the rules for Battle Servitors on pages 374–375 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

HERETEK DISCIPLE

Magos Forcyz has a small circle of Heretek working with him in the vaults beneath Modren's dwelling. Although not particularly capable combatants, they will stand by their Magos in any fight.

Heretek Disciple

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	30	40	40	15	40	35	35	15

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 12

Armour: Flak Coat (3 Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Daemonology, The Warp, Xenos) (Int), Literacy (Int) +10, Logic (Int), Medicae (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Chymistry, Occult) (Int), Secret Tongue (Tech) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Techna-Lingua) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10

Talents: Ambidextrous, Autosanguine, Logis Implant, Mechadendrite Use (Utility), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal)

Traits: Mechanicus Implants

Weapons: Hellpistol (Pistol; 35m; S/2/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full)

Equipment: 1 reload for hellpistol, numerous bionics and implants, utility mechadendrite

DAEMON ENGINE TRAITS

A number of Magos Forcyz's mechanical minions possess the following traits:

DAEMON ENGINE (X)

The creature is a hybrid of Daemon and machine, fusing technology and sorcery in a way that is both seamless and horrifying. The visual impact of these entities strikes fear into friend and foe alike and provides it additional protection against standard armaments. The Daemon Engine has the combined effects of From Beyond and The Stuff of Nightmares. Psychic Powers that affect the mind cannot control the Engine as it is bound to the sorcerous runes holding the construct together. In addition, Daemon Engines gain a Toughness Bonus equal to the number in parentheses, which, like the Daemoniac Trait, can be negated by force weapons, holy/sanctified weapons, or Damage caused by psychic powers.

DAEMONFORGE

Once per encounter, the Daemon Engine can re-roll a Damage roll in its entirety. Any of the re-rolled dice that come up a 9 or 10 also inflicts 1d5 Damage on the Daemon Engine, ignoring Armour and Toughness Bonus.

FORGEFIEND

Forgefiends are massive, destructive Daemon Engines that stomp across the battlefield discharging unholy blasts from their heavy weapons and messily crushing anything unfortunate enough to be underfoot. While these Daemonic creatures are horrifically potent, they can be brought down by heavy weapons (and orbital ordnance, if necessary).

Forgefiend								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
30	40	⁽¹²⁾ 65	⁽¹⁴⁾ 65	35	15	40	45	01

Movement: 12/24/36/72 (6/12/18/36) **Wounds:** 50

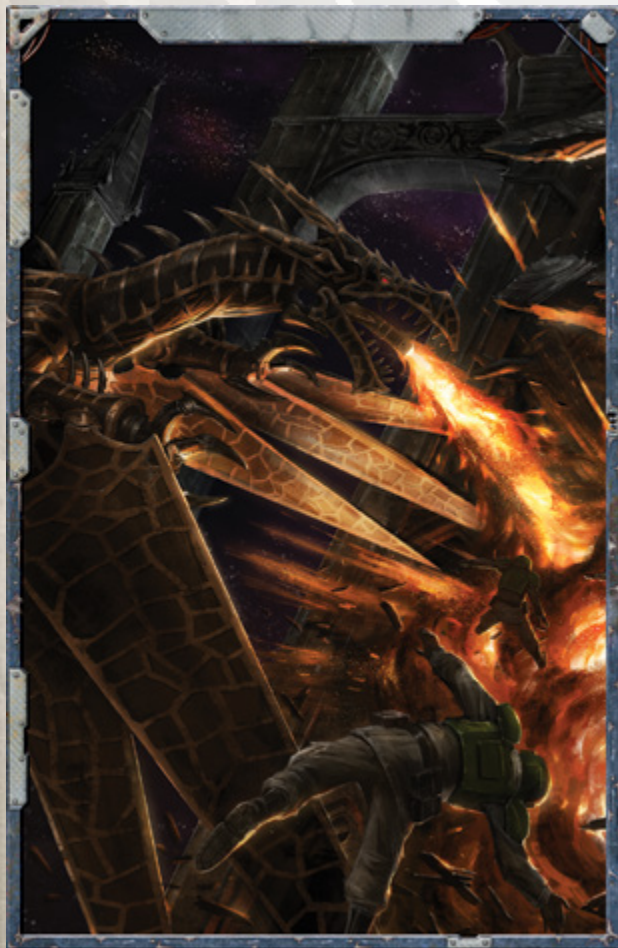
Armour: Machine (12 All) **Total TB:** 14

Skills: None

Talents: Ambidextrous, Frenzy, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder

Traits: Auto-Stabilised, Daemonforge, Daemon Engine (8), Fear (3), Machine (12), Size (Enormous), Unnatural Strength (x2)

Weapons: Two reaper autocannons (Heavy; 300m; S/4/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Reliable, Twin-Linked) *or* two assault cannons (Heavy; 150m; -/-/10; 2d10+10 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Tearing) *or* two ectoplasma cannons (Heavy; S/3/-; 1d10+9 E; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Maximal, Overheat, Warp Weapon), claws and fangs (Melee; 1d10+12 R; Pen 3, Tearing)



MAULERFIEND

Brutal beasts of Daemonic energy trapped in a body of twisted steel and fuelled by hate alone, Maulerfiends are some of the most savage Daemon Engines in close-quarters combat. Whether they wield lasher tendrils or searing magma cutters, these ferocious monstrosities are extremely deadly foes.

Maulerfiend								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	30	⁽¹²⁾ 65	⁽¹⁴⁾ 65	40	15	35	45	01

Move: 12/24/36/72 (6/12/18/36)

Wounds: 50

Armour: Machine (12 All)

Total TB: 14

Skills: None

Talents: Ambidextrous, Frenzy, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder

Traits: Auto-Stabilised, Daemonforge, Daemon Engine (6), Fear (3), Machine (12), Overwhelming†, Size (Enormous), Unnatural Strength (x2)

Weapons: Clawed forelimbs and fanged maw (Melee; 2d10+12 R; Pen 5; Razor Sharp, Tearing, Natural Weapons), magma cutters (Melee; 2d10+14 E; Pen 24; Unwieldy) *or* lasher tendrils (Melee; 1d10+12 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Snare [3])

†**Overwhelming:** A Maulerfiend may attack a Grappled opponent with its magma cutters as a Reaction.

HELDRAKE

Heldrakes are massive and incredibly destructive Daemon Engines with a draconic visage, and are capable of shattering their foes with bursts of autocannon fire, searing them with infernal flames, and eviscerating them with their razor-sharp talons.

Heldrake								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
48	33	55	⁽¹²⁾ 62	38	31	47	42	02

Move: 12/24/36/72 (6/12/18/36)

Wounds: 48

Armour: Machine (12 All)

Total TB: 12

Skills: None

Talents: None

Traits: Auto-Stabilised, Daemonforge, Daemon Engine (6), Flyer (12), Hoverer (6), Machine (12), Size (Enormous)

Weapons: Hades autocannon (Heavy; 300m; 3/6/12; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Storm) *or* baleflamer (Heavy; 45m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 E; Pen 6; Flame), talons (Melee; 2d10+10 R; Pen 6; Tearing), wings (Melee; 3d10+5 R; Pen 6)

TAU NPCS

Full rules for characters and NPCs hailing from this xenos culture can be found in the **TAU CHARACTER GUIDE** supplement. For those who do not own that document, please use the following, simplified rules instead:

TAU SKILLS

A handful of NPCs in this appendix possess the following Skills:

Scholastic Lore (Advanced, Investigation)

Intelligence, Groups: Tau War Doctrine

Tau Empire: This Skill represents a knowledge of the structures, deployment, logistics, and strategies of the Tau military machine on an academic level.

TAU TRAITS

A number of the NPCs in this appendix possess the following Traits:

Exemplar of Unity

Although all Tau are equal in following with the Greater Good, some Fire Warriors fall into positions of command. Unlike some other races, however, Tau commanders hold themselves to the same standards of those they command. As a Half Action, a Tau NPC may make the **Follow My Lead** Action.

Follow My Lead

Type: Half Action

Subtypes: Concentration

Until the beginning of his next Turn, each allied Tau character within 10 metres who undertakes the same Half Action the Commander performs after his Follow My Lead Action gains a +10 bonus to any Tests associated with that Action.

For The Greater Good!

The Tau value the group over the self, and trust their comrades and commanders to always choose the best course of action. This enables every Tau to follow orders without hesitation or doubt. Once per encounter, a Tau NPC may gain a +10 bonus to a Test made while directly following an order from another Tau character. Additionally, if this order places the Tau NPC into substantial danger to benefit the group as a whole, this bonus increases to +30 (GM's discretion).



TAU TECHNOLOGY

The Tau are an extremely advanced technological species. Many of their weapon and equipment designs far exceed those of the Imperium or a great many other species in the galaxy. A number of the NPCs presented in this adventure make use of equipment unique to the Tau Empire. Full rules for characters and NPCs hailing from this xenos culture can be found in the **TAU CHARACTER SUPPLEMENT**. For those who do not own that document, please use the following, simplified rules instead:

New Equipment: Blacksun Filter

A blacksun filter comprises several unique sensors and lenses, similar in function to the photo visor of the Imperium. These filters are often built into helmets, or the complex sensor suites of Tau battlesuits. Some Tau Pathfinders have been seen to wear the filters independently, often taking the form of elaborate goggles or visors. The blacksun filter boosts ambient light and makes certain frequencies of light visible to the wearer, granting some limited night vision. The filters were also designed to temporarily block out extremely bright lights, preventing Tau Fire Warriors from being blinded by their own photon grenades.

A character wearing a blacksun filter gains the Dark Sight Trait and makes the wearer immune to the effects of photon flash grenades, Tau photon grenades, and similar devices and abilities.

New Equipment: Target Lock

Designed to allow Tau Fire Warriors and battlesuit pilots to rapidly shift their attention from one target to the next. The target lock provides the user with accurate firing plans and tracks the location of individual targets allowing for complex patterns of fire to be established by a single gunner. Originally found only on platforms mounting multiple weapons, it quickly made its way into use by Fire Warrior Shas'ui.

A Tau NPC with a Target Lock does not lose the benefit of an Aim Action when he makes a Reaction.

TAU TALENTS

A number of NPCs in this appendix possess the following Talents:

Blessing of the Ethereals

Prerequisites: WP 40

At some point in life, this Tau warrior was blessed by an Ethereal for some worthy feat. In times of great peril, he is able to draw upon the memory to find reserves of strength and determination to soldier on when others would falter and fail. Whenever the Tau is suffering from Critical Damage, he is immune to the effects of Fear and Pinning, but disengaging from combat or backing down from a fight without a direct order from a superior requires a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**.

Bonding Ritual

Prerequisites: WP 35

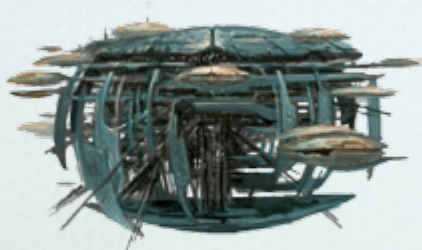
The ancient Fire caste ritual of Ta'lissera is often performed amongst close-knit groups of Tau Warriors, further solidifying their bond to one another and ensuring they will do absolutely anything to protect the group. Many warriors who undergo this rite carry a symbolic bonding knife as a sign of their pact.

As long as the Tau NPC is in a group containing another individual with this Talent, he feels empowered to fight on no matter the cost. The first time the NPC suffers Critical Damage each encounter, if there is another character with this Talent within 20 metres, this Tau NPC automatically passes any Tests he is required to make by the Critical Effect and ignores any non-permanent effects that the Critical Effect would have (such as gaining Levels of Fatigue or being knocked Prone, but not losing a limb or being slain outright).

Disciple of Mont'ka

Prerequisites: Ag 40, Silent Move +10

The Tau war doctrine of Mont'ka, otherwise known as the Killing Blow, revolves around swiftly dealing a perfectly timed overwhelming blow to quickly eliminate a target. Whenever the Tau NPC strikes an Unaware target, he inflicts additional Damage equal to his Degrees of Success on the Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test.



Fire Caste Weapon Training

Prerequisites: None

This Tau warrior is proficient in the use of all Tau weaponry, and can wield these weapons without suffering the penalty for untrained weapon use.

Greater than the Sum

Prerequisites: Fel 45

The Tau doctrine of the Greater Good prescribes that each individual submits their best qualities to the whole. This often means that Tau are exposed to the finest qualities other individuals possess, and sometimes learn from their example. Once per session, the NPC may spend a Fate Point and either gain the benefits of a Talent an ally possesses or grant the benefits of a Talent he possesses to an ally. The character temporarily receiving the effects of the Talent need not meet its Prerequisites to benefit from it. This effect persists until the end of the encounter.

Strength through Unity

Prerequisites: Bonding Ritual, Fel 40

Although normally weak in close combat, many Tau Warriors find additional strength when fighting alongside their allies. When engaged in melee combat, for each ally with the Bonded Talent engaged with the same target, the Tau Warrior gains an additional +5 bonus to Weapon Skill Tests and inflicts an additional 1 Damage with melee attacks.

Supporting Fire

Prerequisites: None

Tau prefer ranged combat over barbaric melee, and seek to cut down their foes before they reach close combat. Any time an enemy makes a Charge Action to become engaged in melee with an allied Tau character within 20 metres, a Tau NPC may choose to spend his Reaction to make a Standard Ranged Attack at a -20 penalty against the enemy. This attack resolves before the target completes its Charge Action.

Tactical Flexibility

Prerequisites: None

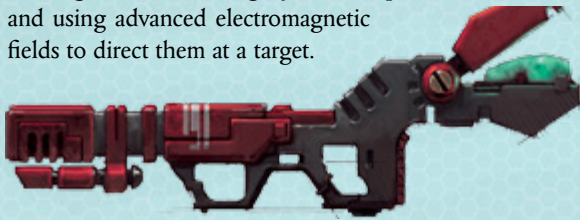
Unlike many other races that the Tau Empire has encountered, the Tau find no fault in retreating from a hopeless situation in favour of saving strength for a better occasion. Once per encounter, as a Half Action, the Explorer may make a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) Test**. If he succeeds, he and each other Tau ally within 20 metres may immediately make a Disengage Action as a Free Action.

TAU WEAPONRY

A number of the NPCs presented in this adventure make use of weapons unique to the Tau Empire. Full rules for characters and NPCs hailing from this xenos culture can be found in the **TAU CHARACTER SUPPLEMENT**. For those who do not own that document, please use the following, simplified rules instead:

New Weapon: Ion Rifle

Tau ion weapons are typically found on heavy vehicles and voidcraft, this lightweight man-portable variant is still considered highly experimental. The weapon operates by creating a stream of highly ionised particles and using advanced electromagnetic fields to direct them at a target.



New Weapon: Pulse Weapons

Another marvel of Tau technology and the standard arms of the Tau military. Pulse weapons operate by launching an unstable particle, via an induction field, at the target. As the particle leaves the barrel of the weapon it breaks down, generating a plasma pulse of significant size. The

pulse carbine is of particular interest as it features an attached grenade launcher slung beneath the barrel. This launcher operates as a Mezoa grenade launcher (see page 125 of the **ROGUE TRADER CORE Rulebook**).



New Weapon: Rail Weapons

Tau rail weaponry is based on the technology of linear accelerators. The barrel of each weapon is surrounded in super-conductive electrodes. These electrodes create a wave of magnetic acceleration used to hurl a projectile at incredible velocities.

New Weapon: Tau Photon Grenade

Photon grenades are defensive weapons, meant to blind attackers as they approach and give the user a chance to strike first or escape.



Anyone caught within the blast radius of a Photon Grenade must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or be blinded for one Round, plus one Round per Degree of Failure he scored on the Test.

Table 4–2: Tau Weapons

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	kg	Availability
Ion Rifle	Basic	110m	S/2/4	2d10+5 E	5	24	Full	Overcharge (6)	12	Near Unique
Pulse Carbine	Basic	60m	S/-/3	2d10+2 E	4	24	Full	Gyro-Stabilised	6	Very Rare
Pulse Pistol	Pistol	40m	S/2/-	2d10+2 E	4	16	Half	Gyro-Stabilised	3	Very Rare
Pulse Rifle	Basic	150m	S/2/4	2d10+3 E	4	36	Half	Gyro-Stabilised	8	Very Rare
Rail Rifle	Basic	150m	S/-/-	3d10+2 I	12	12	Full	Felling, Proven (2)	8	Near Unique
Tau Photon Grenade	Thrown	SBx3m	S/-/-	—	—	—	—	Blast (12)	0.5	Rare

New Weapon Quality: Felling

To kill powerful foes often requires fearsome weapons or special rounds with the ability to punch through even the toughest hides. When calculating damage from Felling weapons, reduce the target's Unnatural Toughness Bonus by one. Therefore Unnatural Toughness x3 would become x2, x2 would be removed completely, and so on. Felling only reduces Unnatural Toughness, not the target's base Toughness Bonus. The reduction occurs for calculating Damage only and does not persist.

New Weapon Quality: Proven (X)

Weapons with a Proven Quality always inflict massive trauma and treat any Damage die result lower than the value of the Proven Quality (X) as if it were X instead. Thus, a Proven (3) weapon would treat any die result for Damage of 1 or 2 as a 3.

New Weapon Quality: Overcharge (X)

Weapons with the Overcharge Quality are typically safe for their users. However, their internal systems can be pushed past safe limits, allowing wielders to increase the potency of their shots at considerable personal risk. When using a weapon with the Overcharge Quality, a Tau NPC may choose to increase the weapon's Damage by X. If he does so, the weapon gains the Overheats Quality for those shots.

New Weapon Quality: Gyro-Stabilised

The weapon has a small auto-stabilisation unit that helps keep the weapon levelled at the optimal angle for firing. A Gyro-Stabilised weapon never counts its target as being further than Long Range (normal maximum range still applies). Heavy weapons with this Quality reduce the penalty for firing without Bracing to -20.

TAU FIRE WARRIOR

The bulk of the warriors comprising Shas'o Ja'Vra's cadre are these Shas'la of the Fire caste. Trained since birth and tempered in the fires of war, they form a well-organised and supremely well-equipped fighting force. Under the coolly calm direction of their Shas'ui officers, they seek to end any engagement by use of the Tau doctrine of war, utilising their highly advanced weaponry and battlesuits to overwhelm all opposition.

Fire Warrior

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	35	30	30	20	30	35	30	25

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 13

Armour: Tau combat armour (6 All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Tau Empire) (Int)†, Dodge (Ag), Medicae (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tau War Doctrine) (Int) +10†

Talents: Bonding Ritual†, Combat Formation, Fire Caste Weapon Training†, Greater than the Sum†, Supporting Fire†

Traits: For the Greater Good!†

Weapons: Pulse rifle (Basic; 150m; S/2/4; 2d10+3 E; Pen 4; Clip 36; Reload Half; Gyro-Stabilised†) or rail rifle (Basic; 150m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 I; Pen 4; Clip 12; Reload Full; Felling†; Proven [3]†)

Equipment: 2 reloads for primary weapon, micro-bead, 2 Tau photon grenades

†See **Tau** sidebars, on pages 112-114 for details.

Fire Warrior Shas'ui

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	40	30	35	25	30	37	35	40

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 15

Armour: Tau Combat Armour. (6 All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Tau Empire) (Int)†, Dodge (Ag), Medicae (Int), Pilot (Battlesuit) (Ag)†, Scholastic Lore (Tau War Doctrine) (Int) +20†

Talents: Bonding Ritual†, Combat Formation, Fire Caste Weapon Training†, Greater than the Sum†, Strength Through Unity†, Supporting Fire†, Tactical Flexibility†

Traits: Exemplar of Unity, For the Greater Good!

Weapons: Pulse rifle (Basic; 150m; S/2/4; 2d10+3 E; Pen 4; Clip 36; Reload Half; Gyro-Stabilised†) or Pulse Carbine (Basic; 60m; S/-/3; 2d10+2 E; Pen 4; Clip: 24; Reload Half; Gyro-stabilised†) or Rail Rifle (Basic; 150m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 I; Pen 4; Clip 12; Reload Full; Felling†; Proven [3]†)

Equipment: 2 reloads for primary weapon, micro-bead, 2 Tau photon grenades, target lock



IMPORTANT VESSELS

The following voidships play a prominent role throughout this adventure.

THE ARDENT BANE

Hull: Cruiser

Class: Ambition-class Cruiser

Dimensions: 4.9 km long, 2 km abeam at fins approx.

Mass: 25 megatonnes approx.

Crew: 89,000 crew, approx.

Accel: 3 gravities max sustainable acceleration

The construction of the *Ardent Bane* was completed under a pall of secrecy in the Kormisoshi Dockyards after Modren seized his Warrant but before his retreat into the furthest reaches of the Expanse. Investigators from the Tricorn palace suspect Modren eliminated a chartist captain who'd already commissioned an Ambition-class vessel in a convenient accident involving a solar storm. With the original owner dead, he offered to purchase the partially completed hull and pay handsomely for the finishing. What surreptitious deals Modren offered the masters of the shipyards to enact this highly irregular transfer may never be known, but the *Ardent Bane* was completed five years to the day after being moved to an isolated slip on the edge of the dockyards. Many fitters and dockworkers who helped construct the interior portions of the vessel also suffered strange accidents—those who did not die were often crippled so badly that they were recycled into servitors aboard the *Ardent Bane*.

In the decades since its launch, the *Ardent Bane* has made a name for itself in the Expanse as a dangerous vessel to cross prows with. As formidably armed as any warship of the Imperial Navy, the *Ardent Bane* has, on at least one occasion, hulked a reaver cruiser in a single torpedo volley. The rumourmongers of Footfall tell tales of the lavish halls lauding the glories of House Modren running the length of the keel. They also whisper of secret underdeck vaults housing technologies of unknown origin and providence, maintained by tongueless servitors and shackled engineeer-slaves.

Speed: 5

Manoeuvrability: +12

Detection: +15

Void Shields: 2

Armour: 17

Hull Integrity: 66

Morale: 100

Crew Population: 100

Crew Rating: Crack (40)

Turret Rating: 2

Weapon Capacity: Prow 1, Port 2, Starboard 2

Essential Components

Jovian Pattern Class 4 Drive, Stelov 2 Warp Engine, Gellar Field, Multiple Void Shield Array, Ship Masters Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Voidsmen Quarters, M-100 Augur Array

Supplemental Components

Port and Starboard Mars Pattern Macrocannon Broadside: (Macrobattery; Strength 6; Damage 1d10+3; Crit Rating 5; Range 6)

Port and Starboard Titanforge Lance Battery: (Lance; Strength 2; Damage 1d10+4; Crit Rating 3; Range 6)

Prow Mars Pattern Torpedo Tubes: (Torpedo; Strength 6; Damage 2d10+14; Crit Rating 10; Range 60; Terminal Penetration [3]) The *Ardent Bane* is equipped with 24 torpedoes.

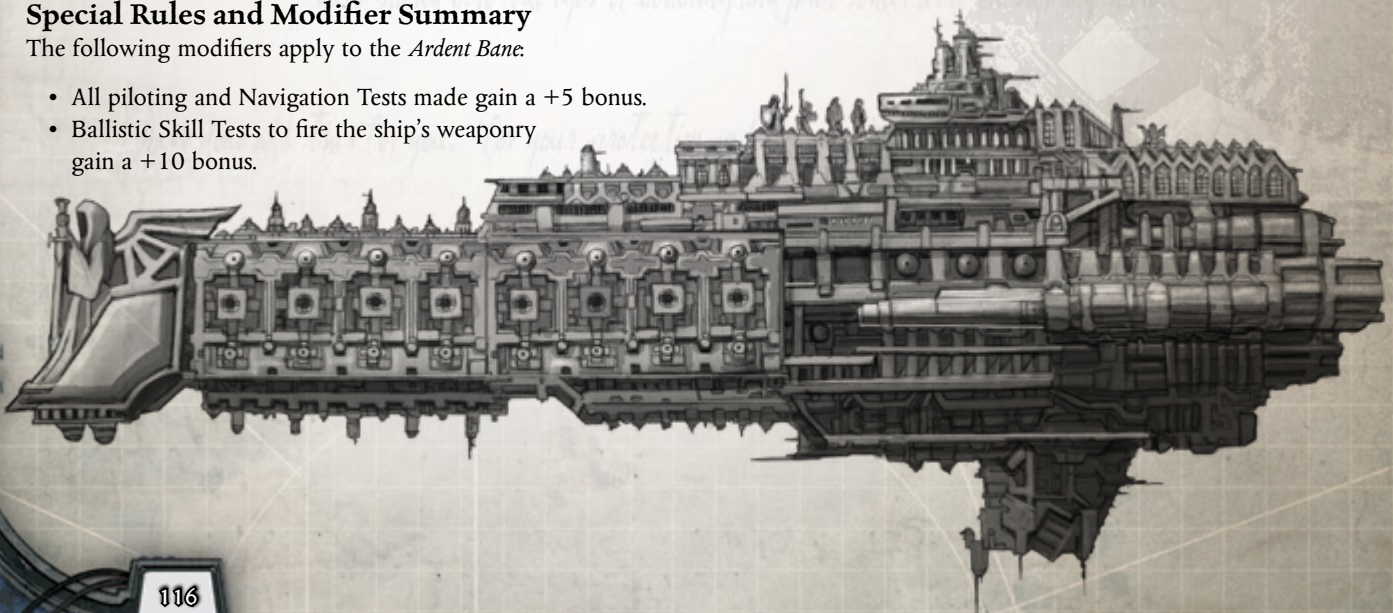
Munitorum: The bonuses for this have already been included in the profile.

Trophy Room: A vast chamber celebrating the deeds of the Modren line and this vessel's history.

Special Rules and Modifier Summary

The following modifiers apply to the *Ardent Bane*.

- All piloting and Navigation Tests made gain a +5 bonus.
- Ballistic Skill Tests to fire the ship's weaponry gain a +10 bonus.



SACRAMENT OF JUDGEMENT

Hull: Light Cruiser

Class: Endeavour-class Light Cruiser.

Dimensions: 3.8 km long, 0.5 km abeam at fins approx.

Mass: 22 megatonnes approx.

Crew: 67,500 crew approx.

Accel: 3.9 gravities max sustainable acceleration.

Once, the name of the *Sacrament of Judgement* proudly adorned the victory banners hanging in the chambers of Port Wrath. Now, the name has been struck from all rolls of honour, obscured with the smeared ashes of martyred Navy bosuns. The *Sacrament of Judgement* committed a Naval vessel's vilest sin—mutiny. Until such time as the venerable Lord-Captains of Battlefleet Calixis can consign the mutinous Sabina Alsunet and her renegades to the void and bring the ship back to Port Wrath under a prize crew, her name can only be spoken as a curse.

While part of Battlefleet Calixis, the *Sacrament of Judgement* served as a long range escort and patrol vessel; a perfect task for an Endeavour-class light cruiser. The Endeavours have mid-strength broadsides of reliable macrocannons and a pair of prow torpedo tubes, and while their armament is no match for a true ship of the line, its versatility makes them quite capable of running off all manner of scum and renegades. In addition, it trades the speed of most light cruisers for heavier armour; meaning that while it may not be able to bring a pirate raider to heel, it can certainly best any reaver foolish enough to stand and fight.

Thus, while light cruisers such as the Dauntless tend to operate in fleet actions as a harrier and flanker, the Endeavour best serves in detached operations, operating alone or with a frigate as their only support. They boast extensive supply lockers, allowing them to remain at void for years at a time without resupply.

Speed: 6

Manoeuvrability: +12

Detection: +20

Void Shields: 1

Armour: 20

Hull Integrity: 60

Morale: 100

Crew Population: 100

Crew Rating: Veteran (50)

Turret Rating: 2

Weapon Capacity: 1 Port, 1 Starboard, 2 Prow

Essential Components

Jovian-pattern "Warcruiser" Drive, Stelov 2 Warp Engine, Gellar Field, Single Void Shield Array, Command Bridge, Vitae Pattern Life Sustainer, Clan-kin Quarters, Mark 201.b Auger Array

Supplemental Components

Port and Starboard Mars Pattern Macro cannon Broadside: (Macrobattery; Strength 6; Damage 1d10+2; Crit Rating 5; Range 6)

Prow Voss-pattern Torpedo Tubes: (Torpedo; 2 Damage 2d10+15; Crit Rating 9+; Range 60; Terminal Penetration [3])
The *Sacrament of Judgement* is equipped with 24 torpedoes.

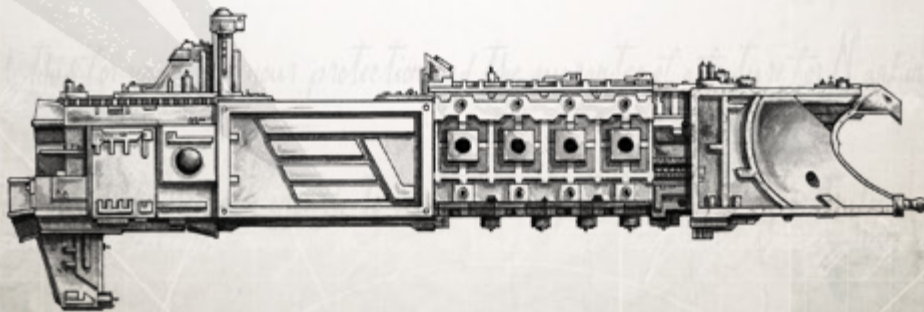
Prow Starbreaker Lance Weapon: (Lance, Strength 1, Damage 1d10+2, Crit 3, Range 5)

Defensive Provides the bonus detailed under Special Rules.

Special Rules and Modifier Summary

The following rules and modifiers apply to the *Sacrament of Justice*:

- As long as the bridge remains undamaged, all Command Tests made by the captain gain +5 and all Ballistic Skill Tests to fire shipboard weapons gain +5.
- Once per engagement the *Sacrament of Judgement* may apply a -20 penalty to all Ballistic Skill Tests made to attack it for the next 1d5+1 strategic turns. Torpedoes suffer -30 penalty instead.



GILDED CLAW

Hull: Raider

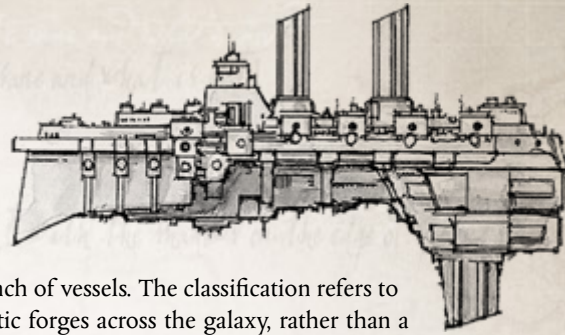
Class: Iconoclast-class Destroyer

Dimensions: 1.3 km long, 0.4 km abeam at fins approx.

Mass: 6.1 megatonnes approx.

Crew: 16,500 crew, approx.

Accel: 7.2 gravities max sustainable acceleration.



The class of raiders Battlefleet Calixis tacticians refer to as

“Iconoclast Destroyers” are a widely varied and motley bunch of vessels. The classification refers to a disparate series of ships made by shadowports and heretic forges across the galaxy, rather than a single unified design. The *Gilded Claw* stands as a prime example of the type.

Fragmented Imperial records indicate the vessel has served as a reaver of middling success for centuries, before being taken by the uprising of the pilgrim-turned-pit fighter Makara De’Soth. De’Soth’s lack of experience in commanding warships means the *Gilded Claw* has changed little in the hands of its new owner. Like most Iconoclast vessels, it boasts blistering speed and manoeuvrability as its primary attributes, but carries light armour and meagre amenities. The ship has a large crew but little room for supplies and stowage; this lack of long-term provisions inspires ever bloodier raids for provisions as well as loot.

As De’Soth becomes ever more embroiled in Modren’s schemes, the Rogue Trader has convinced his uncomfortable ally to undertake retrofits to his vessel. While these have improved the *Gilded Claw*’s effectiveness as a reaver ship, they smack of heretical or even xenos technology to the superstitious De’Soth. Foremost amongst these is a battery of disruption macrocannons that can cripple vessels without visible damage. While far more potent than the *Gilded Claw*’s ageing Thunderstrikes, they draw inordinate power and are operated by a cadre of mysterious, black-robed tech adepts.

Speed: 10

Manoeuvrability: +25

Detection: +10

Void Shields: 1

Armour: 14

Hull Integrity: 28

Morale: 100

Crew Population: 100

Crew Rating: Crack (40)

Turret Rating: 1

Weapon Capacity: Dorsal 2

Essential Components

Jovian-pattern Class 2 drive, Strelor 1 Warp Drive, Gellar Field, Single Void Shield Array, Pirate Bridge, L-12.b Life Sustainer, Pirate Quarters, M-100 Augur Array

Supplemental Components

Dorsal Disruption Macrocannon: (Macrobattery; Strength 3; Damage 1d10+1; Crit Rating –; Range 5)

Dorsal Thunderstrike Macrocannon: (Macrobattery; Strength; 3 Damage d10+, Crit Rating 6; Range 4)

Pirate Hold: If the *Gilded Claw* is captured with this component intact, the explorers gain 20 Achievement points.

Special Rules and Modifier Summary

The following rules and modifiers apply to the *Gilded Claw*:

- When effecting long term repairs, this ship may repair an additional +2 Hull Integrity if the repairs succeed.
- When calculating the damage caused by the *Gilded Claw*’s disruption macro cannon weapon, for every five damage that exceeds the target’s Void Shields, one randomly determined Component becomes Unpowered. Additionally the macrobattery’s damage is not affected by Armour, however, this damage cannot cause critical hits nor deal damage to Hull Integrity. The disruption macro cannon may only be combined into a salvo with other disruption macro cannon weapons.

DEFFSTORM

Hull: Cruiser

Class: Ork Kill Kroozer

Dimensions: 4.5km long, 1.1km abeam approx.

Mass: 30 megatonnes approx.

Crew: Hordes of Grotz and Boyz.

Accel: 2.7 gravities max sustainable acceleration.

Voidsmen from Footfall to Naduesh know the blunt, menacing prow of the *Deffstorm*, an Ork Freebooter vessel renowned for its ability to survive damage that would cripple or kill a lesser ship. As with most Ork ships, the *Deffstorm* has seen many Kaptins over the decades, until being taken by Gargoff Eadbreaka in a grog-fuelled boarding action some years hence.

Although no two Ork vessels are the same, *Deffstorm* does exemplify some “design” choices typical of the madcap contraptions constructed by Ork Meks. The ship sports a solid, heavily armoured prow constructed to vaguely resemble a snarling Ork face, including huge “teef” to scare off predators in the Warp. Additional slabs of armour line the flanks (though the ship is more vulnerable at its lightly protected stern), and the snouts of blunt-barrelled macroweapons protrude haphazardly from the hull. Since obtaining the *Deffstorm*, Eadbreaka has encouraged his Meks to make some improvements to the ship; most notably a pair of gigantic lance weapons salvaged from a derelict Eldar cruiser. Reworked into “zzap kannonz” and mounted in the *Deffstorm*’s fanged maw, these cannons provide the Freebooter vessel with a dangerous bite at short range.

Speed: 5

Manoeuvrability: -5

Detection: +10

Void Shields: 1

Armour: 25 prow, 21 port and starboard, 18 stern

Hull Integrity: 90

Morale: 100

Crew Population: 100

Crew Rating: Crack (40)

Turret Rating: 1

Weapon Capacity: Prow 2, Port 2 Starboard 2

Essential Components

Looted Drive, Warp Engine, Single Void Shield Array, Air Pumps, ‘Uge Teef, Boyz Barracks, Kaptin’s Bridge, Searchy Gubbinz

Supplemental Components

Prow Kannonz: (Macrobattery; Strength 1d5+2; Damage 1d10+3; Crit Rating 5; Range 9)

Prow Zzap Kannonz: (Lance; Strength 2; Damage 1d10+4; Crit Rating 3; Range 6)

Port and Starboard ‘Eavy Gunz: (Macrobattery; Strength 4; Damage 2d10; Crit Rating 4; Range 3)

Port and Starboard Kustom Kannonz: (Macrobattery; Strength 1d5; Damage 1d10+2; Crit Rating 5; Range 6)

Da Hold: If the *Deffstorm* is captured with this component intact the explorers gain 100 Achievement points.

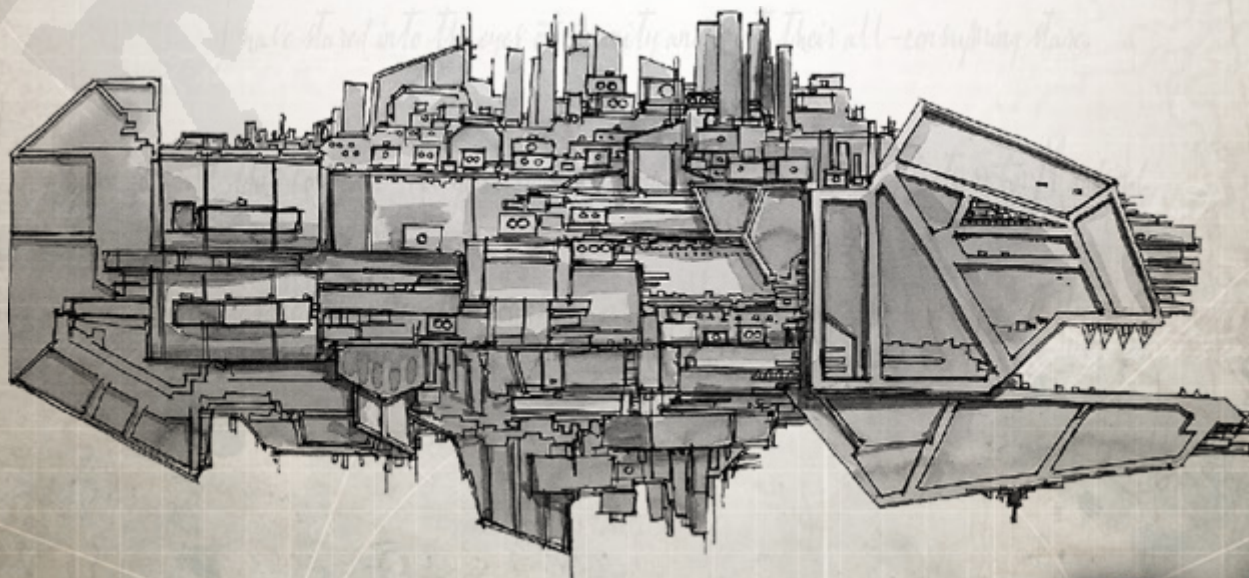
Grot Holes: Damage to crew population is halved, but damage to Morale is increased by +2.

‘Uge Armour Plates: The bonuses for this upgrade have been included in the ship’s profile.

Modifier Summary

The following modifiers apply to the *Deffstorm*:

- +10 bonus on all Command Tests involving boarding actions and Hit and Run Attacks.
- +10 bonus on all Pilot Tests to increase speed.
- +1d5 Speed during any manoeuvre action when the ship does not turn.
- -10 penalty on all tests made when on silent running.



SHADOW'S EDGE

Hull: Light Cruiser

Class: Aurora-class Light Cruiser

Dimensions: 3.4 km long, 0.4 km abeam approx.

Mass: 12 megatonnes approx.

Crew: Unknown

Accel: 9 gravities max sustainable acceleration.

Eldar corsair vessels are as graceful as they are deadly, and the *Shadow's Edge* is no exception. The ship follows the typical armament for the Aurora light cruisers; a destructive combination of two pulsar lances and four torpedo tubes. For most vessels, the lack of macrobatteries would be a hindrance, giving the vessel no way to strike down void shields and leave the ship vulnerable to follow-up lance shots. However, pulsar lances can fire a fusillade of brilliant beams in an instant, overpowering void shields and crippling opponents with a single volley.

The swept wings of the *Shadow's Edge's* solar sails resemble the pinions of some monstrous bird of prey, an appearance enhanced by the deep ebony hull speckled with motes of rich vermillion. The dread corsair Alasiel Belanir captains the voidship, using its exceptional manoeuvrability to great advantage. He is known to sweep down upon the winds of solar storms into his enemies, using the roiling electromagnetic vortexes to hide his approach. Often his enemies do not know he has arrived until the first torpedoes pass through their void shields and penetrate their hulls.

Within Modren's service, the *Shadow's Edge* often serves as an advance scout and outrider. Belanir's hatred for humanity means he can only barely stomach being in the presence of Modren and his fellow captains, and the *Shadow's Edge* is better tasked for lone operations in any case.

Speed: 14

Void Shields: –

Morale: 100

Turret Rating: 1

Manoeuvrability: +43

Armour: 15

Crew Population: 100

Weapon Capacity: Prow 2, Keel 1

Detection: +20

Hull Integrity: 48

Crew Rating: Crack (40)

Essential Components

Large Solar Sails, Warp-Plotter, Command Bridge, Eldar Life Sustainer, Eldar Crew Quarters, Sensor Array

Supplemental Components

2 Prow Pulsar Lances: (Lance; Strength 1, Damage 1d10+3; Crit Rating 3; Range 3; Pulsed Fire)

Keel Torpedo Tubes: (Torpedo Tubes; Strength 4; Damage 2d10+14; Range 40; Defensive Holofield; Terminal Penetration [3]) The *Shadow's Edge* is equipped with 24 torpedoes.

Holofield: The bonuses for this component are described below.

Stowage Bays: If this ship is captured with this component intact, the explorers gain 25 achievement points.

Modifier Summery

The following modifiers and rules apply to the *Shadow's Edge*:

- –1 Movement if heading towards the nearest sun, +1 Movement if at a right angle, no effect if moving away.
- Add 1 to Crew Population loss suffered.
- Subtract 1 from Morale Loss suffered (to minimum of 1).
- –40 on any test to hit the *Shadow's Edge* with lances, torpedoes, attack craft or by ramming. –20 to hit the *Shadow's Edge* with macrobatteries.
- –30 on any extended Action involving Detection.
- Torpedoes negate Turret Rating bonuses and use Seeking Rules.

