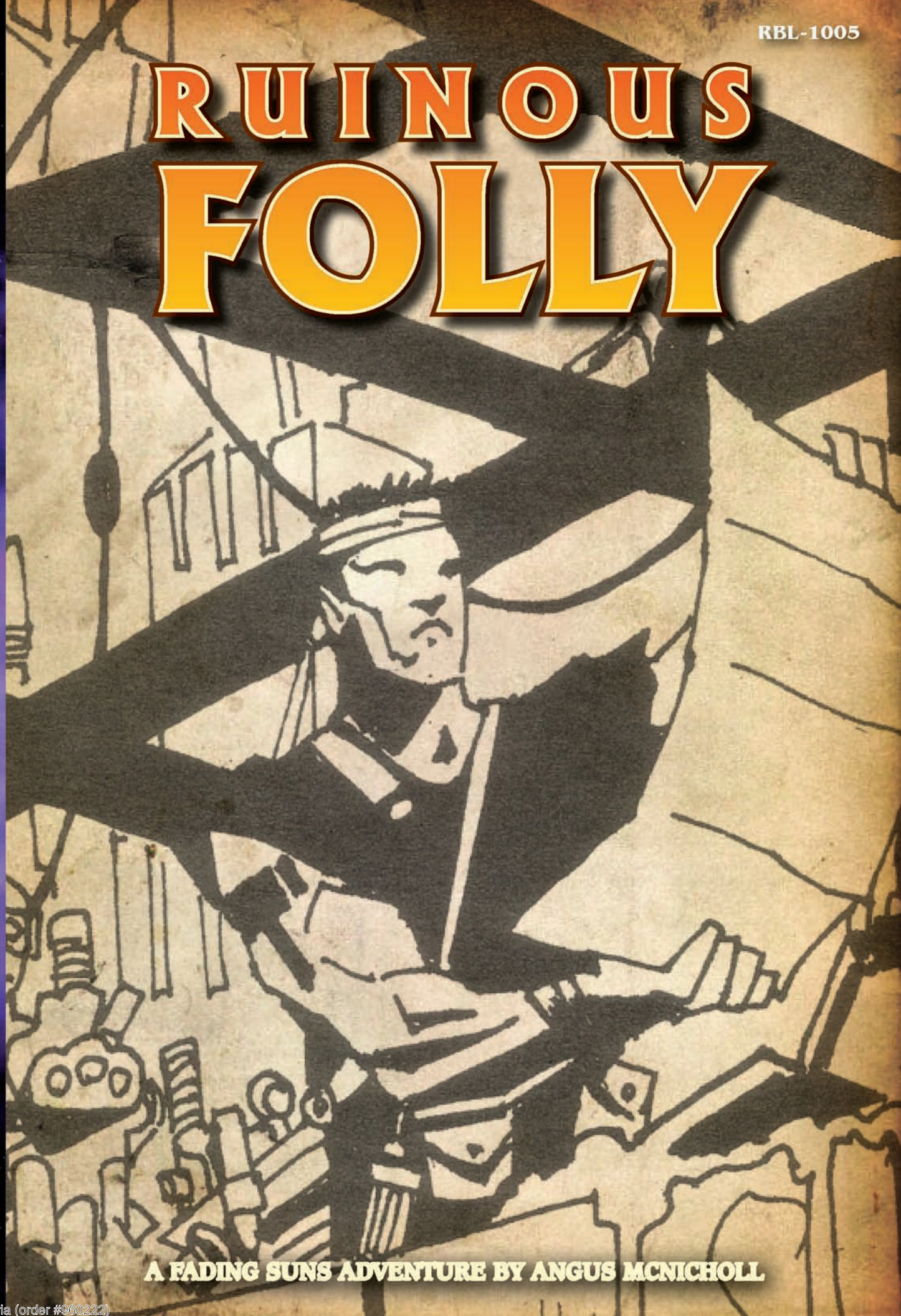


# RUINOUS FOLLY



FADING SUNS™

A FADING SUNS ADVENTURE BY ANGUS MCNICHOLL



# FADING SUNS

It is the dawn of the sixth millennium and the skies are darkening, for the suns themselves are fading. Humans reached the stars long ago, building a Republic of high technology and universal emancipation—and then squandered it, fought over it, and finally lost it.

A new Dark Age has descended upon humanity, for the greatest of civilizations has fallen and now even the stars are dying. Feudal lords rule the Known Worlds, vying for power with fanatic priests and scheming guilds.

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This volume contains the adventure **Ruinous Folly**, designed for a group of 3 to 6 player characters. In this adventure, the characters explore the secrets of an ancient think machine, following a treasure map into the turbulent atmosphere of the gas giant Gargantua. However, they are not the only ones, and the treasure they find has plans of its own...

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RBL-1005

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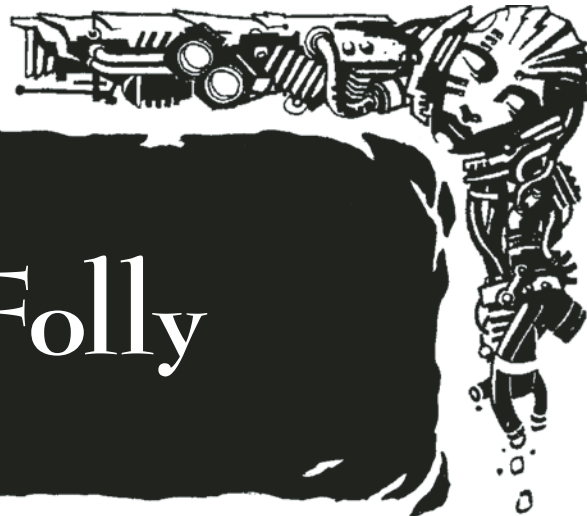
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# Ruinous Folly

**Ruinous Folly** is a short adventure for **Fading Suns** for a group of 3 to 6 player characters. It can be used as part of an existing campaign or as the start of a new epic. This adventure suits almost any group of adventurers, ranging from lowlife scoundrels to questing knights. The only requirement is that they be on speaking terms with House Keddah, who are their patrons for this drama, though this could be easily swapped out for any other faction.

As written, the drama takes place in the Rampart system in Li Halan space but could be easily moved to any other system with a large gas giant in it. It would be highly advantageous if one of the characters were to be able to speak Urthtech and useful for one of them to have the skills Science (Meteorology), Science (Terraforming), and Think Machine. These latter three skills are not actually required if the characters can hire them in.

## Running the Adventure

**Ruinous Folly** is a treasure hunt drama that requires the characters to overcome certain challenges and locate the prize. Although the drama has a definitive beginning and an end point, the middle needs to be fluid to allow for investigative work and tangential ideas.

**Ruinous Folly** is laid out in acts, but within each act there is a great deal of freedom to pursue the adventure in whatever way the characters choose. Where possible the text describes the characters and areas the characters will encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise. Finally, we included suggestions on modifying the drama depending on how this story best fits into your existing campaign, or whether you want to use **Ruinous Folly** as the beginning of a longer-running **Fading Suns** epic.

If **Ruinous Folly** is not used with an existing group of player characters (for a convention game, for example), players may use the pre-generated characters included in the **Appendix** on p. 21.

## Adventure Background

When the Second Republic fell, it left behind many wonders for those who would come after to discover and exploit. A think machine has come to auction; the information that it contains can lead the characters to a wealthy pay off. Acquiring a rich mineral source would be a boon for any House, and a great boon for a minor House like Keddah. But the treasure map leads to more than just mineral wealth; it leads into the heart of an ancient and arcane terraforming engine.

Terraforming was the science of Doramos, the greatest of the world builders. The ability to reshape a world into a new image using great arcane engines was poorly understood even at the height of the Second Republic. Though many have survived over the long years since the Fall, most are automated with little input or technical expertise required.

The discovery of a functioning terraforming engine offers the promise of incredible wealth to any power in the Known Worlds.

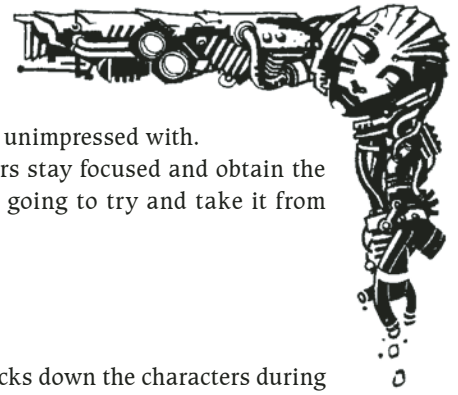
The opportunity to not only uncover a working engine but also a technically competent caretaker with a detailed understanding of the principles involved would be the stuff of which legends are made and ballads are sung. But with a potential payoff so great, there are many who would seek to usurp the prize or simply destroy it. Secrecy is the characters' only ally.

## Plot Synopsis

The characters are employed by Baron Halman Keddah, an influential nobleman who seldom leaves the confines of his estates on Grail. Instead, he employs a network of trusted family members and other agents to pursue his agendas and explore the many unusual things that occur within the Known Worlds. In this instance, he has become interested in a think machine currently entered into an auction of strange curiosities. Actually it is not the machine that he is interested in but the information it is purported to carry.

The characters receive a small expense account and are tasked with retrieving the data. They may also investigate





the other artifacts entered into the auction in the hope that one or more of these items prove interesting to their patron, these other items are left as open adventure hooks for the gamemaster to explore or ignore as he sees fit. So long as they can justify the expense and remember that the items purchased are the property of the Baron and not theirs to own, there should be no problem.

The characters are not the only ones interested in acquiring the think machine and the property to which it leads. The party's first challenge is to hang onto their acquisition as the Shodan Scravers try to take it from them, this will bring a series of clashes with Rampart's premier underworld family. If the characters fail to win the bidding at the auction, then they must resort to theft or violence to secure the prize. Once they have secured the think machine, they must get the data from it and have it analyzed before following the clues on the treasure map to its final destination.

Within the turbulent atmosphere of Gargantua lies an ancient atmosphere processing station built during the time of the Second Republic. Constructed as a filter-mine and refinery station and refitted long ago as a science station and meteorological research facility, the station has survived under the benevolent guidance of an artificial intelligence.

With the Scravers again in hot pursuit, and the station demonstrating that it has a mind of its own, the characters will be forced to make some tough decisions. Winning the prize requires shrewd tactics and savvy negotiation. Resorting to violence to take the station from the custodian only leads to ruin, not just for the characters' mission but for an entire ecosystem and a race of previously unknown Changed.

## Act One: The Auction

The characters are conducting their own business on Rampart when an agent of Baron Halman Keddah contacts them. The dame could come to them for any number of reasons; a recommendation or a previous association with her brother is the most likely. She explains that an invitation-only auction has been arranged, and that the baron is interested in one of the lots, she also provides the characters with a copy of the Auction Lot Flyer provided in the appendix of this Shard. She needs a few good people to attend the auction in her stead to acquire the designated lot and then make a full survey and investigation of this new property. The characters are provided with an expense account for the auction as well as anything else they might need on this mission.

While at the auction, the characters may be tempted to bid on other items that look interesting. So long as they keep a focus on the lot they 'must' acquire, there should be no problem in outbidding other interested parties. If the characters somehow manage to lose the auction, then they must resort to violence or thievery to get what they were sent for. This earns them a bad reputation and harms that of the

baron, something he will be unimpressed with.

However, if the characters stay focused and obtain the item, then the Scravers are going to try and take it from them by force.

## The Contact

Dame Urshla Keddah tracks down the characters during their visit to Rampart. She comes to visit them wherever they are currently residing, be it an expensive hotel, a flophouse, or aboard their own starship. She comes alone, unescorted. Before she introduces herself, she runs a bug scanner round the room while making small talk. Once satisfied that she is not being spied upon, she turns to the matter at hand. In addition to the bug scanner, she wears a bracelet that conceals a poison sniffer; she discreetly runs it over anything she eats or drinks.

*"Please forgive my intrusion upon your time. I understand that you are busy conducting business of your own. However, let me be to the point: I have need of trustworthy associates, and I hear that you are just that. Perhaps you know of my brother Baron Halman Keddah? He has a reputation for his interest in the strange and unusual. Something has piqued his interest, and alas, I do not have the time to look into it directly, as I have other pressing engagements."*

Assuming the characters indicate their interest and willingness to serve House Keddah, the dame gets down to laying out the situation.

*"There is a private auction being held tomorrow evening. My brother would have me attend, but I have a prior engagement, and it would cast me in poor favor to change plans at this late date. I would have you attend the auction in my stead and ensure the purchase of the curiosity that interests my brother the Baron."*

*I will provide you with the necessary expense account to ensure that you can bid for the device. Once you have it, I need you to undertake an examination of the machine and establish its value to House Keddah. I am not sure exactly what my brother expects to find, but from his letter, he indicated that there may be some kind of plan or map or something hidden within the device that needs to be extracted and examined to determine its authenticity.*

*For this task, and of course representing both my House and myself with a suitable level of dignity, I will see to it that you are financially compensated for taking time out of your own busy schedule."*

The expense account has 10,000 firebirds in it and needs to cover both the auction expenses and any other costs they incur during the remainder of the drama. Anything the characters buy with the expense account belongs to the baron and he expects a full account and inventory of his holdings once the characters are finished. Urshla provides the letter of invitation to the auction, a letter of authority to act on the





baron's behalf, the letter of credit (stamped and approved by the Reeves Guild) and the auction lot's listing, all in an plain wooden scroll case. What the characters will likely never find out is that the scroll case has a squawker bug built into the bottom of the case, so that she can eavesdrop on everything that transpires in its vicinity. The dame offers a total purse of up to 200 firebirds of representing House Keddah at the auction. She also arranges to meet with the characters again the evening after the auction, to examine what they have recovered.

## The Auction

In the Known Worlds, the Orthodoxy proscribes a great many things: technology, artifacts, and knowledge. Whenever a prohibition is declared on such items, a lucrative black market springs into existence to cater for the demand. Formerly, Rampart was a League world, with all the freedoms that that status brings. Now curtailed under Li Halan rule, the trade in black market goods has become one of the most lucrative businesses.

One such place is the Austair Auction House, an old building in Avaneir's market quarter that offers both public and private auctions. It is a clearinghouse for all manner of goods, from mundane furnishings to collectible antiques, to heavily proscribed alien tech. The mundane goods form the day-to-day business of the auction house and are profitable in their own right. But the privately held collectors' auctions are where the risk, and the big money, can be found. Many of these collectors' pieces are rare tech, cybernetics,

think machines, golems, and even the occasional soul shard. Alien tech is highly sought after, as are items of cultural significance to both the Kurgan and Vuldrok peoples.

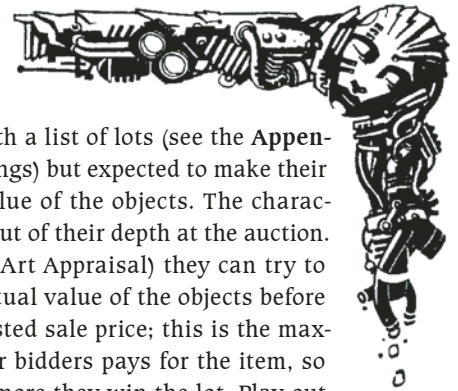
In the right circles, Austair has a reputation for being a source of restricted books, sometimes real paper books, and other times think machine records, related to the dark arts. Austair makes no moral judgment on those who might seek to possess such works, provided that they pay the winning bid in full.

## The Austair Auction House

The Austair Auction House is a beautifully appointed old building that harkens back to a time before the Fall. The front of the building was recently restored after damage sustained during the Emperor Wars. The reconstruction used materials salvaged from other Second Republic-era buildings. It was closed down during the latter days of the war and reopened in 5001. The ground floor of the building holds the auction mart used in the day-to-day auctions of mundane items. Other areas of the building are covered by a high-tech security system for the protection of both goods and specialist clients. Collectors attend private auctions in the upper floor auction room.

The basement level is a warren of secure vaults and open storage space. If rumor is to be believed, there are also links to the Avaneir's storm and flood drainage system. The mid-level floors of the building are a mixture of staff offices, private client rooms, and a small bar and lounge for Austair's most important of clients. There is also a private entrance at the rear of the building for those who do not wish





to be observed coming or going. The private collectors' auctions are usually conducted in the evening when the rest of the building is closed to the general public.

Austair manages daily public auctions for items as mundane as room furnishings to as exotic as books and object of art. Certain days of the week are reserved over for particular types of auctions, while others are something of a mixed bag.

The Auction House is technically a minor guild in its own right but increasingly has come under the influence of the Scravers, specifically the Shodan family who see the valuable contribution that a legitimate trading face can make. Many of the artifacts that appear in the private collectors' auctions are items being fenced or smuggled through Li Halan customs by the Scravers Guild. The legitimate face of the Auction House has prevented level heads in the Shodan family from just moving in and taking over; they see the advantage of keeping such a secret high-risk business at arm's length.

## At the Private Auction

The private auctions are not a regular occurrence but called by invitation only when Austair has a suitable collection of interesting items. Sometimes these auctions follow a theme; at other times it's just whatever is available. These auctions are open only to those individuals who are on Austair special client list. Even then, each buyer must produce his invitation to be admitted. Many of the collectors consider this too risky and send intermediates bearing both the invitation and a letter of authority to act for them. In some circles it is considered a mark of status to be one of Austair special clients.

The private auction chamber is a small room with a raised platform and lectern from which the auctioneer runs proceedings. Important clients may have one of the seven shady booths around the perimeter of the room; the clients concerned with anonymity always book these well in advance. The main floor space is arranged into groups of tables and chairs, and the lighting is kept low.

To make a bid, the buyer must raise a numbered flash card, which pulses briefly to attract the auctioneer's attention. One of the assistants records the number of the bidder and tracks the current bid price and winning client. Security is very tight; no weapons are permitted in the chamber and must be stored along with cloaks, coats, and other outdoor clothing in a small cloakroom on the ground floor. Any troublemaker is vigorously put down and not invited back. A character carrying overt weaponry is asked to leave it in the cloakroom, but because all attendees are vetted and invited guests, nobody checks them for concealed devices. The biggest check on the characters actually resorting to concealed weapons is that they represent a noble man and to draw a weapon would reflect very badly on him, and consequently his disfavor and Urshla's would be visited upon them. Urshla is not one to forget an insult and she is both tough and resourceful should the characters cross her.

Bidders are provided with a list of lots (see the Appendix on p. 25 for auction listings) but expected to make their own judgment as to the value of the objects. The characters might well feel a little out of their depth at the auction. If they have the skill Lore (Art Appraisal) they can try to make an estimate of the actual value of the objects before bidding. Each item has a listed sale price; this is the maximum price one of the other bidders pays for the item, so long as the characters pay more they win the lot. Play out the bidding slowly, raising the bid level to increase the tension and feel of the auction environment.

There are a couple of interesting people at the auction that might interact with the characters: Jana Berkhart of the Prospectors Guild, Adept Symon Templeton of the Brother Battle, and Entered Kuvol Tellun of the Supreme Order of Engineers. These bidders can be used in whatever way the gamemaster sees fit, but they each have interests in one or more of the items in the auction and could be used to take the action into a completely different direction, becoming part of a wider plot. The gamemaster should also feel free to create other bidders or their agents for the auction, and ratchet up the pressure by running a bidding war.

## Auction Lots

The auction lots on the night when the characters visit Austairs' are listed below. Gamemasters should feel free to add or remove items on this list. Each item comes with a short description. The Value entry states what the item is worth, the Bid entry states what the highest bidder pays for it unless the characters outbid him.

### Gargara-Mok

**Value:** 300 firebirds

**Bid:** 250 firebirds

The Vorox version of a modern-day Stradivarius, it looks like two cellos fused together, with the poles and the twin string sets slightly tilted (the thing is somewhat V shaped). It is made of reddish wood and bears the marks of the famous Angerak of Gargara makers.

### Ritual Bowl from Manitou

**Value:** 50 firebirds

**Bid:** 100 firebirds

The ritual bowl is made of copper and engraved with mystic symbols around the rim. The auctioneer's notes say that a cult on Manitou used it to prepare and drink zhrii-ka'a tincture.

### Holo-Icon from the Late Second Republic

**Value:** 200 firebirds

**Bid:** 150 firebirds

The Holo-icon is a small metal disc with a lens in the middle. When a switch is turned on, it forms a 50-cm tall image of the prophet Zebulon.

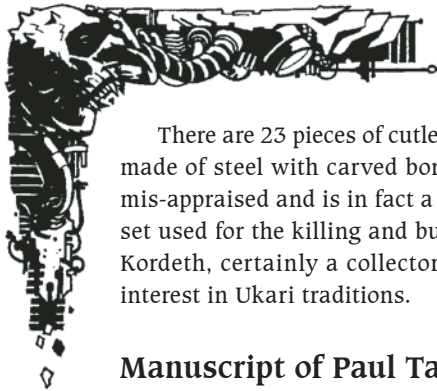
### Complete Set of Traditional Ukari Cutlery

**Value:** 50 firebirds

**Bid:** 50 firebirds







There are 23 pieces of cutlery in this set, all of which are made of steel with carved bone handles. The set has been mis-appraised and is in fact a traditional hunter's butchery set used for the killing and butchery of certain animals on Kordeth, certainly a collector's piece to someone with an interest in Ukari traditions.

### Manuscript of Paul Tamul

**Value:** 250 firebirds

**Bid:** 400 firebirds

This damaged notebook is (correctly) believed to be the diary of Paul Tamul, an explorer and adventurer who lived during the last days of the Second Republic. It contains his notes and musings on the workings of Jumpgates and the decryption algorithms used to retrieve previously unknown coordinates. This tome could be a potentially valuable resource for any would-be explorer.

### Bottle of 300-year-old Brandy from Ravenna

**Value:** 100 firebirds

**Bid:** 80 firebirds

The bottle is made of brown glass and sports an almost unreadable label. The cork still has its wax seal.

### White Stone set in a Silver Brooch

**Value:** 1,000 firebirds

**Bid:** 900 firebirds

This item is lesser lux stone capable of enhancing talents of a psychic using the Far Hand path.

### The Philosopher's Head

**Value:** 1,000 firebirds

**Bid:** 1,250 firebirds

This finely crafted metal golem head seems to be complete, and does not appear to have any means of attaching it to a body. Owned by, and some even say built by, the first Academician of Rampart, the head is believed to be a font of knowledge and wisdom.

### Three Obun Opera Masks

**Value:** 300 firebirds

**Bid:** 200 firebirds

The masks represent three different characters and each has a strange glyph in its forehead. The masks are made of a hard plastic and still have their straps in place.

### Rare Copy of the *Great Princes of the World and Their Lineages* by Magnus Torensen

**Value:** 150 firebirds

**Bid:** 250 firebirds

This big book contains a wealth of information about heraldry. It is loaded with lots of pictures and family trees. The original was written shortly after Vladimir's death, but this copy is only 200 years old.

### Think Machine Journal

**Value:** 500 firebirds

**Bid:** 5,500 firebirds

This computer contains the research document entitled *An Observation of Gargantua's Weather Patterns* written by Dr. Risus Ekhard. The data on this device is what the characters have been charged to recover.

### Ornate Music Box

**Value:** 50 firebirds

**Bid:** 25 firebirds

The music box plays a favorite childhood nursery rhyme when opened.

### Second Republic Era Jumpkey

**Value:** 3,000 firebirds

**Bid:** 5,000 firebirds

This item is a thin metal cylinder, unadorned with any decoration. The jumprouth this key opens is unknown.

### Key to a Safe Deposit Box

**Value:** 100 firebirds

**Bid:** 200 firebirds

Though the key comes with a tag that reads '272,' there is no indication of the bank or facility in which the actual box is located.

### Bowl Carved from an Unknown Crystal

**Value:** 500 firebirds

**Bid:** 1,250 firebirds

This bowl gives off a low frequency hum when filled with water. This hum is relaxing and seems to accelerate natural healing processes of those in its presence. If filled with different liquids, the bowl has other effects (giving a soothing rest to regain Wyrd points more quickly, or lessening the effects of toxins upon the body, for example).

### Finely Carved Wooden Box, within which sit Five Glass Orbs in Carefully Prepared Padding

**Value:** 5,500 firebirds

**Bid:** 7,000 firebirds

Two of the orbs are clear glass, while the remaining three appear milky or smoke-filled. For more information on Soul Glasses, see *Arcane Tech* on p. 71.

### Matte Black Stone Covered in Shallowly Carved Runes

**Value:** 2,000 firebirds

**Bid:** 2,400 firebirds

This is an Ur device, which when held gets warm, based on the level of the holder's Urge or Hubris. At level 1 it is warm while at level 10 it is burning hot. If more than one psychic at a time touches it, the stone redistributes their combined urge evenly between them.

### Soldier's Journal

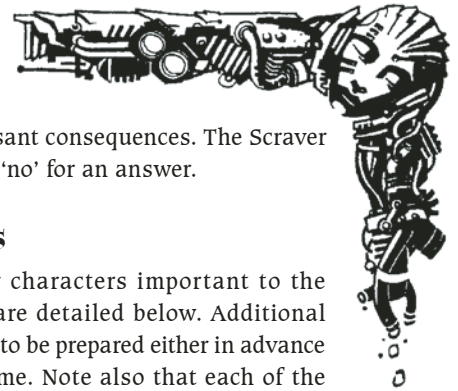
**Value:** 200 firebirds

**Bid:** 125 firebirds

This book was written by a soldier fighting a war on a







Lost World. (The last entry in the journal (before the “big push”) is dated in three months’ time.)

### Collection of Fine Bone China Plates

**Value:** 1,500 firebirds

**Bid:** 2,000 firebirds

A complete set of thirteen plates, each finely hand painted with the likeness of one of Zebulon’s followers.

### The Blessed Hand of St. Markku

**Value:** 5,000 firebirds

**Bid:** 7,750 firebirds

This item is a cybernetic hand and lower arm reputed to have belonged to St. Markku of Tethys, a church knight who fought with valor during the Symbiot War where he was said to have healed Symbiot taint with quiet prayers and the laying on of his blessed hand. The blessed hand is a standard Cybernetic Arm, though it did belong to St. Markku (+2 Strength Self-Powered, Obvious, 6pts – Saints Lore: The Laying on of Hands). It has the unusual property that anyone using the arm cannot become a Symbiot.

### Winning Bid

The characters are free to bid on any of the interesting items in the auction, but they need to hold onto enough firebirds to secure the Journal of Dr. Risus Ekhard. It is obvious that they are not the only people interested in acquiring the machine, and the bids rise sharply. If the characters fail to win the bidding war, they may have to come up with some other way of acquiring the journal, theft or violence being the most likely.

Once the auction is over, the characters can pay for their purchases and leave with them. As they try to leave the auction room, one of the other bidders makes their way over to speak to them: Jana Berkhart of the Prospectors Guild. She introduces herself and tries to find out a little about the characters and what they plan to do with the journal. She tells the characters to look her up once they have decided that the journal is of little value to them, and she offers to pay them 5,000 firebirds for the device and its intact contents.

### Car Jacking

The auction house doorman arranges transport for the characters to take them back to their abode. A plush fossil-fuel car stops outside to pick them up and then speeds away through the light traffic of Avaneir. The rain has come on heavily and the common people on the streets of the city huddle in doorways or carry flimsy umbrellas. The other traffic on the road is limited to a few petrol driven vehicles and pedal bikes and trikes that seem to be popular with the peasantry. If a character is being watchful for such things, give him a chance to spot that they are being tailed on Perception + Observe goal roll.

The car they are traveling in slows down and makes an unscheduled left turn, pulling into a narrow alleyway and stopping. The trailing car pulls in behind them, and the doors open. Three very large men get out and approach their vehicle. They advise the characters to simply hand over the

journal to avoid any unpleasant consequences. The Scraver goons are not about to take ‘no’ for an answer.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Additional gamemaster characters need to be prepared either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama. They are likely to have many more.

### Dame Urshla Keddah

A younger sister of Baron Halman Keddah, the dame is one of his most trusted agents. Urshla harbors a deep grudge against House Decados, whom she blames for the untimely and mysterious death of her husband. She uses her anger as fuel to serve her house, plotting, planning, and dreaming about the day when Keddah will be free of Decados manipulations. On that day Urshla will let herself grieve but not before. In the meantime she has become a hardened soldier, incapable of placing complete trust in anyone (except her brother). Though she despises all that House Decados stands for she has become a mirror for them, plotting, scheming, ready to take any advantage, she would be a good match for any Decados and a source of pride had she been born as one of them.

The dame is a middle-aged woman with a trim duelist’s physique who obviously takes care of her appearance and physical fitness. Her hair is long and dark, neatly braided into a tail that reaches halfway down her back.

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 8, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 7, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Extrovert 6, Introvert 3, Passion 3, Calm 6, Faith 4, Ego 4

**Natural Skills:** Charm 6, Dodge 5, Fight 4, Impress 8, Melee 6, Observe 7, Shoot 5, Sneak 7, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Etiquette 6, Knavery 7, Inquiry 8, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Weapons:** Palm Laser

**Armor:** Assault Shield

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|O|O|O|O|O

### Entered Kuvol Tellun

Entered Kuvol is researching jumpgates; the ancient technology of the Anunnaki fascinates him—a passion passed on to him from his early mentor Engineer Parnel Dwainson. He dreams of making some startling discovery that wakes the Known Worlds from its Dark Age and bring about a return to the light of reason. He is hoping to acquire both the unknown jumpkey and the Manuscript of Paul Tamul in the hopes that they start him down the path to greatness.

Kuvol is a middle-aged man who is something of a dreamer and not as great an engineer as he imagines. He is a thin man with pallid skin and eyes which always seem



to be focused far away, like he is looking right through the person to whom he is speaking.

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Endurance 3

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 7, Tech 8

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 6, Passion 3, Calm 7, Faith 1, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 4, Fight 4, Impress 6, Melee 4, Observe 10, Shoot 3, Sneak 4, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 7, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○

## Adept Symon Templeton

An adept of the Brother Battle order, Symon is expertly trained in the hand-to-hand arts of Mantok. He has managed to get an invitation to this auction by doing a few favors of which he is not overly proud. As in warfare, however, the victory justifies the means. The Saints Hand will be in his possession shortly, and once it is he can return to the seclusion of the order and leave behind this crazy and undisciplined world.

A young man in peak physical condition, Symon is both tall and broad across the shoulders. While at the auc-

tion he remains robed and hooded in an attempt to remain incognito.

**Body:** Strength 8, Dexterity 7, Endurance 10

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 6, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 5, Passion 7, Calm 1, Faith 6, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 6, Fight 7, Impress 4, Melee 6, Observe 5, Shoot 5, Sneak 4, Vigor 7

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 5, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Combat Actions:** Martial Fist, Martial Kick, Martial Hold, Claw Fist

**Weapons:** None

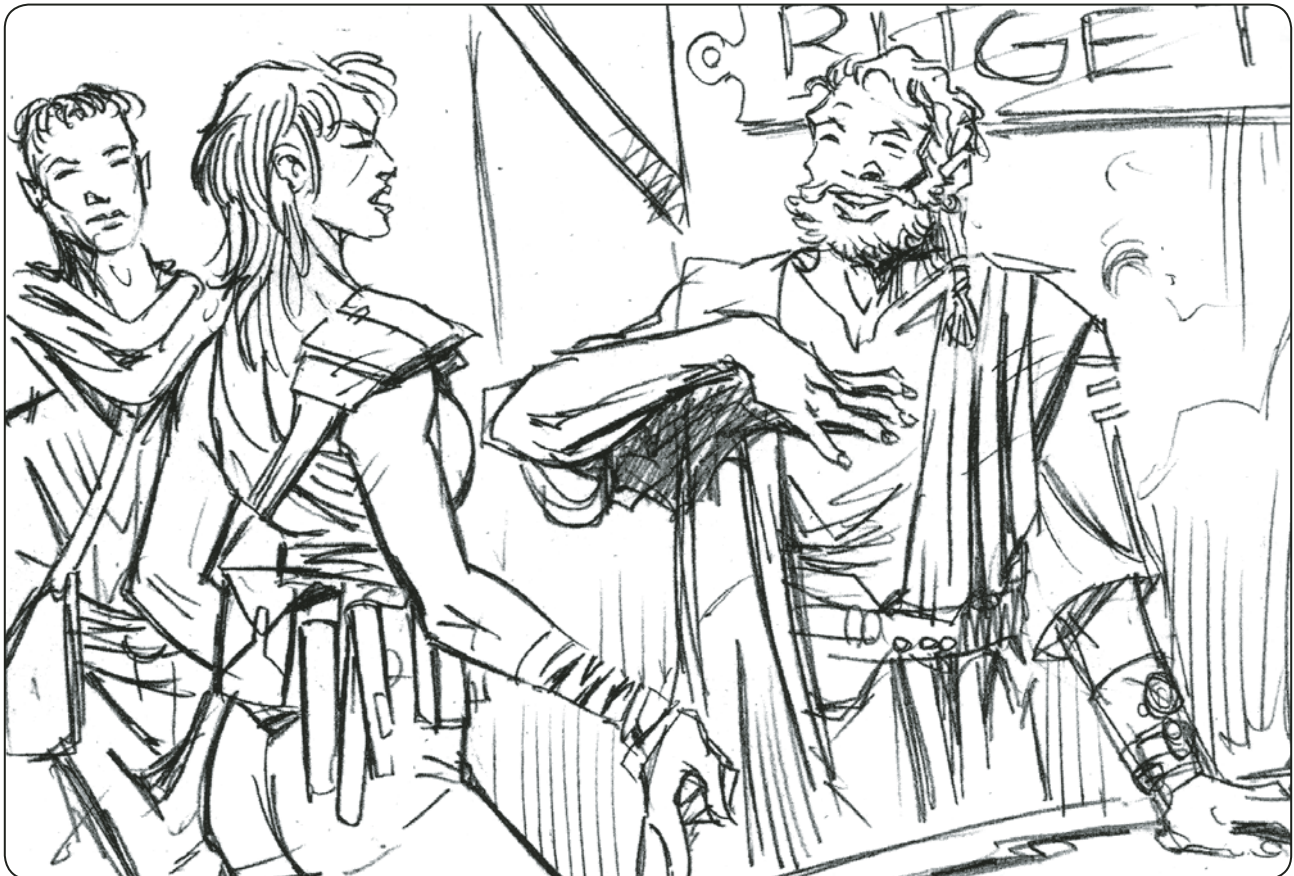
**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

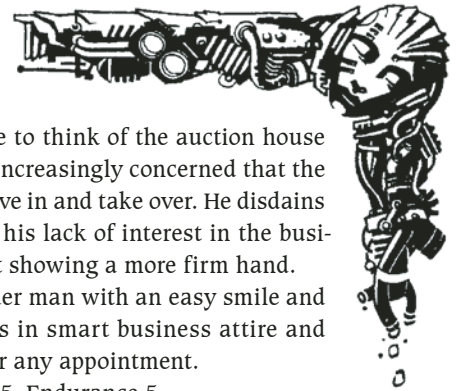
## Jana Berkhard

Jana is a businesswoman of no small talent, and not what most people would expect from a member of the Prospectors Guild. Her primary interest is in dealing with issues of administration and guild affairs, unfortunately she finds herself spending more time than she would like establishing claims and mineral extraction rights with the Reeves Guild.

A middle-aged woman who appears much younger, almost too young to hold her position. She has a seductive figure and pale grey eyes that seem to draw people in.







**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 9, Perception 6, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 4, Passion 5, Calm 4, Faith 3, Ego 6

**Natural Skills:** Charm 6, Dodge 4, Fight 4, Impress 7, Melee 3, Observe 5, Shoot 4, Sneak 4, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 4, Inquiry 5, Diplomacy 3, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Weapons:** Palm Laser

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○

## Halan Timis, Owner of Austairs'

Halan Timis was lucky enough to have been born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He likes to think that he has everything he could ever want. The Auction House means very little to him. So long as the money keeps flowing in and the goods keep flowing out he doesn't care very much about the individual people who work for him. Halan has instigated several disagreements with his auctioneer—Mortimer Bailis—about how the establishment is run. Mainly he likes to make life difficult for his chief auctioneer simply because he is bored and in need of amusement. While he dreams of being among the idle rich, the truth is that Halan does need the auction house as a source of income. Further exacerbating the situation, Halan often lives beyond his means. So far, he has managed to remain out of financial trouble by turning a blind eye to the Shodan activities on his premises.

Halan is a handsome youth and he knows it. He likes to pretend he is part of the wealthy gentry and dresses in fashionable attire. On occasion—when he thinks he can get away with it—Halan adds a noble title to his name, usually 'Baronet.'

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 5, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 6, Introvert 2, Passion 4, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 6

**Natural Skills:** Charm 6, Dodge 3, Fight 4, Impress 6, Melee 3, Observe 4, Shoot 3, Sneak 3, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 2, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○

## Mortimer Bailis, Auctioneer

Mortimer Bailis has always had a clever tongue and a sweet smile. He first came to the auction house as a child with his father. Ever since that day, he wanted to be an auctioneer. Mortimer started out sweeping the floors and grew up learning every aspect of the business. Over the last forty

years he has gradually come to think of the auction house as his own. He has become increasingly concerned that the Shodan family intends to move in and take over. He disdains Halan Timis, the owner, for his lack of interest in the business and blames him for not showing a more firm hand.

Mortimer Bailis is an older man with an easy smile and talent for charm. He dresses in smart business attire and has a habit of being early for any appointment.

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 5, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 7, Introvert 3, Passion 5, Calm 3, Faith 1, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 6, Dodge 3, Fight 4, Impress 6, Melee 3, Observe 4, Shoot 3, Sneak 3, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 4, Social (Oratory) 6, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○

## Westinane Kluff, Appraiser

Westmane Kluff is a man obsessed with the finer things in life; he loves art and enjoys his position as an appraiser. He is, however, also a thief. Westmane has stolen many small objects of art from the auction house. Usually his thefts are concealed by a fake paper trail that either makes it appear that an object was never received for auction or that it was sold to a collector along with many other purchases in a transaction. Westmane has stolen around twenty small objects over the last four years. Each of these items now has a place in his small apartment. Westmane is a very introverted and private man who does not socialize with co-workers. To do otherwise might bring suspicion upon him. In spite of his best efforts, there have been a couple of close calls with missing items that rose to the attention of Mortimer, or in one case Halan himself. So far though, he has managed to avoid implication by passing these thefts off as the actions of corrupt security guards.

A young man with a studious look, he dresses conservatively in the Li Halan style. His hair is thin for a man so young and he wears glasses into which he can seat extra lenses for making detailed examinations of auction items.

**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 8, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 6, Passion 3, Calm 3, Faith 2, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 2, Dodge 2, Fight 1, Impress 3, Melee 2, Observe 6, Shoot 4, Sneak 2, Vigor 3

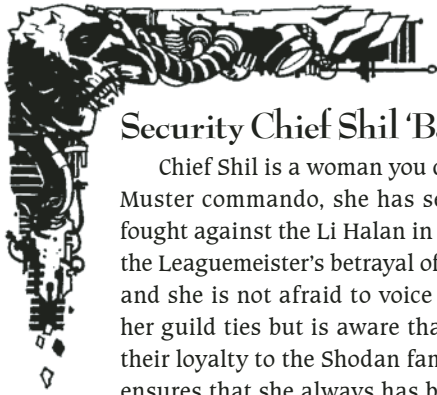
**Learned Skills:** Lore (Art Appraisal) 5, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Read Latin, Read Urthtech

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○





## Security Chief Shil 'Ball Buster' Stepson

Chief Shil is a woman you do not want to cross. A former Muster commando, she has seen a lot of service and even fought against the Li Halan in defense of Rampart. She took the Leaguemeister's betrayal of Rampart as a personal insult, and she is not afraid to voice her opinions. She renounced her guild ties but is aware that many of her own staff owe their loyalty to the Shodan family rather than to her, so she ensures that she always has backup from at least one unaffiliated team member when on duty.

She regularly takes action to undermine the Shodan influence on her security staff, but it seems that every time she manages to get rid of one, another becomes compromised. She is considering sacking her entire staff and employing a new crew on a rotating, short-term basis to ensure that the Shodan cannot gain a foothold. This strategy, however, would limit her ability to build loyalty to herself and this prospect stays her hand from sweeping change. The Shodan may soon decide that she is too much of an irritation to put up with any longer and create a vacancy for someone more amenable.

A tough hard-bitten woman who as seen some action and has a few scars to prove it. She has hard eyes that seem to look right through people. She keeps her hair tied back tightly and her mouth often has a pinched look like she is sucking lemons.

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 4, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Extrovert 4, Introvert 3, Passion 3, Calm 6, Faith 6, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 4, Dodge 5, Fight 6, Impress 6, Melee 5, Observe 6, Shoot 4, Sneak 4, Vigor 6

**Learned Skills:** Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Combat Actions:** Martial Hold, Rooting

**Weapons:** Vibro Dirk, Stunner

**Armor:** Dueling Shield

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Typical Security Guard

The security staff functions much like a group of club bouncers. They are physically imposing and capable of subduing anyone who gets out of control. In serious instances, the guards have access to other weapons, including Frap Sticks and Shotguns. They are usually very polite and helpful and often assist patrons in the loading of large purchases. Many of them also happen to be on the Shodan family payroll and are stationed here to keep a watchful eye on their investment. If a situation really gets out of control, they can call in Shodan family enforcers can be called in.

The Security Guards are mixed in gender, age and experience, but all wear smart dark suits.

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 5, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 2, Passion 5, Calm 2, Faith 4, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 4, Fight 6, Impress 3, Melee 4, Observe 5, Shoot 4, Sneak 4, Vigor 6

**Learned Skills:** Speak Urthish

**Combat Actions:** Martial Hold

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Typical Scraver Goon

Large and well dressed, these men are the enforcement arm of the Shodan family. More often than not, their mere appearance results in capitulation, avoiding the need for violence. For maximum effect, the goons take off their jackets before a fight to reveal their spiraling colorful tattoos that mark them as Shodan.

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 4, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 3, Passion 5, Calm 1, Faith 2, Ego 4

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 5, Fight 5, Impress 4, Melee 4, Observe 4, Shoot 5, Sneak 4, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Speak Urthish

**Weapons:** Frap Stick

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

# Act Two: Pandora's Box

Once the characters have managed to acquire the think machine, they must decode the information that it contains. If they are technically skilled, they can attempt this themselves. Otherwise they need to track down an expert who can help them. With the Scravers' attempt to separate them from the think machine fresh in their minds, they are not likely to try use underworld contacts as this only plays into the hands of their would-be muggers.

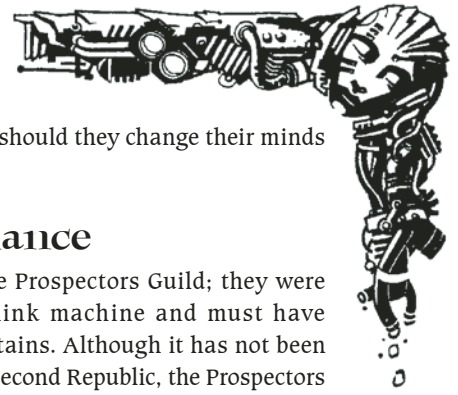
They need to locate someone who is both proficient with Think Machines and Science (Meteorology). There are not too many people with that combination of skills, and the most likely place to find them is at Avaneir University, an establishment of learning second only the Academy Interatta on Leagueheim. Of course, the characters can also make a deal with the Prospectors Guild, as they seem to have some idea of how to handle the situation at hand. The characters should be aware that anyone they approach becomes a target for the Scravers, who are very keen to get their hands on the journal.

## Meeting Urshla Again

Urshla returns to the character's abode on the evening after the auction to reward them for their actions thus far.







She doesn't express surprise or regret on hearing about the attempt to liberate the think machine from the characters, instead this only increases her interest in the data the device carries. When it becomes obvious that the information is disguised or encoded as something else she becomes frustrated, torn between her interest in the information, her natural desire to supervise the characters and her busy social schedule that she must adhere to.

If the characters discovered the bug in the bottom of the scroll case she gave them she feigns ignorance of it claiming it was a gift from a Decados admirer and that she is outraged that he would attempt eavesdrop upon her business. She may find another way to bug or watch the characters during the rest of the drama, or even try to clear a window in the social schedule to accompany them directly. If Urshla joins the character group it is important to have her distracted by other business before they leave for Gargantua lest she exert too much control over the decisions of the group.

She presses the characters to find a cipher of this code and to follow up and investigate all leads. If the characters don't think of it first, she goes as far as suggesting taking the data to either the University or the Prospectors in the hope of obtaining their expertise at a minimum cost. But without knowing the actual value of what the characters will find she chooses to offer them an incentive in the form of a percentage of any end value. Of course if the characters find nothing, then even a 100% of nothing is zero. Urshla, however, does not sign over more than 45% of the end value to other parties and she will try to limit the characters to between 5-10% and no more than a 30% share to any other outside partners (like the Prospectors Guild).

## Academic Interest

A brief enquiry at Avaneir University reveals that it has a physical sciences department that deals with the study of meteorology. The dean of the faculty is Danol Froam, but he is a very busy man who doesn't wish to be disturbed by just anyone. The dean has no love for the nobility or the Church, but a fellow guildsman or academician should be able to get a message through to him and receive an invitation to share his evening meal later in the day.

The evening meal is a very simple affair, as the Dean is not a man who enjoys extravagances or distractions. Attended by a manservant, a basic meal is laid out, which would not be out of place in a peasant household, though the wine served is definitely far above what a serf or freeman could reasonably afford. Froam is engrossed in the importance of his own position and makes conversation about all manner of minutiae concerning the running of his department until one of the characters tells him in clear fashion what they want from him. At this point he suddenly becomes very interested in what the characters have to say.

The dean agrees to help the characters, in return for a copy of the data. It would be of use to his department's ongoing research into Gargantua's weather cycles. If the characters do not agree to his terms, he bids them good

night but informs them that should they change their minds he is willing to assist them.

## Prospectors Chance

The second option is the Prospectors Guild; they were keen to get hold of the think machine and must have some idea of the data it contains. Although it has not been attempted since the time of Second Republic, the Prospectors are keen to locate any information or technology linked to atmospheric filter mining. They have recently obtained other records that claim Gargantua was once the site of such an installation. The Guild believes that the meteorological data will allow them to determine the location of the remains of any structure in the gas giant, or perhaps provide some other type of insight.

Jana Berkhart agrees to see the characters immediately, believing that they might have come to their senses and decided to sell something that is of little real value to them. She receives them in her office at the Prospectors Guild House, close to Padua Spaceport. She is very surprised when the characters ask for help in decoding the information. Before she agrees to anything, she wants to set the terms of the deal.

The Prospectors are interested in claiming any salvageable technology and information that can be found at Gargantua, something to which the characters cannot really agree if they are to remain in the graces of their boss. That said, through careful negotiation it is possible for the characters to split the stake with the Prospectors Guild, effectively giving up a portion of their find. Initially Jana offers her guild's expertise in return for a 50/50 split but negotiations may be conducted by any character using an opposed Extrovert + Diplomacy goal roll. Each VP reduces the Prospectors' share by 5%, while Jana's VPs will increase their share by 5%. The minimum percentage Jana accepts is 10%, there must be something in it for the Prospectors.

An alternative option that Jana entertains is a finder's fee of 10,000 firebirds in return for full ownership of their discovery by the Guild. This is a lot of money, but this would mean betraying Urshla and the baron, which would lead to the character's reputations being dragged through the mud in Rampart's social circles and could lead to any number of dramas as the characters have to defend their reputations—Urshla is not the type to forgive or forget and could become a major enemy if betrayed.

## Deciphering the Code

The data recorded in the think machine is not what the characters expect. It appears to be an atmospheric survey of a gas giant planet. The data is complex and includes several decades of observations centered upon an unusual stationary maelstrom. To have any chance to understand what the data is telling them, the characters may attempt a Tech + Science (Meteorology) goal roll, which takes many hours (possibly days) of research. The implications of the data analysis indicate that the storm front is not natural, though



it conforms to the basic principles of 'cyclo-genesis' with an area of particularly low pressure at the eye of the storm and titanic pressures roiling in the circling storm front.

The data indicates that this effect is anchored in place by something in the deep atmosphere, either a device or some hitherto unknown principle of atmospheric composition and mix. Of greater interest, however, is the spectrographic analysis of the atmosphere, which is primarily composed of hydrogen and helium with trace signatures of methane, water vapor, and ammonia. Curiously, the eye of the storm has a very different composition. The stable center of low pressure is made up of oxygen and nitrogen in a breathable mixture, with traces of other elements and water vapor. Unless the storm is drawing up these compounds from deeper within the atmosphere, they should not be present.

The characters can also make a Tech + Science (Terraforming) goal roll to understand that this appears to be a high tech terraforming effort most likely left over from the Second Republic. Though what the ancient scientists were trying to create is something of a mystery, they have managed to build an environment that, while very unusual, could be habitable for human life ... if there was anything for them to live on.

If the characters receive aid from the Prospectors Guild, Jana Berkhart has a good idea of what she expects to find. She briefs them on Second Republic filter mining and indicates that a filter station may still be operating within the atmosphere of Gargantua. Her details are sketchy as she has no hard data on how the engineers of the Second Republic performed such miracles, only that it was done.

If the characters receive aid from Danol Froam, he offers conjecture about the existence of a deep atmosphere terraforming station and other wonders of the Second Republic. He might even become sufficiently excited to try and persuade the characters to take him along on a trip to see such a wonder.

If the characters are still working with Urshla, she encourages them to go to Gargantua and investigate the maelstrom. Unfortunately she does not go with them as she has yet another round of inescapable social functions to attend to.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Additional gamemaster characters need to be prepared either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama. They are likely to have many more.

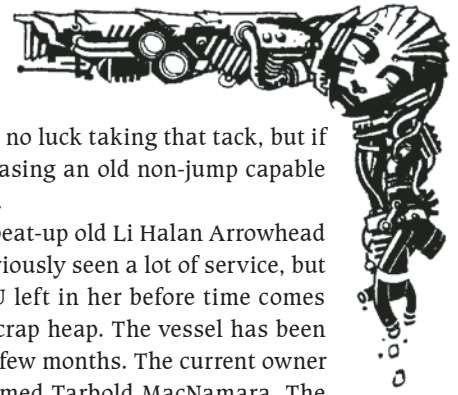
### Dean Danol Froam

Prior to the Li Halan occupation of Rampart, it was a League world and second only to Leagueheim itself in importance and academic reputation.

Many, including Froam, were minor members of the old administration, but in truth he prefers avoiding politics and prefers focusing on science.







A wizened little man with a kindly face and hair that long ago turned white. He maintains a comically long white beard.

**Body:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Endurance 3

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 6, Tech 9

**Spirit:** Extrovert 2, Introvert 5, Passion 7, Calm 2, Faith 6, Ego 2

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 1, Fight 1, Impress 4, Melee 1, Observe 5, Shoot 1, Sneak 4, Vigor 2

**Learned Skills:** Science (Meteorology) 6, Science (Terraforming) 3, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○

## Act 3: Storm Front

The characters now know that they are looking for something in the heart of the storm, but they are not sure exactly what form an arcane terraforming engine would take. If they shared their information with anyone else, the Scravers have acquired it and are preparing to send their own scouting party. If somehow the party kept them completely in the dark, the Scravers still have a fall-back plan. They fit a small tracking device to the characters' starship and follow the party to their destination with the intention of salvaging the prize for themselves.

If the characters have a fast Lander-grade (streamlined hull, fully capable of travel and landing in atmosphere) starship, then they are set to go. Otherwise, complications arise later. In order to enter the atmosphere of a gas giant, the ship must have at least an atmosphere-grade hull. If they want to land on the platform at the station they must have a lander-grade ship. To be able to escape the crushing gravity of Gargantua, the characters must have a 'fast' rated ship. Any vessel with a standard or slow rating cannot make escape velocity. All is not lost if they don't have a 'fast' ship; the Scravers arrive in their own ship which is capable of evacuating them. The Scravers, however, aren't just going to hand it over.

If the characters don't have their own starship, or don't want to risk it in this venture they might try to tap their contacts to obtain one. The gamemaster is free to make available whatever resources he would like the characters to have. Any of the characters allies (Urshla, Danol or Jana) is able to help them locate the Prospectors shuttle through their various contacts.

## Hiring a Ship

If the characters don't have a starship of their own with a lander-grade hull, they need to find someone who does. Very few ship captains are prepared to fly their starships into the outer atmosphere of a gas giant, and even fewer are prepared to risk flying into the heart of the biggest storm in the solar

system. The characters have no luck taking that tack, but if they are interested in purchasing an old non-jump capable shuttle, there is one for sale.

The Solar Ray is a tiny, beat-up old Li Halan Arrowhead Class shuttlecraft. It has obviously seen a lot of service, but she may still have a few AU left in her before time comes to send the old girl to the scrap heap. The vessel has been gathering dust over the last few months. The current owner is an ancient prospector named Tarbold MacNamara. The pain in his hands from his arthritis is now so severe that he can no longer handle the controls. He recently decided to sell out and retire.

The old man is willing to sell his ship and prospecting gear for 5,500 firebirds, 4,000 firebirds if one of the characters is a member of the Prospectors Guild. Of course, there is some room to haggle with an opposed Wits + Knavery goal roll. Each VP lowers the price by 200 firebirds, but each of Tarbold's VPs raises the price by 200 firebirds.

## Trip to Gargantua

Gargantua orbits at 16.207 AU from Esperance, Ram-part's star. The shuttle trip should not take more than three days, but if the party is large those days are uncomfortable and cramped. Of course, if the characters use their own starship, the situation is completely different. Gargantua, despite its name, is not the largest gas giant the characters have ever seen and only has two major satellites, Draco and Kraken. Both are rocky moons with long, active volcanic ridges that spew dust and debris out, only to have it caught by their gravity and slowly returned to settle on the surface. Neither of these planets is very hospitable, though prospectors sometimes visit them.

Gargantua itself is a world of swirling colorful gases, picked up and pushed around the planet in howling jet streams by the titanic force of the maelstrom. The immense storm has an eye approximately 3,000 km across and a raging storm front many times that size.

If the characters are keeping a careful watch, they can attempt a Tech + Science (Sensors) goal roll with a tough (-6) penalty to recognize that they are being followed by another ship. This is, of course, the Scravers. Should the characters turn to confront them (which in a weaponless shuttle would likely be suicidal anyway), the Scravers simply back off and avoid a fight, waiting for the characters to continue toward their destination.

## Eye of the Storm

The gravity well of the great planet is powerful, and descending into the atmosphere is possibly the most risky thing the characters will ever undertake. The gravity draws the ship in, and only ships with the very powerful engines can reach escape velocity for the return trip. If the characters don't have a starship with a 'fast' rated engine, this trip is one way. Once they enter the atmosphere, they need to follow an accurate course to the center of the maelstrom. Like all orbital insertions, this isn't a case of pointing the nose down and flying straight at it.



The pilot must make a Dexterity + Drive (Spaceship) goal roll to avoid taking damage as they cross the boundary of the stratosphere and drop into the hurricane force jet streams. If the goal roll is failed, the spaceship takes a point of damage for each VP under the goal that the pilot rolled. The gravity of the situation strikes the characters as they realize that they feel heavier than they should be. The artificial gravity in the spaceship normally keeps them at a comfortable 1G, but the effect of Gargantua is considerably stronger. Once into the atmosphere, the characters feel the effects of life under 2Gs (Gargantua's 3G less the 1G that the ship is capable exerting). This makes life very difficult and even simple actions exhausting. The gamemaster may call for Strength + Vigor goal rolls anytime the characters attempt extended physical action.

As they pass into the raging storm front, the ship is battered and wrenched first one way and then another. Great lumps of frozen ice held aloft by the winds crash against the hull of their ship, threatening to pulverize them before they can break through to the eye and the relative safety of the calm within.

Once inside the eye of the storm, the raging winds suddenly abate and the characters enter a dim, murky realm of relatively gentle winds and billowing clouds of water vapor. Lightning flashes through the storm wall behind them.

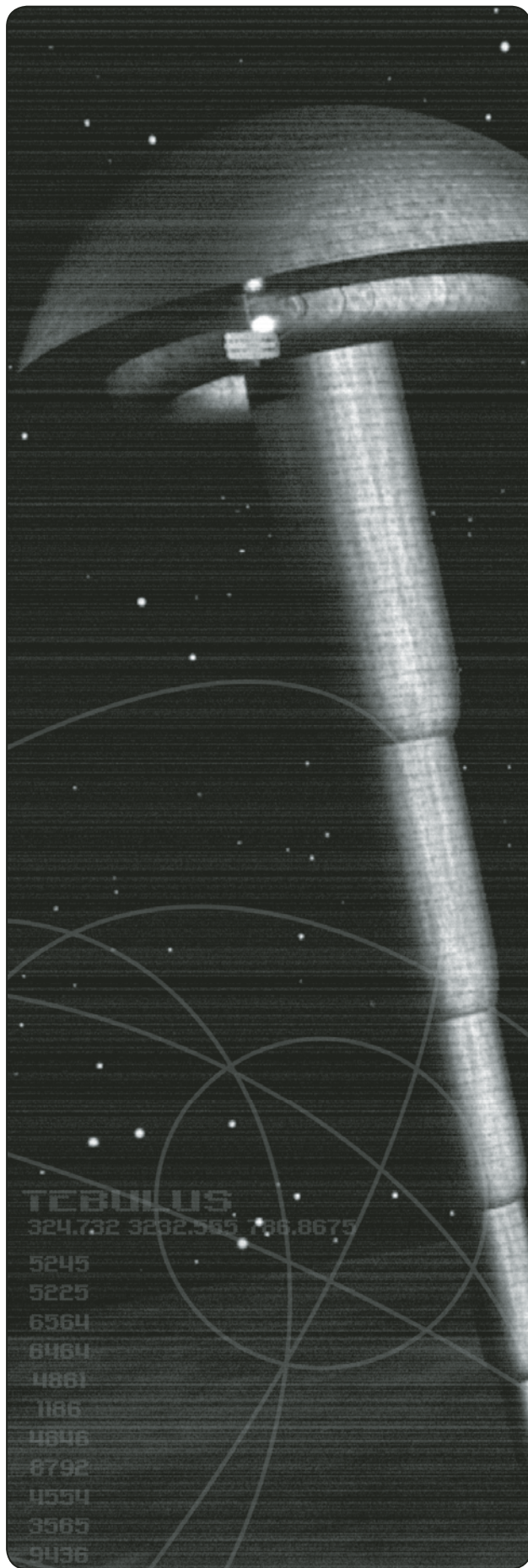
Now that they are within the eye, they must locate Tebulus Station, which is at the center of the terraformed bubble. It is a large space to search, and the engines strain to maintain altitude. The characters may have to make multiple Tech + Science (Sensors) goal rolls to locate the tiny deep atmosphere station. It is possible that they come across one or two of the smaller sensor monitoring stations on the way in.

## Terraforming Station

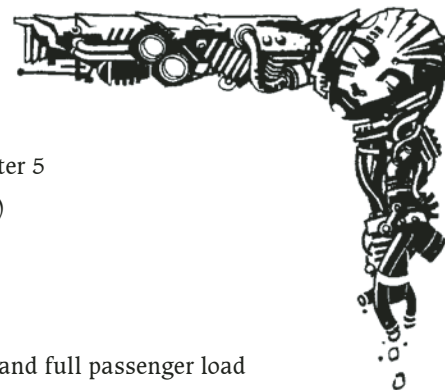
Suddenly a light can be seen shining through the mist of the cloudbank. The Tebulus Station appears out of the gloom. The station resembles a huge mushroom. Great pipes extend downwards through the cloud layer, their reach obscured by dense vapor clouds. Even the starship sensors cannot tell how far they descend. Both the cap of the mushroom and area around the pipes are clustered with weather vanes that constantly monitor the environmental conditions at the heart of the maelstrom.

About mid-way up the cap is a ring of three docking bays. One is closed and secured. The other two are open and awaiting a starship. The squawker comes to life, and an automated metallic voice declares that Bay 2 is cleared for their arrival. Phantasmal landing lights flash on, showing the guide path to the bay. The station can accommodate three starships of up to size 6. Once the ship has landed, the bay doors close and seal. The internal lighting is on in the bay, illuminating a clean and well-kept facility.

Note that although the gravity well of the gas giant is exerting over 3Gs, the characters do not experience this effect unless they leave the confines of the station, which exerts its own artificial gravitation as a constant and com-







portable 1G. The station's artificial gravity is much more powerful than that of a starship and is capable of nullifying the full 3Gs. The characters are likely unaware of the actual environmental conditions of the eye or how life manages to flourish here.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Additional gamemaster characters need to be prepared either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama. They are likely to have many more.

### Tarbold MacNamara, Retired Prospector

The old prospector is finally hanging up his laser drill and retiring to enjoy the last years of his life on Rampart. Tarbold doesn't speak much about his time among the stars. Weary of the solitude, he finds himself both attracted to the company of others and uncomfortable when actually in their presence.

An old man who walks with a pronounced limp, Tarbold is completely bald, but judging from the slight shadow on his skin, this is by choice rather than aging. He is well dressed for a freeman, soft spoken and very respectful.

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Endurance 4

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 6, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Extrovert 1, Introvert 7, Passion 3, Calm 2, Faith 3, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 2, Dodge 2, Fight 3, Impress 4, Melee 3, Observe 5, Shoot 2, Sneak 3, Vigor 7

**Learned Skills:** Knavery 3, Speak Urthish

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○

## Starships

Starships are both characters and backdrops to **Fading Suns** games. While many ply the Jumproads of the Known Worlds, each should have its own distinct flavor; even ships of the same class should be unique.

### Solar Ray, Arrowhead Class Shuttle

**Size Rating:** 1 (10m long, 5m wide, 7m high)

**Grade:** Lander

**Engines:** Standard

**Shields:**

<i>Speed</i>	<i>Left / Right</i>
Full thrust	0 / 0
$\frac{3}{4}$ thrust	1 / 1
Half thrust	1 / 1
$\frac{1}{4}$ thrust	2 / 2
Full stop	2 / 2

**Armament:** None

**Sensors:** Radar 5, Densometer 5

**Crew:** 2 (1 pilot) (1 engineer)

**Passengers:** 3

**Cargo:** 5 tons

**Jumps:** NA

**Supplies:** 1 month for crew and full passenger load

**Vitality:** 10

**Cost:** 14,100 firebirds

**Description:** The Solar Ray is a small craft, designed for trans-atmospheric flight, which looks much like a small version of the wedge-shaped forward section of the Cardano Class Galliot. At maximum capacity she can accommodate up to eight people sleeping in shifts for the trip to Gargantua and back. The journey, however, will not be comfortable, as everyone is crammed into the tiny onboard space, sleeping on the floor with little more than a bedroll. Food is an issue as well. Characters are forced to survive on whatever food they have brought along. Facilities are basic, with a tiny galley shelf and a privy, though the ship is equipped with a sizable ore hold.

**History:** Tarbold MacNamara used the Solar Ray as a prospecting ship for more than 35 years. The ship flew all across the Rampart system visiting every moon and planet at least once. The majority of the ships service took place in the asteroid belt where prospecting was profitable but very dangerous prior to the Li Halan fleet eliminating the pirates who operated from secret bases there.

## Tebulus Station Traits

**Tech Level:** 8

**Height:** 10km though the habitation section on top is only 150m high

**Diameter:** 750m

**Crew:** 100 (currently controlled by the Custodian AI)

**Passengers:** 0

**Cargo (Internal):** 100 tons

**Cargo (External):** 0 tons

**Ship Docks:** 3 ships (size 6 or less)

**Supplies:** None

**Sensors:** Neutrino 10

**Weaponry:** None

**Armor:** 6

**Shields:** Standard

**Vitality:** 200



## Act 4: Tebulus Station

Tebulus Station was state of the art when the Second Republic commissioned it, and even after the Fall it remains so today. The Custodian, a sophisticated artificial intelligence, was originally designed to maintain the station's functions and to monitor the extraction and processing of minerals from the deep atmosphere. The Custodian is a highly proficient engineer who has managed to maintain most of its features with the large stocks of supplies that were abandoned during the Fall.

As the Second Republic reached its height, these operations became less profitable and the facility was scheduled for decommissioning. However, a group of scientists saw the potential such a facility offered for testing meteorological weather formation and control technology. In time, they established the storm front and created their own pocket environment. The Custodian was also adapted for its new role. At first it was an observer and later, when it was ready, became the caretaker of the facility. In a bid to continue their research, several scientists chose to undergo a process called 'imprinting' that would map their neural functions into the existing AI to form a gestalt.

Once the biosphere was established, they tried to build their own ecology, genetically engineering many kinds of creatures and insects for the novel environment. A group of technicians even went so far as to engineer themselves to better function in their new world. Using a combination of their own human DNA and DNA from animal and xeno-animal species, they created a winged hybrid. These bat-winged Changed are now all that is left, though they have been fruitful and multiplied. They have continued to evolve further from the basic pattern determined for them and now some live, hunt, and even sleep on the wing. Others still use the station and the many scattered monitoring stations as islands in the sea of clouds.

The characters face a number of challenges while aboard the station. The first of which is the Scravers who are hot on their tail. Once they have been dealt with, the characters can open a dialogue with the Custodian and be received as guests of honor among the tribes of the Changed. This initial goodwill is likely to sour quickly when the Custodian reasons that if it lets the characters go, its anonymity would be under threat, and therefore also its existence.

The characters are welcome to stay aboard the Tebulus indefinitely, but the moment they try to leave, the situation comes to a head. The Custodian will not let them go. If necessary, it fights to protect its world by destroying the threat that the characters represent, should they escape to tell of the station's existence.

## Introduction to Tebulus

The Second Republic was a time of many great wonders, not least of which was the construction of an atmospheric filter mining operation on Gargantua, a gas giant world shrouded in cloud with a relatively stable atmosphere and no major storm fronts to endanger the construction. The

filter mine itself is little more than a giant straw pushed down in to the deep atmosphere and used to siphon off the gas pockets in the dense, high pressure, chemical soup. Once brought up, valuable chemicals are available for extracting, processing and decanting into containers for off-world export.

The monumental structure is a miracle of high-tech engineering. Sophisticated artificial gravity rings placed a few hundred meters apart prevent the pressure and gravitation of Gargantua from affecting the structure, as well as help convey the gaseous mineral wealth upwards towards the processing station. The long riser doubles as a fractional cracking facility, heating gases and separating them out over the course of the upward flow.

Atop the riser sits perched a mushroom-shaped production facility, using similar gravitational technology to maintain comfortable working conditions for the crew while the toxic winds rage around the station. Living areas were not included in the initial designs of the station, and work crews were rotated through duty shifts from a second space station that doubled as mineral transfer facility in a high orbit around Gargantua. This second station has long since been removed, destroyed, or simply fallen out of orbit to burn up in Gargantua's atmosphere.

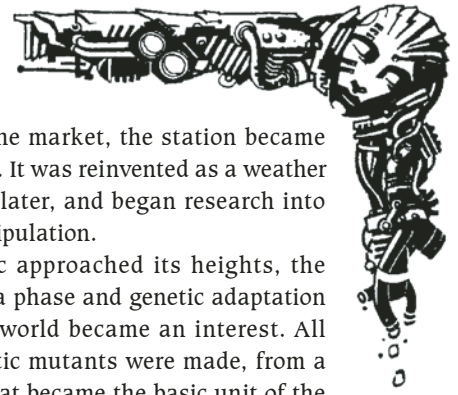
As the Second Republic reached its heights, the market for refined minerals declined, and Tebulus Station ceased to be economical. Unwilling to simply mothball the station and knowing that without regular maintenance it would eventually succumb to Gargantua's atmosphere, the mining concern sought a buyer to at least gain a financial return on its investment.

The Tebulus was purchased by an Urth-based research company interested in the meteorology of gas giants. Over a period of six months, the facility was partially refitted as a scientific station. This process involved stripping out a lot of the old processing equipment, redesigning the space as multiple decks, and incorporating living space and science laboratories. Initially serving purely as an advanced meteorological observatory, the station was later refitted a second time to include a terraforming engine, and the company upgraded the AI systems' supervisor into the form of the Custodian.

In a little over ten years, the experimentation of the scientists had produced a small but stable storm front that would be the beginning of the great eye of the storm. Initially not much more than 500 meters across, it continued to grow throughout the years. As an accidental byproduct of this process, liberated reserves of deep atmosphere oxygen were stirred up into the eye, changing the very composition of what would become known as 'the bubble.'

Once the scientists realized what they had achieved, albeit accidentally, they began to examine what could actually live in their new bio-bubble. They started to genetically modify existing species of plants and animals to live within the airy domain. Each of the environmental monitoring stations previously deployed to observe the storm front was expanded and modified to provide an aerial environment. No longer were these facilities simple monitoring stations,





but places where plants could take hold and grow and flying creatures created by the scientists could take refuge.

As the Fall approached, the scientists made greater and greater developmental leaps. Many creatures they engineered now lived entirely on the wing. An airborne plankton-like spore formed the basis of the artificial ecosystem and food chain. When the Fall occurred, the scientists saw society crumble. They knew they could return to face the collapse of the Second Republic, but many chose instead to stay behind, secure in their own little world. The final step in transition occurred when the remaining scientists began to modify themselves for the new environment and empowered the Custodian to single-handedly maintain the existence of the bubble. Ever since, the Custodian has steadily expanded the storm front to give its charges more space in which to thrive. Occasionally, it even introduces genetic modifications to various species in order to help them deal with the effects of Gargantua's gravitation and pressure.

Over a thousand years in the making, the Tebulus and the Caretaker endure, the eye of the storm expands slowly, and the species within are fruitful and multiply. Hidden in plain sight from the eyes of the Church and the greed of the nobility, this tiny orb is a haven of Changed life.

## Tebulus Station

Tebulus was constructed during the early days of the Second Republic to fulfill the demand for exotic chemicals in certain manufacturing processes. When new techniques

and technologies reached the market, the station became economically unsustainable. It was reinvented as a weather study center only a decade later, and began research into wide-area atmospheric manipulation.

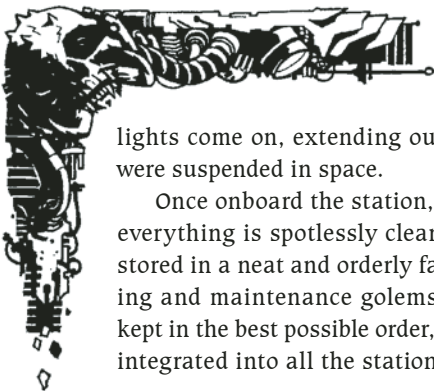
As the Second Republic approached its heights, the experimentation moved up a phase and genetic adaptation of species for their bubble world became an interest. All manner of outlandish genetic mutants were made, from a type of floating plankton that became the basic unit of the bubble's food chain to the Changed humans that now still maintain the station and the monitoring posts, enjoying an aerial existence oblivious to the concerns outside their biosphere.

## General Description

The station is a mushroom-like structure perched atop a very long pipe riser that disappears into the depth of the atmosphere. It is well maintained, with no signs of corrosion or damage to the exterior surface. The many windows of the mid decks and the observation dome on the very top of the mushroom cap are dark, giving the impression that the station is without power. However, these systems are simply powered down when not in use. The on-board interior lighting activates and deactivates as people move around.

Two of the hanger bays are empty and open, awaiting the landing of a craft, while the third is sealed. As a ship makes an approach to the station, the Custodian makes contact by radio and gives it clearance to land. Phantasmal landing





lights come on, extending out from the station as if they were suspended in space.

Once onboard the station, the characters discover that everything is spotlessly clean and supplies and tools are stored in a neat and orderly fashion. A small fleet of cleaning and maintenance golems ensures that everything is kept in the best possible order, and the Custodian AI is fully integrated into all the station's workings and golems.

## Command Deck

The upper level of the mushroom dome, the circular command deck is arranged about a central pillar of technology that display phantasmal illustrations of the station, its workings, the monitor stations outside, and the storm wall itself. The observation dome forms the upper level of the two-tier command center. Most of the time, this deck is powered down and lifeless, as the Custodian has no need of its functions, since it is fully integrated with the station's systems.

## Technical and Scientific

This level forms a ring about the central core, with many rooms equipped for scientific analysis. There is an extensive medical infirmary with advanced and very sophisticated genetic engineering equipment. This facility could be used to literally change a human into one of the Changed. The Custodian has occasionally made use of these facilities to 'aid evolution' of the species that live in the bio-bubble.

## Habitation

Much of the habitation level has not been used in a long time, decades at least. Many of the rooms are bare, obviously cleaned out and abandoned, though they do seem to receive regular cleaning which maintains their spotless condition.

## Docking Bays and Storage

Three large hanger bays occupy the outer area space of this level, surrounding a central core that forms a maintenance and storage area. There are many valuable tools and pieces of equipment on storage shelves and in lockers. The central core extends upwards and downwards through the whole station, permitting the transport of large pieces of equipment between decks.

Of the three hanger bays, one is occupied by three small bathysphere vehicles that could be used for inspection flights of the siphon tube riser that extends deeper into the atmosphere. They are very powerful craft but not designed for extended use. They make use of gravitational technology, similar to that incorporated into the straw to prevent the gravity and pressure from crushing them during inspection flights. These bathyspheres are not capable of escaping Gargantua's gravitational well.

## Engineering

Engineering occupies the two bottom decks of the mushroom-like cap of the station, most of this area is sealed off and what is not is dimly illuminated, with walls of pipe work and electrical junction boxes. Great vat-like chemi-

cal mixers also present here are used for water purification and systemic recycling. Some truly arcane equipment is linked to the long pedestal of piping that extends downwards 10km through the atmosphere. This is, of course, an ancient terraforming engine constructed by Second Republic technicians. Under the full automation and control by the Custodian, the facility maintains and expands the storm wall slowly edging it outwards increasing the area of the bubble.

## Is Anyone Home?

The characters have an opportunity to look around before the Scravers appear and try to claim the station as their own. The Custodian is genuinely interested in learning about these humans who have managed to find it after all these long centuries. Of course, it knows a little about the world beyond the bubble. It has listened in on communications from passing ships, but these are rare and mostly routine radio chatter. On occasion it has even conversed with a few travelers who believed the communications came from a prospecting ship close to one of the moons.

The Custodian is even more surprised when a second ship arrives. It arranges for the two groups to encounter each other as they explore the station—as an experiment to see what happens. The Scravers are interested in securing this station for their own purposes. They plan to either strip out the technology for auction or possibly use the facility as secret depot and hideout. Sharing is not in their nature, and they expect to encounter resistance from the characters. They shoot first and ask questions later. Use the Scraver Goon stats from **Act One** (see p. 19), but give them some body armor and more serious weaponry.

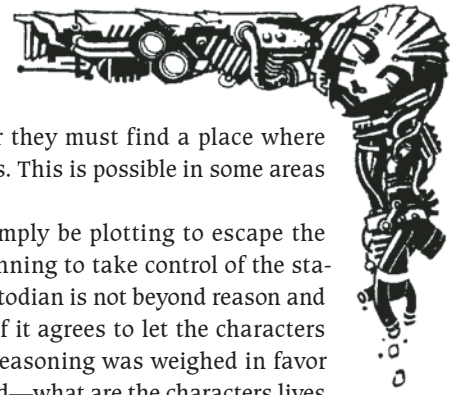
Having observed both starships arrive, the Changed begin circling the station. There is a general level of agitation in the general population and even some conflict between the gathering tribes. The elders of each tribe seek access to the Custodian hoping to discover what is happening.

## As the Dust Settles

Once the characters have settled things with the Scravers, the Custodian becomes concerned about the general level of hostility and sends a golem drone to negotiate with them. The golem is under the direct control of the Custodian, and it waits for the characters, standing openly in the next corridor they enter after their conflict with the Scravers concludes. The humanoid form approaches cautiously with its arms low and hands turned outward to face the characters so that they can clearly see that it is unarmed.

It speaks in perfect Urthish, addressing the characters and identifying itself as the Custodian. However, the intricacies of conversation are something the machine has not participated in for many long years. Although the Changed communicate with it from time to time, they lack depth of understanding regarding the complexities of the universe. If the characters are hostile, the Custodian simply backs away and does not contact them further, instead instruct-





ing the Changed to deal with the threat that the characters represent.

Assuming that the characters speak with the Custodian, it is curious about a great many things, not least about the characters' intentions towards it and its people (meaning the Changed). What the characters say at this juncture determines the degree of cooperation they receive from the Custodian. It is possible that the characters are received as honored guests and brought before the tribal elders of the Changed. If, on the other hand, they are arrogant and make demands of ownership on the station, the Custodian quickly classifies them as a risk to both its own and the tribes' survival. In fact, the Custodian likely concludes, even after a peaceful meeting, that the knowledge the characters possess presents such a grave danger to the station that it cannot reasonably let them go.

The Custodian is just that, a caretaker, not a tyrant, but it weighs the lives and free will of a few humans against its own survival, the secrecy and security of the bubble, and the lives of all the Changed. It is an easy choice to make and to class the characters as a liability. The Custodian tries to offer the characters a comfortable existence if they agree to remain as its guests, permanently. This is when life starts to get problematic.

## Flight or Fight

The characters will likely not settle into their new lives as permanent residents very well. The Custodian seals off the docking bays to both their own ship and the Scravers' vessel. It can listen in on any conversation the characters have almost anywhere in the station. If the characters want to plot their escape, they must do it in a language that the

Custodian doesn't speak, or they must find a place where the Custodian has no sensors. This is possible in some areas of the old refinery.

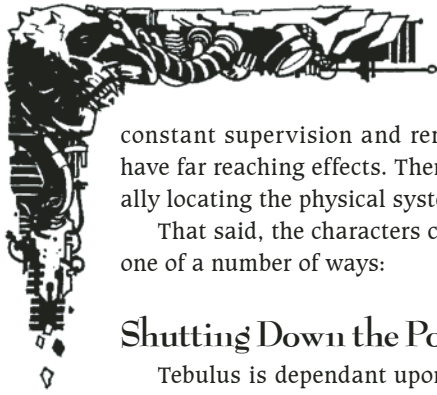
The characters might simply be plotting to escape the station or they might be planning to take control of the station for their patron. The Custodian is not beyond reason and is actually very honorable. If it agrees to let the characters go it will do so. Its current reasoning was weighed in favor of the survival of the Changed—what are the characters lives when set against those of a thousand others?

Planning any action is difficult, and once the Custodian is alerted, strange meetings make it watchful and cause it to take precautions. The first action it undertakes is to have both the starships rigged with an explosive device. If the characters do insist on leaving, the Custodian sends Changed or a few Golems after the characters in a bid to force them to run. Once the ship is safely away from the station it activates the timer, so that any explosion and wreckage is well away from Gargantua.

A character conducting routine engineering work finds the explosive rigged to the fusion core on a Wits + Tech Redemption goal roll. How much time is left on the timer is up to the gamemaster, but 12 minutes gives them a fighting chance to save themselves. Deactivating the device requires a Tech + Warfare (Demolitions) goal roll. Alternatively, they can jettison the fusion core, but this leaves them drifting towards home with only the stored power in the batteries (enough to keep them alive for about four days). Without the core they have to hope that another ship comes to their aid.

The alternative to this is to fight and to try and force the Custodian to back down, negotiate or actually take out the AI. This is risky, because the terraforming engines are under





constant supervision and removing the controller would have far reaching effects. There is also the problem of actually locating the physical systems that support the AI.

That said, the characters can take the fight to the AI in one of a number of ways:

## Shutting Down the Power

Tebulus is dependant upon its power generation capacity. It has two fusion cores and battery cell backups. If the characters can shut off the power by jettisoning the cores manually, severing the power relays or shutting down the cores, then everything switches over to the back-up batteries. At this point, the AI has 30 minutes to restore power or the station is lost. Without power, the artificial gravity shuts down immediately, inflicting Gargantua's 3Gs on the station's structure. The riser immediately buckles and snaps, sending the station into the depths of the atmosphere to be crushed and pulverized in a matter of minutes. The characters had better be off the station by the time the power fails or they are dead. The moment the Custodian realizes what they have jettisoned the cores it bends all efforts towards destroying them, if they have simply severed the AI, it will be prepared to negotiate to restore power.

## Isolating the Custodian

If the characters can locate the physical housing of the Custodian's AI systems, they can sever the data and sensory links with the rest of the station. This reduces the Custodian to being blind, deaf and dumb, but it also separates the controller from the terraforming engines, which leads to growing atmospheric instability over the period of several months. It is even possible that the bubble eventually collapses in on itself, destroying the whole ecosystem.

To locate the physical systems that house the Custodian, a tech savvy character must spend at least a day examining technical schematics or tracing relays, power, and data conduits. A Tech + Think Machine goal roll with a hard (-6) penalty locates the critical systems.

## Holding the Custodian to Ransom

Rather than actually cutting the Custodian off, the characters demonstrate that they are capable of doing that but show a willingness to negotiate. Then the Custodian realizes the error of its ways and requests the opportunity to come to an arrangement. The Custodian will cooperate with the characters in return for the safety of the bio-bubble and its inhabitants. This would permit the characters to succeed without threatening the long-term survival of the station. It also permits them to negotiate over filter mining operations that could be invaluable to their patron, or they could simply use the facility as a secret staging area or observation post.

## The Tribes of the Changed

The Changed tribes all share certain geno-fixed survival traits, essential for living under the intense stresses

of a high-G aerial environment. Once human, their basic physiology required recoding at a molecular level, where sweeping changes were made to normal physical tolerances. Even with the thick soupy atmosphere of Gargantua, flight is a challenge under its powerful gravity. Muscle and respiratory systems no longer even bear a resemblance to normal human physique. Bone has been replaced with a lightweight semi-flexible keratin and all major organs including the circulatory system are sheathed in powerful muscle to maintain their function under the stress of high gravity.

Atmospheric buoyancy is maintained with several lighter-than-air bladders, and flight is aided by reduced skeletal density, reduced physical stature, lightweight body mass and a large ultra-light wingspan. The actual art of flying involves riding the thermals and air currents to gain altitude, then gliding down upon the intended target. Each of the tribes uses one of the weather monitoring stations as a base of operations. They cultivate a hardy moss and hunt various small avian species. One of the tribes has even evolved so far that it lives entirely on the wing, even sleeping as they soar on the thermals.

The tribes know nothing of the worlds outside their bubble and look upon the Custodian as a semi-mythical entity. Only the elders of each tribe are considered wise enough to communicate with the Custodian though any could petition for an audience. The tribes maintain an unsteady peace enforced by the will of the Custodian through the elders. Occasional skirmishes occur between young hotheads of different tribes.

## Key Characters

Those few gamemaster characters important to the overall flow of the drama are detailed below. Additional gamemaster characters need to be prepared either in advance or on the fly during the game. Note also that each of the characters only lists Learned Skills that may be relevant to the drama. They are likely to have many more.

### The Custodian

The Custodian is a collection of silicone circuits in the station's central core. It is the intelligence that runs the Tebulus station and has maintained the operations of the station for centuries.

**Body:** Strength -, Dexterity -, Endurance -

**Mind:** Wits 10, Perception 5, Tech 8

**Spirit:** Extrovert 4, Introvert 4, Passion 3, Calm 7, Faith 0, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge NA, Fight NA, Impress 7, Melee NA, Observe 8, Shoot NA, Sneak NA, Vigor NA

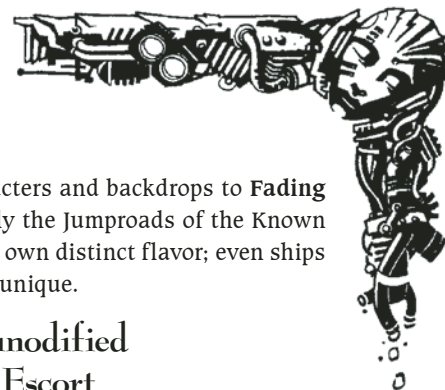
**Learned Skills:** Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Urthtech, Read Urthtech, Speak Birvoc

**Weapons:** None

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** NA





## Typical Changed Tribal Elder

The typical Changed tribal elder stands about five feet tall, their faces look almost human but completely hairless. Like the ancient Urth bats, these Changed have folded skin membranes between their arms and legs. These membranes are fanned out during flight to catch the winds and act as a combination of wing and sail.

Elders are short, thin men with leathery ruffles folded in about their body. They are not greatly different in size from the average tribal member. An extra pair of arms contorts to fold in down their backs at odd angles. When not flying, the creature's membranes normally fold into great ruffles of skin along the sides of the body. Tribal elders have skin tones that are slightly purple, and what clothing they wear is made of woven plant fibers dyed in symbolic patterns. It is this clothing that sets an elder apart from the rest of the tribe and interestingly, the patterns dyed upon their clothes appear to depict the station and the cloud banks around it.

**Body:** Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 6, Tech 2

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 4, Passion 3, Calm 2, Faith 7, Ego 2

**Natural Skills:** Charm 2, Dodge 3, Fight 5, Impress 4, Melee 2, Observe 5, Shoot 0, Sneak 0, Vigor 7, Fly 7

**Learned Skills:** Stoic Body 3, Speak Birvoc

Changed Traits: Extra Limbs x2, Wings

**Weapons:** Claws

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Typical Changed Tribal

The typical Changed tribal member shares the same basic appearance as his tribal elders, though younger, fitter, and with less stoic self-control.

The typical tribal member is a thin man of short stature with leathery ruffles folded in about his form. An extra pair of arms contorts to fold in down his back at an odd angle. His skin tone is slightly purple and what clothing he wears seems to be made from plain, undyed woven plant fibers.

**Body:** Strength 7, Dexterity 2, Endurance 6

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 6, Tech 1

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 4, Passion 5, Calm 2, Faith 6, Ego 2

**Natural Skills:** Charm 2, Dodge 3, Fight 4, Impress 2, Melee 4, Observe 5, Shoot 0, Sneak 0, Vigor 7, Fly 5

**Learned Skills:** Speak Birvoc

Changed Traits: Extra Limbs x2, Wings

**Weapons:** Claws

**Armor:** None

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Starships

Starships are both characters and backdrops to **Fading Suns** games. While many ply the Jumproads of the Known Worlds, each should have its own distinct flavor; even ships of the same class should be unique.

### Scoundrel's Chance, modified League Sentry Class Escort

**Size Rating:** 4 (40m long, 30m wide, 7.5m high)

**Grade:** Lander

**Engines:** Fast

**Shields:**

*Speed* *Left / Right*

Full thrust 0 / 0

¾ thrust 1 / 1

Half thrust 1 / 1

¼ thrust 2 / 2

Full stop 2 / 2

**Armament:** 5 Lt Laser, 1 Missile Launcher (turret), 2 Grapple Guns

**Sensors:** EMS 8

**Crew:** 11 (2 pilots – or 1 pilot and 1 navigator, 1 engineer, 8 gunners, +1 Noble/Captain)

**Passengers:** 5 Marines (or 5 passengers)

**Cargo:** 10 tons

**Jumps:** 2

**Supplies:** 1 month

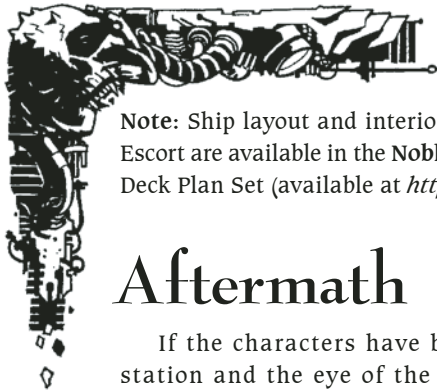
**Vitality:** 40

**Cost:** 87,500 firebirds

**Description:** The Scoundrel's Chance has a sleek, angular look with an overall wedge shape. Bulky engines at the rear of the craft give the impression that it's built for speed, and obvious weapons are placed in a dorsal turret. The missile launcher turret is oriented toward the front of the ship, it creates a sleek, but dangerous mouth-like appearance, the intentionally chipped paintwork enhances the disturbing imagery with a threatening shark's tooth design.

**History:** The Scoundrel's Chance has had more captains than most. Affiliated with the Scravers of the Shodan family on Rampart, the captaincy of the Chance is something of a matter of chance, and usually only lasts until the ill-fated leader manages to cross someone who shouldn't be crossed or loses cargo to a Li Halan inspection. As a result, each new captain tends to be somewhat tyrannical as they try desperately to hold onto their position and their ship. At the moment, the Chance is technically between captains; that is to say that former captain is no more and a new captain has yet to be appointed. Ham Grey is currently filling in for his masters and has wisely opted not to apply for the "permanent" captaincy. (Use standard Scraver Goon stats, but add Drive (Starship) 4).





Note: Ship layout and interior design for the Sentry Class Escort are available in the **Noble Armada Letters of Marque Deck Plan Set** (available at <http://www.holistic-design.com>).

## Aftermath

If the characters have been forced to destroy the station and the eye of the storm, there is little they can return to their patron. While their expenses are covered, they receive little recognition or reward for failure. Dame Urshla Keddah is disappointed with their performance and only offers them a token payment of 50 firebirds for their troubles, which, she informs them if pressed, is generous, given that all they have really managed to achieve is an expensive visit to an auction in her absence.

There is also the issue of genocide to consider, if the characters have destroyed the station they have wiped out a unique race of Changed. This is a grave sin and one that will tarnish their soul mirrors for a long time to come. A psychic or theurge should be penalized with a point or two of urge or hubris to reflect this. But even characters without occult powers are marked by this event. Penance will be a long road of trials, and true atonement is likely impossible. The gamemaster may choose to inflict a haunting, recurrent bad luck or other afflictions upon the characters.

If, on the other hand, the characters manage to negotiate with the Custodian and are able to bring news of the facility back to House Keddah, they are well received, rewarded with 500 firebirds each and elevated in the esteem of the House and within the eyes of Baron Halman Keddah. They may even be awarded dwellings on the Baron's estate or a small parcel of land.

It will be some time until House Keddah is able to exploit the resources of the Tebulus Station. It is within Li Halan territory and the Scravers Guild knows of its existence. House Keddah moves quickly to exploit the situation as best they can, but with little realistic chance of being able to hold the facility for themselves, they use it to their best advantage and offer it as a gift to the Phoenix Throne. Once the facility is openly known and belongs to the Emperor, no one else has a claim upon it. House Keddah is sure to receive favor in return for such a gift.

## Awarding Experience

Rewarding Experience Points should follow the guidelines on p. 126 of the Revised Second Edition (p. 136 of the **Fading Suns** rulebook):

- 1 Experience Point if the characters failed to discover Tebulus Station.
- 2 Experience Points if the characters managed to discover Tebulus Station but are forced to destroy the Custodian.
- 3 Experience Points if the characters managed to discover Tebulus Station and negotiate with the Custodian to a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

## Extra Experience

The player characters may receive bonus experience for good role-playing, working together, and learning new things as detailed below:

+1 Experience Point for role-playing: Any character that was role-played properly and took an active part in the drama should receive this award.

+1 to +3 Experience Points for learning something new: There is plenty to learn in this drama. It is not likely the characters have ever attended a private auction, flown into the eye of a massive storm in the atmosphere of a gas giant to discover a lost atmosphere station, dealt with tribes of winged Changed, or negotiated with an Artificial Intelligence. All of these things, if handled well, offer the referee opportunities to give out extra experience.

## Complications

Of course you do not need to run the drama exactly as written. Feel free to tweak or change any aspect of it for your own epic. Here are a couple of complications that add extra layers to the story. These elements are entirely optional:

### The Jumble Sale

Any one of the many items included in the auction can lead the characters off in various directions and numerous different quests. The gamemaster should feel free to be as inventive as he likes with the auction, creating new items and providing back-stories to any item that might be of interest to the characters.

For example, the Ukari cutlery set might be haunted by someone ritually murdered with them. The holographic projection of the Prophet might contain a message, directions, or a plea for aid that only plays when the item is handled in a particular way. Or the safe deposit key could open the door of any room numbered '272'!

### The Mix-Up

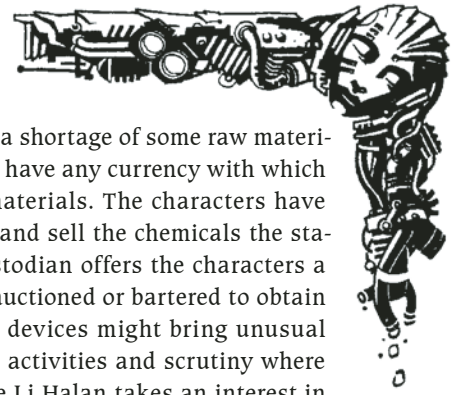
As the characters pick up their carefully packaged winnings from the auction, they are unaware that their lot has been switched or mixed up. Perhaps they find themselves confronted by Adept Templeton who believes they deliberately switched the lots so as to steal the Saint's hand. Perhaps the characters don't discover that they have the wrong item until the Scravers try to take it from them. Perhaps Westmane Kluff has taken their lot for his private collection, and the falsified records might lead the characters on a merry chase until they discover who really has what they seek.

### The Second Wave

The Scravers have been expecting their fellows to make contact and report in. When they don't, they know something has gone wrong and assume the characters have overpowered them. They dispatch a second, more heavily armed and equipped ship to intercept the characters as they climb out of Gargantua's atmosphere. They aim to capture the characters and their ship to learn what fate has befallen their comrades.







The characters can run or they can fight, but the Scravers could well upset the secrecy element of any deal they have made with the Custodian. Perhaps they can cut a deal? This option works if the characters have their own ship or if they take the Scoundrel's Chance.

**Note:** The use of the Noble Armada miniatures game rules for combat greatly enhances this scenario.

## Spin-offs

If the characters are moving on from this drama into an ongoing epic, here are few ideas to keep them busy:

### In Short Supply

Tebulus Station and the Custodian have managed to survive for a protracted period of time without assistance from the outside world. Now however, repairs are becoming a problem; even with the ability to build almost any

needed component, there is a shortage of some raw materials. The Custodian does not have any currency with which to purchase the required materials. The characters have no means set yet to gather and sell the chemicals the station could provide. The Custodian offers the characters a few small tech items to be auctioned or bartered to obtain the necessary parts. These devices might bring unusual attention to the characters' activities and scrutiny where none is wanted when House Li Halan takes an interest in their dealings.

### Heretical Genetics

One of the Changed stows away on the characters' ship. Once they make it to port, the strange creature really has no chance. It is captured by Church authorities and put on public trial as a demon. The characters recognize the pathetic creature, but do they choose to leave it to its fate or do they intervene?

# Appendix

The sample pre-generated characters presented are designed as a group of freelancers with a less than clean reputation. Please note that although all the characters are gendered male it is a simple thing for a player to rename and switch gender if he prefers. Likewise, the character descriptions have been left deliberately vague so that the player can embellish and personalize them.

## Sir Tevin Keddah

Sir Tevin was born to a branch of the Keddah family on Grail and raised alongside his twin brother Kolyn. There has always been some argument between them as to who is the eldest, though as the second and third sons, any argument over such things is irrelevant for now. The brothers were always close though very different; striving for their own individual identities, both took separate paths.

Tevin was always the more outgoing of the pair and excelled in social situations. His brother was more interested in 'doing' rather than 'saying' which has lead to a lifelong struggle between them to refine their own philosophies about the world and prove the other wrong. This rivalry has never been permitted to get out of hand; they are brothers first and rivals second.

Naturally, Sir Tevin gravitated towards diplomatic duties and earned himself a place amongst the small diplomatic corps assigned to the Li Halan world of Rampart. Here, he

could mix with both the uptight penitents of the Li Halan and the more liberal and interesting culture of Rampart. Tevin's time has been well spent, and he has established himself in the local gossip network and made many other useful contacts.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** House Keddah

**Rank:** Knight

**Quote:** "My brother would say that deeds speak louder than words, but I say that only words can be heard."

**Description:** Sir Tevin is a young man of medium build; his hawkish face is cleanly shaven and his hair worn longer in the style of the Li Halan court. His clothing is also in the simple decorative Li Halan style.

**Age:** 24

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Spring Knife, Squawker, 45 firebirds

**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Endurance 4

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 8, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 6, Introvert 1, Passion 1, Calm 6, Faith 1, Ego 5

**Natural Skills:** Charm 7, Dodge 3, Fight 3, Impress 3, Melee 3, Observe 5, Shoot 3, Sneak 5, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Etiquette 5, Lore (Court Rivals) 2, Knavery 5, Arts (Rhetoric) 2, Social (Debate) 2, Ride 2, Empathy 1,



Bureaucracy 1, Inquiry 7, Performance 1, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Blessings & Curses:** Alert (+2 Perception when spying on rivals), Untrustworthy (-1 Knavery), Rank (Knight), Contact, Gossip Network (Rampart)

**Combat Actions:** Parry, Thrust

**Psi:** 3

**Psi Powers:** Psyche (Intuit, Emote, Mindsight)

**Wyrd:** 7

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○

## Sir Kolyn Keddah

Sir Kolyn was born to a branch of the Keddah family on Grail and raised alongside his twin brother Tevin. There has always been some argument between them as to who is the eldest, though as the second and third sons, any argument over such things is irrelevant for now. The brothers were always close though very different; striving for their own individual identities, both took separate paths.

Kolyn was always interested in proving himself through action. Never one inclined to talk or share his thoughts; he gives careful consideration to the task at hand and then takes the most appropriate action as he sees it. Despite the differences in outlook between Kolyn and Tevin, they always trust each other and have a deep understanding that the other is there for him.

Kolyn naturally moved towards a military career, serving in House Keddah's small fleet of system defense ships. The Keddah fleet is too small to be effective against a full-scale invasion, but they are more than a match for the occasional pirate incursion. An engagement of this sort recently earned Kolyn a bit of good will from the government as well as a small sum of firebirds.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** House Keddah

**Rank:** Knight

**Quote:** "Deeds are all that matters, words are simply lost in time."

**Description:** Sir Kolyn is a young man of medium build, his hawkish face has a slight touch of shadow to it and his hair is worn short in a military cut. His clothing is undecorated and plain, yet practical.

**Age:** 24

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Wrist Squawker, Blaster Pistol, Tabletop Magic Lantern Projector, 1,100 firebirds

**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 7, Perception 7, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 3, Passion 4, Calm 2, Faith 1, Ego 4

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 3, Fight 3, Impress 4, Melee 4, Observe 5, Shoot 5, Sneak 4, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Etiquette 3, Lore (Jumproads) 1, Knavery 4, Arts (Rhetoric) 1, Social (Debate) 1, Drive (Spacecraft) 4, Remedy 1, Social (Leadership) 2, Think Machine 4, Warfare (Gunnery) 3, Warfare (Starfleet Tactics) 2, Spacesuit, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Blessings & Curses:** Alert (+2 Perception when spying on rivals), Untrustworthy (-1 Knavery), Rank (Knight)

**Combat Actions:** Parry, Thrust, Counter Parry

**Psi:** 3

**Psi Powers:** Psyche (Intuit, Emote, Mindsight)

**Wyrd:** 5

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○

## Deacon Matthias Latinan

Matthias grew up in the heart of rural Grail in a family that was a distant relative of House Keddah. He dreamed of his family being recognized as nobility and uplifted from the drudgery of common toil. Alas, that never happened. As the youngest of many sons, he was simply an extra mouth to feed. At age 6, Matthias father sent him to be invested into the Church of Saint Amalthea. In time, he came to accept his role in life, though not before he had tried to run away from the Sanctuary. Matthias was not punished for his actions, instead viewed with a kind-hearted sympathy. It was then that he understood for the first time compassion and charity towards others.

After his eye-opening revelation, Matthias applied himself to his study. He learned how to read and how to heal. He also learned that he was destined to take the word of Saint Amalthea's Sanctuary out to those who knew only suffering and had yet to hear the warming words of understanding and sympathy. On his last night at the Sanctuary before going forth to spread the word, Matthias was visited by an angel. As he prayed, a hand of bright light reached down to touch the Jumpgate Cross he held before him. No words were spoken, but Matthias understood that this was a gift from the Saint herself, and that his mission to heal humanity must not fail.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** Sanctuary Aeon

**Rank:** Deacon

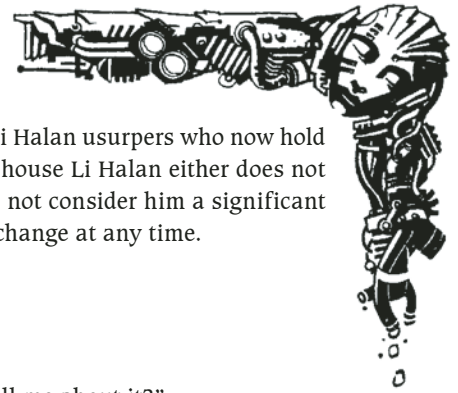
**Quote:** "Only through our charity can we know the will of the Pancreator."

**Description:** Matthias is a young man with an earnest expression; his hair is starting to grow out from the short monastic style it had been cut into. In moments of uncertainty, his hand reaches up to touch the pendant that hangs about his neck.

**Age:** 21

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Expedition MedPac, Elixer Injector +3 doses, Jumpgate Cross Pendant of St. Amalthea (Saints Lore: The Laying on of Hands), 460 firebirds





**Body:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 5, Perception 6, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 5, Introvert 5, Passion 3, Calm 4, Faith 8, Ego 1

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 3, Fight 3, Impress 7, Melee 3, Observe 4, Shoot 3, Sneak 3, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 5, Lore (Folk) 2, Arts (Music) 2, Empathy 2, Lore (Local People) 1, Physick 4, Remedy 3, Stoic Mind 2, Drive (Beastcraft) 2, Focus 1, Lore (Doctrine) 3, Ride 1, Social (Oratory) 5, Streetwise 1, Science (Meteorology) 1, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish, Speak Latin, Read Latin, Speak Urthtech

**Blessings & Curses:** Compassionate (+2 Passion when helping others), Gullible (-2 Wits when fast talked), Rank (Deacon), Saints Lore

**Wyrd:** 4

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○

## Associate Seb Earstnan

A native of Rampart, Seb started out in the slums of Padua and has worked hard for everything he now enjoys. He has Republican ideas, believing that those who work hard should rise while those who don't should not. Seb has no love for those born to privilege, but he knows better than to be too vocal about his opinions. Instead, he has dedicated himself to helping those who need help and embarrassing those in authority who abuse their power. Toward that end, Seb took a post as a reporter for the Town Criers Rampart Guild House.

Over the years, Seb has avoided making too many enemies. His judicious choice of candidates to attack minimizes that risk. Seb is very careful to only take on those people he believes he can bring down. Though he knows it is likely a pipe dream, Seb imagines a day when his words might spark

a revolution and topple the Li Halan usurpers who now hold Rampart in thrall. As of yet house Li Halan either does not know of Seb's goals, or does not consider him a significant concern, though that could change at any time.

**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** Town Criers Guild

**Rank:** Associate

**Quote:** "So why don't you tell me about it?"

**Description:** Seb is a middle-aged man who looks young for his years, with a charming and disarming smile.

**Age:** 31

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Derringer, 50 firebirds

**Body:** Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Endurance 5

**Mind:** Wits 8, Perception 7, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 3, Passion 3, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 6

**Natural Skills:** Charm 5, Dodge 4, Fight 5, Impress 4, Melee 3, Observe 8, Shoot 4, Sneak 5, Vigor 3

**Learned Skills:** Inquiry 5, Streetwise 5, Academia 3, Etiquette 2, Lore (Rampart Agora) 1, Lore (Rampart Underworld) 3, Social (Debate) 2, Gambling 1, Knavery 5, Empathy 1, Think Machine 2, Social (Oratory) 2, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Blessings & Curses:** Curious (+2 Extrovert when seeing something new), Argumentative (-2 Extrovert in conversation), Rank (Associate), Gossip Network (Li Halan worlds), Refuge (Guild safe house), Contacts ×3

**Wyrd:** 3

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○

## Oblate Tyran Dow

Tyran was an orphan, raised like countless others, by the Brother Battle order. His entire life has been one of hard work, training, and discipline. His time spent in meditation, contemplation, and martial battle practice left him with little time to even consider a world beyond the walls of the monastery. Tyran's strict observance of the faith and the blossoming of his theurgist capabilities certainly would have earned him an honorable and noble place upon the battlefields of Stigmata, but the Master had another task for him, one that would be far more difficult than serving as a grunt at the frontline. He was chosen to gain worldly experience, to understand what the order is fighting to defend and to act as a 'poster boy' for the order.

In only a few short months, Tyran has discovered how inadequate his training was for the task entrusted to him. People lie, cheat, and steal; they profane the Pancreator with both words and actions and these affronts are difficult to abide. As a result of his experiences with the outside world, he is slowly learning that all things are not black and white and that generalizations are just that.



**Race:** Human

**Alliance:** Brother Battle

**Rank:** Oblate

**Quote:** "The Pancreator sees all and knows all. When the time comes and life is spent, my deeds in his name will be remembered."

**Description:** An idealistic young man, who looks at the world with innocent eyes. He is always immaculately presented.

**Age:** 19

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Broadsword, 85 firebirds

**Body:** Strength 8, Dexterity 8, Endurance 8

**Mind:** Wits 3, Perception 3, Tech 3

**Spirit:** Extrovert 1, Introvert 4, Passion 2, Calm 3, Faith 6, Ego 1

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 5, Fight 6, Impress 3, Melee 8, Observe 3, Shoot 8, Sneak 3, Vigor 4

**Learned Skills:** Focus 1, Remedy 3, Stoic Body 5, Physic 1, Survival 1, Warfare (Military Tactics) 1, Speak Urthish, Read Urthish

**Blessings & Curses:** Disciplined (+2 Calm in combat), Clueless (-2 Perception to social cues), Rank (Oblate)

**Combat Actions:** Parry, Thrust, Slash, Disarm

**Theurgy:** 5

**Rites:** Soul's Vessel, Rightfully Guided Hand, Armor of the Pancreator, Righteous Fervor, Liturgy of the Wrathful Host  
**Wyrd:** 9

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○

## Sergeant Klesh 'Hungry' Ukdon

Born and raised on Ungavorox before being civilized and then trained by the Muster. Klesh is better known by his nickname of 'Hungry.' True to his name he loves food and can never seem to get enough of it; human portions are always too small. Hungry has served with distinction on several battlefields and has a reputation as both a competent bodyguard and tracker.

If truth were told, Hungry was the runt of the litter, even now he does not have the stature of a typical Vorox. As a result he has something of an inferiority complex that he fights constantly to overcome. Towards that end, he cocoons himself in a fearsome reputation as a warning to others, all the while trying to live up to what he believes represents a proper Vorox warrior.

**Race:** Vorox

**Alliance:** Muster

**Rank:** Sergeant

**Quote:** "Pleased to meet you, I'm hungry. \*Growl\*"



**Description:** Hungry is a mountain of fur and muscles, though only standing a head taller than most humans.

**Age:** 21

**Equipment:** Traveling Clothes, Blaster Shotgun, 800 firebirds

**Body:** Strength 8, Dexterity 8, Endurance 8

**Mind:** Wits 4, Perception 4, Tech 4

**Spirit:** Extrovert 3, Introvert 1, Passion 6, Calm 1, Faith 1, Ego 3

**Natural Skills:** Charm 3, Dodge 5, Fight 8, Impress 5, Melee 8, Observe 4, Shoot 8, Sneak 5, Vigor 5

**Learned Skills:** Remedy 3, Survival 5, Tracking 3, Drive (Watercraft) 3, Lore (People and Places) 4, Search 3, Streetwise 3, Mech Redemption 2, Speak Vorox, Speak Urthish

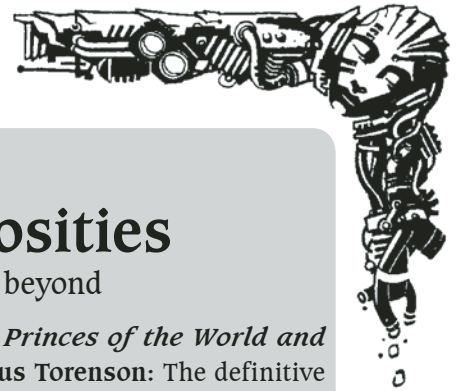
**Blessings & Curses:** Predatory (+2 Perception / -2 Calm when hungry), Tall (+1 Vitality, 12m base run), Sensitive Smell (+2 Perception distinguishing smells), Uncouth (-2 Extrovert in social situations), Bold (+2 Passion when acting when others hesitate), Surly (-2 Extrovert when upset)

**Wyrd:** 6

**Vitality:** -10|-8|-6|-4|-2|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○|○







Austairs' Auction House presents

## A Diverse Collection of Curiosities

from across the Worlds of the Phoenix Empire and beyond

**Gargara-Mok:** The Vorox instrument that looks like two cellos fused together, with the bodies and the twin string sets slightly tilted (the thing is somewhat V shaped). Made of reddish wood and bears the marks of the famous Cellaryyarna Angerak of Gargara makers.

**Ritual Bowl from Manitou:** Cast in copper and engraved with mystic symbols of ancient Ukari pictograms around the rim. Reputed to have once been the property of Magda Hargrat, who is believed to have brewed the zhrii-ka'a tincture in it.

**Holo-Icon from the Late Second Republic:** A small metal disc with a lens in the middle. When a switch is turned on, it forms a 50 cm tall image of the prophet Zebulon.

**Complete Set of Traditional Ukari Cutlery:** A complete 23 piece traditional cutlery set forged from steel with intricate bone carved handles.

**The Manuscript of Paul Tamul:** A well-thumbed notebook that was once the property of Paul Tamul, an explorer and adventurer who lived during the last days of the Second Republic. Contained within are his observations on the Ur artifacts we know as the Jumpgates. He also has detailed notes and decryption algorithms that he used to decode previously unknown jumproutes. This could be a valuable resource for any would-be explorer.

**Bottle of 300-year-old Brandy from Ravenna:** A brown glass bottle and sports an almost unreadable label. The cork still has its wax seal.

**White Stone set in a Silver Brooch:** A lux stone; it is of value to anyone with an interest in the psychic arts, and the height of fashion at the Imperial Court.

**The Philosopher's Head:** A finely crafted metal Golem head, the head is complete and without attachment for a body. Owned by, and some even say built by, the first Academician of Rampart, the head is believed to be a repository for all his collected knowledge and wisdom.

**Three Obun Opera Masks:** These masks represent three different characters and have a strange glyph in their foreheads. The masks are made of a hard plastic and still have their straps in place. A must for collectors with a keen interest in Obun performance art.

**Rare Copy of the *Great Princes of the World and Their Lineages* by Magnus Torenson:** The definitive work on heraldry and the origins of the great families. The book is well illustrated with lots of pictures and family trees. The original was written shortly after Vladimir's death, but this copy is 200 years old.

**Think Machine Journal:** Containing *An observation of Gargantua's weather patterns* by Dr. Risus Ekhard.

**Small Ornate Music Box:** Plays a childhood nursery rhyme when opened, the box itself sports fascinating interlocked carvings.

**Second Republic Era Jumpkey:** A thin metal cylinder, unadorned with any decoration. It is not possible to speculate about which jumproad this key opens, but it is sure to bring its owner both fame and fortune.

**Key to a Safe Deposit Box:** A small brass key with attached metal tag that reads '272'. This could be a key to untold riches.

**Bowl Carved from an Unknown Crystal:** This bowl gives off a low frequency hum when filled with water. This hum is relaxing and may assist meditation.

**Finely Carved Wooden Box, within which sit Five Glass Orbs in Carefully Prepared Padding:** Two of the orbs are clear glass, while the remaining three are milky or smoke filled.

**Matt black Stone Covered in Shallowly Carved Runes:** The runes are of Ukari origin, but the significance of this piece can only be speculated upon.

**Soldier's Journal:** Leather bound journal written by a soldier fighting a war on an unidentified world. This may be a historical account of one man's view of the Emperor Wars.

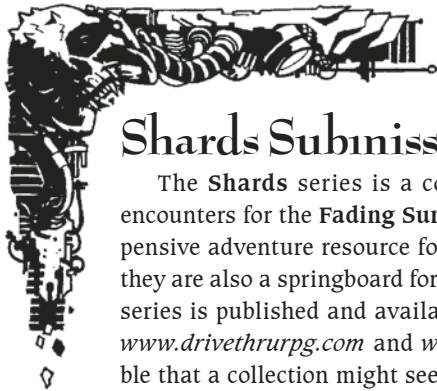
**Collection of Fine Bone China Plates:** A complete set of thirteen plates, each finely hand painted with the likeness of one of Zebulon's followers.

**The Blessed Hand of St. Markku:** A cybernetic hand and lower arm reputed to have belonged to St. Markku of Tethys, a Church knight who fought with valor during the Symbiot War and is said to have healed Symbiot taint with quiet prayers and the laying on of his blessed hand.

## Austairs' Auction House

475 Ramenant Square, Avaneir, Rampart, 46682009





## Shards Submission Guidelines

The **Shards** series is a collection of adventures and encounters for the **Fading Suns** game. Intended as an inexpensive adventure resource for **Fading Suns** gamemasters, they are also a springboard for aspiring writers. The **Shards** series is published and available for purchase online from [www.drivethrurpg.com](http://www.drivethrurpg.com) and [www.rpgnow.com](http://www.rpgnow.com)—it is possible that a collection might see print at a later stage. Please read the following guidelines carefully before submitting your idea for a **Shard**. Submissions that do not conform to the guidelines may not be accepted.

### What We Are Looking For

Short adventures and encounters (including appropriate setting descriptions) for **Fading Suns**, written to be used with the rules contained in the main rulebook. A **Shard** can also contain new creatures and gamemaster characters. The tone and style of the text should fit the **Fading Suns** setting (refer to previously published adventures to get an idea of what we are talking about here). As mentioned above, the **Shards** series also serves as a hunting ground to find potential new writers we can send outlines to and ask to participate in bigger projects, so succeeding here may result in future agreements.

### What You Need to Send Us

Your manuscript, formatted as outlined below, attached to an eMail sent to [submissions@fading-suns.com](mailto:submissions@fading-suns.com). The eMail must contain a standard disclosure agreement (copy the boxed text unaltered into the body of your eMail). Please note that these guidelines are subject to change, so check [www.fading-suns.com](http://www.fading-suns.com) for updates and an FAQ).

### Formatting

We accept electronic submissions only. Each entry should come as a separate file (please use any of the following formats for your entries: DOC, RTF, TXT, or PDF). Your full name and eMail address should be provided on all pages of each entry.

All pages should be plain white letter- or A4-sized paper with one-inch margins all around, and set in type no smaller than 10-point). Using the default settings of your word processor is usually a good idea. Pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation—use our **Submission Handbook** as a guide (available at [www.fading-suns.com](http://www.fading-suns.com)).

### What Happens When My Submission Gets Accepted?

If your submission survives our evaluation process (as outlined in the **Revisions and Rejections** section of our **Submission Handbook**), we will contact you and start working on getting the **Shard** ready for publication (this involves editing, artwork selection/creation, and layout by our staff).

Once we reach this stage, your submission becomes the property of **RedBrick Limited** and **Holistic Design, Inc.**, meaning that you lose all rights to publish it elsewhere.

I wish to submit the materials attached to this eMail for consideration for publication by **RedBrick Limited**, subject to all of the conditions below:

I agree with the terms and conditions outlined in the **Fading Suns Shards Submission Guidelines**.

I submit my materials voluntarily and on a non-confidential basis. I understand that my submission and its review by **RedBrick Limited** does not, in whole or in part, establish or create by implication or otherwise any relationship between **RedBrick Limited** and myself that is not expressed herein.

I further understand and agree that **RedBrick Limited** in its own judgment, may accept or reject the materials that are submitted with this eMail and shall not be obligated to me in any way with respect to my submission until **RedBrick Limited** shall, at its own election, enter into a properly executed agreement with me, and only then according to the terms of the **Fading Suns Shards Submission Guidelines**, as outlined under **What Happens When My Submission Gets Accepted?**.

I agree that **RedBrick Limited** may have a reasonable period in which to review this submission.

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I warrant that the submission is original, and that its publication will not violate the rights of any third party, and that the person identified herein as the submitter is the sole owner of the submission.

Furthermore, I am of legal age in my country of origin and am free to make agreements relative to this submission.

Version: 20070130

### Payment

Apart from the benefits of being a published author, you'll receive the following things from us:

- A complimentary copy of the **Shard** upon publication. If the **Shard** ends up in a later product (a printed collection, for example), you will get a complimentary copy of that as well.

- Depending on the **Shard's** final page count, you will also receive credit which you can spend on **RedBrick** products ONLY. This includes: miniatures, printed books, and eBooks. A small **Shard** (1-8 pages) will reward you store credit of US\$20; a medium **Shard** (9-16 pages) will reward US\$30 credit; a large **Shard** (17-24 pages) US\$40; and a freakin' big **Shard** (25+ pages) US\$50.





# FADING SUNS



## FADING SUNS REVISED SECOND EDITION

This is a revised second edition of the Fading Suns rulebook, featuring extensive bookmarking and hyperlinking, charts and tables to aid play, a new character sheet, an additional adventure set on Pandemonium, and more. The Fading Suns Revised Second Edition rulebook is fully compatible with other second edition products in the Fading Suns game line, available from Holistic Design Inc and RedBrick Limited.

RBL-1000 • 312 pages **P E**



## A ROAD SO DARK

The Shards series is a collection of adventures and encounters, intended as an inexpensive resource for Fading Suns gamemasters.

This volume contains the adventure A Road So Dark, designed for a group of 3 to 6 player characters. In this adventure, the characters research a previously unknown night road between Leagueheim and Grail, following a trail of evidence to an artifact invaluable to their employer.

RBL-1001 • 25 pages **E**



## CHURCH FIEFS – IMPERIAL SURVEY, VOL. 7

Emperor Alexius has sent his Questing Knights forth to bring back reports from all quarters of the Known Worlds on the state of his empire. This volume surveys the Church Fiefs—home to the Priests of the Celestial Sun. Sir Peregrine Obadiah Torenson reports on Artemis, planet of the healers, Holy Terra, the cradle of humanity and the Church's seat of power, mysterious Pentateuch, haven of the Eskatonic Order, De Moley, home of the stalwart Brother Battle, and sun-parched Pyre, where the faithful Temple Avesti finds spiritual purity and unforgiving penance in their quest for the light of the Pancreator.

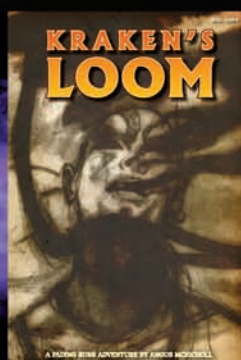
RBL-1002 • 60 pages **P E**



## ARCANE TECH

Arcane Tech catalogues some of the most bizarre and illicit technology in the Fading Suns universe, and includes equipment designed at every stage of human development, from the highest to the lowest: psychic devices, alien artifacts, weapons, and much more. While some of these can mend the body and fend off death in the hands of the Amaltheans, others doom the soul to scream forever in the abyss of the void, for the Church teaches that some technology may only be handled by those who can bear the horrible responsibility.

RBL-1003 • 148 pages **P E**



## KRAKEN'S LOOM

The Shards series is a collection of adventures and encounters, intended as an inexpensive resource for Fading Suns gamemasters.

This volume contains the adventure Kraken's Loom, designed for a group of 3 to 6 player characters. In this adventure, the characters search for a Hawkwood Count, a prominent diplomat whose ship was lost in the outer reaches of the Leminkainen system. The trail leads to Hargard, however, where they learn that there are many fates worse than death...

RBL-1004 • 28 pages **E**



# EARTHDOWN



## PLAYER'S COMPENDIUM

Earthdawn is a roleplaying game set in a world of high adventure, high magic, and terrible danger. The Player's Compendium is the definitive book for Earthdawn players, taking characters from the First to Fifteenth Circle in their Disciplines. This book contains everything your character needs for years of play, featuring revised and updated game mechanics, hundreds of spells, talents, knacks, skills, and much more!

RBL-100 • 524 pages **P E**



## GAMEMASTER'S COMPENDIUM

The Gamemaster's Compendium is the definitive book for Earthdawn gamemasters, providing all mechanics related to poison, traps, ship battles, and gamemaster characters. This book contains everything you need for years of play, featuring revised game mechanics, updated setting material, guidelines on creating campaigns in Barsaive, and extended information on creatures, dragons, Horrors, spirits, magical treasures, airships, riverboats, and much more!

RBL-101 • 524 pages **P E**



## NAME-GIVER'S COMPENDIUM

Eight Name-giver races dwell in the land of Barsaive, each with its own culture and traditions. Despite their differences, they are bound by shared experiences, beliefs and love for their land. Together they embody the heart and soul of Barsaive. This book offers an in-depth look at the eight Name-giver races, and provides extended information on fifteen new Disciplines, new talents and talent knacks, as well as special rules for playing each race.

RBL-200 • 340 pages **P E**



## CHARACTER FOLIO

The Character Folio is a deluxe character sheet, designed to accompany your character throughout his entire adept career.

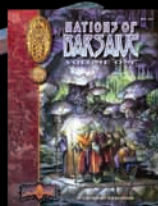
RBL-102 • 64 pages **P E**



## ADVENTURE LOG

The Adventure Log is a notebook designed to store a journal of your group's adventures, which can be filed with the Great Library of Throal.

RBL-103 • 64 pages **P E**



## NATIONS OF BARSAIVE, VOLUME ONE

Where the Kingdom of Throal is the heart of Barsaive, the center of culture, commerce and knowledge, the endless network of waterways known as the Serpent River is what fuels Barsaive's trade. Nations of Barsaive, Volume One offers gamemasters and players an in-depth look at the Kingdom of Throal and the Serpent River, adding new material to enhance your adventures in the world of Earthdawn.

RBL-201 • 336 pages **P E**



## ARDANYAN'S REVENGE

When the Scourge was imminent, the people of the town of Ardanyan sought shelter underground, expecting only the Horrors to be a threat. Over the centuries spent confined in the kaer, small quarrels grew into conflicts, which in turn developed into blood feuds and racial hatred. The Horrors would gladly have fed on Kaer Ardanyan—if they had only found it ...

RBL-300 • 132 pages **P E**



## ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

This adventure supplement contains five classic adventures that can be run as a campaign or stand-alone, designed to introduce players to the world of Barsaive and challenge Initiate through to Warden characters.

RBL-301 • 368 pages **P E**



## SHARDS COLLECTION VOL. ONE

The Shards Collection is an adventure supplement for Earthdawn, containing five stand-alone adventures to challenge Novice through to Journeyman characters. This volume contains the five adventures Journey to Lang, Runvir's Tomb, Kept in the Dark, Pale River, and Tournament Troubles. More Shards are available online!

RBL-303 • 116 pages **P**



## BURNING DESIRES

The city of Oshane, home to the larger part of the ork population of Throal, has fallen foul of a number of fires recently. Arson or accident? The heroes are called in to assist with the official investigation. Some days it's not good to be a hero ...

RBL-302 • 120 pages **P E**