

CHARACTER BOOK ADDENDUM



FADING SUNS



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Dedication:

To all the writers and artists who helped reveal the far-flung worlds of **Fading Suns** in all its previous editions and books. You are all saints and true servants of the Pancreator.

And to Greg Stafford (1948-2018), mythmaker. **Fading Suns** wouldn't exist without the immeasurable influence of Greg's worlds and games.

Pilgrims:

It is truly the end of history, it seems. Judgment is near. Yet, I cannot accept that we are to be rewarded for sitting still and waiting for death. If that were so, why did the Prophet say: "A sun must burn to birth light. When your passion burns, you give off light." Perhaps the suns die because we lack passion. Passion for life, for the struggle necessary to unlock the Mystery. We are bored with everything, having accomplished all. History has returned to the point at which it began.

Or perhaps the answer still waits for us. Perhaps the dying suns are our spur to greatness, a necessary quest on which we will finally understand ourselves and our place in the universe.

— Guiseppe Alustro, *My Time Among the Stars*

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Starships

Julia Abrams smirked and gestured at the sensor readouts. "No way can they find us here. This asteroid is one in a million, and we're stuck to it like a Madoc lamprey." She leaned back and laced her hands behind her head.

"Don't Madoc lampreys stay latched onto a corpse even after it's dead, even after they start to starve?" said Cardanzo, his brow furrowed.

Julia shrugged. "Beats me. I'm just saying —" Alarms blared from her console. "Shit!" She leaned forward, hitting various switches before she reached for the joystick.

"Don't tell me," Cardanzo said, latching his seat harness. "They've detected us."

"One in a million, damn it! We were one in a million!" Julia yanked back on the joystick. The ship lurched as the grav plates temporarily lost power during sudden acceleration before coming back online. "Uh, hey," Julia said, flipping on the speaker channel, "you guys might want to hold on to something back there. Until Sanjuk finishes the rewiring, those plates are going to be going on and off while I do some fancy maneuvering here." She flicked the channel closed and turned back to smile at Cardanzo. "I got this."

An explosion off their starboard hull jolted them. Cardanzo raised his eyebrows.

"Lucky shot," Julia said, turning back to give her full attention to piloting. "The shields will hold." She then muttered under her breath, barely loud enough for Cardanzo to hear her: "Saint Paulus preserve us. I swear, I'll pay back that debt I owe Alustro. Just get us out of this...."

Starships in **Fading Suns** are rare jewels, high-technology artifacts of a previous age that can be afforded by only the most powerful factions. A rare few individuals own their own ships, but for the most part, ships are owned by factions and operated under license by their agents and allies. Of course, PCs might very well become those agents for their factions, setting off for adventures among the stars under the patronage of a noble house, Church sect, League guild, or as Questing Knights and Imperial Cohorts for the Emperor.

The rules for dealing with starships could get hopelessly complicated if strict realism was the goal. We instead prefer to handle them as a part of the story of the characters who control or ride in them. In other words, we're more concerned with a ship's role in adventurous narratives than the exigencies of its exact functions.

There are a host of starship combat games out there (among them: *Noble Armada*, a miniatures game set in the **Fading Suns** universe). Rather than taking up too many pages presenting a mini-game for how to handle starships and their operations, we present the following guidelines for when player characters are involved with them, either as commanders or passengers.

TERMINOLOGY

We use the term "starship" to refer to any vessel that can travel between planets. To be more technical, "starships" have jumpdrives that allow them to travel to distant star systems via the Anunnaki jumpgates, while "spaceships" lack those drives and are bound to their systems. A more general term is "spacecraft," often used by people in the Known Worlds who aren't too familiar with such ships

(beyond the idea that they travel in space). Don't get too caught up on terminology. Known Worlders tend to use the term "starship" for anything that gets them off the rock they're currently on.

Standard Ship Classes

There's a vast range of ship types, including everything from scout ships to freighters to luxury liners to massive military dreadnoughts. It's unlikely that PCs will operate large military ships. We've provided some details below on the smaller civilian ship classes that PCs are most likely to operate or gain passage aboard.

While there are a variety of one-offs and rarer ship types (designs mostly dating to the Second Republic), the standard classes are the most common, since the ability of the major factions to build, fit, and salvage them is fairly reliable.

The classes are based on the size of a ship's hull and its configuration. The smaller the hull, the smaller the ship class. In the early 51st century, spacecraft hulls are expensive to produce. They're quite durable, though. Ship combat involves disabling ship systems, but the hulls usually come out relatively intact. For this reason, it's preferable to board and capture a ship, so you can reuse it or ransom it back to its owning faction.

Each royal house has its own proprietary hull configuration for each class of ship. This is tech they can reliably reproduce, although at great expense. While one house might capture another house's ships, they won't necessarily have the tech know-how to reliably



and cheaply maintain their foreign configurations. They'll usually ransom such ships back to their owners, in return for some of their own captured ships.

The Church and League have their own proprietary ships, although they're fewer in number and with less variety than the royal houses.

The traits for these ships are explained in the *Actions* section below. Note that the number of passengers listed is *in addition* to the crew positions.

Explorer

Travelers use these ships as couriers, as well as for exploration expeditions and stealth recon in enemy space. Explorers usually have only one gun at most (usually turret mounted). They're graded for landing on planets.

The example below is based on the Hawkwood Wayfarer style of explorer.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)

Sensors: Basic 4

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot/navigator, engineer, gunner (optional: the turret can be run by a think machine program — 3000 fb)

Marines: 0

Passengers: 3-6

SECTIONS

Bridge; cabins x3 (1-person); captain's cabin; cargo holds x2 (10 metric tons each); mess; passenger cabins x3 (2-person)

SHIELDS

Speed	Available Shields
Stopped	2
Partial thrust	1
Full thrust	0

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

System	Vitality
Grapple gun (fore)	2
Engines	12
Maneuver jet (aft port)	2
Maneuver jet (aft starboard)	2
Maneuver jet (fore port)	2
Maneuver jet (fore starboard)	2
Turret:	
Laser	2

BOARDING ROUTES

- Fore maneuver jet → bridge
- Aft maneuver jet → engine room → bridge
- Rear engine room → bridge

Raider

Used as traders and pirate ships, raiders can combine forces to take on frigates.

The example below is based on the Decados Reaper style raider.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)

Sensors: Basic 5

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, 5 gunners (optional: the turret can be run by a think machine program)

Marines: 4 (typical quality: 3)

Passengers: 0

SECTIONS

Bridge; Bunkrooms x3 (2-person each); captain's cabin; cargo holds x2 (5 metric tons each); conference room; crew cabins x 3 (2-person each); mess

SHIELDS

Speed	Available Shields
Stopped	2
Partial thrust	1
Full thrust	0

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

System	Vitality
Engines	12
Gun deck (port):	
Grapple gun	2
Laser	2
Gun deck (starboard):	
Grapple gun	2
Laser	2
Maneuver jet (aft port)	1
Maneuver jet (aft starboard)	1
Maneuver jet (fore port)	2
Maneuver jet (fore starboard)	2
Turret:	
Laser	2

BOARDING ROUTES

- Aft maneuver jet → gun deck → fore maneuver jet → bridge *OR* aft maneuver jet → engine room → bridge
- Fore maneuver jet → bridge
- Gun deck → fore maneuver jet → bridge
- Rear engine room → bridge

Escort

Used to defend against pirates (usually raider ships).

The example below is based on the Merchant League Sentry style escort.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)

Sensors: Basic 5

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, 7 gunners (optional: the turret can be run by a think machine program — 3000 fb)

Marines: 5 (typical quality: 4)

Passengers: 1 (2 double-bunked)

SECTIONS

Bunkrooms x3 (4-persons each); bridge; captain's cabin; cargo holds x2 (15 metric tons each); conference room; engineer's cabin (1-person); guest cabin (1-person); mess; pilot/navigator cabin (2-person); tech lab

SHIELDS

Speed	Available Shields
Stopped	2
Partial thrust	1
Full thrust	0

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

System	Vitality
Engines	12
Gun deck (port):	
Grapple gun	2
Laser 1	2
Laser 2	2
Gun deck (starboard):	
Grapple gun	2
Laser 1	2
Laser 2	2
Maneuver jet (aft port)	1
Maneuver jet (aft starboard)	1
Maneuver jet (fore port)	2
Maneuver jet (fore starboard)	2
Turret:	
Laser	2

BOARDING ROUTES

- Aft maneuver jet → gun deck → fore maneuver jet → bridge *OR* aft maneuver jet → engine room → bridge
- Gun deck → fore maneuver jet → bridge
- Fore maneuver jet → bridge
- Rear engine room → bridge

Hauler

The most common freighter configuration is a small ship that attaches to a preloaded cargo container.

The example below is based on the Merchant League Caravan style freighter.

Engine Class: Fast (5 days to jumpgate)

Sensors: Basic 3

PEOPLE

Crew: Captain, pilot, navigator, engineer, gunner (optional: the turret can be run by a think machine program)

Marines: 0

Passengers: 3

SECTIONS

Bunkroom (3-person); bridge; captain's cabin; cabins x2 (2-person); cargo hold (330 metric tons)

SHIELDS

Speed	Available Shields
Stopped	4
Partial thrust	2
Full thrust	0

SYSTEMS/ARMAMENTS

Systems	Vitality
Engines	8
Maneuver jet (port)	3
Maneuver jet (starboard)	3
Turret:	
Laser	2

BOARDING ROUTES

- Port bridge
- Forward cargo hold → bridge
- Port maneuver jet → bridge
- Starboard maneuver jet → engine room → port maneuver jet → bridge *OR* starboard maneuver jet → gun deck → bridge
- Starboard gun deck → bridge
- Rear engine room → port maneuver jet → bridge

Transport (Small)

Now that stellar pilgrimages are becoming more common, the market has adapted to provide cheap transports for the flocks of the faithful. While the well-off can travel by luxury liner, commoners are consigned to the less comfortable rag-tag fleets of converted transport ships. This particular example is a small hauler (see above) whose detachable cargo hold has been modified to carry people rather than tonnage. Instead of private bunks, rows of crash seats accommodate up to 20 passengers and their personal belongings, leaving some room for light cargo bound for distant markets.

Some ships also offer a shipboard priest to tend to the pilgrims' needs on the journey. In the case of Church transports, these are usually young mendicants or friars. On League or independent ships, these are often priests who fell afoul of Church politics and could not get a proper posting to a cathedral or chapel.

Use the same traits as the hauler shown above, except that it can carry 20 passengers in the transport section (that is, the remodeled cargo hold), and its cargo capacity is 100 metric tons.

Military Ships

It is unlikely for PCs to have direct encounters with military ships, unless they're causing some real trouble in a system.

Military ships are expected to display faction colors on their hulls; civilian and merchant ships have no such requirement.

FRIGATE

The frigate is the most common combat ship. In times of peace, they perform gunboat diplomacy and systems policing. In times of war, they are scouts; when combined into armadas, they're front-line vessels.

GALLIOT

This variation of the frigate specializes in boarding actions. A host of marines take the place of guns.

DESTROYER

This dedicated warship is rarely used outside of times of war. A destroyer often performs escort duties for the larger capital ships.

CRUISER

A cruiser is a capital ship capable of bombarding a planet's surface from space.

DREADNOUGHT

The largest military ship is the dreadnought. Most royal houses have only a handful of them.

CARRIERS

These are rare in the Known Worlds, but they're known to be used by Kurgan barbarians. Their decks launch small fleets of short-range fighters.

JUMPDRIVES AND SATHRA DAMPERS

To be able to travel through a jumpgate to a distant star system, a ship needs a jumpdrive. The "drive" isn't so much a thrust engine as a field emitter, enveloping the ship in an energy field that somehow, somehow resonates with the jumpgate's energy vortex, allowing it to be transported to the destination opened by the jumpgate coordinates in a single piece. Large ships have larger fields and can sometimes fit other ships within their penumbra, although this takes careful piloting. Straying outside the penumbra during a jump results in the non-jump-capable ship disappearing altogether... or arriving in pieces.

The original jumpdrive tech was reverse engineered by zaibatsu technicians reading the energy fluctuations emitted by Urth's jumpgate. Somehow, they were able to activate the gate. After multiple experiments with drones, they figured out the field dynamics needed to maintain integrity of objects passing through the vortex.

When they sent manned ships through, they did not anticipate the Sathra Effect. The end result over the years was the creation of the Sathra damper, a shield that modified the harmonics of the jumpdrive field within the confines of the ship, preventing anyone aboard from experiencing the Sathra Effect.

Removing the damper is a crime. Inquisitors often know little about the technology they're busy condemning, but many often learn how to recognize a disabled Sathra damper. Luckily for the souls aboard, it's not easy to remove or disable a damper; it takes some engineering know-how.

Acquiring a Ship

Whether or not a troupe has control of a spaceship is up to the gamemaster, based on the needs of their epic. If they decide the troupe gets one, it's usually through one of the following means.

COMMISSION

The troupe does not own their ship; they use and care for it in trust for its actual owner, who is usually a high-ranking member of the troupe leader's faction. They must pay for upkeep, but often the owner might help with these costs. Example: A Questing Knight troupe might be given an explorer by the Imperial administration in return for performing missions and tasks for the Emperor in dangerous barbarian space. Rumors that the Imperial Eye places listening devices on all Questing Knight vessels are patently false, though the quality of these ships has often been less than stellar.

INHERITANCE

One or more of the troupe members has inherited a ship. They own it, but they also own all its costs for upkeep. If it's a family heirloom, it might be expected that the inheritor will hand it down to another generation when the time comes, so long as it stays in the family. Example: A Charioteer inherits his father's small freighter and is expected to keep up the family business of trading among the stars. Of course, sometimes this means the troupe inherits the relative's enemies (and debt collectors). Stories that the relative's ghost sometimes refuses to leave the ship are surely peasant folklore.

PIRACY

Surely no troupe member would ever steal a spaceship. It must all be a misunderstanding. Still, no matter how much the troupe's spiritual advisor may counsel otherwise, far too frequently this seems to be how the troupe gets their hands on one. Perhaps they have the noblest of intentions, only stealing from pirates. Perhaps a noble has managed to procure a letter of marque for the troupe to act as privateers against the Vuldrok, and they took a vessel as prize. Or perhaps, in desperate haste to get off a suddenly antagonistic planet, they put rapiers to the throats of the crew and demanded their ship. Now, while the troupe does have a ship (often needing repairs and lacking a full crew), they also have a new host of enemies and suspicions. Let's also hope the troupe has a highly qualified engineer to ensure the engines are not booby trapped, the shields are functional, and the Sathra damper is working.

MONEY

Starships are invaluable. They usually cannot be bought for money alone — although they do cost a lot of money. Most owners won't simply sell a ship to an individual; they'll also want some favor or arrangement with the prospective buyer's faction. This could

be a trade contract, a dispensation from the Church, a promise of protection, or anything someone well-off enough to be able to sell a ship might need from a powerful institution. Even at the height of the Emperor Wars, when privateers regularly sold captured ships, they rarely sold to individuals. The factions, be they noble, merchant, or religious, bought the vast majority of these.

This means that troupes wanting to own and crew their own ships usually need to gain the backing of one of their member's factions. In return, they'll be expected to use that ship for one or more missions for that faction (the bigger the ship, the more the missions), until their social-capital debt is paid off.

But that is in addition to the cold, hard firebirds the ship's current owner will want. The chart below lists the typical costs for four different ship classes. Some ships can cost considerably more, if they're well-fitted, while a few might cost less if they're in need of repair or a thorough hull-rat extermination procedure.

Characters with the Riches perk can take out a loan instead of paying the full cost. The chart lists the minimum level of that perk needed to qualify, and the firebird cost rises by 20% due to interest. Half of the character's listed annual income for their Riches perk must be applied annually to paying off the loan (i.e., 5000 per year for a Wealthy character). Failure to pay can mean anything from a rise in interest rate to a leg-breaking warning to confiscation of the ship.

Troupe members can pool their levels together to co-sign for the loan (this is required to be able to afford an escort). For example, a character with Well-Off Riches can team with a character with Good Riches (for a total of three levels of the Riches perk) to match the equivalent of Wealthy.

Ship Class	Firebird Cost	Riches Perk
Explorer	70,000	Wealthy
Raider	100,000	Rich
Escort	120,000	Filthy Rich
Hauler, light	100,000	Rich
Hauler, fast	120,000	Filthy Rich

JUMPKEYS

Owning a ship doesn't mean a troupe has any jumpkeys. They'll need one or more of those to travel from one system to another. While Charioteers graduate their apprenticeships with a single jumpkey, a troupe will have to acquire others on their own, through gameplay on adventures, missions, or crimes.



Space Encounters

PCs can serve as vital agents in shipboard actions. These rules emphasize their possible roles, making their choices and skills important factors in space encounters.

Spacecraft dramas don't occur in Instantaneous turn-based play; they're played through Present Tense moments and punctuated by key dice rolls. Space conflict isn't about fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants fighter piloting. It's more like slow-moving naval combat, although obviously in three-dimensional space rather than on water.

Most space activity is peaceful; ships are busy trading, touring, or patrolling. Each system is owned by one or another of the major factions, and they ensure that their space-lanes are relatively safe and calm. Outside of the occasional pirate, most space travelers have little to worry about on their journeys from planet to jumpgate.

Of course, that's assuming they stick to the major routes patrolled by the system's defense forces, as declared in standardized star charts. There are no guarantees for those who go "off road." They might encounter hidden star-labs developing technologies that the factions would prefer remained a secret, confront rebel insurgencies building up forces for a sortie against the ruling powers, or even uncover antinomist cultists lurking on asteroids and worshipping the demons of the Dark Between the Stars. Even worse, they might discover that certain folktales are all too real and that there really are creatures out there — *void krakens*, hungry to eat ships and the souls that man them.

Actions

When ships encounter hostile ships, you have five main actions to consider. Each of them is performed by a particular crewmember (who might very well be a PC).

- **Sense:** The ship's navigator uses ship sensors to find and identify other ships.
- **Pursue:** The ship's pilot chases or flees from another spacecraft.
- **Battle:** The ship's captain directs tactical maneuvers to disable another ship.
- **Repair:** The ship's engineer performs emergency repairs to damaged systems.
- **Board:** The ship's marine commander leads a cadre onto another vessel, fighting to take its bridge and force a surrender.

Sense

Space is big. Unbelievably big. That means it's not always easy to see what's out there. A ship's sensor array determines the range at which other objects (in-

cluding enemy ships) can be detected, as well as the quality of detail that can be read.

A sensor array is given a rating from 1–10: the shortest distance is 1 and the longest distance is 10. Each rank represents the distance in AU that the sensors can read. A rating of 1 means the ship can detect things up to 1 AU away. Beyond that, it must rely on star charts to know what's out there and where everything is. Of course, the charts only apply to predictable objects, like planets and known comets; starships don't show up on charts.

There's also the quality of the sensors to consider in determining the level of detail they can divulge. Basic sensors can provide rough extrapolations, enough to identify a ship's class but not its particular faction's unique configuration. For instance, you can identify an explorer, but not whether it's the cylindrical Hawkwood model or the more raptor-like Decados type. Military sensors are more precise, providing exact identification of other ships but fewer details about other stellar bodies like planets. Second Republic sensors, although rarer, provide almost everything you'd want to know about anything within their range.

SENSORS

Sensor Array	Rating*	Information
Basic	1-5	Detect ship class** and speed, rough planetary info
Military	1-7	Detect class, faction, speed, ship systems, planetary details
Second Republic	1-10	Detect class, faction, ship systems, section-layout, crew numbers, planetary details

* 1 AU range per rating

** Detected at far and distant ranges; at close and near range, a ship's class and faction can be identified visually

NAVIGATING SPACE

The job of the ship's navigator is to keep a watch on space all around the ship, as far as the sensors allow, and to chart a course through it using their knowledge of the system, bolstered by star charts. (On small ships like explorer-class vessels, the pilot often doubles as navigator.)

The navigator is also the person to turn to when the captain wants to hide a ship from other ships outside of visual sensor range. (See the *Stellar Distances* sidebar.) This involves not simply traveling surreptitiously, but also using stellar phenomena — asteroids, debris, planetary gravity — to baffle other ships' sensors.

This is far easier to do at great distances (one or more AU) than at ranges of engagement.

MANEUVERS

The ship's navigator executes these maneuvers.

DETECT

Action

You search for ships and objects within far range of your ship. Objects within near range can be seen on the ship's visual monitors without the need for a roll.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Interface + Wits

Capability: Think Machines, Shipboard Operations

Resistance: Easy for frigate-class ships and larger, Hard for raider-class ships and smaller

Impact: You detect objects of interest, their present locations, speeds, and vectors. You must perform an identify maneuver to determine just what the object is.

HIDE

Action

You use the stellar environment to confuse others' sensors about your ship's presence and/or location. This cannot be performed at close range; it can only be performed at near range if there's a significant object to hide behind, such as an asteroid, space station, or a dead-in-the-void ship.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Focus + Intuition

Capability: Think Machines, Shipboard Operations

Resistance: Depends on your ship's class. Hiding is Hard for explorers, raiders, and escorts; Demanding for freighters and frigates; Tough for galliots; Severe for destroyers; impossible for capital ships.

Impact: You can spend VP to make it harder for others to *detect* and *identify* your ship: 1 VP per +1 Resistance.

IDENTIFY

Action

You attempt to identify an object picked up on the sensors at near and far ranges. A think machine with a good database can help greatly (making this roll favorable). The quality of the sensors sets limitations; see *Sensors*, above.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Interface + Wits

Capability: Think Machines, Shipboard Operations

Resistance: Easy for frigates and larger, Hard for escorts and smaller

Impact: You correctly identify the object.

STELLAR DISTANCES

Space is measured in astronomical units (AU). One AU is the distance from Urth to the Sun. Most jumpgates are about 70 to 100 AU distant from their system's sun, orbiting the outer edge of their solar systems. In between, there's a number of planets varying in size and number, as well as asteroids, natural debris, and maybe even the occasional comet.

For the purposes of these tabletop rules, we use the following steps to represent the different activities that can occur within different ranges. The actual distance is relative to each ship, based on its sensor rating. A raider with a 5 rating has a far range of 5 AU, while an explorer with a 4 rating reaches up to 4 AU at its far range.

Close — The target is within grappling gun range.

Near — The target is within "sight": about a fifth of a lunar distance (roughly 75,000 km). At engagement range, pursuits shift to battle mode (see below). Objects can be seen on the ship's visual monitors.

Far — The target is within sensor range: anything outside of near (visual) range and up to maximum sensor range (based on the ship's sensor's rating; 1 AU per rating). Objects can be detected by most sensors and possibly identified. Pursuits can begin at this range (see below).

Distant — The target is outside sensor range. Navigation to extremely distant objects relies on star charts.

Pursue

Before a combat or boarding action is possible, an aggressor ship must close within range of its prey. If its prey prefers to avoid the encounter, or if the prey wants to escape from a situation that's already too close, the chase is on.

In a chase, dice rolls are made by the pilot. The overall choices — the destination — might be made by the captain, but the pilot executes them with precision and expert timing.

A chase can occur as soon as a ship is detected, even if it's at a great stellar distance away. A chase might begin with one ship near, say, Mars, while its pursuer has just left the orbit of Urth's moon. If they share a mutual destination — such as the system's jumpgate — getting there might bring them closer



together, depending on the gate's location in its orbit relative to the ships' locations. Also, a ship with efficient engines can speed up more quickly (by applying greater thrust).

ENERGY SHIELDS AND SPEED

Spacecraft that travel too fast risk damaging their hulls. Energy shields are dedicated to deflecting the debris that is naturally scattered throughout space. As a ship moves faster and faster, it encounters more and more debris, requiring more of its shields to be dedicated to deflection. If all the shields are used up and the ship keeps accelerating, debris will begin impacting the hull. This tends to put an upper speed limit on starship chases. Still, a capital ship such as a cruiser or dreadnought has so many more shields, as well as thrust capacity, than a tiny explorer that it can plow through space with greater abandon in pursuit of distant prey.

Speed is simplified into three factors: stopped (no movement), partial thrust, and full thrust. When a ship is stopped, all of the ship's energy shields are available to deflect attacks. As the ship adds thrust, some shields become occupied dealing with debris, so that at partial thrust only half the shields are available to block enemy fire. At full thrust, *all* shields are occupied against debris and cannot protect against enemy fire.

Speed	Energy Shields
Stopped	All available
Partial thrust	½ available
Full thrust	None available (all are occupied vs debris)

Example: *An al-Malik Odyssey-class explorer has two shields. When stopped, both are available. At partial thrust, one is available. At full thrust, all are occupied, none are available. On the other hand, a League freighter has six shields: at partial thrust, three are available, and none are available at full.*

SPACE DEBRIS

If a ship loses one or more energy shields from lucky shots during battle, it might need to slow down, lest debris begin to damage the hull and ship's systems.

If half or more of the ship's shields are down, it cannot travel at full thrust without taking damage. If all shields are down, it can't travel at all without damage.

Damage is 1 Vitality per moment/turn that the ship moves. (A stopped ship takes no debris damage, even if all its shields are down.) See the *fire!* maneuver below (under *Battle*) to randomly determine which ship system takes the damage.

Example: *An explorer with two shields loses one of them. It can now only travel at partial thrust; otherwise, it will take damage. A freighter with six shields can lose three of them before it must give up full-thrust travel.*

SHIPBOARD GRAVITY

Ships maintain their own internal gravity, thanks to miraculous gravity-plate technology originally stolen from the vau. They're placed in the ceilings and fused with the hull. When powered on, they create an invisible repulsion field that exerts force downward, simulating 1 G of gravity. The field compensates for increased thrust, fast spin, or sudden vector changes, so the crew is not flung around every time the ship changes course. Cruder models on cheap ships sometimes have a slight "hiccup" when adjusting to such forces, forcing the crew to "buckle up" for rough rides.

More advanced models can alter the force for less or slightly more gravity, and all models can be turned off to produce zero-G in stopped ships. (A moving ship presents a degree of force from its thrust, but it's sideways to the normal up-and-down direction intended by most ship designs.)

Removing a grav plate from its hull is a major operation that requires a shipyard.

TRAVEL TIMES

Some ships are faster than others. Their engines produce more thrust, propelling an accelerating ship forward more quickly than a ship with less thrust power. Engines are classed as slow, standard, or fast.

- A slow ship can make the trip from planet to jumpgate in 10 days, assuming full thrust (or 20 days at partial thrust).
- A standard ship can make the trip in 7 days at full or 14 at partial thrust.
- A fast ship can make it in 5 days at full or 10 at partial thrust.

These are general times. The actual position of the jumpgate in its far orbit relative to the planet of departure can add or subtract travel time, as can taking alternate routes that don't go directly there.

MANEUVERS

Pursuit maneuvers are executed by the ship's pilot (who must have the restricted Pilot skill, as well as the Spacecraft capability).

CHASE/ESCAPE

Action

You gain or close distance — flee or pursue. See *Pursuits* (under the Drive skill description) in **Chapter 3: Traits**.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Pilot + Wits

Capability: Spacecraft

Resistance: Depends on the “terrain” of space: the presence of many objects (asteroids, other ships) makes it Tough; otherwise, it’s Hard.

Impact: As per the *Pursuits* rules. The pursuer and prey are assumed to be traveling at full thrust. If one of them drops to partial thrust, the race is over and the other closes within battle range. (See *Battle* below.)

A ship’s engine class (slow, standard, fast) can affect the race. For each level by which one ship is swifter than the other, it gains one additional range increase per victory on a *chase* or *escape* roll. When ships are evenly matched in thrust, victory awards one range increase. (See *Ship Classes* above for example ships and their engine classes.)

STUNT

Action

You perform some risky course corrections in an attempt to throw off your pursuer. See the *stunt* maneuver description for the Drive skill (in **Chapter 6: Traits**).

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Pilot + Intuition

Capability: Spacecraft

Resistance: Depends on the “terrain” of space: the presence of many objects (asteroids, other ships) makes it Tough; otherwise, it’s Hard.

Impact: As per the *stunt* maneuver. Your ship’s engine class might also further increase the range; see *chase/escape* above.

Battle

In a starship combat, dice rolls are not made by the gunners or pilot but by the captain. It’s less a situation of dexterous twitching at the maneuver jets and gun sights and more about tactical competency and command (including the long-term ability to forge the crew into a responsive unit).

When an aggressor ship comes within near range of its prey, it can begin firing guns in an attempt to disable the prey’s systems. This is played out like an instantaneous turn-by-turn combat, but each turn is actually a few minutes long, as the ships execute their slow maneuvering. Like a turn-based combat, each side has a place in the initiative queue and can perform a single primary action per turn.

Although most weapons have nigh-infinite range in space (energy and matter will keep going until it dis-

perses or impacts an object), the ability to actually hit a chosen target with shipboard armaments is next to impossible beyond near range.

The style of fighting relies on broadsides and boarding actions in space. Due to the physics of space, you can’t simply turn on a dime and zip around anywhere you want. Thrust is applied from only one direction (from the engines), so braking involves spinning the ship around (using the maneuver jets) and applying thrust in the direction of travel to counter current momentum.

Ships guns are either reloaded or recharged between shots. To deliver maximum damage in the shortest amount of time, ships fire a broadside from a gun deck and then spin around to bring their other gun deck to bear, then repeat the process until their enemy surrenders, escapes, or is within close range for grappling, allowing them to commence a boarding action to seize the ship.

Guns are fired to disable ship systems. Usually, you want to first take out the enemy’s guns, but if they’re fleeing, you might go for the engines first to prevent them from adding more thrust. (The danger here is that, without working engines, they can’t slow down either.)

SHIP SYSTEMS

The type and number of guns per deck varies per faction (Li Halan prefer lasers; Decados prefer slug guns) and ship class (a destroyer has more guns than a frigate). The larger the class, the larger the engine and the possibility of more maneuver jets.

Systems are rated by their Vitality (i.e., how many points of damage it takes to disable them). The effects listed below apply when a system has lost all its Vitality.

Systems	Effect
Engine	Taking out the engine prevents the ship from applying thrust. This means it can’t speed up or slow down but instead keeps moving along its vector. Another ship can take control of a disabled ship’s movement by grappling it.
Gun	Taking out a gun prevents its damage from being added to a volley’s total damage (see below).
Maneuver jet	Taking out a maneuver jet slows the ship’s ability to reorient (see the <i>evasive action</i> maneuver, below); taking out all jets prevents the ship from controlling its spin (it cannot bring its opposite gun deck to bear).
Turret	Taking out a turret prevents its weapon(s) from being fired

ARMAMENTS

We consider only two directions for ship battles: starboard (the right side of the ship when you're facing forward) and port (the left side). When ships come into conflict, decide where they are in relation to each other's two sides. Ship battles often involve firing a single broadside volley of all guns on that side's gun deck, after which the ship spins around to bring its other gun deck to bear for a fresh volley.

A gun can be fired once every *other* turn. It fires, then spends a turn recharging (or being reloaded by gunners), then can fire again the following turn.

Weapon*	Goal	Damage**	Special Effect
Slug gun	—	4	Cannot pierce shields***
Laser	+2	2	
Blaster	—	3	Leaks through shields (see <i>Energy Shields</i> earlier in this chapter)
Heat blaster	-3 v shields	2	A hit ignores all shields.
EM pulse gun	—	2	Burns out shield for 1 round; when part of a volley, guns in the volley ignore one active shield
Missile	-1	4	
Grapple gun	—	—	Close range only; connects the ships so marines can cross from one to the other.

* These stats are for light versions of these weapons. Military ships host medium and heavy versions.

** Damage is per weapon.

*** Slug guns are often paired with EM pulse guns

MOUNTS

Gun deck: All guns on a gun deck can fire at once as part of a single volley. When figuring damage, add up all the guns on the deck, plus any turrets that participate in the volley. For example, a League escort has 2 lasers on each gun deck, plus 1 laser in a turret. Its volley thus can involve up to 3 lasers. Each does 2 damage for a total of 6 damage from a single volley.

Missile: Each missile is its own volley, even when shot from a gun deck.

Turret: A turret gun can fire in any direction and can either join a gun deck's volley or make a separate volley of its own.

ENERGY SHIELDS

A ship's available shields deflect attacks. Each available shield can block a single volley once per round, completely deflecting *all* damage from that volley. Blasters can leak through shields and EM pulse guns can disable them for 1 round.

Some ships have more than one shield available. For example, a freighter has 3 shields at partial thrust. This means it can block three volleys per round. In battle against a single other ship, it'll hold up well, blocking its attacks. When you add additional attacking ships, it might be in trouble (although it can stop and gain all its six shields). Most two-ship battles wind up with a boarding action or an escape.

MANEUVERS

The following maneuvers (except *decelerate*) represent the captain giving orders that the crew executes. On small ships with small crew complements, the captain punches in the orders into the ship's think machine, which then executes the commands.

DECELERATE

Action (pilot)

Once ships enter engagement range, they often slow down to make more of their shields available to block incoming fire. While the captain is the one to order a slow-down, the pilot executes the maneuver. Hence, it can be done in the same turn that the captain takes their action.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Pilot + Wits

Capability: Spacecraft

Resistance: Decelerating is Hard for ships traveling at partial thrust and Demanding for full thrust.

Impact: You drop thrust by one degree. You can spend 3 VP to drop another degree. If you're traveling at full (as most ships are during pursuits), you can drop to partial thrust with a victory or spend 3 VP to stop.

EVASIVE ACTION

Action (captain)

You maneuver your ship to avoid enemy fire and/or take maximum advantage of your available shields. You'll need proper timing to execute a spin while anticipating your enemy's maneuvering.

The number of available shields can add a bonus to this roll: +1 goal per available shield.

Ships have multiple maneuver jets (allowing the ship to spin). Enemy fire can destroy one or more jets. For each jet that is lost, raise the Resistance by 1. If all jets are lost, this maneuver cannot be performed at all.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Focus + Wits

Capability: Shipboard Operations, Warfare Lore

Resistance: Evasive action is Hard for ships traveling at partial thrust and Demanding for full thrust.

Impact: Spend VP to boost your Resistance against enemy *fire!* maneuvers: 2 VP per +1 Resistance.

Alternatively, you can ensure that enemy fire only hits the system you want it to hit. You spend VP equal to the firing-ship captain's Wits. If that captain scores a hit, it's in the system you chose. (You cannot both raise Resistance *and* choose the system you want to be hit; choose one or the other option.)

FIRE!

Action (action)

You order guns brought to bear. This maneuver represents a single volley. If your ship has weaponry capable of separate volleys (such as a turret and a gun deck), and you have gunners to man the guns, you can attempt this maneuver multiple times in a single turn, up to a maximum number of volleys equal to your Focus skill. Each *fire!* after the first suffers -2 goal.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Focus + Wits

Capability: Shipboard Operations, Warfare Lore

Resistance: Base Resistance equals the target-ship captain's Wits rating.

The skill lies in hitting the systems you want to target, which requires outthinking the enemy's maneuvering while executing your own. It's harder to target some sections than others; apply the following modifiers. If you're not taking a targeted shot, see below.

Targeted system	Resistance
Engine	+2
Gun deck	—
Maneuver jet	+1
Turret	+2

Impact: You hit the ship. If you did not target a system (which raises Resistance), roll a d20 to see which system to you hit:

d20 result

d20 result	System hit
1–10	Gun deck
11–14	Maneuver jet
15–16	Turret (if none, then Engine)
17–20	Engine

If the system hit is already destroyed, the volley blows into the next system on the list.

Special: On a critical hit, you can choose to take out an energy shield instead of damaging a ship system. This might result in the damaged ship being forced to slow down to compensate for the loss of the shield's debris deflection.

GRAPPLE

Action (captain)

You order your ship to close to grappling range (assuming your ship has a grappling gun).

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Focus + Wits

Capability: Shipboard Operations, Warfare Lore

Resistance: Based on the targeted ship's thrust:

Hard for stopped ships, Demanding for ships traveling at partial thrust, Tough for full thrust.

Impact: You secure a grapple and can begin boarding actions (see *Board* below). Consult the boarding routes listing for the ship. Choose a point of entry section from which your marines will begin fighting to *advance* to the bridge.

Once a ship is grappled, it can no longer perform *evasive actions* or spin to bring its opposite gun deck into play (although the facing gun deck can keep firing every other turn). The larger ship controls the speed and vector of both ships as one. If the ships are matched in size class, either ship can *decelerate* or speed up, taking the other with it at that speed.

Repair

Ships systems can be damaged by enemy fire, as well as by debris that wasn't properly deflected by the ship's energy shields (which can happen if the ship's speed exceeds its shields' capacity).

The ship's engineer can make emergency repairs. In small ships like explorers and raiders, one person might be able to effect repairs by themselves. Larger ships require a larger contingent of trained crew who can follow the engineer's directions.

MANEUVERS

Engineers must have the Shipboard Operations capability as well as the Tech Lore capabilities.

FIX

Action

You work to repair the Vitality of a damaged system. Once the system is completely disabled (zero Vitality), you must *jury-rig* it (below) to be able to keep it working.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Tech Redemption + Wits

Capability: Shipboard Operations, relevant Tech Lore (usually TL6 or higher)

Resistance: Depends on the system.

System	Resistance
Engine	Hard
Gun	Tough
Maneuver jet	Demanding
Turret gun	Tough

Impact: Spend VP to restore Vitality to the system being worked on: 2 VP per 1 Vitality.

JUICE

Action

You tweak a single ship's system to get a temporary performance boost: strengthen an energy shield, rev up the ship's thrust, flow all power to the turret gun, etc.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Tech Redemption + Intuition

Capability: Shipboard Operations, relevant Tech Lore (usually TL6 or higher)

Resistance: Depends on the system.

System	Resistance
Engine	Hard
Gun	Tough
Maneuver jet	Demanding
Shield	Severe
Turret gun	Tough

Impact: For the rest of the scene, the system worked on performs at the next higher capacity; however, this uses up energy resources: the engine's Vitality is lowered by 2. A system can be juiced only once per act, but you can repeat this maneuver to *juice* other systems.

System	Boost
Engine	+1 class (slow to standard; standard to fast)
Gun	+2 damage
Maneuver jet	-2 Resistance on <i>evasive actions</i>
Shield	+1 active shield
Turret gun	+2 damage

JURY-RIG

Action

You perform a quick but temporary repair on a completely disabled system.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Tech Redemption + Intuition

Capability: Shipboard Operations, relevant Tech Lore (usually TL6 or higher)

Resistance: Depends on the system.

System	Resistance
Engine	Hard
Gun deck	Tough
Maneuver jet	Demanding
Shield	Severe
Turret	Tough

Impact: You get the system working for a little while (at least for a distance traveled in AU equal to the VP spent). Afterward, the system breaks down and must be repaired with fresh materials.

Board

Fading Suns era space combat is all about broadsides and boarding actions. The broadsides are handled by the captain; the boarding actions are executed by the marine commander and their complement of marines. It's still Present Tense action, not turn-based, measuring how both parties work to take sections of the ship or are repelled from sections.

The goal is to take territory, winning control of the ship section by section. The boarding ship must first grasp its prey with a grapple gun (see the *grapple* maneuver above). It then sends over a cadre of marines along the grapple line, who burn their way into the hull at the point of entry and begin fighting. Once the bridge is taken, the ship is won.

Ideally, play would involve a map of the boarded ship, showing which sections connect to one another and which ones need to be taken on the march to the bridge. We present here a simplified narrative method usable without maps.

Most boarding actions involve sword-and-axe combat in armored spacesuits. Guns risk damaging ship systems.

If a ship does not have a complement of marines listed with its traits, it cannot repel boarding actions. (If a ship the PCs are on is boarded and they want to resist, play this out as actual combat using the rules in previous chapters.)

SHIP SECTIONS

Boarding actions involve invading a ship and winning control over each section from the point of entry to the bridge. Once the bridge is taken, the ship is won. When you take a section, the following effects occur:

Section	Effect
Gun deck*	Guns are silenced (cannot be fired).
Engine room	The bridge cannot control thrust; the ship can't <i>decelerate</i> or speed up.
Maneuver jet	Prevents the jet from working (on larger ships, taking a jet prevents the jet jockeys from heeding bridge orders to maneuver the ship); the ship's <i>evasive actions</i> are hampered.
Bridge	Wins the ship.

Note: Crew quarters are ignored for boarding actions; they aren't territory an invading force needs to take on its way to the bridge, since presumably all defenders are on deck and not in quarters.

BREACHING SECTIONS

Sections are built for redundancies meant to keep their crew alive. In the case of a breach or loss of oxygen, connecting sections are automatically closed off by bulkheads. Part of a boarding action involves opening or cutting through these bulkheads. Since the aim is to take the ship, not necessarily to kill everyone on board, one marine might be tasked with sealing breaches behind the cadre's advance.

Standard equipment in every ship section's locker includes a number of *sealant nets*: TL6 synthmesh cloth that automatically expands and stretches to seal whatever breach they are thrown at, allowing atmosphere to be pumped back into the section. Engineers can then use more sturdy replacement plates and sealant when time allows.

Whenever a ship goes to battlestation status, crew and passengers are advised to don spacesuits. Crew, mid-class, and high-class passengers get actual suits, and marines get armored suits. Low-class passengers get their own *space sacks*: a large bag you crawl into, zip up, and trigger for a few hours of atmosphere. Needless to say, anyone without such protection when their section is breached begins Dying (see *Vitality*, in **Chapter 6: Traits**) from the sudden frigid lack of pressure and air.

MANEUVERS

The following maneuvers represent the marine commander giving orders that their troops then execute. Marine cadres (both attackers or defenders) are rated by their quality, ranging from 1 (untrained) to 10 (elite).

ADVANCE

Combat

You press your marine cadre forward to take the next ship system on your route to the bridge.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Impress + Presence or Strength

Capability: Military Weapons, Shipboard Operations

Resistance: Equals the defender's quality.

Impact: You reduce the number of defenders by 1 per 3 VP spent and win one section of the defending ship, allowing you to then attempt an *advance* to the next section for your next action. Once the defenders are all dead or wounded, the ship is won. (If the enemy succeeds in a *repel* action, you cannot proceed until you win another *advance*.)

DAUNT

Influence (coercion)

You attempt to demoralize the enemy troops.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Impress + Intuition

Capability: Military Weapons

Resistance: Enemy's quality

Impact: The enemy is Daunted. If you succeed in a successive *advance* or *repel* action, the enemy will retreat back by one section (or even return to their ship).

REPEL

Combat

You press your marine cadre to repel attacking boarders.

Time: Present Tense (primary action)

Roll: Impress + Presence or Wits

Capability: Military Weapons, Shipboard Operations

Resistance: Attacker's quality

Impact: You reduce the number of attackers by 1 per 3 VP spent and prevent their advance. Once they're all dead or wounded, the boarding action is over.

Cybertech

Before the dawn of the Second Republic, zaibatus and kindred corporations colonized the stars. Engineered for profit, they devised laws suited to their own interests, expanding the ranks of the disenfranchised as they redefined criminality. Black market rivals learned to circumvent those corporate laws with concealed personal technology. Even at the height of civilization, ambitious technophiles sought an edge over their enemies by augmenting their minds and bodies.

Millennia later, their distant descendants resurrect scavenged technology, kit-bashing ancient tech to meet the needs of a new dark age. Old cybertech isn't at the bleeding edge of pre-Fall tech, but it's better than what most commoners have. Criminals who fought the old zaibatsus didn't have long lifespans, but they did have concealable, profitable, and often ruthless cyberdevices. A new generation has learned to reboot and rebuild that tech.

Many priests find this trend particularly troublesome. If humans were made in the Creator's image, redefining that form is an insult, perhaps even blasphemy. Cyborgs inexorably tarnish their souls with each modification until they're only dim reflections of the Pancreator's light. The more these heretics deviate, the more they stray from humanity... and human restraint. Fortunately, there's a hidden network of specialists ready to help would-be cyborgs adjust: a shadowy underworld of cyborgs struggling to retain their sanity and humanity as they circumvent the law.

The Perks of Augmentation

In past millennia, cyber freaks could insert and remove highly customizable cyberware as casually as changing clothes. In the new millennium, grafting cybertech to your body isn't simply "plug and play." Characters acquire cybertech through perks. Unless you've got the proper perk to go with the new cyberdevice you've purchased, it won't integrate into your body: it is unusable. Adaptation also takes time, resources, and delicate cyber-surgery.

With time and experience, a cyborg can adapt to an increasing amount of tech in their body. In game terms, cyberdevices count against a character's Technosis rating, just as all high-tech does. (See *Technosis* in **Chapter 3: Traits**.) If you've implanted more devices than your Technosis allows, you're in overload, and since these devices are surgically attached, you can't simply offload them to ease your compulsions. This is called *cyberpsychosis*, since it's effectively permanent until enough tech is removed from the body or your Technosis is raised to adapt to it.

When you've got adequate Technosis to handle another cyberdevice, you're free to shop for the next tech you need, hunt down a surgeon who can implant it, and deal with the consequences of recovery and adaptation.

Unfortunately, there's no universal "Interweb" for finding these gizmos. Underworld contacts on your

current world may provide a list of devices from which you can choose, as provided by your GM. Cyborgs can conceivably customize a device's materials, power source, and features, but the rules for that can get complicated. This rulebook instead provides a list of off-the-shelf devices you can acquire. You gain your perk, pay the money, and take your chances.

Being caught with cybertech has its own share of risks. Local authorities don't like dealing with criminals who have augmentations they've never seen before, so mere possession of cyber can lead to arrest, exile, or even immolation. Keep in mind, though: If they don't know you have it, they can't guard against it. Cyborgs shouldn't be overt or indiscriminate in their use of cyber, but when it's applied at the right time in the right way, it can provide a winning (possibly chrome-polished) edge over your competition.

Common Devices

For your shopping convenience, we've included a few sample devices repeatedly confiscated from back-alley surgeons. The exact size and color may vary from one world to the next.

Each device is acquired as a perk (most often by taking the Cyborg calling, which gives you access to all of these devices). Once you begin play, however, you must *also* pay the firebird cost for new devices you acquire, *in addition* to the perk. So, to gain a shiv sleeve during play, you have to find the device somewhere, pay for it (unless you've stolen it or dug it out of a ruin), pay for the surgery, and also choose its perk as a calling perk. (Most callings don't provide access, though, so you'll probably need to follow the Cyborg calling for one or two levels, depending on how much cybertech you want to acquire.)

You can't install more than one cyberdevice for the same organ. If you've replaced your right eye with an Etyri Eye, you can't install a Shadow Eye in the same socket.

You may also find manufacturers' variants of a device: Each one includes a manufacturer's name, which can tip you off to its materials, power supply, tech level, and other considerations. Two manufacturers may make the same device, but with different bonuses and costs.

Caveat Emptor: Before you pay your firebirds, one more word of caution. Taking the maximum amount of cybertech is risky. As with all forms of high tech, cyberdevices cause tech compulsions in those who carry too much tech.

Armor

OZYMANDIAS TEFLON MESH

Calling • Cyberdevice TL6 • Precondition: Cyborg
Across most of your torso, back, and upper legs, you've got subcutaneous layers of highly resistant alloys, increasing your resistance to electricity, radiation, and acid. You're also comfortable in a wider range of temperatures.

Benefice: You gain concealed armor rated at +2 Body Resistance. It's also Flameproof and Shockproof, it's compatible with most energy shields, and it has ABC protection (atomic, biological, and chemical).

Cost: 200 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation

Tech compulsion: Protective

OZYMANDIAS TORSO MESH

Calling • Cyberdevice TL6 • Precondition: Cyborg

Across most of your torso, back, and upper legs, your skin has a second, hidden layer of metallic mesh underneath it. Externally, your appearance doesn't change. Internally, you have extra protection against crude forms of weapon damage.

Benefice: You gain concealed armor rated at +2 Body Resistance. It's also Hardproof and Slamproof, and it's compatible with most energy shields.

Cost: 200 firebirds to purchase; 200 firebirds for implantation

TECH COMPULSION: PROTECTIVE

Enhancements

CIRCE LITHE WIRE

Calling • Cyberdevice TL6 • Precondition: Cyborg
Synthetic muscle grafts boost your reaction time in your arm and leg muscles. This gives you swift reactions to danger, increasing your ability to deflect and dodge.

Benefice: You gain +2 goal when performing the *dodge* and *evade* maneuvers. You can spend 1 VP to boost your Body Resistance by 2. After that, the cost is normal (+1 Resistance per 1 VP).

Cost: 200 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Heedless

CIRCE SPRY-STIM

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg
Synthetic muscle and nerve implants provide hair-trigger reflexes when danger is near.

Benefice: You gain *superior* initiative edge. You always act first, unless someone else has a superior

edge, in which case you roll to determine which of you acts first. Your superior edge cannot be overruled or interrupted, except by another superior edge.

Cost: 300 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation

Tech Compulsion: Heedless

JORGENSEN'S SUBCUTANEOUS CAVITY

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg
You've replaced some of your internal organs with smaller synthetic substitutes, freeing up a chamber where your left lung used to be.

Benefice: Removable flesh flaps and osseous hinges allow you to open or close the chamber. You can hide an object up to one square foot inside your chest cavity. Alternatively, you can hide one Medium-sized item, two Small items, or three Extra-Small items. Drawing an object out or placing an object inside takes a primary action.

Cost: 300 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Acquisitive

OZYMANDIAS DEEP LUNG

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg
You can store an internal supply of oxygen, allowing you to breathe for an extended time, even while floating in a vacuum or submerged in liquid.

Benefice: You can breathe in an area without external oxygen for a number of hours equal to your Endurance.

Cost: 500 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Industrious

PROMETHEAN LUMBAR LIFTS

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg
Reinforced metallic implants in your arms, lower back, and legs increase the amount of weight you can lift. As an added benefit, you are strong enough to bend metal or crush organic creatures in a steel-vise bear hug.

Benefice: You gain +2 Strength when lifting things, grappling others, or bending/breaking items.

Cost: 300 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Destructive

Perception

TARSTON ETYRI EYE

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg
You've replaced one of your eyes with a simulacrum that not only allows you to focus on a specific distant or fast-moving target, but also coordinates with implants in both hands to coordinate your aim. As a result, you're a crack shot with a ranged weapon in either or both hands.

Benefice: You gain +1 goal on attacks with ranged weapons. You do not need to take the Shoot *aim* action to get this bonus, but you can still *aim* for greater accuracy. You also ignore penalties for long and extreme ranges.

Cost: 300 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

SMITH & SMITH SHADOW EYE

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg Surgeons have replaced one of your eyes with an artificial simulacrum; you can still see with it. When activated, it also allows you to see with infrared and ultraviolet night vision.

Benefice: You can see in the dark. You ignore the Blind and Visually Impaired states when they're caused by darkness. In addition, you can see thermal radiation — heat signatures — given off by people and tech.

Cost: 500 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

Think Machines

PANDORAN DATA INTERFACE

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5+ • Precondition: Cyborg; Interface 1+

You've got a think machine implanted near the base of your brain.

Benefice: Your think machine provides three lore capabilities and has space to add up to two more. You can access these capabilities in your think machine's database for use with a skilled action.

You have some cables and adaptors for interfacing with another think machine; you can read its data and copy it into your own archives. In addition, you gain +2 goal when using the Interface skill with think machines to which you are connected.

Cost: 500 firebirds to purchase; 200 for implantation.

Tech Compulsion: Inerrant

Weaponry

SMITH & SMITH SHIV SLEEVE

Calling • Cyberdevice TL5 • Precondition: Cyborg A surgeon has replaced muscle tissue inside one of your fingers, arms, or toes with thinner synthetic sub-

stitutes. That provides enough room for implanting a concealed melee weapon: usually, it's a dagger or sword. You're very precise with that weapon.

Benefice: Deploying or retracting a shiv sleeve's weapon is a secondary action. You gain +1 goal when attacking with it.

You can hold a dagger in a finger, toe, or the palm of your hand, or your arm can conceal a sword.

Cost: 300 firebirds to purchase; 200 firebird base cost for implantation

Tech Compulsion: Bloodthirsty

Cyber-Surgery

Engineers, Scravers, and similar cyber-freaks have skills for identifying and resurrecting cybertech, such as the High Tech Lore capability used with Tech Redemption skill. That knowledge is useful, but neither of those traits makes you a cybersurgeon. Implanting cyberdevices requires the Remedy skill as well as the Cybernetics Lore medical capability.

If you have this skill and capability combo, you can make some money as a cybersurgeon, whether legally through a guild or Amalthean clinic or illegally in numerous underworld chop-shops. Eccentric nobles (especially Decados and al-Malik) hire their own personal cybersurgeons.

If you have the Social Arena (Streetwise) capability, you can ask around for a black-market cybersurgeon without needing a roll, assuming you're on a fairly cosmopolitan world or city. Otherwise, you might need to risk a persuasion influence roll, where failure might mean the wrong people find out what you're looking for and the Inquisition might come looking for you.

You cannot implant a device on yourself. If you have access to a high-tech automated surgery clinic (TL7), you might be able to perform surgery on yourself, using its suite of pain-killers to keep you fully functional while you cut out your own flesh and install chrome and plasteel materials. These technological wonders are extremely rare, and their owners — usually wealthy nobles or Sanctuary Aeon cathedrals on Artemis — aren't necessarily keen on letting outsiders use priceless artifacts to experiment on themselves.

Cyborg

Cyborgs bear cybernetic device implants. You may have gained your implants as a requirement for your employment or to replace a missing limb or organ. Or you might be a cyberfetishist who is obsessed with altering and improving your body.

Cyborgs can be found throughout the Known Worlds in a wide variety of occupations, although they are often distrusted by Inquisitors and treated as pariahs by the common folk. Some of their more common professions include: soldiers, guards, spies, couriers, hackers, and even musicians and entertainers.

Cybernetic implants tend to impact your personality (due to techgnostic overload), and many cyborgs are often more focused on (and more concerned about) technology than people. You might prefer interacting with a think machine to actually engaging in social interaction. Much of your time is also devoted to improving and tinkering with your cybernetic enhancements.

This calling is rarely practiced for more than one or two levels — just long enough to gain access to one or more cybernetic device perks.

PATRON SAINTS

Blessed Anomalie — A rare disease struck the northernmost mining settlement of Cadavus, and the remote town had few resources to deal with widespread illness. Sheer providence brought an itinerant healer. Sister Anomalie of Tethys (c. 3850) tended to the disease's victims until she too became infected. The disease progressively devastated her body. Anomalie's patients saved her by replacing her dying limbs and organs with cybernetics. Once the disease was halted, she continued to minister and heal — an anathema to the Church but beloved by her people.

Saint Galatrix — Galatrix (3700-?) was a Second Republic Fleet Captain (Julie Harrow?) damaged in a shipping collision. Saved by angelic intercession, her damaged legs, left arm, and left eye were replaced by blessed sentient-tech. Pledging herself to the Pancreator to keep all sentients safe, she became a folk-saint among the tech-implanted. Historians later discovered this "saint" was named after the Galatrix corporation that implanted her; she was a walking advertisement for their "body-enhancement" technology. Some believe she lives still.

EARLY CAREER TRAITS

Capabilities: Tech Lore; Think Machines *or* an appropriate Lore *or* Science

Characteristics: Dexterity +2; Endurance +2; Will +1

Perk: Choose 1 from the Cyborg Perks list below or from the open perks list.

Skills: Academia 1; Focus 2; Interface 2; Tech Redemption 3; Vigor 2

Equipment: Cybernetic repair kit

CYBORG PERKS

You may choose any cyberdevice perk.

MEDICAL LORES

CYBERNETICS LORE

RESTRICTED: *Merchant League, Cyborg, Enthusiast, Healer, Occultist, Reclaimer, Spy, Sybarite, Tech Redeemer*

You know how to implant and remove cybernetic devices. (Repairing these devices uses the Tech Redemption skill.)