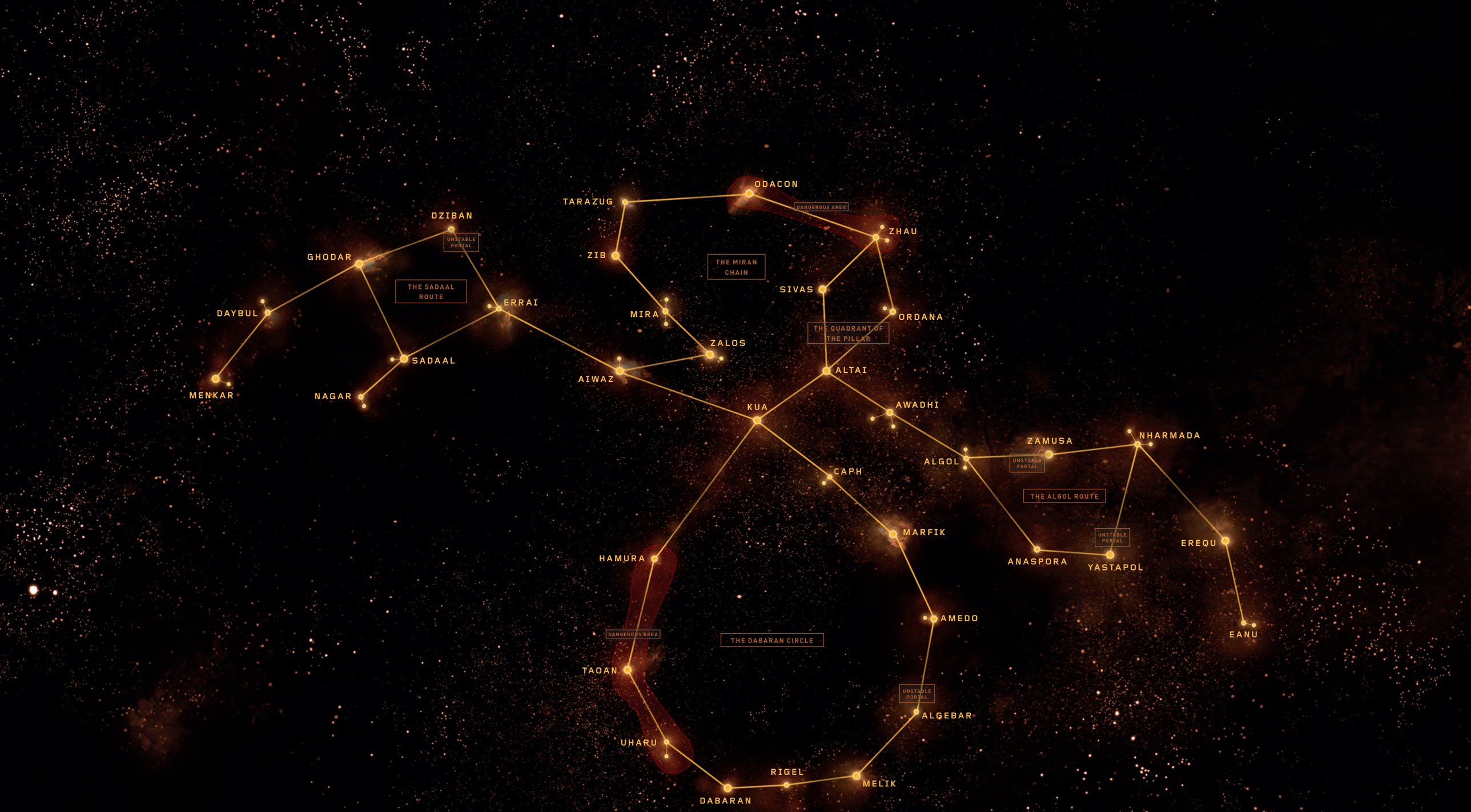
FREE LEAGUE

# CORIOLIS



## THE THIRD HORIZON


ODACON
DANGEROUS AREA
TARAZUG
ZHAU
DZIBAN
UNSTABLE PORTAL
GHODAR
ZIB
THE MIRAN CHAIN
THE SADAAL ROUTE
SIVAS
ERRAI
DAYBUL
MIRA
ORDANA
THE QUADRANT OF THE PILLAR
ZALOS
SADAAL
ALTAI
AIWAZ
MENKAR
NAGAR
KUA
AWADHI
ZAMUSA
NHARMADA
ALGOL
UNSTABLE PORTAL
CAPH
THE ALGOL ROUTE
MARFIK
UNSTABLE PORTAL
HAMURA
ANASPORA
YASTAPOL
EREQU
AMEDO
DANGEROUS AREA
THE DABARAN CIRCLE
EANU
TAOAN
UNSTABLE PORTAL
ALGEBAR
UHARU
RIGEL
MELIK
DABARAN

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*and all of the great gaming groups at Gothcon 2016*

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO**
*Rickard Antroia, Iain M. Banks, Alexandra Bohl Granath, Moa Frithiofsson, Mattias Johnsson, Mort de Kai, Robert Kustosik,*
*Amelie Lagerström, Mattias Lilja, Daniel Palm, Adam Palmqvist, Kiku Pukk Härenstam, Martin Sellgren, Pernilla Sparrhult,*
*and all of our backers*

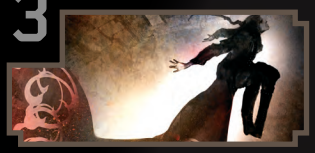
**PRINT**
*Livonia, Riga 2016*

**ISBN**
*978-1-910132-72-2*

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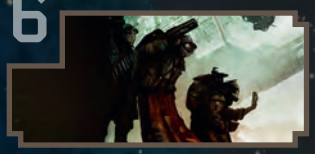

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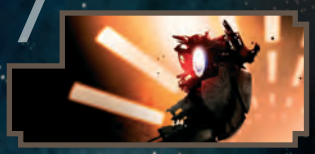

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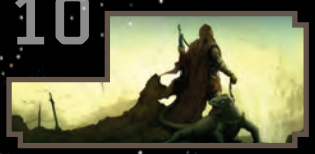

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*Coriolis was the reason I got back into roleplaying games, and the key to the foundation of Free League Publishing. In 2008, when the first edition of the game was released, I hadn't played a pen and paper RPG in years. Coriolis had everything I had longed for in a sci-fi game: vast space, exciting cultures, lost wonders, and mysteries in abundance. I started playing the game with some new friends right away. We had tremendous fun, but soon realized that there wasn't enough material about the game universe. So a few of us, enthusiasts, decided to create more material for the game. Thus, the Free League game studio was born, taking its name from one of the factions in the Third Horizon.*

*The Third Horizon is a truly unique RPG setting – a marriage of old oriental tales and modern science fiction. Storytellers, djinni, wide deserts, magnificent palaces, thieves, and scoundrels mingle with starships, portals between the stars, and beam weapons. The opportunity to weave one's own stories from the rich tapestry of Middle Eastern culture fused with concepts from my favourite modern sci-fi by authors such as Iain M. Banks, Alastair Reynolds, and Michael Flynn, just to mention a few - this was enough to get me hooked straight away.*

*When we in the Free League got the opportunity to develop a completely new edition of the game, the main thing missing was a rules system that truly fit the setting of Coriolis. The game engine from Mutant: Year Zero, modified to bring the themes of Coriolis to the forefront, made the difference. Now, you have a game that incorporates a vivid world and setting with easy-to-grasp rules that let you dive into the universe without any hindrance. The Third Horizon, with its space nomads, rival factions, distant star systems, mischievous djinni, and much, much more, is waiting for you. So don your exo shells, spit on your sugar globes, and venture out into the Dark between the Stars.*

*Kosta Kostulas and the Free League*

# RULES







## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

*Zenith heralded the dawn of a new era – and the Horizon blossomed once again. Three dozen star systems, linked by fate and by the will of the Icons, wandered together towards a brighter future. But as the Emissaries arrived, the happy days drew to a close, and the Dark between the Stars slowly came creeping back.*

**THE REALM OF THE ICONS – A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE THIRD HORIZON** – Kaldana Mourir

Welcome to Coriolis – The Third Horizon! In this role-playing game, you take on the role of adventurers, traveling the stars.

**ALONG YOUR JOURNEY,** you will experience marvellous things. Ahead lies the greatest adventure of all – and who knows, maybe you will be the ones who change the fate of the Third Horizon for good?

### PLAYERS

All players except for one will play adventurers, or Player Characters (PCs). You, the player, decide what your PC does, thinks, and says – but not what challenges she needs to overcome. Your job as a player is to bring your PC to life. Imagine yourself in her position – how would you react, what would you do? The PCs are always the central characters of the story. The game is about you. Your decisions, your lives.

### GAMEMASTER

The last player takes on the role of the Gamemaster (GM). He describes the world around you, he plays the other characters you encounter during your adventures, he controls the monsters and enemies standing in your way, and he decides what truths that lie behind the secrets you uncover.

It's the GM's job to put obstacles in your way, to challenge your PCs and to force them to show what they're truly made of. It's not his job, however, to decide everything that happens in the game – and certainly not how your story should end. Over the course of the game, this is what you play to find out.

## WHAT DO YOU DO?

In Coriolis, the entire Third Horizon lies before you: a vast cluster of star systems containing exotic planets, space stations and strange artifacts. It is up to you to explore the game world and unearth its secrets. There are several things you will be doing while playing the game:

### CREW A SPACE CRAFT

Your spaceship is your vessel, your base and your home. It is without doubt your most valuable possession and most important asset. Onboard your craft, you will experience both perilous journeys and violent conflicts that will test your mettle.

### EXPLORE THE HORIZON

The Third Horizon is the game world of Coriolis, a gigantic cluster of stars linked together by mystical portals. Together, you will explore the stars and behold their grandeur.

### UNRAVEL SECRETS

The world of Coriolis is full of mysteries and secrets. Who built the portals? From where did the strange Emissaries arrive? And what did really happen to the lost faction the Sacrifice of Nazareem? During your adventures, you will delve into the mysterious world that is the Third Horizon – and perhaps learn something about yourselves along the way.

### PLOT & SCHEME ONBOARD CORIOLIS

The factions of the Third Horizon are wrapped up in a never-ending struggle for power and influence – a game that you sooner or later will be forced to engage in. The agents of the factions converge on the Coriolis space station, and this is where the lies and the scheming are most intense.

### CARRY OUT MISSIONS

In order to survive and build yourselves a better future, you will have to take on missions. Whether it is hauling Dabaran wine to a colony out on the fringes of civilization, spying on a rival faction or acting as bodyguards to a wealthy merchant, you will have to work together to accomplish the mission in the best way you can.

### PRAY TO THE ICONS

Icon worship is ever-present in the Third Horizon. Through faith, the people find strength, and so will you. When darkness surrounds you and all hope seems lost, a desperate prayer to the Icons can be what saves your lives.



# CORIOLIS IN A NUTSHELL

*Coriolis – The Third Horizon* is a role-playing game set in space. There are ships, space stations and starry vistas, just like in any other space-themed RPG. What separates *Coriolis* from other sci-fi RPGs is first and foremost the social environment, which in *Coriolis* is strongly inspired by the Middle East. The unique features of the game are listed below.

## ARABIAN NIGHTS – IN SPACE

The Coriolis world is inspired by Middle Eastern culture rather than the Western one. Food, music and fashion, as well as religion, philosophy and literature. Most importantly, myths and folk tales from the Middle East deeply entwine with the spirit of the game world. The Third Horizon is a world where ancient myth meets high technology.

## THE OLD VERSUS THE NEW

A central theme to *Coriolis* is the conflict between the Firstcome, the Horizon's earliest settlers, and the Zenithians, descendants to the second wave of colonists arriving onboard the Zenith. Although the Firstcome had already established their culture throughout the Horizon when Zenith arrived, the Zenithians have grown to dominate more and more in the last decades, through trade, hostile expansion and colonization. The Zenithians' cultural imperialism is a key factor in the conflict between the Consortium – a Zenithian faction – and the Firstcome Order of the Pariah.

## MYSTICISM AND ICON WORSHIP

Worship of the Icons permeates everything in the world of *Coriolis*. The religion is the smallest common denominator for peoples of the Third Horizon. While faith is strongest with the Firstcome, especially so amongst the ranks of the Church of the Icons and the Order of the Pariah, the recently arrived Zenithians have too converted to worshipping the

Icons in large numbers. The level of religious commitment varies, from the superstitious hauler crew praying to the Traveler before a portal jump, to missionaries zealously devoted to the holiest of struggles, saving the Horizon one soul at a time.

## THE DARK BETWEEN THE STARS

The omens have foretold it, and the clergy have preached it for a long time now: the Dark between the Stars – the unspeakable, corrupting force at work in the intersection between civilization and the endless nothingness of space – seems to be real. In *Coriolis*, the Dark between the Stars plays roughly the role of the Devil in Earth's Christianity.

### THREE TIPS FOR INSPIRATION

Watching a TV series or reading a book can help you to get into the right mood for an RPG. Here are three quick tips for Coriolis:

- Firefly, the TV series about the crew onboard a small freighter vessel, has a lot in common with Coriolis. Just trade the Western influence for Arabian Nights.
- Revelation Space and its sequels. These books by Alastair Reynolds are full of ancient mysteries and mythical ruins – just like Coriolis.
- Alien, by Ridley Scott. Dark, deep-space horror and retrofuturistic spaceships fit perfectly with the world of Coriolis.



# TOOLS OF THE GAME

Your improvisational skill and creativity will be your most important tools when playing *Coriolis – The Third Horizon*, but there are a bunch of other tools in the game that will help you build your story.

### CHARACTER AND SHIP SHEETS

Your PCs are no anonymous dime-a-dozens. You are individuals, each with your own roles and tasks, unique attributes and traits, relationships and dreams. In *Coriolis – The Third Horizon*, you create your PC and write everything about him or her down on a character sheet. A character sheet can be found at the back of this book for you to make copies of, and on the Free League website. The website also provides free downloads of character sheets. The next chapter will help you create your PC. But your PCs are not everything; in *Coriolis*, your spaceship is your most prized possession. Use the ship sheet, also at the back of the book and available for free download to keep track of what happens to your craft.

### DICE

You decide what your PC does, but if your actions are especially risky, the GM will ask you for a dice roll to determine if you are successful or not. Treat your dice well, because out there in the darkness, whether you live or die will sometimes come down to chance.

### MAPS AND PLANS

Inside the front cover of the book you will find a map of the Third Horizon, to use when you plan your space travel. Several detailed ship plans are also provided in Chapter 7. Use these to get an overview of your, or someone else's, spaceship. Both maps and ship plans are free to download from our website.

# THE THIRD HORIZON

The Third Horizon, commonly just "the Horizon", consists of 36 star systems joined through space and time by mystic portals. The Horizon of today is a melting pot of different cultures, peoples and factions.

### ZENITH AND NADIR

Many hundreds of years ago, two colossal colonization vessels left Earth. Their names were Zenith and Nadir, and their destination the star Aldebaran. The crews lived their lives aboard the ships, through centuries of deep space travel. One of the ships, the Nadir, was lost somewhere in the darkness during the voyage, without leaving any trace. The Zenith continued, alone, and after traversing the empty void, finally reached its destination. But the humans onboard discovered that they were not the first to arrive in the Third Horizon.

They arrived in an already colonized cluster of star systems, linked by ancient portals. A long time after the departure of Zenith, the ruling powers of Earth had discovered one of these portals, and through it a shortcut to what became known as the Third Horizon.

### THE PORTALS

Mankind had discovered a remnant from a highly advanced culture, which they named the Portal Builders. The portals opened the way for humanity to travel the stars, and a new golden age began. Colonization vessels sought out distant stars, establishing the First and Second Horizons. Finally, the Third Horizon was reached, and it became a haven for radicals and freethinkers from the first two horizons. Earth-like worlds were discovered and colonized, massive palaces and temples erected – civilization slowly spread across the Third Horizon.

### THE PORTAL WARS

Eventually, the First Horizon wanted to reclaim the systems that had freed themselves. The newborn separatist powers, headed by the Order of the Pariah, resisted, and war broke out. The slaughter lasted for several years, but ended when the star fleets of the Third Horizon finally wiped out the First Horizon's lackeys – a faction called the Sacrifice of Nazareem – and closed all portals to the other horizons. The terrible war left in its wake remnants of once great armadas, rifts in the



fabric of spacetime, and cities, whole planets even, scorched and destroyed.

## ZENITH

When the silence after the war was at its deepest, Zenith finally arrived in the Third Horizon. The massive arkship found its original destination already colonized – by the lords and emirs of Dabaran. After traveling the war-torn Horizon, Zenith decided on the cluster's central system, Kua, as its new home. However, a mutiny aboard soon divided the crew. The captain's family fled the ship and settled on the planet Kua's surface below. The remaining colonists cannibalized their ship, rebuilding it into the great space station Coriolis and declared a new era in the Third Horizon – a time for trade, reawakening and peace.

## ZENITHIANS AND THE FIRSTCOME

Descendants of the crew of Zenith call themselves *Zenithians*, while the peoples of the first colonization wave call themselves the *Firstcome*, as they view themselves as the Horizon's original settlers. Among the latter however, many have begun identifying as Zenithians, despite not being blood related to the crew of Zenith. This is most common among those who regard themselves as progressive, and who share the Zenithians' practical take on the Icons and life in general.

## CORIOLIS AND KUA

The center of the Third Horizon is the Kua system, where the space station Coriolis orbits the green jungles of the planet Kua. The system is also home to the burning hot planet Lubau, the acidified Jina, an asteroid belt, the gas giant Xene, the ice planet Surha and, farthest out, an outer asteroid belt where only one of the nine sectors is inhabited. Most of the system's inhabitants live on the planet Kua. There, many dwell close to an ancient wonder left behind by the Portal Builders – a gigantic monolith, made habitable by the Zenithians – or in the industrial conglomerate that stretches along the planet's equator.

## THE FACTIONS

When the Zenithians founded Coriolis, they sent word to all major powers in the Third Horizon to come to the space station and set up a council for peace and trade. The invitees became known as *factions*, and the Council a force for peace and commerce,

albeit some conflicts remained unsolved. The council factions of today are *the Consortium*, a group of powerful corporations; *the Zenithian Hegemony*, the descendants of the captain family onboard Zenith; *the Free League*, the union of free traders; the mercenaries of *the Legion*; the secretive *Draconites*; the divine iconocrates of the *Order of the Pariah*; *Ahlam's Temple*, with its courtesans and philosophers; and lastly the people's church, *the Church of the Icons*. Two additional groups are regarded as factions although they are not represented at the Council: the criminal network *the Syndicate*, and the nomads in *the Nomad Federation*. Tradition divides the council into Zenithian (the first four factions mentioned above) and Firstcome factions (the four latter). The Syndicate is usually considered Zenithian and the Nomad Federation, Firstcome.

## THE EMISSARIES

As the Third Horizon had just begun to blossom again, and harmony had returned to the Council of factions, the peace was suddenly broken. From the depths of the gas giant Xene rose the faceless *Emissaries*. Spectres from another world, Icons or Portal Builders? The theories about their origins are many. The Emissaries demanded a seat at the Council – and got one. One of the Emissaries claimed itself an incarnation of the Icon the Judge, to which the Order of the Pariah cried "sacrilege!" and closed their home system to all travel. A new age of shadows and suspicion has dawned, and the peoples of the Horizon all wonder: what is the true agenda of the Emissaries?

## CONFLICT

Today, new conflicts are flaring up, and old ones are emerging again in the Horizon. The intrigue surrounding the factions thickens, and matters usually settled with a signature or a handshake are now taken to the battlefield. Firstcome revolts against the Zenithian factions, particularly the Consortium, are erupting everywhere. The factions fight each other in proxy wars, through rebel forces, mercenaries, corsairs and toll ships.

In the midst of all this chaos, a new phenomenon has come to light in the Horizon – people are suddenly showing signs of powers said to be reserved for the Icons themselves. They can tell the future, see things worlds away and even conjure up fire from empty air. These new mystics are a dangerous element to the rest of the population, as they are not yet in full control of their powers.

## POSSIBILITIES

The new era does however bring with it many new opportunities for adventurers like you and your group: trading with far-off systems, solving conflicts with your trusty Vulcan carbine, spying on shady corporations or factions, escorting travelers and pilgrims, delivering important messages as couriers, or searching for secrets in the ruins of old, be it the remnants of the Portal Builders or the looming wrecks from the Portal Wars. All this and much more is at your feet in *Coriolis – The Third Horizon*!







## CHAPTER 2

# YOUR CHARACTERS

*Zoura Sadaldin was not just anyone. Born of a tailor and a laundress in the shadow of the Monolith, her upbringing was modest, but the Icons had bigger plans for her. That she would one day play a key part in the greatest battle of the Portal Wars was nothing that anyone foresaw.*

**ZOURA SADALDIN – THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A HERO** – Rumsah Shamhzin

It is time to create the main characters in your story: the Player Characters (PCs). In Coriolis, your PC is your avatar, your eyes and ears in the Third Horizon. But she relies on you to make wise decisions. Take your PC seriously and portray her as if she were an actual person – that will create the most rewarding experience. But don't try to shield your PC from every danger – the object of the game is to create an exciting story, and to do this you will have to take some risks!

**CREATING YOUR PC** is preferably done together with the other players. Your PC is part of a group, and has her role to play. Your task is to create a team where all the PCs contribute something unique.

# THE GROUP

Before creating your PCs, you should decide together what kind of group your PCs make up. Your group can consist of all kinds of individuals – the group concept only outlines your most basic reason for sticking together in the Third Horizon. The group concept will also tell you what type of ship you will begin play with, what group talent you will have, and who your patron and nemesis will be. There are five group concepts to choose from: Agents, Mercenaries, Free Traders, Pilgrims and Explorers.

**CREATE YOUR GROUP**

1. Pick a group concept.
2. Pick your spaceship.
3. Pick your group talent.
4. Pick your patron.
5. Pick your nemesis.

### ⚙ FREE TRADERS

Commerce is what greases the wheels of the Third Horizon, and the hub of trade in the region is the space station Coriolis. The free traders are the entrepreneurs and innovators of the Horizon, embracers of the new order – with a few exceptions. Tariffs, tolls, and bureaucrats looking to make a quick buck abusing the trade system are all things despised by any free trader. As Free Traders, you will portal jump between the different systems of the Third Horizon, hauling everything from goats on ice or farm machinery to candied Kabra bugs and illegal Vulcan carbines. In small freighters or enormous bulk haulers, you travel silent routes in an ocean of cold starlight. Slipping past corrupt toll collectors, blockade ships and corsairs is all part of your thrilling lives.

The Free Traders group concept can also be used for:

- **Smugglers** carrying illegal cargo to the highest bidder.
- **Bulk haulers** on lonely routes with heavy loads.
- **Couriers** delivering valuable information.

Possible character concepts (with sub-concepts) for PCs as a group of Free Traders:

- **NEGOTIATOR (PEDDLER).** If it wasn't for you, the crew would still be delivering livestock to the asteroid belt. You make sure those sweet birr end up in your bank account.
- **PILOT (FREIGHTER PILOT).** Someone needs to fly this thing.
- **SCIENTIST (TECHNICIAN).** A ship is only as good as its mechanic or technician. You make sure the group gets anywhere at all.
- **SHIP WORKER (DECKHAND).** There is always something that needs doing onboard. The others may think that you mainly scrub air filters, but there is no one who knows the ship like you do.
- **SHIP WORKER (DOCK WORKER).** You oversee the cargo – a crap job some would say, but this is far from true. Without you, the crew wouldn't earn a single birr.
- **SOLDIER (LEGIONNAIRE).** Corsairs, mercenaries, smugglers. The list of cold-blooded fighters out there in the Dark is long. You and your Vulcan carbine protect the group when the going gets rough.

### MERCENARIES

Not all can enjoy the peace and prosperity of the new era. Old wounds fester in the dark, and the absence of peace means plenty of job opportunities for people like you: Mercenaries. As such, you are often both feared and scorned, yet valuable pawns in the power plays of the factions. Mercenaries can be anything from Legionnaires to hired guns for the Consortium. Typical jobs for you would be crushing rebels on Uharu-9, hunting corsairs in the Border Space, or toppling Dabaran pashas.

The Mercenaries group concept can also be used for:

- **Corsairs** plundering careless free traders on lonely routes.
- **Rebels** fighting to free their people from oppression.
- **Tactical teams** performing whatever military operations the factions might require.

Possible concepts (with sub-concepts) for PCs as a group of Mercenaries:

- **SOLDIER (OFFICER).** Without you, the group would be without discipline. In a crisis, you are quick to take charge.
- **SOLDIER (LEGIONNAIRE).** The backbone of any mercenary group. You could be anything from a field medicurg, to a weapons expert or a marine. Regardless, you and your trusty carbine get the job done.
- **TRAILBLAZER (SCOUT).** You make sure your surroundings are clear, be it in the hills of the Xifas ridge or the scrap belt around Qugassa. You could be a sniper, a scout, an ex-burglar or a sensor specialist.
- **PILOT (FIGHTER PILOT).** Someone has to fly the iron fist you call your ship, or land your drop pod or armored hovercraft.
- **SCIENTIST (TECHNICIAN).** Tending to your death machines is a rigorous job. Without someone to look after the crew's equipment, you'd soon be worth about as much as skavara droppings in a dung plant.
- **OPERATIVE (SPY).** You are the group's expert on alarm systems and infiltration, and your network of contacts is vast. With your help, the jobs run smoother and require less Vulcan hails than they otherwise would.





### EXPLORERS

The Horizon is full of mysteries to uncover. You are truth seekers who refuse to settle for the Bulletin's oversimplified version of reality. It's all there, if you just scratch the surface a little. Explorers not only delve into the past, they also push beyond the frontiers of the Horizon – as colonists, curious anthropologists or traveling journalists. As Explorers, you dig through the frozen ruins on Surha, the remnants of the Portal Builders in the jungles of Kua, or search for forgotten colonies along the Enau Arm.

The Explorers group concept can also be used for:

- **Prospectors** seeking valuable minerals in dangerous asteroid belts.
- **Colonists** valiantly claiming new settlements for the peoples of the Horizon.
- **Correspondents** reporting the news no one else dares to.

Possible concepts (with sub-concepts) for PCs as a group of Explorers:

- **SCIENTIST (ARCHAEOLOGIST).** Whether it's digging for ruins in the desert or mapping the mysterious gravitation pools, you are an explorer in the truest sense.
- **TRAILBLAZER (PROSPECTOR).** You know how to find all the Horizon's riches, from ice ore or Helium-3 to shipwrecks or the finest timber.
- **SCIENTIST (TECHNICIAN).** Whether it's calibrating the macroscope and the deep space sensors, or repairing the colony's old grav tractor, you are essential to the group.
- **PILOT (FREIGHTER PILOT).** The crew would get nowhere without you, especially if the destination is somewhere no one's been in a while.
- **TRAILBLAZER (SCOUT).** As a colonist or pathfinder, you are vital to discovering both valuables and threats during your travels.
- **DATA SPIDER (CORRESPONDENT).** You are the number one news hunter. No truths slip by your keen eyes and ears.

### AGENTS

Birr and Legionnaires are not always the best tools for a faction – sometimes, more subtle means are required. This is where the Agent cells come in. Typical jobs for a group of Agents might be infiltrating Dabaran courts, assassinating dignitaries, tracking down lost relatives, or just keeping the scum on Coriolis in check.

The Agents group concept can also be used for:

- **Judicators** keeping the Coriolis station free from criminals.
- **Assassins** making sure that troublemakers disappear.
- **Detectives** for hire.

Possible concepts (with sub-concepts) for PCs as a group of Agents:

- **OPERATIVE (SPY).** You are the core of the cell with your skill set of infiltration, subtle cons, and surveillance.
- **TRAILBLAZER (SCOUT).** If anyone can follow a trail – in a crowded bazaar or on the vast savannah – it's you.
- **SOLDIER (OFFICER).** All groups need organization and contacts, things you possess as well as practical knowledge of combat and social interaction.
- **ARTIST (COURTESAN).** You are the true manipulator. Your skill and reputation gets you in anywhere, and what you need doing done.
- **DATA SPIDER (CORRESPONDENT).** You dig through old archives, Bulletin logs and info terminals. No stored information is out of your reach.

### PILGRIMS

The Pilgrimage is an important rite for everyone in the Horizon, and for some it is their calling. Other pilgrims travel for different reasons than to visit the holy sites: looking for work, searching for wisdom, or spreading joy to the Horizon as traveling circuses. Lastly, there are the nomads of the Horizon. They usually remain in one system or one sector, but sometimes they also travel through the dangerous portal fields. Regardless of why you travel, your lives will be hard and painful. Getting to visit the Dome of the Icons on Coriolis, the Leaning Prayer Tower on Algol, Mira's Icon City, or the temple city of Lotus on Dabaran is achieved only by the truly dedicated – as is experiencing the joy of the audience as Kassar the Nimble performs his triple salto mortale.

The Pilgrims group concept can also be used for:

- **"Hands"** – traveling workers taking jobs where they are to be found.
- **Traveling circuses** made up of entertainers and performers.
- **Space nomads**, perpetually trudging the starry void.

Possible concepts (with sub-concepts) for PCs as a group of Pilgrims:

- **PREACHER (MISSIONARY).** You preach, see visions, and strive to make the peoples of the Horizon understand the greatness of the Icons.
- **NEGOTIATOR (DIPLOMAT).** You are the one who makes sure that your crew always gets to your destinations – acquiring new passports and papers with the correct stamps, as well as paying the occasional bribe.
- **SHIP WORKER (DECKHAND).** You can work just about anywhere, be it on a ship or in a bar – someone with a broad skill set is always needed, and that someone is you.
- **ARTIST (COURTESAN).** As a master of the arts of pleasure, you can perform anything from a chai ceremony to intricate dances and the sacred Algolan incense prayers.
- **NEGOTIATOR (PEDDLER).** You are a traveling merchant, supplying whatever people are demanding.

## SPACESHIP

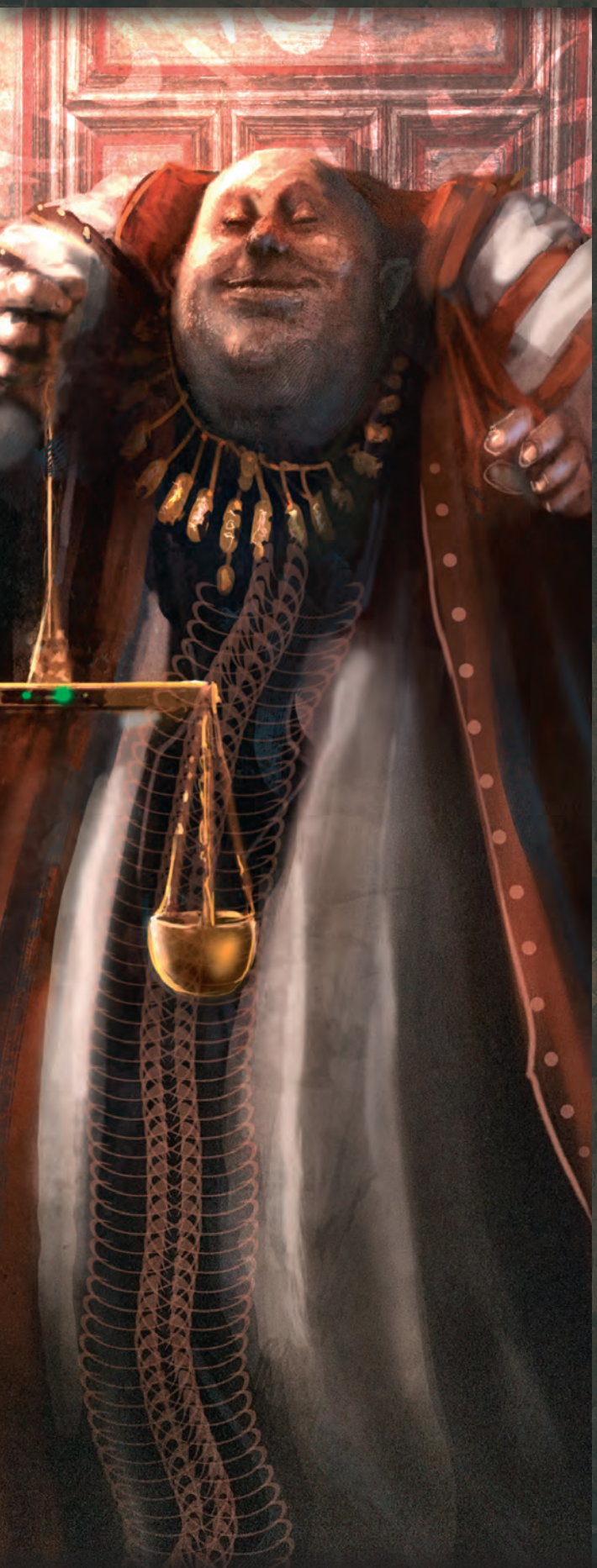
Your PCs will begin play with a spaceship. Decide together as a group which spaceship to pick using the rules and tables in Chapter 7. Your most logical choice would be a ship suited to your group concept, but nothing prevents you from picking one with entirely different qualities. You could also choose to design your ship from scratch using the ship construction rules in Chapter 7. Regardless of your choice, you will begin your adventures in debt.

## DEBT

As you begin playing, you will not yet entirely own your spacecraft. Depending on the ship type you choose, a sizeable debt will lie between you and calling the ship your very own. As you begin playing, your collective debt will be 50% of the ship's original value. Who you owe the money to is up to you to decide – it could be to your patron, some other NPC, or maybe your nemesis! Whomever you owe the money to will expect regular payments from you – estimate 5% of the total debt per year in monthly payments. In other words, already from the start you will have a very good reason to make sure you make enough birr to keep your ship flying. If you play your cards right you might even find yourselves the rightful owners of your very own spaceship, but it's a long road getting there.

## GROUP TALENTS

When creating your group, pick one of the talents connected to your group concept. Everyone in the group can use this talent. Talents are described in Chapter 4.



## PATRON AND NEMESIS

The Third Horizon is a hard place, and getting anywhere without help is difficult. It has become something of tradition for smaller ship crews to ally themselves with a powerful benefactor. As a group, pick a patron from your group concept list below. If you'd rather come up with a patron of your own, you may, as long as the GM agrees. You will also begin play with an enemy, a nemesis who can suddenly turn up to spoil your plans, or stay in the shadows as a lurking threat. Just like the patron, the nemesis is described briefly below. Pick a nemesis from the list or come up with one of your own.

### THE FREE TRADERS' PATRON/NEMESIS

- **Aldair Jubal (Jubal Imports & Exports).** A shady peddler from Djachroum, making sure the flow of spices, drugs and weapons continues.
- **Abdul Nasr (the Free League).** A merchant specializing in technological artifacts, operating out of Ozone Plaza on Coriolis.
- **Lea Marhoun (Zenithian Trade Alliance).** An antiques dealer from the Monolith, specializing in trade in artifacts and archaeological findings.
- **Mukhtar Sawalla (Hyperion Logistics).** An agent of a Consortium-owned corporation, running bulk haulers all over the Horizon.

### THE MERCENARIES' PATRON/NEMESIS

- **Hatma "The Skull" Kerash (the Legion).** A recruiter for the Legion but also involved in running operations that are too dirty for Legion standards.
- **Captain Arina Chike (the Chike Company).** An exiled Hegemonist who raids faction ships in Kua's outer rim from a secret base.
- **High General Abassar Douk (the Free Uharan Army).** A leader of rebel forces all across the Menkar arm, an idealist and a pragmatist in one.
- **Farhad Krisma (Strike Team Krisma).** An ex-judicator, now hired by the Consortium for interventions against rebels and agents of other factions.

### THE EXPLORERS' PATRON/NEMESIS

- **Doctor Wana (the Foundation's Archaeological Institute).** An unconventional archaeologist, happy to get her hands dirty searching for findings in the sector of the Lady of Tears.
- **Professor Omalda darBhouno (the Mathematical Institute of Daddah).** A brilliant mathematician with his heart set on explaining every mystery in the Horizon, including the Icons themselves.

- **Jarros Kumbra (the Colonial Agency).** One of the few within the Agency passionate about founding new colonies, however unsafe they may be.
- **Drefusol Amadi (Free News).** A media mogul with the ambition to reach places even the Bulletin cannot.

### THE AGENTS' PATRON/NEMESIS

- **Captain Girrah (Judicator).** Completely loyal to the Governor of Coriolis, and prepared to counter any threat to the station, even if it means breaking the rules.
- **Jihvane Kourides (Special Branch of the Consortium).** A field agent rising through the ranks who will stop at nothing to climb even higher.
- **Hiram "the Black Widow" Momasdi (Ahlam's Black Lotuses).** An aged madam who is secretly an assassin, offering her customers anything but pleasure.
- **Nefrite Garroud (the Free League's news division).** Wants to know everything that could affect the League's activities in the Horizon.

### THE PILGRIMS' PATRON/NEMESIS

- **High Priestess Taminasah-Buri (the Church of the Icons).** A woman of the faith, supporting all of the Horizon's believers seeking the truth of the Icons.
- **High General Abassar Douk (the Free Uharan Army).** A leader of rebel forces all across the Menkar arm, an idealist and a pragmatist in one.
- **Captain Mero (commander of the bulk hauler "Mero's Promise").** A generous soul who lets anyone travel onboard his ship as long as they help out in some way.
- **Io "the Smile" Xoma (circus director).** Owner of several traveling circuses in the Kua system.
- **Shuja Mulk-Chitral (leader of the Mehtar nomads).** Started the Hargadour rebellion to unite the nomads in the sector of the Lady of Tears.

# THE PLAYER CHARACTER

When you have decided on what type of group you will be playing, it is time to create your individual characters. The Player Character (PC) is your alter ego in the game. It is through her you will experience the Third Horizon.

**HOW TO CREATE YOUR PLAYER CHARACTER**

6. Choose your background.
7. Choose a concept.
8. Determine your Reputation score.
9. Choose a name.
10. Choose your appearance.
11. Distribute your attribute points.
12. Determine your Hit Points and Mind Points.
13. Distribute your skill levels.
14. Choose a talent.
15. Randomly determine your Icon and Icon talent.
16. Choose a personal problem.
17. Choose your relationships to the other PCs.
18. Choose your gear.
19. Choose your crew position.

## BACKGROUND

The first thing you must do is to decide on your PC's background. Where are you from? How did you grow up? Are you a normal human or a humanite? The answers will be the foundation on which to build your PC.

### ORIGIN

Origin means both which star system you come from, and whether you're of the Firstcome or a Zenithian. An important part of the Third Horizon's history is the two waves of colonization that have swept across the systems. The Firstcome have been living in the Horizon for hundreds of years, but have been isolated from each other for a long time. The Zenithians are newcomers who have opened up the trade routes and furthered contact between the systems once again. Roll to determine your home planet on table 2.1 on the next page. Your origin has no mechanical effect; it merely tells you something about who your PC is.

### UPBRINGING

Are you from a remote colony in the jungle that now covers a ruined metropolis from the first wave of colonization? Or did you grow up among the traveling nomads, going from

### ZENITHIANS AND THE FIRSTCOME

Zenithians often have a pragmatic view of the world, and place their trust in science as much as in the whims of the Icons. They regard themselves as being more modern than the superstitious Firstcome, and claim to be the champions of success, progress and leadership. The Firstcome, on the other hand, view themselves as more spiritual and with a deeper connection to the Icons than the Zenithians. For the Firstcome, both close and extended family matters greatly, and old myths from many generations back take precedence over modern history. Read more about Zenithians and Firstcome in Chapter 10.

### HUMANITES

- **SIRB** get the talent Pheromones.
- **XINGHUR** get the talent Resistant.
- **NERID** get the talent Water Breathing

**TABLE 2.1 HOME SYSTEM**

| D6 | SYSTEM |
|---|---|
| 1 | **ALGOL** – a planet of rebels, ruined by heavy industry and under draconian Consortium rule. |
| 2 | **MIRA** – the cradle of Firstcome culture, filled with temples, churches and cloister palaces. |
| 3 | **KUA** – the center of the Horizon, home to the space station Coriolis. |
| 4 | **DABARAN** – a barren desert with ravine seraglios, oasis gardens, and domed palaces. |
| 5 | **ZALOS** – deeply devoted to the Icon the Martyr (an incarnation of the Judge), locked in constant civil war with the heathens. |
| 6 | **CHOOSE** – check the map of the Third Horizon and read Chapter 13 for inspiration. |

station to station, living off odd jobs or selling handicrafts? Perhaps you were born into one of the old Zenithian bloodlines, brought up according to the old traditions?

You can choose between the upbringings Plebeian, Stationary or Privileged (see table 2.2). The Plebeians are the lower class of the Horizon, workers as well as planetside colonists and nomads. People raised on major space stations or asteroids are called Stationary. The Privileged are the highest of the social strata – bureaucrats and factory owners in the Conglomerate, Dabaran pashas, and wealthy merchants on Coriolis, pure-blooded Hegemonists in the Monolith.

Your environment growing up affects many aspects of your PC: your attributes, skills and Reputation score at the start of the game, as well as your starting capital.

#### HUMANITES

Not everyone in the Horizon is a normal human, or a "pure-blood" as the older Hegemonists would say. Some groups of people are biosculpted. These "humanites", as they are called, are often found in primitive tribes on distant planets or abandoned space stations. Common folk view the humanites as sub-human and dirty, but they are usually superbly fitted to life in the environment they were designed for. You can only choose to play a humanite if you choose the upbringings Plebeian or Stationary. If you play a humanite PC, your starting Reputation is halved – it's 1 for Plebeians and 2 for Stationaries. In return however, you get a talent connected to your biosculpting. Read more about humanites in Chapter 10. You can create your own humanites using inspiration from the ones in the book.

## CHARACTER CONCEPT

When your background has been decided upon, it is time to figure out what you have done in your life up to this point – your concept. The concept tells you what you do for a living. Each concept contains several sub-concepts to give your PC more detail. Your concept affects your attributes, which skills and talents you can choose from at the start of the game, your gear, your relationships and your personal problem. All of the concepts are described at the end of this chapter.

**Contacts:** Your sub-concept determines what network of contacts you will have access to. If you're in a place where the GM decides that you might find former colleagues, you can roll for Manipulation to find a useful contact.

### CONCEPTS AND SUB-CONCEPTS

- **ARTIST** – Courtesan, Musician, Poet
- **DATA SPIDER** – Analyst, Correspondent, Data Djinn
- **FUGITIVE** – Criminal, Mystic, Revolutionary
- **NEGOTIATOR** – Agitator, Diplomat, Peddler
- **OPERATIVE** – Assassin, Guardsman/-woman, Spy
- **PILOT** – Driver, Fighter Pilot, Freighter Pilot
- **TRAILBLAZER** – Colonist, Prospector, Scout
- **PREACHER** – Ascetic, Missionary, Prophet
- **SCIENTIST** – Archaeologist, Medicurg, Technician
- **SHIP WORKER** – Deckhand, Dock Worker, Engineer
- **SOLDIER** – Legionnaire, Mercenary, Officer

## NAME & APPEARANCE

When you know your concept, it is time to pick a name and decide how you look. Each concept has a list of suggested names, facial features and clothing – choose from the list or come up with something of your own. Note choices down on your character sheet. Name and appearance will not affect the game in any mechanical sense, but are of course important to bring your PC to life.

## REPUTATION

Your Reputation is a rating that decides your social position and standing in the Horizon. Your Reputation is determined by your upbringing and modified by your concept. If you play a humanite, your Reputation is lowered (page 22). Your Reputation can change over the course of the game (page 28). Your Reputation score determines how easily you can manipulate people (page 62), and how others generally treat you.

## ATTRIBUTES

Your four attributes determine your basic composition, what natural characteristics you were born with. Attributes range from 1 to 5 for normal humans, and a higher number is better. The attribute scores are used when you roll dice for important actions in the game. When you create your PC, you get a pool of points to spend on your attributes – how many depends on your upbringing. You must assign at least 2 and at most 4 points to each attribute, with an exception of the key attribute for your concept, in which you can place 5 points.

**TABLE 2.2 UPBRINGING**

| UPBRINGING | PLEBEIAN | STATIONARY | PRIVILEGED |
|---|---|---|---|
| ATTRIBUTE POINTS | 15 | 14 | 13 |
| SKILL POINTS | 8 | 10 | 12 |
| REPUTATION | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| STARTING CAPITAL | 500 birr | 1,000 birr | 5,000 birr |

***Example***

*Jessica is creating the PC Sabah, Trailblazer and Prospector. Sabah is of a Firstcome origin with a Stationary background, born and raised on Kua. As a Stationary, her Reputation score is 4, and her chosen character concept Trailblazer will not modify this.*

### PLAYING A SEMI-INTELLIGENCE?

You could create a PC from one of the semi-intelligent species nekatra, ekilbri or skavara. Make sure that the other players are fine with it, and then have the GM check the rules for semi-intelligent species in Chapter 14.

***Example***
*As Sabah comes from a Stationary background, Jessica gets 14 points to spend on attributes. She gives Sabah Strength 2, Agility 3, Wits 5 and Empathy 4. She gets 5 Hit Points and 9 Mind Points.*

**TABLE 2.3 SKILL LEVELS**

| SKILL LEVEL | ABILITY |
|---|---|
| 1 | Novice |
| 2 | Capable |
| 3 | Competent |
| 4 | Experienced |
| 5 | Master |

### GENERAL SKILLS

- **DEXTERITY** (Agility)
- **FORCE** (Strength)
- **INFILTRATION** (Agility)
- **MANIPULATION** (Empathy)
- **MELEE COMBAT** (Strength)
- **OBSERVATION** (Wits)
- **RANGED COMBAT** (Agility)
- **SURVIVAL** (Wits)

### ADVANCED SKILLS

- **COMMAND** (Empathy)
- **CULTURE** (Empathy)
- **DATA DJINN** (Wits)
- **MEDICURGY** (Wits)
- **MYSTIC POWERS** (Empathy)
- **PILOT** (Agility)
- **SCIENCE** (Wits)
- **TECHNOLOGY** (Wits)

- **STRENGTH** – Raw, physical strength and physique.
- **AGILITY** – Your overall body control and motor skills.
- **WITS** – Intelligence, alertness and sharpness of mind.
- **EMPATHY** – Your charisma, empathy and ability to manipulate others.

## HIT POINTS AND MIND POINTS

Life in the Third Horizon will no doubt be tough on both your body and your mind – read more in Chapter 5. To measure how much trauma you can take, the game uses two numeric ratings: Hit Points (HP) and Mind Points (MP).

- You have a number of HP equal to your Strength + Agility scores. HP are degraded by damage.
- You have a number of MP equal to your Wits + Empathy scores. MP are degraded by stress.



## SKILLS

The next step is picking skills. These are important, as they, along with your attributes, determine how effectively you can act in the game. There are 16 skills in the game, and they're all described in detail in the next chapter. Your mastery of a certain skill is called your skill level and is a number from 0 to 5 – the higher, the better. Skills and their use are described in detail in Chapter 3.

**General and Advanced:** The skills are divided into two groups: general and advanced. See the adjacent lists. Each skill is also connected to one of your attributes. You can always roll dice for a general skill even if your skill level is zero – just roll dice for the corresponding attribute. To use an advanced skill, you need at least a skill level of 1.

**Starting Levels:** When you create your PC, you get a number of skill points to distribute across your skills – how many depends on your upbringing (see table 2.4). You can set your concept skills to a maximum of level 3, and other skills to a maximum of 1. You can increase your skill levels during play (see page 28).

## TALENTS

Talents are tricks, cheats and abilities that give you an edge over others. They are more specialized than skills, and are a way to give further detail to your PC. Talents are described in Chapter 4.

You will have three talents at the start of the game – one each from your group concept, your character concept, and your Icon. You can acquire more talents during play. Mystical powers are a special category of talents – they are only available to a PC with at least skill level 1 in the Mystic Powers skill. If you begin play as a Mystic, you get to choose one free mystical power talent.

## YOUR ICON

The nine Icons are ever-present in the Third Horizon. Almost all believe in their power, and the protection they offer from the Dark between the Stars. Prayers, giving alms and the burning of incense are common among most people at the start of a long journey, before signing a business contract or just to jump-start the old harvester in the shed.

You are born under the sign of one of the Icons. This Icon will have a tangible impact on your life, and might just lend you

**TABLE 2.4 SKILL POINTS**

| UPBRINGING | POINTS TO SPEND |
|---|---|
| Plebeian | 8 |
| Stationary | 10 |
| Privileged | 12 |

***Example***

*Sabah, being Stationary, gives Jessica 10 points to spend on skills. She gives the Trailblazer Sabah Technology 3, Survival 2, Pilot 2, Dexterity 1, Ranged Combat 1, and Observation 1. Jessica picks the Nine Lives talent for Sabah.*

**TABLE 2.5 YOUR ICON**

| D66 | ICON |
|---|---|
| 11-14 | The Lady of Tears |
| 15-22 | The Dancer |
| 23-26 | The Gambler |
| 31-34 | The Merchant |
| 35-42 | The Deckhand |
| 43-46 | The Traveler |
| 51-54 | The Messenger |
| 55-62 | The Judge |
| 63-66 | The Faceless |

supernatural powers. You won't get to choose your Icon – this is up to fate. If you have the Icon deck (sold separately), draw a card to see which Icon is yours – otherwise use table 2.5.

### ICON TALENTS

The Icon under whose sign you are born will grant you a special Icon talent. Icon talents work like normal talents, but are generally more powerful. You can never learn additional Icon talents.

#### THE NINE ICONS

The nine Icons worshipped in the Third Horizon are described briefly below, with their symbols in parentheses. Read more about the Icons in Chapter 10.

- **THE LADY OF TEARS (A TEAR):** On their way towards the justice of the Judge, the dead are accompanied by the Lady of Tears. She also consoles the living. The Lady of Tears is a woman dressed in white, the color of mourning, with traces of tears still on her cheeks.
- **THE DANCER (A SWEEPING SHAWL):** The Dancer is the Icon of inspiration and perseverance. Sometimes a woman, sometimes a man, mostly androgynous. The Dancer represents the bond formed in the union between two lovers, but also unbridled lust when appearing as the Musician, playing a lyre or cirra.
- **THE GAMBLER (DICE):** For the adventurous, the Gambler is a perfect fit. This Icon is often pictured as a little girl stretching her hand towards the beholder, her eyes urging you to take a risk, to roll the dice.
- **THE MERCHANT (A CHALICE):** The portly Merchant, an older man dressed in embroidered silk robes, is the Icon of growth, prosperity and success.
- **THE DECKHAND (A KEY):** This Icon is usually portrayed as a tired boy holding a broom. The Deckhand can bless homes and ships, if they're well-kept and the right offerings have been made.
- **THE TRAVELER (A SHIP):** For free traders, explorers and colonists, the Traveler offers protection. The Traveler is often portrayed as a man with his eyes on the horizon, holding a walking stick, a compass or an astrograph.
- **THE MESSENGER (A SCROLL):** The fleet-footed Messenger brings news, prayers and omens to wherever the faithful might be. The Messenger is portrayed as a pale boy with a stern face and flaming eyes.
- **THE JUDGE (A SWORD):** An old matriarch with a grave face and a sword at her side is the common way to picture the Judge. The Judge's realm is that of justice and due punishment.
- **THE FACELESS (NO SYMBOL):** The seeker among the Icons is never pictured. In temples and on Icon walls there is instead an empty place or alcove, or an asymmetry in the placement of the other Icons.

## PERSONAL PROBLEM

As a PC in Coriolis, you have a history. You have been through something before the beginning of the game that still haunts or threatens you – perhaps a mortal enemy, a dark secret or a strong addiction? Whatever it is, it's called your personal problem. Each concept lists three suggested personal problems – choose one from the list or come up with one of your own. Your personal problem is mainly a tool for the GM to create stories and events that feel personal to you, but it also affects how many Experience Points you receive after a gaming session (page 28).

## RELATIONSHIPS

As you enter the game, you will already have relationships to the other PCs. These relationships will affect how you gain Experience Points (see below) and are useful tools for the GM to create suspense. When creating your PC, describe your relationship to each of the other PCs with a short sentence on your character sheet. Your concept lists a few suggestions to choose from, or to use as inspiration.

**PC Buddy:** When you've chosen your relationships to the other PCs, you should pick one of them as your buddy – your best friend in the group. Check the box next to that person on your character sheet.

## CREW POSITION

You've already chosen your spaceship – it is time to decide who does what onboard. There are five crew positions:

- Captain
- Engineer
- Pilot
- Sensor Operator
- Gunner

Decide as a group who should have which position. The crew positions are mainly important during space combat, which you can read more about in Chapter 7. You are free to switch positions during play, so the choice is not permanent. The

space combat chapter describes how to proceed if you have fewer than five PCs in the group. If you have more than five PCs, you can either share positions, or crew other stations onboard, like the medlab, the hangar etc..

## GEAR

The last step in the PC creation process is for you to pick your starting gear. Your concept gives you a few choices. You can purchase extra gear during play (see the price lists for goods and services in Chapter 6).

**Starting Capital:** The currency in the Third Horizon is called the birr. Your upbringing (see above) determines how many birr you start the game with, along with your starting gear. Transactions involving birr are mostly handled electronically, using so-called tags.

## ENCUMBRANCE

Each of your possessions should be written down on a row under Gear on your character sheet. If an object is not on the list, you don't have it anymore – you've dropped it or forgotten it somewhere. Generally, you can carry a number of items equal to your Strength doubled. Note down one object per row on your character sheet. Talents (Chapter 4) can increase your carrying capacity.

**Heavy and Light Objects:** Extra heavy or cumbersome objects are harder to carry. An object deemed heavy will count double and thus take up two rows on your sheet instead of one. Some objects may even require three or more rows. There are also objects considered light – they require only half a row, meaning you can have two light items on one row.

**Tiny Objects:** Even smaller objects than light ones are called tiny. They are small enough not to affect your encumbrance at all. A good rule of thumb is, if the item can be concealed in a closed fist, it is tiny. Tiny items must also be written down, even if they don't weigh you down.

**Overencumbered:** You can temporarily carry more than your normal load. If you do though, you must roll the Force skill each time you attempt to move any long distance. If you fail the roll you must either let go of what you are carrying, or stop where you are.

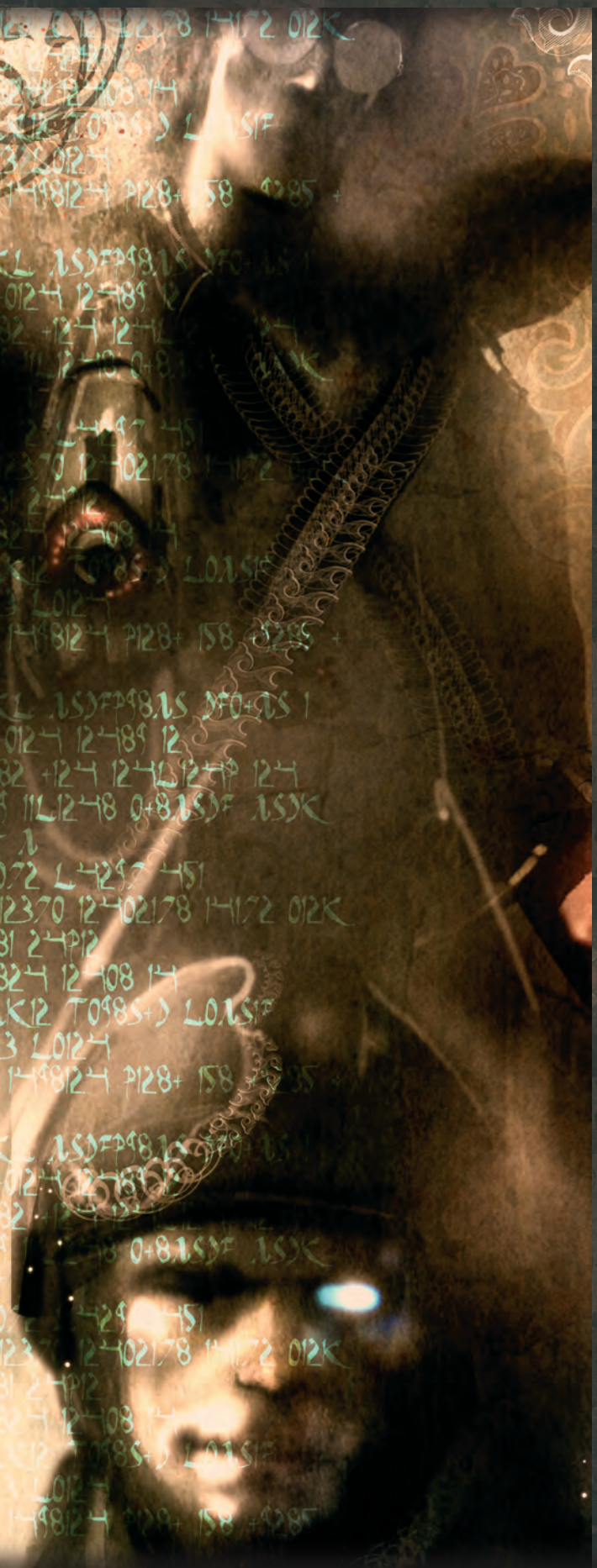
***Example***

*Sabah is possessed by something from the Dark between the Stars. It sometimes takes over, causing seizures or memory loss.*

**CREW CARDS**

**For each of the positions, there is a Crew Position Card supplied in the Icon Card Deck (sold separately), which includes a summary of the actions possible for each crew position. These cards are not needed for play, but are very handy.**





## IMPROVE YOUR CHARACTER

Your PC will not stride unaffected through the Third Horizon. Your adventures will change you – this is the only certainty in an uncertain world. Your PC will improve her skills, learn new talents and change her Reputation score over the course of the game.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

How much you learn during the game is measured in Experience Points (XP). You get your XP after each session. Have a debriefing and let everyone discuss what happened. For each of these questions you can answer "yes" to, you get 1 XP:

- Did you participate in the session? You get 1 XP just for attendance.
- Did you overcome a difficult challenge, to help your crew to reach its current goal?
- Did you put yourself or your crew at risk because of your personal problem?
- Did you learn something new about yourself or another PC?
- Did you sacrifice or risk something for your PC buddy?
- Did you act in accordance with your Icon?

The GM will have the last say on how many XP each PC gets, but let everyone speak their mind. Mark your XP in the checkboxes on your character sheet. After XP have been handed out, you're free to change relationships with the other PCs.

## LEARNING SKILLS AND TALENTS

When you've gathered 5 XP, you can take an advance. An advance is either increasing a skill level by 1, or learning a new talent. You can never raise a skill level above 5. You can learn any new talent, except for Icon talents. When you've taken your advance, erase 5 XP and start getting new ones. When you've got another 5 XP, you can take a new advance. You are free to save XP as long as you like, before using them.

## CHANGING YOUR REPUTATION

Your Reputation in the Horizon can be changed by actions you take in the game. This is decided after the session, when XP are handed out. If you've done something generally considered good and heroic, your Reputation is increased by 1. If you've done something generally considered evil or destructive, your Reputation is decreased by 1. Your Reputation can never go below zero. Truly remarkable deeds may change your Reputation several steps. For an action to affect your Reputation, it must be publicly recognized somehow.





# ARTIST

*The Icons live through poetry, songs and books. You have dedicated your life to the fleeting moments of Iconic beauty that your art creates. You know that no culture is stronger than its art, and you intend to make sure the Third Horizon is remembered for something other than chaos, war and destruction.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **COURTESAN –** Well-versed in all the arts of pleasure, you live to share them with others. You could be one of the legendary courtesans of Ahlam's Temple, a Dabaran mithra, a hierodul from the Pillar Quadrant, or perhaps an Algolan food artist.
- **MUSICIAN –** You are one with your instrument. Your music can communicate the most triumphant love or the blackest sorrow. You are a street performer in the Conglomerate, a cirra player, a baria chantress or a composer of blood operas in the Monolith.
- **POET –** Your words are your art, and they stir strong emotions in your audience. You might be a psalter serving the Church of the Icon, a street poet, a Border Space singer, or a tarrab from Algol.

**NAMES:** Abdalar, Amirah, Havima, Iosop, Masruq, Sani

**REPUTATION:** +1

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Empathy

Concept Skills:

- **COURTESAN:** Manipulation, Culture, Dexterity, Observation
- **MUSICIAN:** Manipulation, Culture, Infiltration, Observation
- **POET:** Manipulation, Culture, Dexterity, Infiltration

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Flawless makeup, bedroom eyes, black curls, animate tattoo
- **CLOTHING:** Silk burra, shining dress, embroidered djellaba, swirling skirts

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Beautiful (BIO)
- Defensive
- Seductive

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You get very jealous when others succeed. It should be your turn now.
- You are insanely stubborn and never give up despite negative consequences.
- A faction you have somehow angered is out to get you.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

… is annoying. He/she just rubs you the wrong way.
… appreciates your art and is deserving of your time.
… is your true love. But does he/she feel the same?
… is hiding something. You want to know what.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Hand fan | or | tabula |
| 2. | Opor | or | environment scanner |
| 3. | Exquisite clothing | or | musical instrument |
| 4. | Beautiful (BIO) | or | rare collection of poems |
| 5. | The memoirs of Mazelman | or | standing reservation at Alkamaar's |



# DATA SPIDER

*The factions rule the Horizon, and information guides their actions. If you can control this information, you will be powerful. A simple enough equation, but you are one of the few to have figured it out. You are a Data Spider, carefully weaving a complex net of data gathered from the most obscure sources. You might not be the sharpest dressed or have a single birr to your name, but you have information, and information is power.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **ANALYST** – You gather and compile data from many different sources and systems. Your info bank can be used to predict anything from the rebels' coming offensive, to next segment's fad in the Spire. You might be a corporate oracle, a data seer, or a souk analyst.
- **CORRESPONDENT** – You work for the Bulletin or some smaller news organization, collecting and disseminating information. You might be an embedded war correspondent with the Legionnaires on Uharu, or a freelance reporter covering the elephant trade on Algol. Some private detectives are ex-journalists.
- **DATA DJINN** – You spend your days by your computer wherever you are. With a careful whisper, you can control and direct complex systems, extract classified information from djinn intelligences, or simply destroy info banks and databases. You could be a meme creator, a data infiltrator or just a lowly programmer for the Space Port Authority.

**NAMES:** Asour, Barika, Fatma, Naim, Omran, Yaqub

**REPUTATION:** ±0

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Wits

Concept Skills:

- **ANALYST:** Data Djinn, Culture, Manipulation, Science
- **CORRESPONDENT:** Culture, Manipulation, Infiltration, Observation
- **DATA DJINN:** Data Djinn, Manipulation, Observation, Science

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Flawless makeup, curious eyes, smirking face, wrinkled forehead
- **CLOTHING:** Embroidered vest, dark corporate caftan, worn gallabeya, skullcap

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Faction Standing
- Judge of Character
- Third Eye

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You are a compulsive thrill seeker. If you see the chance to do something foolhardy, nothing can stop you.
- You have sworn an oath never to rest until you have apprehended the nemesis of your friend or your family.
- Someone knows who you are and who you work for. Unless you pay up, the news will be spread.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... has a keen eye for what's important. Watch and learn.
... has the occasional bright idea, but is mostly just a waste of space.
... doesn't even see you. One day that will change.
... is your role model. You want to be more like him/her.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Communicator (IV) | or | personal holograph |
| 2. | Proximity sensor | or | computer |
| 3. | Vulcan cricket | or | stun gun |
| 4. | Tabula | or | transactor with 1,000 birr |
| 5. | Opor | or | arrash |



# FUGITIVE

*You can never stop moving. Always look over your shoulder. Always sleep with a gun under your pillow. You are on the run from the past. It doesn't matter what you once may or may not have done – all that matters is getting to the next hideout, the next safe haven. But some day you shall be rid of your pursuers. Some day you will dare sleep with your back to the door.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **CRIMINAL –** You make sure that the birr keeps flowing in the back alleys of society, no matter if it takes threats or even outright violence to do it. You could be a gang member, a corsair or an opor dealer, maybe even one of the despised Algolan slavers.
- **MYSTIC –** You are on the run, stigmatized and possibly being tracked. Your past life is gone. Now, you are a prisoner to nightmares and the crippling anxiety over what trouble your powers will cause next.
- **REVOLUTIONARY –** You want to make the Horizon a better place. To do it, the oppressors must be destroyed. You could be a member of the Kuan Free Brigades, a rebel on Uharu, or maybe one of the Maskless, fighting the regime on Sadaal.

**NAMES:** Abbud, Ghazi, Inas, Jibril, Yarah, Zinah

**REPUTATION:** -2

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Empathy

Concept Skills:

- **CRIMINAL:** Force, Melee Combat, Dexterity, Infiltration
- **MYSTIC:** Manipulation, Mystic Powers, Dexterity, Infiltration
- **REVOLUTIONARY:** Ranged Combat, Dexterity, Observation, Survival

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Blank stare, facial tattoos, lip ring, shaved head
- **CLOTHING:** Brown coat, jacket with many pockets, blue patterned gallabeya, turban

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Intimidating
- Mystical Power
- Nine Lives

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- A group of zealous Icon believers are on your tail. They know about your powers.
- You suffer from terrible agoraphobia that could set in at any moment.
- You have betrayed a friend who has sworn to get back at you.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... wishes you harm. Keep your distance.
... knows your secret. But maybe he/she could understand you.
... is principled. A shame it's the wrong principles, though.
... is someone you respect. You hope he/she feels the same way about you.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Anonymous clothing | or | tag with 500 birr |
| 2. | Communicator (II) | or | protective clothing |
| 3. | Vulcan carbine | or | Dura sword |
| 4. | Thermostatic suit | or | exo shell |
| 5. | Transactor with fake identity | or | mask |



# NEGOTIATOR

*Words are what keep the Horizon running. Weapons and threats may have their uses, but in the end, it's around the negotiating table where everything is really settled. You have realized this, and seen the immense power that lies in closing a deal when all hope seems lost. Your sharp intellect and silver tongue can move mountains.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **AGITATOR –** You make sure the people or the customers know what's important, whether your goal is to stir a revolt or sell a product. Perhaps you are a rebel prophet, a statistician at the Sadaal Institute of Planning, or an ad djinn at a Consortium firm.
- **DIPLOMAT –** You parley and negotiate between the factions and dynasties of the Horizon. A peace treaty or free trade agreement is usually the goal. You could be a consul, a trade mission official, or the personal ambassador of a wealthy family. Less glamorous jobs like customs officer or bureaucrat are also possible.
- **PEDDLER –** You scheme and deal in anything from frozen goats to Kuan hardwood. Profit is your imperative, and birr jingling in your pockets make you truly happy. You could be a free trader, an import mogul, or the dabra of a souk. Or you could be working from the shadows as a smuggler or a fence for the Syndicate.

**NAMES:** Esam, Izzaldin, Minnah, Nada, Radwa, Ubaid

**REPUTATION:** +1

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Empathy

Concept Skills:

- **AGITATOR:** Data Djinn, Force, Manipulation, Culture
- **DIPLOMAT:** Command, Culture, Manipulation, Melee Combat
- **PEDDLER:** Culture, Manipulation, Observation, Pilot

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Red face, grave looking, stubble, too much makeup
- **CLOTHING:** Red djellaba with gold embroidery, dress uniform, black caftan, head wrap with a gem

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Faction Standing
- Language Modulator (CYB)
- Lie Detector (CYB)

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You have a protégé that you need to take care of. It could be a relative or a friend you owe a debt of gratitude.
- You owe money to the Syndicate. They want it back. Now.
- You are greedy, and you just have to scam people if you get the chance, even your friends.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... is easy to like. And easy to manipulate.
... is very blunt. You don't understand each other.
... embarrassed you in front of everybody. You won't forget that.
... is good with words. You respect that.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Tabula | or | language modulator (CYB) |
| 2. | Com link V | or | voice amplifier |
| 3. | Exquisite clothing | or | kambra (D6 doses) |
| 4. | Lie detector (CYB) | or | language unit |
| 5. | Vulcan cricket | or | mercurium dagger |



# OPERATIVE

*You are a professional. You move unnoticed through the shadows, as comfortable in a crowded bazaar as in the corridors of power. Where law and diplomacy end, you begin. You are an Operative, the long arm of the powerful, carrying out missions in the dark. You expect neither laurels nor fame. To you, a job well done is enough reward in itself.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **ASSASSIN** – You make sure that undesirable elements disappear – sometimes in public and conspicuous ways, but more often in secret. You could be one of Ahlam's Black Lotuses, or maybe a hassassin from the Order of the Pariah.
- **GUARDSMAN/-WOMAN** – You work for the good of the people by protecting them from criminals, be it gang members or deadly assassins. You might be a member of the Coriolis Guard, a Draconite dragoon, or a gendarme in the Conglomerate. Or you may serve the law only for pay and work as a bounty hunter.
- **SPY** – You work for a faction or some other powerful group, carrying out secret missions and espionage. You could be an operative for the Consortium's Special Branch, a judicator, or perhaps a loathed corporate agent.

**NAMES:** Abidah, Kef, Shakir, Salah, Sorbul, Waga

**REPUTATION:** ±0

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Agility

Concept Skills:

- **ASSASSIN:** Infiltration, Dexterity, Melee Combat, Ranged Combat
- **GUARDSMAN/-WOMAN:** Force, Melee Combat, Ranged Combat, Observation
- **SPY:** Data Djinn, Manipulation, Infiltration, Ranged Combat

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Scarred face, blank stare, cold eyes, crew cut
- **CLOTHING:** Practical uniform, black gallabeya, long leather coat, utility vest

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Executioner
- Intimidating
- Licensed

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You are paranoid and rarely trust anybody.
- You are being hunted by a powerful group/person, who wants both you and your loved ones dead.
- You have a dark secret that could turn everyone against you.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

… can be trusted no matter what.
… is skillful, but naïve.
… is clumsy. Don't let him/her near your stuff!
… has a hidden agenda. You are going to find out what it is.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Vulcan cricket | or | advanced melee weapon |
| 2. | Proximity sensor | or | computer |
| 3. | Modulation mask | or | mechanical lockpick |
| 4. | Recon drone | or | an assortment of fake identities |
| 5. | Security tablet | or | poison (5 doses) |



# PILOT

*Your ship and you are as one. At the helm, you feel complete freedom and a righteous Iconic presence. You are never more alive than when you pierce the Uharan clouds, when you soar across the Kuan jungles, or when you defy death by diving into an asteroid field. Flying is living, and you want to live more than ever.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **DRIVER –** You thrive in your vehicle, free to roam as you please across the planet's surface. You could be a hoverbike racer in the Conglomerate slums, a caravan driver, or an attack hovercraft pilot.
- **FIGHTER PILOT –** You can afford to be cocky and obnoxious, because you know that in the cockpit of your fighter, you are a god. Perhaps your ship is a torpedo boat or a breach pod, maybe you are a corsair hunter or a dogfight ace.
- **FREIGHTER PILOT –** You travel the Horizon's trade routes in a freighter. The Dark between the Stars doesn't scare you. You could be a free trader, a dust trawler, a bulk hauler pilot or an ice miner.

**NAMES:** Dhakir, Dunyana, Ghazalah, Hanbal, Ithar, Nadir

**REPUTATION:** ±0

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Agility

Concept Skills:

- **DRIVER:** Force, Pilot, Ranged Combat, Survival
- **FIGHTER PILOT:** Data Djinn, Pilot, Ranged Combat, Technology
- **FREIGHTER PILOT:** Data Djinn, Force, Pilot, Technology

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Proud eyes, chiseled features, steely grey eyes, unshaven
- **CLOTHING:** Pilot's uniform, leather jacket, overalls and safety harness, dark green caftan

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Zero-G Training
- Exo Specialist
- Targeting Scope (CYB)

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You are reckless and take stupid risks with yourself and your ship, even when it isn't necessary.
- You hate humanites/the Privileged/nekatra/the Zenithian Hegemony/something else, and will do anything to provoke one of them if they get close.
- You scare easily and never challenge yourself. Better safe than sorry.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... thinks that you are a rickshaw driver. This annoys you.
... can take a Zero-G roll without throwing up. Impressive.
... is a good friend, someone to trust.
... thinks he/she is the captain of this boat. You know that this is far from true.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Tools (Ordinary) | or | talisman (Pilot +1) |
| 2. | Exo shell | or | hand jet |
| 3. | Targeting Scope (CYB) | or | communicator (IV) |
| 4. | Accelerator pistol | or | stun weapon |
| 5. | Flight suit | or | exquisite clothing |



# PREACHER

*You are convinced that the Third Horizon is the promised land of the Icons – and it is your duty to convince its people of this. You are a preacher, a bringer of holy words, one of the Icons' countless pilgrims. Humility, duty and piety are your virtues. In times like these, when the Dark between the Stars grows stronger, you are needed more than ever.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **ASCETIC –** You have dedicated your life to understanding the Horizon and the innermost nature of the universe. Your road to enlightenment has been hard. You could be a hermit from the Zhau system, one of the yogin of Karast, a philosopher from the Circle of Seekers or just a simple beggar monk or nun.
- **MISSIONARY –** Countless souls wander aimlessly through the Horizon, but you have the chance to save at least a few of them. You might be a traveling missionary, a Samaritan apprentice or an Iconoturg.
- **PROPHET –** You have seen the Icons' faces, or creatures from beyond the Darkness – and the people must know. You are a revivalist preacher, a flagellant, one of Ahlam's dance masters or maybe a Sogoi shaman.

**NAMES:** Abdelkadir, Heera, Ibnassar, Jawna, Lunah, Salam

**REPUTATION:** +1

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Empathy

Concept Skills:

- **ASCETIC:** Force, Culture, Dexterity, Science
- **MISSIONARY:** Culture, Manipulation, Dexterity, Survival
- **PROPHET:** Force, Culture, Manipulation, Observation

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Mad eyes, fiery speech, frowning, unruly hair
- **CLOTHING:** Loincloth, black preacher's gowns, golden headwrap, torn gallabeya

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Blessing
- Faction Standing
- Talisman Maker

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You only see the worst in people, and you can't trust or accept help from anyone.
- You are indecisive and hesitant to act. You obsess over choices and get nothing done.
- You have seen the power of the Darkness, and throw a fanatical fit if signs of Darkness appear near you.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... doesn't understand your visions. A lost soul.
... could be steered onto the right path. You mustn't give up.
... is probably an unbeliever. Stay clear.
... thinks before he/she speaks. Someone you can really talk to.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Blessed scripture | or | thurible |
| 2. | Talisman | or | cásula (preacher's robes) |
| 3. | Reliquary | or | written prophecy |
| 4. | 10 blessed m-doses | or | 10 herbal remedies |
| 5. | Tabula | or | writing paraphernalia |



# SCIENTIST

*The Horizon is full of mysteries, but they can all be explained. You are a soldier in the service of science, your duty is to find answers where others see only questions. You work tirelessly, honoring the scientific method, testing and re-testing your hypotheses. There are no absolute truths, only a constantly changing canon of stories about the creation of the Icons. It's your job to write those stories.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **ARCHAEOLOGIST –** You dig through the old and the forgotten, from ancient ruins to dead stars. You could be an astronic at the Yerba Institute, a psycho-arithmetist, a Kuan humanologist or a field archaeologist in an exo shell in the darkness of Border Space.
- **MEDICURG –** You work with healing and improving people, physically as well as spiritually. You could be a biosculptor on Ozone Plaza, a Samaritan with the Order of the Pariah, or perhaps a field medicurg in the Legion.
- **TECHNICIAN –** You work with anything technical, from old sensors to ship reactors. You could be a ship engineer on the Harima docks, an artifact technician with the Consortium or maybe a gunsmith in a band of mercenaries.

**NAMES:** Abdelassa, Cantara, Dalal, Omran, Qasim, Wana

**REPUTATION:** +1

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Wits

Concept Skills:

- **ARCHAEOLOGIST:** Culture, Observation, Science, Survival
- **MEDICURG:** Medicurgy, Manipulation, Observation, Science
- **TECHNICIAN:** Force, Technology, Observation, Science

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Curious eyes, smooth forehead, dirty face, hair bund
- **CLOTHING:** Overalls, lab coat, white djellaba, cargo shorts and boots

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Field Medicurg
- Gearhead
- Wealthy Family

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You just can't stay off the kohôl. It makes you impulsive and erratic.
- Bounty hunters are after you, but for something you didn't do.
- A competitor has slandered your good name. One day you shall have vengeance.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... is almost as smart as you. Impressive.
... has no clue. How can someone possibly be so dumb?
... makes you insecure. You don't know how to interact with him/her.
... is so beautiful. But he/she would probably never look your way twice.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Communicator (III) | or | proximity sensor |
| 2. | Portable lab | or | computer |
| 3. | Exo shell | or | database |
| 4. | Pressure tent | or | medkit |
| 5. | Tools (Advanced) | or | compass |



# SHIP WORKER

*You have always felt the stars calling to you. Your destiny is to travel the endless Darkness with your crew. Your ship is your home and your best friend, and you know her like the back of your hand. You live a tough life in a tough profession but you wouldn't trade it for anything – you are a starfarer through and through.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **DECKHAND –** It is the little things that make sure a spaceship and its crew can function, and you work with just those little things. You are a captain's aide, a chef, the master deckhand or maybe a janitor on a spaceship.
- **DOCK WORKER –** You load and unload cargo in one of the Horizon's ports. Your skill with grav loaders and exo suits makes you a vital part of any trade enterprise. You could be a spaceport worker, exo specialist or a river barge rat.
- **ENGINEER –** You maintain the technical state of the ship. The head engineer will sometimes give you orders, but most times you just get things done on your own. You might be a reactor djinn, a torpedo operator or a ship's mechanic.

**NAMES:** Botou, Dharr, Fida, Ghaada, Hameed, Hamsa

**REPUTATION:** -1

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Strength

Concept Skills:

- **DECKHAND:** Force, Manipulation, Dexterity, Culture
- **DOCK WORKER:** Force, Melee Combat, Dexterity, Technology
- **ENGINEER:** Data Djinn, Force, Observation, Technology

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Tired eyes, sweaty face, lank hair, pursed lips
- **CLOTHING:** Tattooed arms, tank top with a symbol, wide brim cap, leather jacket

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Exo Specialist
- Tough
- Zero-G Training

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You have a short fuse and are prone to fits of rage. This often gets you in trouble.
- You have a cold heart and would never help someone in need unless you would really benefit from it.
- You have seen the Dark between the Stars, and now, space terrifies you. Sometimes you are able to conquer your fear.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

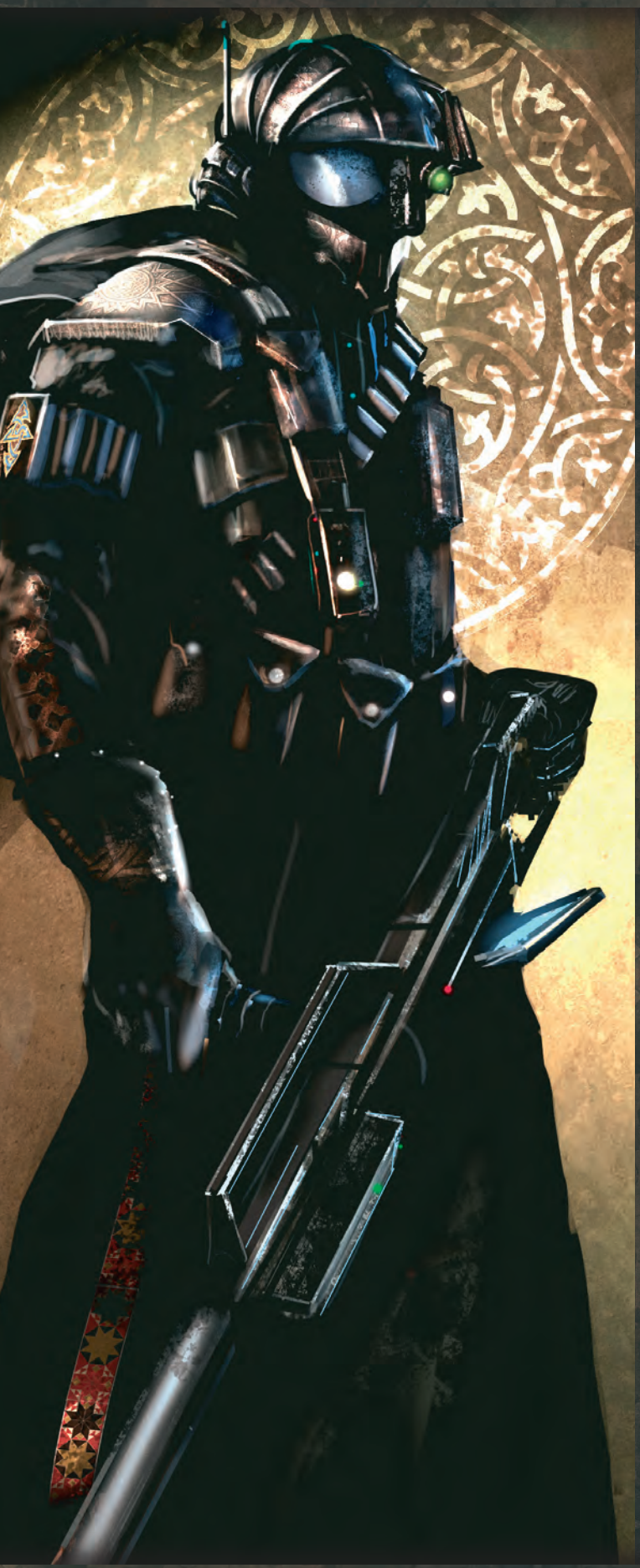
Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... treats you like a skavara.
... plots to hurt your best friend. You must find out how.
... is your closest friend. You can talk about anything with each other.
... is someone you would follow into death, if needed.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Tools (Ordinary) | or | vacuum sealer |
| 2. | Power glove | or | environment scanner |
| 3. | Arrash | or | tabak |
| 4. | Exo loader | or | exo shell |
| 5. | Hyper rope | or | dura knife |



# SOLDIER

*You know what war and violence do to people. You have seen it up close. Watching your friend being blown to bits does something to your soul, alters your mind. What you also know is that a Vulcan carbine is power in its absolute form. Violence is power. You don't live for killing, but as long as the factions keep fighting, as long as the corsairs keep raiding and as long as someone pays and feeds you, you will continue doing it. Because you are a soldier, and it's just what you do.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **LEGIONNAIRE –** You are one with the Legion and your comrades. You fight for honor, order and birr, although maybe not in that order. You are a sergeant, a nekatra handler, a sniper, or simply just a legionnaire soldier.
- **MERCENARY –** You follow the conflicts and the money, usually in a group of like-minded fighters. You could be a rebel fighter, a gun-for-hire, a nomad clan warrior, or perhaps a specialist in a shadow company.
- **OFFICER –** You are in command of a unit or a ship. Your orders are law and you always keep a cool head when things get ugly. You could be a Legionnaire corporal, a Miran temple guard, a captain of the Guard or maybe a political officer with the Sadaal Dogma Institute.

**NAMES:** Aqilah, Faridah, Jabbar, Khoury, Wazir, Zahra

**REPUTATION:** -1

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Agility

Concept Skills:

- **LEGIONNAIRE:** Force, Melee Combat, Ranged Combat, Survival
- **MERCENARY:** Melee Combat, Dexterity, Observation, Ranged Combat
- **OFFICER:** Command, Culture, Melee Combat, Ranged Combat

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Menacing stare, scarred, cybernetic eye, burn marks
- **CLOTHING:** Fatigues, dress uniform, deep black djellaba, long leather coat

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Combat Veteran
- Cybernetic Muscles (CYB)
- Tough

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You are addicted to opor, and use it after doing things on the battlefield you would rather forget.
- You are arrogant and condescending toward others.
- You are a coward, but try to hide it as best as you can.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... fought by your side and saved your life.
... left you for dead. You will never forgive him/her.
... is highly skilled. A quality you respect.
... is wonderful. He/she will one day be yours.

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Heavy armor | or | mercurium sword |
| 2. | Accelerator pistol with sensor scope | or | vulcan carbine |
| 3. | Frag grenade | or | cybernetic muscles (CYB) |
| 4. | Command unit | or | advanced scope |
| 5. | Communicator (II) | or | medkit |



# TRAILBLAZER

*Curiosity is your poison. You have always been one to look under every stone, search every nook and cranny. Your calling is to unravel the Horizon's secrets and mysteries. You know that the future can be told through the ruins of the past. If you only dig deep enough and work hard enough, maybe you will be the one who discovers a secret so vast it will shake the Horizon to its very core.*

Possible sub-concepts:

- **COLONIST –** You are the worker who couldn't stand the slums anymore, and left to start a new life. You have only your fists and your skills, but the Horizon is your oyster. You could be a logger, an asteroid colonist, a miner or a nomad.
- **PROSPECTOR –** Ever the seeker of new worlds and new riches, for you there are always new expeditions to be planned. You could be a colonial agent, an asteroid wallah, a robber digger or perhaps a nomad.
- **SCOUT –** You are a self-reliant lone wolf, but you offer your services to others – if they keep the talking to a minimum. You could be a Legionnaire scout, a big game hunter, an agent for the Colonial Agency or even a cat burglar.

**NAMES:** Amjad, Duro, Evgena, Hakam, Maysam, Sabah

**REPUTATION:** ±0

**KEY ATTRIBUTE:** Wits

Concept Skills:

- **COLONIST:** Force, Dexterity, Ranged Combat, Survival
- **PROSPECTOR:** Pilot, Technology, Science, Survival
- **SCOUT:** Infiltration, Ranged Combat, Observation, Survival

### APPEARANCE

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- **FACE:** Weather-beaten, squinting, protective goggles, bald
- **CLOTHING:** Heavy overalls, crude boots, fur-lined coat, lined caftan

### TALENTS

Pick one. You can learn more during play. Chapter 4 details all of the talents.

- Weatherproof (CYB)
- Nine Lives
- Rugged

### PERSONAL PROBLEM

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

- You are stubborn to a fault, never giving up, even if you or your friends will suffer negative consequences.
- You have a dark secret that has made you the target of a faction.
- You are possessed by something from the Dark between the Stars. It sometimes takes over, giving you seizures or memory loss.

### RELATIONSHIPS TO THE OTHER PCS

Choose from the list or use your imagination.

... survived 10 days in a desert. A worthy friend.
... is always correcting you, even when he/she is wrong.
... won't stop talking. One day you will have to do something about that.
... always looks so gloomy. What's eating him/her?

### GEAR

You begin play with this gear. Pick one from each row. Gear is described in Chapter 6.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Recon drone | or | communicator (V) |
| 2. | Dura axe | or | vulcan carbine |
| 3. | 5 m-doses | or | database |
| 4. | Weatherproof (CYB) | or | exo shell |
| 5. | Environment scanner | or | compass |





# CHAPTER 3
# SKILLS

*It has been said about the fourth sultan of Bahari, that nowhere in the Horizon was there ever a speaker more eloquent. When the raiding parties of rivaling clans stood at the city gates, the sultan spoke so movingly to them that they turned their weapons against their leaders and swore eternal loyalty to the sultan instead – forming the now legendary Bahari bodyguard.*

**EARLY RULERS OF THE HORIZON** – Sora Moradi

You have created your alter ego in the Third Horizon, and soon you will depart on a great adventure in the Dark between the Stars. But first, you must learn how to overcome the obstacles you will encounter – by using your skills.

**THERE ARE TWO** kinds of skills: general skills, that anyone can use, and advanced skills, that require specialist training. All skills are described in detail further on in this chapter. Each skill is tied to one of your four attributes: **STRENGTH**, **AGILITY**, **WITS** and **EMPATHY**.

Both attributes and skills are measured on a scale of 1 to 5. A higher score is better.

## ROLLING DICE

When you are in danger and attempt to accomplish something difficult, your fate is in the hands of the Icons. It is time to bring out some dice! Any six-sided dice will do.

### SIXES MEAN SUCCESS

When you perform an action, start by describing what your PC tries to accomplish. Then, take as many dice as your skill level in the appropriate skill plus its corresponding attribute. The dice total can be modified by your gear and other external factors. Then, roll your (modified) dice total, all dice at once. For your action to succeed, at least one die must come out a six. If you roll more than one six, you unlock bonus effects.

**Advanced Skills:** You can always test a general skill, even if your skill level is zero – simply roll a number of dice equal to the corresponding attribute only. This is called your Base Chance. To use an advanced skill however, your skill level must be at least 1, otherwise you can't roll for the skill at all.

### LEVELS OF SUCCESS

One six is enough for your action to succeed, but it means you made it just barely. If you roll three or more sixes, you achieve what is called a critical success. Each skill lists its own results corresponding to your level of success later in this chapter.

**GENERAL SKILLS**

- DEXTERITY (Agility)
- FORCE (Strength)
- INFILTRATION (Agility)
- MANIPULATION (Empathy)
- MELEE COMBAT (Strength)
- OBSERVATION (Wits)
- RANGED COMBAT (Agility)
- SURVIVAL (Wits)

**ADVANCED SKILLS**

- COMMAND (Empathy)
- CULTURE (Empathy)
- DATA DJINN (Wits)
- MEDICURGY (Wits)
- MYSTIC POWERS (Empathy)
- PILOT (Agility)
- SCIENCE (Wits)
- TECHNOLOGY (Wits)

***Example***

*Prospector Sabah hurls herself towards the closing airlock. The GM decides that, to make it in time, Sabah must successfully test* **DEXTERITY**. *Sabah has* **DEXTERITY** *1 and* **AGILITY** *3, giving her a total of 4 dice for the roll.*

TABLE 3.1 LEVELS OF SUCCESS

| NUMBER OF SIXES | LEVEL OF SUCCESS |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | Limited Success |
| 3+ | Critical Success |

***Example***
*Sabah rolls her four dice and gets a six. It's a limited success. She rolls through the airlock without a second to spare.*

**DESCRIBE YOUR ACTION**

In Coriolis, you create your story together. Testing a skill should be a dramatic high point. Start by describing what you intend to do so that everyone knows what is at stake. Then roll the dice. Read the result and describe the outcome – what you do, what you say, what you think, how your enemy reacts. If you send a prayer to the Icons, describe your prayer. Take the dramatic initiative, don't wait for the GM – only if you overstep your dice result should he stop you.

**Bonus Effects:** Some skills, like **RANGED COMBAT**, **MELEE COMBAT** and **PILOT**, allow for bonus effects to be "bought" using your extra sixes (if you rolled more than one). These effects and how many sixes they cost are described in Chapter 5 (combat) and Chapter 7 (space combat).

### THE ART OF FAILING

If you roll no sixes, something goes wrong. You are now in the hands of the GM, and he decides what happens to you. The only thing he cannot say is "nothing happens". Failure should always have consequences. In some cases, the rules outline what the failure means, but most times, the GM gets to decide. Maybe you hurt yourself, lose an important possession, are forced to take another route to your destination, or maybe a new threat arises. You have one last chance if you are truly desperate to avoid failing a roll – you can pray to the Icons (page 55).

**Combat:** In combat (Chapter 5), the GM doesn't have to give every failure too much of a consequence. The fact that your attack missed is usually enough, as it is now your enemy's turn to retaliate. The GM can of course penalize you with extra consequences in combat as well – maybe your missed shot hits someone else instead?

## PRAYING TO THE ICONS

When your need is most dire, you can pray to the Icons for help. This means you get to reroll all dice not showing sixes. Which Icon you pray to depends on the skill you just tested – see table 3.2. The prayer doesn't count towards your actions in the turn (see Chapter 5) and takes no time to perform – you just open yourself up to the energy of the Icons. But this doesn't come without risk, see below. You will usually only pray to the Icons when your roll has failed, but you could pray even if there were sixes in your initial roll, to get more sixes and unlock more bonus effects. You can only pray to the Icons when testing a skill, not for any other roll. You can only pray once for each roll.

### PREPARATORY PRAYER AND CHAPELS

If you make time for preparatory prayers to a specific Icon before lunging into the fray, you get a +1 modifier to rerolls when you pray to that same Icon anytime later during the



session. If the prayer takes place in a chapel, your modifier becomes +2. This is in effect for the rest of the session, but only when you pray to that specific Icon (see table 3.2).

### ⚙ THE DARK BETWEEN THE STARS

The Universe strives towards balance. If you use the power of the Icons to help you, you will sooner or later suffer the backlash, something represented in the game by Darkness Points (DP). Every time you pray to the Icons for a reroll, the GM gets 1 DP. He can use these in a number of ways – see the adjacent list.

You can use any token you like to keep track of DP – there are many types of gaming markers available in hobby stores; if you don't have access to those you can use coins, for example. DP can be saved between sessions, so the GM should make a note of his pool at the end of each session. There is no cap on how many DP the GM can have.

**Darkness Points Without Prayer:** The GM can acquire DPs in other ways as well – at portal jumps, during travel in the Dark between the Stars, and when players use mystical powers. Read more in Chapter 15.

### USING DARKNESS POINTS

The Darkness Points are a dramatic tool for the GM. Using them, he can put obstacles in the PCs' way or help NPCs in a pinch. The DP also have a psychological effect on the players – seeing the growing pool of tokens becomes an omen that something bad is about to happen. The GM can use his DP whenever or however he wants, to create the most suspense possible. Here is a list of some ways to spend DP, and of how much each usage costs:

- **REROLL** – Just like when a PC prays and rerolls, the GM can reroll a skill roll for an NPC. Costs 1 DP.
- **TAKE THE INITIATIVE** – An NPC breaks the turn order and reacts before her slot in the turn. The GM chooses when. Costs 1 DP.
- **EMPTY CLIP** – A PC who is shooting runs out of ammo. The attack is not affected, but the weapon must be reloaded after it. Costs 1 DP.
- **MISFIRE** – A PC's firearm jams. The attack is lost, and a roll for Technology (a Slow action) is required to fix the weapon. Costs 3 DP.
- **REACTIVE ACTION** – Normally, NPCs cannot perform reactive actions in combat (page 84). To do so, the GM must spend 1 DP.
- **LOST POSSESSION** – A PC has dropped an important possession. The GM decides which. Costs 3 DP.

- **REINFORCEMENTS** – The enemy receives unexpected backup. The GM decides the details. Costs 1-3 DP, depending on the reinforcements.
- **INNOCENT IN DANGER** – An innocent bystander is suddenly caught in the line of fire and needs help. Will the PCs intervene? Costs 2 DP.
- **PERSONAL PROBLEM** – A PC's personal problem (page 26) affects her in a manner the GM chooses. Costs 1 DP.
- **NATURE'S WRATH** – Something dangerous in the environment around the PCs suddenly affects them. It could be collapsing beams or a landslide. Costs 1-3 DP, depending on the level of danger.
- **A DARK MIND** – A PC is suddenly stricken with a temporary dark madness. More details in Chapter 14. Costs 1-3 DP.
- **THE POWER OF DARKNESS** – Certain talents or abilities can be activated by NPCs or creatures using DP. More details in Chapter 15. The DP cost varies.

## ONLY ONE CHANCE

As a rule, you only have one chance at succeeding with an action. When you have rolled the dice – and prayed to your Icon – you can't take another shot at doing the exact same thing again. You must change your approach to reaching the goal, or wait for the circumstances to change in some tangible way. Another PC could attempt to succeed where you failed, though.

In combat (Chapter 5), the GM should be more permissive. You can keep attacking the same enemy turn after turn, as long as you describe what you do differently to up your chances.

## MODIFICATION

Sometimes, external factors help you reach your goal, giving you extra dice to roll. Sometimes, they work against you, lowering your dice total. These factors are called modifiers.

A +1 modifier means you get 1 extra die, a +2 modifiers means you get 2 extra dice, and so on. A -1 modifier means you roll 1 less die, a -2 modifier means 2 less dice, and so on.

There can be several active modifiers at once – add them together to get your modifier total. A +2 and a -1 equals a +1.

**TABLE 3.2 ICONS AND SKILLS**

**Which Icon you pray to depends on which skill you just tested. This has no mechanical effect, but should be part of your narrative.**

- **DEXTERITY:** The Dancer
- **FORCE:** The Deckhand
- **INFILTRATION:** The Faceless
- **MANIPULATION:** The Merchant
- **MELEE COMBAT:** The Dancer
- **OBSERVATION:** The Gambler
- **RANGED COMBAT:** The Judge
- **SURVIVAL:** The Traveler
- **COMMAND:** The Judge
- **CULTURE:** The Traveler
- **DATA DJINN:** The Messenger
- **MEDICURGY:** The Lady of Tears
- **MYSTIC POWERS:** The Faceless
- **PILOT:** The Gambler
- **SCIENCE:** The Messenger
- **TECHNOLOGY:** The Messenger

***Example***

*Prospector Sabah raises her shaking hand and fires her Vulcan pistol against the assassin. She has* RANGED COMBAT *1 and* AGILITY *3, so she rolls 4 dice but gets no sixes. She sends a silent prayer to the Judge and rerolls the dice. A six! Sabah closes her eyes and the shot hits. The GM gets a Darkness Point.*

**NPCS AND SKILLS**

NPCs use Skills just like the PCs. The GM rolls dice for their actions, and can reroll by spending Darkness Points. But the GM should only roll dice when an action directly affects a PC – for example, when an NPC attacks or attempts to rescue a PC. When an NPC takes an action that doesn't directly affect a PC, the GM is free to decide what happens without dice rolls.

**TABLE 3.3 SUCCESS CHANCE**

**When rolling many dice at once, it can be hard to estimate your chance of succeeding. The table below lists the chance of success when rolling 1-10 dice. The third column shows the chance modified by praying to an Icon.**

| DICE | CHANCE | WITH PRAYER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 17% | 29% |
| 2 | 31% | 50% |
| 3 | 42% | 64% |
| 4 | 52% | 74% |
| 5 | 60% | 81% |
| 6 | 67% | 87% |
| 7 | 72% | 90% |
| 8 | 77% | 93% |
| 9 | 81% | 95% |
| 10 | 84% | 96% |



There are four things that can result in modifiers:

- Your gear
- The difficulty of your action
- Assistance from others
- Prayer and preparatory prayer (page 55)

### GEAR

Good gear can give you positive modifiers – usually between +1 and +3. Lists of weapons and other gear can be found in Chapter 6. Modifiers to Medicurgy from medical gear are listed on page 95.

### DIFFICULTY

The exact difficulty of your action is often not that important – only challenging actions should demand dice rolls in the first place, after all. But there may be situations when the GM wishes to emphasize that some circumstance or other either makes your action harder or easier to do. Use Table 3.4 for guidance.

In combat (Chapter 5), the rules often give you modifiers, for example, depending on the distance between your firing position and your target, or when you set up an ambush for your enemies. Some talents (Chapter 4) can also give you positive modifiers.

### HELP FROM OTHERS

Other PCs or NPCs with at least a level 1 in the skill you are about to test can help you succeed. They must state that they are helping you before you roll the dice. It must also fit with the story – the person assisting you must be where you are and have a reasonable chance of affecting your action. The GM has final say. For every person helping you, you get a +1 modifier. A maximum of three people can help with any one roll, which means that the highest modifier others can give you is +3.

**Combat:** Helping someone perform a slow action counts as a slow action for you as well. Helping someone with a normal or fast action counts as a normal action for you.

**Command:** The Command skill (page 63) can be used for more effective assistance. Instead of the automatic +1, a Commander provides a modifier equal to the number of sixes on her Command roll – given that you follow her order, that is. Commanding is always a normal action in combat.

**NPCs** can help each other just like PCs. Having NPCs act as groups rather than individuals is a good way to manage large groups of NPCs in combat (Chapter 5).

## SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS

You and the other PCs cannot help each other when you are acting simultaneously, that is when you are performing the same action at the same time – for example when you are trying to sneak past a guard (**INFILTRATION**), or when you walk into an ambush (**OBSERVATION**). Then you must all roll separately.

If the outcome of your roll is really good, some skills allow you to share your success with a friend, who in turn does not have to roll. You can help someone this way even if that person has already failed her roll.

## OPPOSED ROLLS

Sometimes, a six will not be enough to pass a skill test. In these cases, you also have to beat an enemy's roll. This is called an opposed roll. To win an opposed roll, you have to roll more sixes than your opponent. Each of your opponent's sixes cancels out one of yours. Only you (the attacker) can pray to the Icons on an opposed roll. Sometimes, you and your opponent will test different skills, sometimes the same. Opposed rolls are always used when you roll for **MANIPULATION** or **INFILTRATION**, and when someone uses these skills against you. The GM can also call for an opposed roll when he deems it appropriate, for example **FORCE** vs **FORCE** to resolve some armwrestling.

**Combat:** In combat (Chapter 5), an opposed roll only counts as an action for you (the attacker), not for your opponent (the defender).

# GENERAL SKILLS

The following section will describe the eight general skills that all PCs and NPCs can use. Each skill lists examples of what a failure, a limited success and a critical success could mean – but the exact details are up to the GM. The combat skills **MELEE COMBAT** and **RANGED COMBAT** are exceptions to this – the effects of your level of success when testing these are detailed in Chapter 5.

### ZERO DICE

**If your modifiers put you at zero dice or fewer, roll two dice – but to succeed, both have to show sixes. Hard, but not impossible!**

### TABLE 3.4 DIFFICULTY

| DIFFICULTY | MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| Child's Play | +3 |
| Effortless | +2 |
| Easy | +1 |
| Normal | 0 |
| Demanding | -1 |
| Hard | -2 |
| Insane | -3 |

***Example***

*A while later, Sabah is desperately trying to shake off a pursuing enemy, and attempts to climb over a wall. She must test* **DEXTERITY** *again, but the GM deems the climb Hard (-2). Sabah has* **AGILITY** *3 and* **DEXTERITY** *1, but gets only 2 dice.*

***Example***

*Sabah's friend, the prospector Wali, helps her over the wall. This gives Sabah 1 extra die to roll.*



## DEXTERITY (AGILITY)

When you jump, climb, sprint, or perform an action that demands speed or coordination, you test **DEXTERITY.**

**FAILURE**

You fall or stumble and fail to reach your goal. Depending on the circumstances, you run a high risk of taking damage. See page 97 in Chapter 5 for rules about damage resulting from falling.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**

You manage to pull off the maneuver, but just barely.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**

You succeed with flawless skill, and you achieve some unexpected, positive side effect, like helping a friend or creating an obstacle for an enemy. The GM decides the details.

## FORCE (STRENGTH)

When you must lift something heavy, carry a wounded comrade or force shut an airlock by hand in a spaceship under explosive decompression, you test **FORCE**. If you are trying to overpower another person, for example when arm wrestling, it is an opposed roll.

**FAILURE**

You give it your all, but you are not strong enough. Is there another way?

**LIMITED SUCCESS**

You beat the challenge, but just barely.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**

You beat the challenge, and receive some unexpected, positive side effect – for example wounding an enemy, helping a friend or finding a new way ahead.

## INFILTRATION (AGILITY)

Avoiding confrontation by sneaking around the enemy is often the wiser choice. Test **INFILTRATION** when you want to move unnoticed, perform a sneak attack, or set up an ambush (see Chapter 5). **INFILTRATION** tests are opposed rolls with your **INFILTRATION** score against the **OBSERVATION** score of your opponent.

**FAILURE**
The enemy spots you or hears you. The element of surprise is lost.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
You avoid detection, but are forced to take a detour to your destination. An enemy might also sense that something is up and start looking for you.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
Like a shadow in the night you approach your oblivious enemies. You get a +2 on a sneak attack if you perform it directly after the **INFILTRATION** test.

## MANIPULATE (EMPATHY)

Lies, persuasion, threats, charm or seduction – there are many ways to make someone see things your way. You must beat the opponent in an opposed **MANIPULATION** vs **MANIPULATION** roll (see above). Your Leverage (below) and your Reputation modify the roll.

**FAILURE**
Your opponent refuses to listen and won't accept your demands. She may even attack you if you provoke her.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
Your opponent must make a choice – either do as you want, or attack you physically right now (with **MELEE** or **RANGED COMBAT**). Even if she agrees, she can demand something of you in return – the GM decides what. You can either accept the deal or back off.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
Your opponent is so moved by the strength of your personality that she accepts your demands without asking for anything in return. If you want to, you can also inflict stress points (page 92) equal to the number of sixes you rolled.

### LEVERAGE

When testing **MANIPULATION**, you get a +1 for each of the following factors:

- You have more people on your side than your opponent does.
- What you are asking for doesn't really cost your opponent anything.
- Your opponent is injured.
- You have helped your opponent in the past.
- You present a strong case (GM's judgement).

You get a -1 for each of the following factors:

- Your opponent has more people on her side than you do.
- What you are asking for is expensive or risky for your opponent.
- Your opponent has nothing to gain from helping you.
- You and your opponent have trouble understanding each other.
- The distance between you and your opponent is Short or longer (page 84).

## MELEE COMBAT (STRENGTH)

The Third Horizon is a violent place. At times you will have no choice but to fight for your life. Test **MELEE COMBAT** when either attacking someone or defending yourself in close combat. Rules and details are found under **MELEE COMBAT** in Chapter 5.

**Weapons:** You can use weapons in close combat – anything from simple shivs and blunt instruments to advanced weapons like Dura knives and Mercurium swords. Weapons will give you a bonus and inflict more damage than an unarmed attack. Read more in Chapter 5.

## OBSERVATION (WITS)

An adventurer in the Third Horizon must always be vigilant, or she won't live long. You test **OBSERVATION** to spot someone sneaking up on you (opposed roll, see above). You can also test the skill when you spot someone or something at a distance if you wish to know more.

**FAILURE**
You can't make out what it is, or come to a faulty conclusion. The GM gives you false information.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
You can see what it is, but can't tell much detail. The GM gives you correct but brief information.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
You see in detail what it is, and also discover a weakness (if enemy/obstacle) or a new route ahead.

### REPUTATION

Your Reputation score and that of your opponent will affect your **MANIPULATION** roll. If yours is higher, you get a +1 for each step you outrank your opponent. If your score is lower, you instead get a -1 for each step of difference. Reputation will, however, only affect your roll in situations where your social standing in the Third Horizon is relevant. The GM has the final call on this.

### MANIPULATING GROUPS

**When you use MANIPULATION on a group of people, you normally engage with the group's leader or spokesperson. Remember that you get a -1 for being outnumbered by your opponent. If you reach an agreement with the leader, the group will usually accept this. If there is no clear leader, things will be harder – every one of your opponents will then act individually.**

### DON'T ROLL TO SPOT HIDDEN OBJECTS

**In Coriolis, you don't roll dice to find hidden objects, secret doors or clues. If you describe to the GM that you are searching in the correct spot, he should let you find it, if it can be found at all. Roll no dice.**

## RANGED COMBAT (AGILITY)

With a Vulcan pistol, an accelerator carbine or a common throwing knife, you can stop an enemy at a distance, keeping the bloodstains off your caftan. Test **RANGED COMBAT** when firing a ranged weapon at an enemy. Read more about ranged combat in Chapter 5. **RANGED COMBAT** is also tested when operating ship guns or launching torpedoes. Read more on this is in Chapter 7.

**Weapons:** Firearms counts as gear, giving you a bonus to your roll, just like weapons in close combat. The difference is that a firearm is a direct necessity to even use the skill. Many different firearms are described in Chapter 5.

## SURVIVAL (WITS)

Surviving in the harsh landscapes of the Third Horizon is not easy. The Horizon contains everything from steaming jungles and frozen tundras, to titanic mountains and bottomless oceans. **SURVIVAL** includes the knowledge about constructing shelters, finding food and water, and how to orientate oneself using only the stars in the sky, as well as how to construct simple traps, how to fish and how to hunt. Test **SURVIVAL** when you travel in uncharted terrain on a planet's surface.

**FAILURE**
You get lost, or are unable to find food or clean water.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
You find your way, find clean water, find food, or create a simple shelter for yourself.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
You find a shortcut to your destination, find clean water and food for yourself plus D6 others, or construct a sturdy shelter that can be used again later.



# ADVANCED SKILLS

This section describes the eight advanced skills that require specialist training to use. If your skill level in an advanced skill is zero, you don't get to test that skill – you automatically fail. Just like with the general skills above, each skill below lists examples of what failure, limited success and critical success could mean. The GM decides the details.

## COMMAND (EMPATHY)

You are the leader of a ship or maybe a troop of soldiers. In a crisis, you call the shots, but you know that you are never stronger than your unit. Your task is to make sure your comrades perform at their best. Unity is strength.

**COMMAND** uses different rules during space combat (Chapter 7), but can otherwise be used whenever you help others (page 58) – the positive modifier your help gives the other person is equal to the number of sixes on your **COMMAND** roll, as long as the other person follows your orders. **COMMAND** can also be used to help others recover Mind Points – read more in Chapter 5.

## CULTURE (EMPATHY)

You are a person of wisdom, with insight into a wide array of subjects. You have studied the diverse cultures and peoples of the Horizon, and know of their traditions, faiths and superstitions. You are also familiar with their home planets' beings and animals. Test **CULTURE** to see if you can recall something advanced, like the proper greetings among the Sogoi of Kua, the trade routes across the Salam plains on Algol, or if bokor can be driven off through prayer. If you have access to old books, databases or the Foundation's infologs, you get a positive modifier.

### FAILURE

You don't know, or you are mistaken. The GM gives you false information.

### LIMITED SUCCESS

Your knowledge is limited. The GM gives you correct but brief information.

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

You know the subject like the back of your hand, and come to think of something that gives you an extra bonus.

## DATA DJINN (WITS)

Terminals, sensors and advanced data systems are all part of everyday life in the Third Horizon. Most computers are voice operated, but interaction through touchpads, data stylus or via the user's cybernetics is not uncommon. Most people in the Horizon can use basic data systems, but advanced operations require a **DATA DJINN** test – for example entering protected systems, modifying or writing new programs, or counteracting spyware and attack memes. **DATA DJINN** is also used to operate ship sensors (more in Chapter 7).

### FAILURE

Something goes wrong, and the result is the opposite of what you had hoped.

### LIMITED SUCCESS

You reach your goal, but it takes longer than expected, and some sort of complication arises along the way.

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

You reach your goal, and achieve some unexpected bonus effect (up to the GM).

## MEDICURGY (WITS)

Having this skill means that you are trained in the healing arts, how to care for the ill and the wounded, and how to treat psychic maladies. Skillful medicurgs also perform cosmetic surgery and bionic sculpting. As a medicurg, you also know how to use special medical equipment like med labs, spider doctors and mobile trauma units.

The main use of **MEDICURGY** is stabilizing and treating wounded people – read more in Chapter 5. The skill can also be used to recover Mind Points and to make diagnoses, for example recognizing drug abuse or the effects of poison, and identifying injuries or psychic illnesses.

### FAILURE

You have no idea as to what is ailing the patient, or you make an incorrect diagnosis. The GM gives you partial or false information.



**LIMITED SUCCESS**
You have a good guess as to what the problem might be. The GM gives you correct but brief information.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
You make a correct diagnosis, and you remember something that gives you an extra bonus.

## MYSTIC POWERS (EMPATHY)

In the last few years, reports of mystics, people with special powers, have started to surface. The reaction didn't take long – among the religious cults, mystics have either been murdered or worshipped as heralds of the Icons, depending on the cult's beliefs. The Bulletin's newscasts on Coriolis have reported from council meetings on the highest political level debating the legitimacy of the mystical powers.

To acquire this skill when creating your PC, you must pick the sub-concept Mystic (page 35). You can, however, acquire this skill during play, regardless of concept – this means that dormant powers within you suddenly manifest themselves. Each mystic power counts as a separate talent (Chapter 4). When activating a power, test **MYSTIC POWERS**. Each activation gives the GM one Darkness Point.

**FAILURE**
The power misfires somehow – giving you false information or some other undesired effect. The GM decides the details.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
Through tremendous concentration and force of will, you activate the power.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
Mystical energies surge through your body, activating the power and triggering an unexpected but positive bonus effect. Details are up to the GM.

## PILOT (AGILITY)

You are one with your ship. You pilot hundreds of tons of metal through the Darkness, you pierce ice winds and mile-high sandstorms and make sure you all live to tell the tale. Roll for **PILOT** when you operate a vehicle – anything from hoverbikes and ground loaders to gravships and space vessels.

The rules for using **PILOT** in space combat can be found in Chapter 7. You will also test **PILOT** when you operate a normal vehicle and attempt a risky maneuver.

**FAILURE**
You fail. Depending on the circumstances, the outcome can be anything from embarrassing to fatal.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
You perform the maneuver with the smallest margin possible.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
You perform the maneuver flawlessly, and you achieve an unexpected, positive side effect, such as creating an obstacle for an enemy. The GM decides the details.

## SCIENCE (WITS)

You are an academic trained in the scientific tradition. You are well-read on everything from astrophysics and geochemistry to bionics and socio-arithmetics. Test **SCIENCE** to see if you can figure out something that requires advanced scientific knowledge, like how to calculate a portal jump or where to find xenon gas pockets on a frozen megaplanet. If you have access to relevant databases, you get a positive modifier.

**FAILURE**
You don't know, or are mistaken. The GM gives you false information.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
Your knowledge is limited. The GM gives you correct but brief information.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
You know the subject like the back of your hand, and come to think of something that gives you an extra bonus.

## TECHNOLOGY (WITS)

Others may view technical gadgets as almost magical, but you understand their inner workings. The skill is used when handling machines, mechanics, electronics and explosives. You can repair anything from a small gadget to a spaceship (Chapter 7). The skill is also used when blowing things up.

**FAILURE**
Something goes wrong, and the result is the opposite of what you wanted.

**LIMITED SUCCESS**
You reach your goal, but it takes longer than expected, and some sort of complication arises along the way.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS**
You reach your goal, as well as achieving some unexpected bonus effect.



**UNDERSTANDING ARTIFACTS**

**You can come across strange artifacts on your adventures in the Third Horizon. All artifacts have a knowledge requisite – certain skills or talents you must have to understand the artifact. You must pass a SCIENCE test to understand how to use the artifact (even if you understand what it is, your PC may not). Each PC can make one attempt. If you fail, you must gather more information – or wait for another PC or the GM to explain the object to you.**





# CHAPTER 4
# TALENTS

*Afrimede – a mere whisper of the name chills the blood of regents and rulers everywhere. Perhaps the most skilled hassassin of the Black Lotuses of Ahlam, she has elevated her craft to a form of art. There are no known pictures of her, and she is said to be a master of changing her appearance.*

**SECTS, CULTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES** – Kalil Dalma

As a group and a ship crew, you will work as a unit. But your PC is also unique, and has capabilities that no one else in the group has. In the game, these abilities are called talents.

**TALENTS CAN CHANGE** how you use your skills and how you recover from injury, or enable you to do things that are otherwise impossible.

## STARTING TALENTS

When creating your PC, you get three or four talents:

- A group talent, that you choose as a group depending on your group concept (page 16).
- A personal talent, that you choose for yourself depending on your character concept (page 22) .
- An Icon talent, connected to your personal Icon, determined randomly (page 25).
- If you play a humanite (page 22), you get a fourth, special humanite talent.

**Mystical powers** are a separate category of talents. In order to learn these, you must have a skill level of at least 1 in the skill **MYSTIC POWERS**.

**Cybernetics and bionics:** Cybernetic implants and bionic sculpts are talents that some concepts allow you to pick from the start. Such a talent must be chosen both as a talent and as a piece of gear.

## NEW TALENTS

You can acquire new talents during play through Experience Points (XP). When you have collected 5 XP, you can trade them in for a new talent. You can pick any talent, with the following exceptions:

- In order to gain new cybernetic or bionic implants, you need to spend both XP and birr. The birr cost is shown in the gear lists in Chapter 6.
- In order to gain a new group talent, everyone in the group must spend 5 XP. You can only choose among the talents associated with your group concept (page 19).
- You can never learn new Icon talents.

**Only once:** As a rule, you can only take each talent once, but there are exceptions to this. Remember to write down all your talents on your sheet.

**TABLE 4.1 GROUP TALENTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A Nose for Birr | Master Scouts | Survivors |
| Everything is for Sale | A Friend in Every Port | Truth Seekers |
| Quickest Route | Assassins' Guild | Last Laugh |
| Assault | Dancers of Ahlam | One Last Birr |
| Charge | Seasoned Travelers | Mercy of the Icons |

**TABLE 4.2 ICON TALENTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Lady of Tears' Talent | The Merchant's Talent | The Messenger's Talent |
| The Dancer's Talent | The Deckhand's Talent | The Judge's Talent |
| The Gambler's Talent | The Traveler's Talent | The Faceless One's Talent |

**TABLE 4.3 GENERAL TALENTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Blessing | Judge of Character | Soothing |
| Combat Veteran | Licensed | Sprinter |
| Defensive | Machinegunner | Talisman Maker |
| Executioner | Malicious | The Hassassin's Thrust |
| Exo Specialist | Nine Lives | Third Eye |
| Faction Standing | Point Blank | Tough |
| Field Medicurg | Rapid Reload | Wealthy Family |
| Gearhead | Rugged | Zero-G Training |
| Intimidating | Seductive | |

**TABLE 4.4 HUMANITE TALENTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pheromones | Resistant | Water Breathing |

**TABLE 4.5 CYBERNETIC IMPLANTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Accelerated Reflexes | Endo Skeleton | Targeting Scope |
| Active Sensors | Language Modulator | Voice Amplifier |
| Body Armor | Lie Detector | Water Breathing |
| Built-In Weapon | Passive Sensors | Weatherproof |
| Com Link | Servo Locks | |
| Cybernetic Muscles | Skin Electrodes | |

**TABLE 4.6 BIONIC SCULPTS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Beautiful | Morph | Regenerate |
| Built-In Weapon | Nimble | |
| Intelligent | Quick | |

**TABLE 4.7 MYSTICAL POWERS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Artificer | Mind Reader | Stop |
| Clairvoyant | Mind Walker | Telekinesis |
| Exorcist | Prediction | |
| Intuition | Premonition | |



# GROUP TALENTS

Your group gets to choose one talent connected to your group concept. All the PCs can use this talent. It can be used individually by every PC unless explicitly stated otherwise.

## FREE TRADERS

### ⚙ A NOSE FOR BIRR

When trading, you get a +2 to **MANIPULATION**. One use per session for the whole group (not once per PC).

### ⚙ EVERYTHING IS FOR SALE

You have a knack for finding the most corrupt public servants, toll officers or guards, and always get a +2 to **MANIPULATION** when you are bribing someone.

### ⚙ QUICKEST ROUTE

You find the quickest route. Travel takes half the amount of time (page 138), or one encounter along the way may be ignored. The GM gets 1 DP per use. One use per journey.

## MERCENARIES

### ⚙ ASSAULT

You get a +2 to **RANGED COMBAT**, but only when everyone in the group attacks the same target in the same turn.

### CHARGE
You get a +2 to **MELEE COMBAT**, but only when everyone in the group, in the same turn, also spends at least one fast action (1 AP) on movement. The bonus lasts one turn only.

### SITUATIONAL AWARENESS
You always know your surroundings, and get a +2 to **OBSERVATION** when testing it to discover an ambush.

## AGENTS

### A FRIEND IN EVERY PORT
You can find a useful contact in a new place. The contact can protect you, lend you gear, or vouch for you with the local rulers. The GM gets 1 DP per use. One use per session for the whole group (not once per PC).

### ASSASSIN'S GUILD
You can test **INFILTRATION** instead of **MELEE COMBAT** when you make a **MELEE COMBAT** attack against an enemy who isn't aware of you.

### DANCERS OF AHLAM
You can test **DEXTERITY** instead of **MANIPULATION** when trying to make a good impression.

## EXPLORERS

### SEASONED TRAVELERS
You can test **MANIPULATION** instead of **CULTURE** to understand a group's customs.

### SURVIVORS
You can get out of a dangerous situation somehow connected to nature, such as a brushfire or explosive decompression. The whole group escapes the danger. The GM gets 1 DP per use. One use per session for the whole group (not once per PC).

### TRUTH SEEKERS
You can find important information or get a clue from the GM without rolling dice. The information must be important enough to enable you to overcome a minor obstacle or a challenge in the scenario. The GM gets 1 DP per use. One use per session for the whole group (not once per PC).

## PILGRIMS

### LAST LAUGH
You can get yourselves out of a pinch using your knack for entertainment. The GM gets 1 DP per use. One use per session for the whole group (not once per PC).

### MERCY OF THE ICONS
When you are in a tight spot, the Icons will hear you. This means that you can cancel the effects of Darkness Points that have just been spent by the GM (Chapter 3). One use per session for the whole group (not once per PC).

### ONE LAST BIRR
You can make a living out of your craft or performances. Test **DEXTERITY** instead of **MANIPULATION** to find basic subsistence (food, drink, repairs – no new gear) when in a new place.

# ICON TALENTS

As your PC is born under the sign of one of the Icons, she is blessed by it. Icon talents are determined randomly when creating your PC and can never be learned during play. Icon talents can be used once per session, and each use gives the GM 1 DP.

### THE LADY OF TEAR'S TALENT
You can get back up after having been broken by damage or stress, and are immediately restored to 1 HP or MP (read more in Chapter 5). Alternatively, you can choose to ignore the effects of a critical injury when you suffer one.

### THE DANCER'S TALENT
You can evade an incoming attack, taking no damage. You can choose to activate the talent after a successful attack roll, but before you roll any cover or armor dice.

### THE GAMBLER'S TALENT
You are incredibly lucky and can choose an automatic critical success on a skill test of your choice. It counts as if you had rolled three sixes. If it is an advanced skill, you still need a level of at least 1 in that skill to activate the talent.

### THE MERCHANT'S TALENT
You can find a favorable loan enabling you to purchase an expensive object or a ship module. The loan must then be paid back within the agreed upon timeframe.

### THE DECKHAND'S TALENT
If your ship drops to zero Hull Points or Energy Points, you can restore D6 points of either kind instantly. This requires no action from you – it is the Icons intervening on your behalf.

### THE TRAVELER'S TALENT
You can ask the GM about a choice you have to make in the game. It has to be a choice with only two options. The GM must then answer truthfully which of the two is most beneficial to you, if that is at all possible to estimate.

### THE MESSENGER'S TALENT
You can make someone obey you, through careful words and actions, without having to test **MANIPULATION**. Can be used on both NPCs and PCs. Your wish must be reasonable, you cannot, for example, force an NPC to act completely against her own interests.

### THE JUDGE'S TALENT
You deal an automatic critical injury when your attack hits, regardless of whether the attack penetrated cover and armor. Any other effects from the attack are resolved as usual.

### THE FACELESS ONE'S TALENT
Fate is on your side, giving you the benefit of getting to change a single, concrete detail in a scene more to your favor. It must be something that has a cosmetic or indirectly helpful effect – you cannot make an enemy disappear, but you can decide that there is a knife within reach, or that a window has been left open. The GM has final say on what is possible to accomplish with the talent. Remember, you can only use the talent once per session.

# GENERAL TALENTS

Below are all the general talents. They can be learned during play at a cost of 5 XP each.

### BLESSING
Once per session, you can bless another PC, giving her a +3 to one action. The receiver of the blessing must be within Close range of you. In combat, imparting the blessing is a slow action. The GM gets 1 DP per use.

### COMBAT VETERAN
You can make your initiative roll (page 82) with two dice, and choose the best one. If you also have Accelerated Reflexes, you get to roll your initiative roll with three dice and choose the best one.

### DEFENSIVE
You are as nimble as a cat, and can easily evade close combat attacks. You get a +2 to **MELEE COMBAT** when defending (page 87).

### EXECUTIONER
You know where to strike to make the enemy fall and not get up again. Ever. When you inflict a critical injury, you can – if you want to – switch the dice in the D66 roll, turning the tens die into ones and vice versa. If your victim has the talent Nine Lives, the effects cancel each other out – roll normally for the critical injury.

### EXO SPECIALIST
You get a +2 to **DEXTERITY** or **FORCE** when handling an exo of some kind – from loaders to battle exos.

### FACTION STANDING
You belong to a faction or a gang and can use its reputation to get a +2 to **MANIPULATION** when trying to scare or threaten someone – given that the person you are threatening knows of the faction, and that the faction has some influence in the location where you are.

### FIELD MEDICURG
You know the delicate art of stopping a bleeding wound or treating grave injuries. You get a +2 to **MEDICURGY** when treating someone who is about to die from a critical injury. The talent has no effect on stress.

### GEARHEAD
You love tinkering with gear and equipment. With a successful **TECHNOLOGY** test, you can repair an item or jury-rig a one-use contraption for a specific task. The number of sixes on your roll determines the gear bonus of the item.

### INTIMIDATING
You can test **FORCE** instead of **MANIPULATION** when you are threatening someone. If you achieve a limited success, you don't have to accept your opponent's conditional demand – your opponent may then refuse the deal, but if she does, she must immediately attack you.

### JUDGE OF CHARACTER
You can tell if someone is lying or telling the truth without testing **MANIPULATION**. It takes about a minute and you can't tell any details, only whether the person is lying or not. Half-truths also read as lies. Each use gives the GM 1 DP.

### LICENSED
You have the proper licenses to buy restricted gear and weapons (Chapter 6). You can purchase the items if you can afford them, and if they are available at your location. Being licensed is not the same as being permitted to carry all kinds of weaponry in public, however. Local regulations can still stop you from carrying weapons you are allowed to own.

### MACHINEGUNNER
Firing full-auto is the only way to get the job done, in your opinion. Ignore the first 1 when rolling for automatic fire (page 89). Firing a weapon with the High Capacity feature, you get to ignore the first two 1s.

### MALICIOUS
When you successfully **MANIPULATE** someone and inflict at least 1 point of stress, she takes 1 additional point of stress.

### NINE LIVES
No matter how bad it looks, you always seem to come out of situations alive. When you suffer a critical injury, you get to switch the dice – turning the tens digit into the ones and vice versa (page 94). If your attacker has the talent Executioner, the effects neutralize each other – roll the critical injury normally.

### POINT BLANK
When you shoot someone and hit, you automatically add an extra six to your roll – but only if you attack from Close Range.

### RAPID RELOAD
You can reload a weapon as a fast action, rather than as a normal one (page 83).

### RUGGED
You are used to extreme weather and other natural hazards (cold, storms, strong gravity, fire, etc.). The talent counts as "armor" with an Armor Rating of 3 against natural damage.

### SEDUCTIVE
You have an eye for romance, and get a +2 to **MANIPULATION** in situations when you try to achieve something through seduction.

### SPRINTER
Your Movement Rate (page 84) is increased from 10 to 12 meters. You can learn this talent up to three times, for a maximum Movement Rate of 16 meters. This talent can be combined with the Quick talent, but not with Cybernetic Muscles.

### SOOTHING
You read others as if they were open books, and possess a natural quality that makes people open up to you. You get a +2 to **MEDICURGY** when treating someone who has been broken by stress (page 92).

### TALISMAN MAKER
You know how to create and bless talismans. The process takes D6 hours and requires a chapel or an altar. A talisman provides a +1 to one skill test, then the blessing wears off.

### THE HASSASSIN'S THRUST
You are a highly trained assassin. When you make a sneak attack (page 85) using a small weapon, you get +2 to **MELEE COMBAT**.



**THIRD EYE**
You have the ability to sense an ambush, and once per session you can avoid the effects of being surprised. The talent also gives you a constant +2 to **OBSERVATION** when trying to detect a sneak attack or an ambush.

**TOUGH**
You are used to taking a beating. You get 2 additional Hit Points.

**WEALTHY FAMILY**
You can use the rumors of your family's vast riches to give yourself a +2 to **MANIPULATION** in any situation where the GM deems it relevant. Whether the rumors are true or not doesn't matter. You can only choose this talent if you come from a Privileged background (page 21).

**ZERO-G TRAINING**
Your sense of balance is well adapted to an environment without gravity. You get a +2 to **DEXTERITY** when in zero-G.

# HUMANITE TALENTS

The three talents below are unique to humanites (page 22). They cannot be learned during play.

**PHEROMONES**
You have the ability to transmit and receive pheromones via enlarged dermal glands on your chest, neck or face. Your pheromones spread through air and will not work in a vacuum or affect people in exos. The pheromones make others obey you – you get a +2 to **MANIPULATION**. One use per session.

**RESISTANT**
Your body can endure extreme weather and other natural hazards. The talent counts as "armor" with an Armor Rating of 6 against natural damage. You can combine Resistant with Rugged, for a total Armor Rating of 9 against natural damage.

**WATER BREATHING**
You can breathe normally under water.

# CYBERNETIC IMPLANTS

Cybernetic implants will cost you both birr and XP. They also demand D6 days of healing after the procedure before they can be used.

### ACCELERATED REFLEXES

Your nerves are cybernetically modified with extra wiring and micro djinn, giving you superb body control. You get a +2 to **DEXTERITY** for acrobatic maneuvers, and you get to roll your initiative with two dice and pick the best one to determine your initiative score. If you also have the Combat Veteran talent, you get to roll your initiative roll with three dice and choose the best one.
**Cost:** 7,000 birr.

### ACTIVE SENSORS

Active sensors are implanted in your body. You can use them like the active mode on a personal sensor whenever you wish. Details for personal sensors are found in Chapter 6.
**Cost:** 3,000 birr.

### BODY ARMOR

You are cybernetically armored, giving you an extra Armor Rating of 3 (page 92). The implant's rating is added to any other armor you may wear as well. The implants give you a -1 to **DEXTERITY** for acrobatic maneuvers.
**Cost:** 6,000 birr.

### BUILT-IN WEAPON

You have a built-in weapon. The weapon is hard to detect and can only be discovered by someone actively searching for it. The weapon itself must be bought separately. To "draw" a built-in weapon is a free action.
**Cost:** 3,000 birr.

### COM LINK

You have a built-in communications device, similar to a personal communicator. The benefit of the link is that it is very hard to detect – you can verbalize your message in your mind, and the receiver is jacked directly into your auditory system.
**Cost:** 1,500 birr.

### CYBERNETIC MUSCLES

Muscles enhanced with ceramic fibers make you an extremely fast and strong runner. Your Movement Rate is increased by 4 meters per fast action (cannot be combined with Sprinter or Quick). The damage of your unarmed attacks is increased to 2.
**Cost:** 7,000 birr.

### ENDO SKELETON

An endo skeleton with powerful hydraulics and strong alloys supports your body, making you considerably stronger than others – you get a +2 to **FORCE** for heavy lifting. Your carrying capacity is doubled. You get 2 extra Hit Points.
**Cost:** 7,000 birr.

### LANGUAGE MODULATOR

Your larynx and vocal chords have been replaced with a sound modulator and an interpreter unit. You can automatically translate your speech to another language if you speak slowly. The modulator supports up to five different language packs. See Language Unit in Chapter 6.
**Cost:** 12,000 birr.

### LIE DETECTOR

You have a built-in lie detector. To use it on someone, you must touch the person, speak to her, and look her in the eyes. Test **MANIPULATION** with a +2 (not an opposed roll). If you pass, you can tell if the person is lying or not.
**Cost:** 4,000 birr.

### PASSIVE SENSORS

Passive sensors are implanted in your body. You can use them like the passive mode on a personal sensor whenever you wish. Details for personal sensors are found in Chapter 6.
**Cost:** 2,000 birr.

### SERVO LOCKS

The joints in your arms and shoulders have been replaced with lockable servo units, enabling you to carry extremely heavy objects for short distances, and grapple people in combat very effectively. You get a +2 to **MELEE COMBAT** when your

opponent tries to break free from your grappling hold, and a +2 to **FORCE** for heavy lifting.
**Cost:** 4,000 birr.

### SKIN ELECTRODES
Your palms are fitted with conductive surfaces capable of transmitting powerful electrical shocks. After a successful unarmed attack, you can choose to inflict 2 points of stress (page 92) instead of dealing damage. Each additional six rolled inflicts 1 extra point of stress.
**Cost:** 6,000 birr.

### TARGETING SCOPE
One of your eyes has been enhanced with a targeting scope. Makes it easier to hit with firearms (+1 to **RANGED COMBAT**) at Short range and above. Does not work for quick shots (page 88).
**Cost:** 20,000 birr.

### VOICE AMPLIFIER
A resonance chamber with built-in loudspeakers in your throat can amplify your voice. You get a +2 to **COMMAND** or **MANIPULATION** in situations where a loud voice is a benefit, for example when intimidating someone.
**Cost:** 2,000 birr.

### WATER BREATHING
Artificial gills allow you to extract oxygen from water. You can remain under water for as long as you like.
**Cost:** 5,000 birr.

### WEATHERPROOF
You are heavily modified to withstand all climates, recycle body fluids and conserve energy. The effect of this is that the time between each point of damage you suffer from thirst or hunger (page 98) is doubled – to 24 hours and 4 days, respectively.
**Cost:** 2,000 birr.

# BIONIC SCULPTS

Like cybernetics, bionic improvements of your body will cost you both 5 XP and birr. They also require D6 days of healing after the procedure, before they can be used.

### BEAUTIFUL
Your beauty is breathtaking. Whether by classical standards or tasteful originality, you turn heads wherever you go. Your biosculpted looks give you a +2 to **MANIPULATION** whenever they can affect the situation. People with the appropriate sexual orientation tend to fall in love with you. If you are in a place with different ideals of beauty, the GM may decide to ignore your modifier.
**Cost:** 25,000 birr.

### BUILT-IN WEAPON
You have a built-in weapon that counts as a primitive melee weapon (for example claws, a shorter blade or throwing knives). The weapon is very discreet and only a thorough medical check-up can discover it. “Drawing” a built-in weapon is a free action.
**Cost:** 40,000 birr.

### INTELLIGENT
Your brain’s bio code and cognitive pathways have been altered to make you cold and logical. You get a +1 to all **SCIENCE** and **TECHNOLOGY** tests, but a -2 to **MANIPULATION**.
**Cost:** 25,000 birr.

### MORPH
Your body is sculpted so that your entire physiognomy is changed – you could have anything from wings to extra limbs. This gives you obvious benefits, but could trigger fear and disgust among common people, or even hate among fanatics. Your Reputation is lowered by 2. See the boxed text on the opposite page for a list of known morphs.
**Cost:** between 30,000 and 60,000 birr.

### NIMBLE
Your bionically enhanced nerves give you amazing agility. You get a +2 to **DEXTERITY** for acrobatic feats and gymnastic maneuvers. The modifier also applies to dance and other physical activities.
**Cost:** 15,000 birr.

### QUICK

Your muscles are bionically altered for incredibly explosive speed, making you a fast runner. Your Movement Rate is increased by 4 meters (can be combined with Sprinter but not with Cybernetic Muscles). You can jump 5 meters horizontally from standing still, 15 meters with a running start (slow action), and 2 meters vertically.
**Cost:** 10,000 birr.

### REGENERATE

You heal fast, and recover remarkably quickly even from grave injuries. The time to heal a critical injury (page 94) is halved. You also get 2 extra Hit Points.
**Cost:** 15,000 birr.

# MYSTICAL POWERS

In order to learn a mystical power, you need at least skill level 1 in the skill **MYSTIC POWERS**. To activate a power, you must pass a MYSTIC POWERS test. In combat, this is normally a slow action. A failed roll means that the power does not activate properly – giving you incorrect information or resulting in some other undesired effect. The GM decides the details. Each use of a power gives the GM 1 DP.

### ARTIFICER

You can enter a trance to understand an artifact close to you, and to determine its origin and use.

### CLAIRVOYANT

You get visions of where an object or a person can be found. The GM decides what form the visions take, but as a rule of thumb, an object you once owned is easier to locate than an object only described to you.

### EXORCIST

You can enter a trance and exorcise an intruding spirit from someone.

### INTUITION

You get to ask the GM a simple yes/no question about anything

#### KNOWN MORPHS

**The Third Horizon is full of stories about monstrous morphed humans. In the mausoleum of din Hrama, the captain of the guards is said to have an extended torso and an extra set of arms. Some of the monks in the Temple of Anaspurna on Amedo supposedly have wings. The nomads in the Kuan Rimward Reach are often equipped with prehensile tails to assist movement in zero-G, or so rumor would have it.**

- **EXTRA PAIR OF ARMS:** You can perform an extra fast action per turn, as long as you can use the extra arms for that action.
- **EXTRA FINGERS:** You can use tools, make repairs, operate computers or do other tasks that require fine motor skills with extraordinary ease. You get a +1 in situations where fine motor skills are paramount, such as advanced **MEDICURGY**, repairing precision engineering with **TECHNOLOGY**, or reprogramming a computer using **DATA DJINN**. Unfortunately, your brittle and sensitive fingers give you a -2 to **FORCE**.
- **WINGS:** You can glide up to Long Range if you leap from at least 20 meters up. Test **DEXTERITY** to land without taking damage (failure means D6 points of damage). When on the ground, you suffer a -1 to **DEXTERITY**, due to the size of the wings.
- **PREHENSILE TAIL:** You get a +2 to **DEXTERITY** when climbing or moving around in low- or zero-G. The tail is easily hidden under a coat or a caftan.



### THE PROBLEM OF CLAIRVOYANCE

A PC with the Clairvoyant power can make a mess of the GM's plans. If the goal of the scenario is to find someone or to reveal the identity of a killer, the PC can just solve the puzzle right off the bat, using this talent. Not fun. The best way to handle this is to give the PC vague clues instead of hard facts - mystical powers are not an exact science. Try to give the PC a clue that feels valuable, but one that won't ruin the mystery.

in the game world. He must answer truthfully "yes", "no" or "maybe". The GM can answer "maybe" even if he knows the answer, if he thinks answering yes or no would upset the game too much. Please note that neither truths nor lies are universal – it depends on who is asking. Opinions, morals and worldviews can make something true to someone and false to someone else.

**MIND READER**
You can read someone else's thoughts for a minute or so. You can only read surface thoughts; you can't dig for any deeper memories. Your target must be within Close Range.

**MIND WALKER**
If you focus your thoughts on a person you have previously met, you can tap into that person's sensory input. You experience what that person sees, hears and feels in that exact moment, regardless of where in the Horizon she is. No thoughts or emotions are transmitted.

**PREDICTION**
If you conduct a séance, you can experience powerful visions of the future. You ask the GM questions about yourself or someone else taking part in the séance. The GM answers as best he can. The answers should be short, preferably mysterious and ambiguous. An answer could also take the form of an omen, a sign of fortune or tragedy waiting around the corner.

**PREMONITION**
In some mysterious way, you can sense impending danger. The GM will have you test MYSTIC POWERS – if you pass, you get a feeling of a looming threat, but no details about what it might be.

**STOP**
You can stop an NPC from performing an action she otherwise would have. It must be something subtle, that can be attributed to simple forgetfulness. Typical examples would be that the NPC lets the PCs pass a roadblock without checking their papers, or forgets her keys somewhere. The power cannot be used to stop an incoming attack.

**TELEKINESIS**
You can lift, move, turn or bend an object using sheer force of will. The item must be tiny – larger objects are beyond your control. No dice roll is needed, unless you want to use the object for something demanding like moving a key to a lock and then turning it. Then test any appropriate skill. The power cannot be used in combat.







# CHAPTER 5

# COMBAT

*Who the soldier was, we don't know. We know no name, no age, no gender. Still, the Unknown Legionnaire is perhaps the most famous soldier in the Horizon. Killed during the infamous Tahura offensive, the Unknown Legionnaire represents the ultimate sacrifice. A holy symbol to some, a representation of the madness of war to others.*

**WAR AND CONFLICT, CC12–56 – Ebrah**

The Third Horizon is a giant melting pot of different cultures and rivaling powers, all set on dominating the stars. Sometimes these conflicts lead to bloodshed. Sooner or later, someone will pull a gun on you – or you will pull yours first, seeing no other way out.

But remember, combat in Coriolis is dangerous and can get you killed. So, before resorting to violence, always ask yourself: is it worth it?

## TURNS AND INITIATIVE

Combat begins when you attack an enemy, or when an enemy attacks you. Begin by determining your initiative score. Roll for initiative before testing any skills.

### INITIATIVE SCORE

All participants in a fight, willing or unwilling, roll one die each. The result of each die is the initiative score for that person. Leave the dice showing your individual scores on the table during the fight. The GM rolls for NPCs. The scores of the combatants establish the turn order, where a higher score goes before a lower one. In case of a tie, let chance decide (roll another die, no modifiers). When all participants in the fights have acted, the turn is over and another begins. Initiative rolls are only made for the first turn of combat; you keep your original initiative roll for the whole fight, but it can be raised or lowered during the fight.

**Time:** One turn of combat in the game is approximately 10–20 seconds long.

**NPC groups:** For groups of NPCs sharing the same game stats, the GM can choose to make a single initiative roll for them all. They all act at the same point in the overall turn order, but the order in which the NPCs act at that point is up to the GM.

### RAISING YOUR INITIATIVE

You never reroll your initiative score during a fight, but you can raise your score in a number of ways.

- A surprise attack (below) gives you a +2 to your initiative score, but only in the first turn of the fight.
- The talent Combat Veteran (page 72) lets you make your initiative roll with two dice instead of one, and you choose the best result.
- You can use actions (below) to maneuver into a better position, raising your initiative score. Your new score takes effect in the following turn, and could change the turn order for the rest of the fight.
- Skill tests that you pass remarkably well can raise your initiative score.
- Weapons can give you an initiative bonus, but only a temporary one. To gain the bonus, you must attack with the weapon in question. If you apply a weapon's initiative bonus to your score in a turn, you are required to attack with that weapon in that turn – or perform no action at all.

### LOWERING YOUR INITIATIVE

When it's your turn to act in the turn order, you can – instead of taking any action – lower your initiative score to any number below your current score. This has the effect of allowing you to simply wait and see how things unfold. When your new score is up, you can choose if you wish to act or to keep waiting, lowering your score further. Your new score is then in effect for the rest of the fight; you cannot "return" to your original, higher initiative score.

Some bonus effects for successful attacks allow you to lower an enemy's initiative score.

## ACTIONS

When it's your turn to act, you can perform actions. There are four kinds of actions: slow, normal, fast, and free.

### ACTION POINTS

You get 3 Action Points (AP) to spend each turn.

A slow action will cost you all 3 AP, a normal action will cost 2 AP, a fast action will cost 1 AP, and free actions are just that: free, costing zero AP.

In a turn, you can perform three fast actions, one normal and one fast action, or one slow action. You can make any

number of free actions. Usually, you will perform all your actions together during your position in the turn order, but reactions are exceptions to this (see below). Your AP are refreshed at the beginning of every turn, before anyone acts.

### SLOW ACTIONS (3 AP)

- Firing an aimed shot
- Firing full auto
- Administering first aid
- Tinkering with a gadget
- Activating a mystical power

### NORMAL ACTIONS (2 AP)

- Attacking in close combat
- Firing a normal shot
- Reloading a weapon
- Ramming with a vehicle

### FAST ACTIONS (1 AP)

- Sprinting a short distance (typically ten meters)
- Taking cover
- Hitting the ground (makes you harder to hit, see page 88)
- Getting up off the ground
- Drawing a weapon
- Picking up an item
- Parrying in close combat
- Making an attack of opportunity in close combat
- Making a quick shot
- Going into overwatch
- Getting into a vehicle
- Starting a vehicle
- Driving a vehicle

### FREE ACTIONS (0 AP)

A free action is really no action at all. Most are passive dice rolls.

- Using your armor against an attack
- Defending in an opposed roll
- A quick shout to a comrade

### THE ICON CARD DECK

Instead of rolling dice, you can choose to draw Icon cards from the Icon Card Deck (sold separately) to determine the turn order. The "tens" number on the cards will determine your initiative scores. The "ones" number will break ties. Keep the cards in front of you to remember your scores.

***Example***

*Sabah attacks a Sogoi warrior deep in the jungles of Kua. She rolls an initiative score of 6, and then adds +1 (i.e. the initiative bonus of her Dura knife). Her total initiative score is 7, and she gets to act first in the turn. She must attack with the Dura knife this turn, because she claimed the initiative bonus from it.*

**TABLE 5.1 ACTION POINTS**

| ACTION | ACTION POINTS |
|---|---|
| Slow | 3 |
| Normal | 2 |
| Fast | 1 |
| Free | 0 |

### GROUP ROLLS FOR NPCS

Groups of NPCs working together can attack with only one dice roll, instead of each one making an individual attack. This works like Help From Others (page 58): each additional person, up to the maximum of three, means a +1 to the attack roll. This makes the GM's job a lot easier.

***Example***

*Sabah has been broken, and her friend Wali attempts to administer first aid using his M-Dose. He is not a very good medicurg (MEDICURGY 2), so he asks the help of Cillah (MEDICURGY 2). When Wali tests his MEDICURGY, he gets a +1 for Cillah's help, and a +1 for the M-Dose. The effort counts as slow actions for both Wali and Cillah.*

### BATTLE MAPS

**A battle map of a desert and a battle map of a bazaar are available as PDFs from the Modiphius website. Use these if you want to keep extra-detailed track of where all the combatants in a fight are positioned. Place tokens or miniatures representing each of the fighters on the white dots on the map. The white dots are two meters apart – that is, at Close Range from each other. Two people cannot occupy the same dot.**

#### REACTIONS

Generally, all your actions must be made at your initiative score's place in the turn order, but there are exceptions to this. These exceptions are called "reactions." There are three different reactions in the game:

- Defending in close combat
- Attacks of opportunity
- Overwatch fire

How these reactions work are described below under Close Combat and Ranged Combat, respectively.

In order to perform a reaction, you still need to spend AP. If you perform reactions before your turn in the turn order, you will have less AP to spend on your regular actions when it is your turn. Further, to perform reactions after your turn in the turn order, you need to have saved some AP while performing your regular actions, and so have some AP left over for this turn.

NPCs cannot perform reactions, unless the GM spends Darkness Points (page 56).

#### HELPING OTHERS

Helping someone perform a slow action counts as a slow action for you as well. Helping someone with a normal or fast action counts as a normal action for you.

## RANGE

In combat, the distance between you and your enemy is divided into four categories.

- **Close Range:** up to about 2 meters
- **Short Range:** up to about 20 meters
- **Long Range:** up to about 100 meters
- **Extreme Range:** up to about one kilometer

## MOVEMENT

Moving around in combat requires actions. One fast action lets you move a number of meters equal to your Movement Rate, which typically means ten meters. There are talents that increase your Movement Rate, and non-human creatures and vehicles can both have higher Movement Rates than a human PC. During combat, you will need to keep track of where the different combatants are positioned. You can keep this approximate, or you can use a battle map if you wish. The GM has the final say if there are any uncertainties.

**Terrain:** In difficult terrain like dense jungle, deep snow, or waist-high water, your Movement Rate is halved.

**Crawling:** If you crawl on the ground instead of running, your Movement Rate is halved.

**Sneaking:** Sneaking takes time; if you sneak, your Movement Rate is halved.

**Darkness:** If you are moving in complete darkness, you must move carefully, so your Movement Rate is halved.

## SNEAK ATTACKS AND AMBUSHES

The key to winning a fight is often to attack when the enemy least expects it. There are several ways to do this.

**Surprise:** If you attack in a way that the GM deems surprising to your enemy, you get a +2 to your initiative score. This can only occur in the first turn of the fight.

**Sneak attack:** Sneaking up on someone and attacking without them knowing is called a sneak attack. First, test **INFILTRATION**. Roll only once, regardless of how far you are sneaking. Your roll will be modified depending on how close you want to get to your target (see table 5.2). If you want to attack in close combat, you have to get within Close Range.

If you fail the test, you are spotted; now roll initiative scores as you would normally. If you pass the **INFILTRATION** test, you get a normal action "for free" before rolling initiative.

You cannot "trade" your bonus normal action for two fast actions. If several people wish to make a joint sneak attack, they must test **INFILTRATION** individually. If one or more of the rolls fail, all the attackers are discovered; now roll initiative scores normally.

**Ambush:** An ambush is a special kind of sneak attack. You lie in wait for an enemy and then attack when she passes you. All participants in the ambush must test **INFILTRATION** individually, as above, but each roll gets a +2 modifier because it is the target that is moving, not the attacker.

## MELEE COMBAT

When you are within Close Range of an enemy who is aware of your presence, you are engaged in close combat. It doesn't



**TABLE 5.2 SNEAK ATTACKS AND AMBUSHES**

| RANGE | MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| Close | -2 |
| Short | 0 |
| Long | +2 |
| Extreme | +4 |

matter if you haven't attacked each other yet; as soon as you are within Close Range, you are engaged in close combat.

When engaged in close combat, you can attack. This is typically a normal action, and you test the skill **MELEE COMBAT**. The enemy then chooses if she should take the blow or attempt to defend, which she can do if she has enough AP left. For NPCs to defend, the GM also needs to spend 1 DP (below).

**Standing up:** To attack someone in melee combat, you must be on your feet. If you are prone, you must first stand up (a fast action) before you can attack.

**Weapons** can give you extra dice to roll. The weapon's Gear Bonus tells you how many extra dice you get

### BONUS EFFECTS

When your **MELEE COMBAT** roll is successful, your attack hits and you inflict your weapon's Weapon Damage on your enemy (see below). For each additional six rolled beyond the first one, you can choose one of the following bonus effects:



- **Increase Damage:** You inflict 1 extra point of damage. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Critical Injury:** You inflict a critical injury on your enemy. This effect costs extra sixes (beyond the first one) equal to your weapon's Crit Rating. By adding even more sixes, you can increase the severity of the critical injury.
- **Strike Fear:** You strike fear into your enemy. She takes 1 point of stress (page 92). This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Raise Initiative:** You assume a better position for your next attack. Your initiative score is raised by 2, taking effect at the beginning of the next turn. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Disarm:** Your enemy drops her weapon, or some other hand-held item of your choosing. Picking something up again is a fast action.
- **Grapple:** You pin your enemy in a tight clinch. See Grappling, below.

### DEFENDING

Your enemy can attempt to defend against your attack, and you can of course do the same if you are attacked. You must state that you intend to defend before the enemy makes her attack roll.

Defending is a fast reaction (above). This means that you can defend even when it is not your turn in the turn order, so long as you have the AP required. Enemies can only defend if the GM also spends 1 DP.

When you defend, you test **MELEE COMBAT**. You and the enemy roll dice at the same time, and compare the results. For each six you, the defender, rolled, choose an effect below.

- **Decrease Damage:** You neutralize one of the enemy's sixes. If she is left at no sixes, the attack misses. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Counterattack:** You perform a counterattack, dealing Weapon Damage to the attacker. You cannot spend additional sixes to increase the damage of your counterattack. You can, however, spend extra sixes to inflict a critical injury, but the Crit rating of your weapon is considered 1 step higher than normal. You can spend further extra sixes to increase the severity of the critical injury.
- **Disarm:** You disarm your enemy, but only after her attack has been resolved normally.
- **Raise Initiative:** Your initiative score is raised by 2, taking effect this turn if you have not yet acted. Otherwise, the effect applies at the beginning of the next turn. This effect can be chosen multiple times, for additional effect.

Note that you can perform a counterattack instead of stopping your enemy's attack. The outcome could be that you both hit each other at the same time. Also note that each time you defend is considered as a fast reaction, costing you 1 AP. To be able to defend, you must have either not yet acted in the turn, or have AP saved up after performing your regular actions this turn. If you are attacked multiple times in the same turn, you will eventually not be able to defend.

**Weapons:** If your enemy attacks you with a weapon, and you yourself are unarmed, you get a -2 modifier to defending.

### QUICK MELEE ATTACK

You can perform a quick attack in melee combat. This is at the expense of accuracy; you get a -2 modifier to the attack roll, but the attack counts as a fast action (1 AP) instead of a normal one (2 AP). Quick melee attacks can only be performed with light weapons (or unarmed).

### ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY

If an enemy who is engaged in melee combat with you attempts to move away, you can, if you wish, make an attack of opportunity against her. This works like any other melee combat attack, but counts as fast (1 AP), and you get a +2 to your roll. Attacks of opportunity are reactions (see above).

**Movement:** You also get to make an attack of opportunity against an enemy who moves past you within Close Range. The enemy's movement must not start or end within Close Range of you – if she passes close enough during her movement, you get to strike.

### GRAPPLING

As a bonus effect to a successful **MELEE COMBAT** attack, you can choose to pin your opponent. To break free, your enemy must beat you in an opposed **MELEE COMBAT** roll. The opposed roll counts as a normal action for the person in the clinch, but as a free action for you. Until your enemy manages to break free, she can perform no other actions.

**Grapple Attack:** While you are grappling with a pinned opponent, grapple attacks are your only available actions. A grapple attack is like any other **MELEE COMBAT** attack (a normal action), but with the following exceptions:

***Example***

*Sabah attacks a Sogoi warrior with her Dura knife, and she rolls two sixes. She inflicts 2 points of damage on the Sogoi with the first six (2 is her Weapon Damage), and she spends her second six on pinning the now-bleeding warrior. The Sogoi attempts to break the clinch through an opposed* **MELEE COMBAT** *roll, but fails. In the following turn, Sabah makes a grapple attack, giving her a +2 modifier and a total of 8 dice to roll. She gets three sixes! The pinned Sogoi cannot defend. Sabah spends both her additional sixes on extra damage, and the Sogoi goes limp beneath her, broken after another 3 points of damage.*

**TABLE 5.3 RANGED ATTACKS**

| DISTANCE | MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| Close | -3/+3 |
| Short | 0 |
| Long | -1 |
| Extreme | -2 |
| Beyond Weapon Range | -3 |

- You cannot use weapons (you inflict your unarmed Weapon Damage, normally 1).
- You get a +2 modifier to the number of dice you roll for the grapple.
- Your enemy cannot not defend against the attack.

## RANGED COMBAT

When attacking an enemy from a distance, test the **RANGED COMBAT** skill. You will need some form of ranged weapon, be it just a rock. The tables in Chapter 6 list the maximum range of different weapons – i.e. how far away your target can be for your weapon to still be used effectively. You can fire your weapon at targets at up to one range step beyond the weapon's maximum range, but you will suffer a -3 modifier.

**Cover:** You cannot defend against ranged attacks. Instead, a smart move is to find cover (page 93) when the bullets start flying.

### TARGET SIZE

If your target is prone or small, you suffer a -1 modifier to the shot. Tiny targets can give even bigger penalties. A large target, such as a vehicle, instead gives you a +1. Huge targets can give you +2 or more – this is up to the GM.

### RANGE MODIFIERS

The distance to your target will also affect your hit chance.

- When your target is at **Long Range** from you, you get a -1.
- At **Extreme Range**, you get a -2.
- Within **Close Range**, you either get a -3 if you are engaged in close combat with the target (the scuffle makes aiming very difficult), or a +3 if the target is immobile or unaware of you.

### AIMED SHOT

If you take your time to aim carefully before squeezing the trigger, you get a +2 to your attack roll. This makes your attack a slow action (costing 3 AP) instead of a normal action (2 AP). You cannot make an aimed shot against an enemy with whom you are engaged in close combat – there is simply no time to aim.

### QUICK SHOT

If there is no time for aiming, you can just shoot from the hip. You get a -2 to your attack roll, but the attack is a fast action (1 AP) instead of a normal action (2 AP). There are two special rules that apply to quick shots.

- You can only fire a quick shot attack against enemies at Close Range or Short Range.
- If you make three quick shots in the same turn, your clip is empty or your cell depleted. You must reload your weapon.

### RELOADING

Most firearms have large enough magazines for you not to need to worry about counting shots during a fight – just reload when the fight is over. There are a few exceptions.

- Some primitive firearms like long rifles, bows, and rocket launchers (see the weapon lists in Chapter 6) require reloading after every shot.
- If you make three quick shots in the same turn, your clip is empty or your cell depleted (this does not apply for mounted weapons).
- When you shoot full auto fire (see below), you run a great risk of emptying your clip.

Reloading in combat is a normal action (unless you have the Rapid Reload talent).

### BONUS EFFECTS

When your **RANGED COMBAT** roll is successful, your attack hits and you inflict your weapon's Weapon Damage on your enemy. For each additional six after the first one, choose one of the bonus effects below.

- **Increase Damage:** You inflict 1 extra point of damage. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Critical Injury:** You inflict a critical injury on your enemy. This effect costs extra sixes (beyond the first one) equal to your weapon's Crit Rating. By adding even more sixes, you can increase the severity of the critical injury.
- **Suppressive Fire:** You force your enemy to keep her head down. She suffers 1 point of stress (page 92). If you are shooting full auto fire, she takes 1 additional point of stress. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Raise Initiative:** You assume a better position for your next attack. Your initiative score is raised by 2, taking effect at the beginning of the next turn. This effect can be chosen multiple times.
- **Disarm:** Your enemy drops her weapon, or some other hand-held item of your choosing. Picking something up again is a fast action.

### AUTOMATIC FIRE

Some firearms are capable of unleashing deadly bursts of fully automatic fire (see the weapon lists in Chapter 6). Full auto



***Example***

*In the Kuan Conglomerate, Sabah is suddenly attacked by a group of mercenaries firing at her from a rooftop. She returns fire with her Vulcan carbine and rolls 7 dice (3 for Agility, 3 for* RANGED COMBAT*, and 1 for the Gear Bonus of the weapon). She rolls two sixes, inflicting her weapon's Weapon Damage (3) on one of the mercenaries. She uses her second six to disarm the mercenary, whose rifle drops to the street below.*

***Example***

*Sabah is taking cover behind a wall when suddenly the mercenaries' firing stops. War-crying, four of them come running towards Sabah's hiding place, giving her no choice but to fire a deadly burst of full auto fire against them. She rolls 6 dice (3 for Agility, 3 for* RANGED COMBAT*, 1 for the weapon's Gear Bonus, 1 for the support of leaning against the wall, and then -2 dice for firing full auto). She is out of luck – no sixes! She sends a quick prayer to the Icons, giving the GM a Darkness Point, and rerolls. Two sixes! She uses the two sixes to hit two of her enemies, and then starts rolling extra full auto dice. On the first one, she rolls a 4 – no hit, but she gets to keep on firing because it wasn't a 1. Next die shows another 4, but she keeps going. Third die shows a 6, which she uses to score a hit on a third mercenary. The fourth die shows a 1 – her clip is empty and she must reload. Three of the mercenaries were hit by Sabah's burst, each taking Weapon Damage. Time to see if their armor holds!*

fire differs from regular ranged attacks in the following ways:

- Your attack counts as slow (3 AP).
- Your target must be within Long Range or less.
- You get a -2 modifier to your attack roll.
- Regardless of whether your initial roll is successful or not, you can choose to keep rolling dice, one at a time. These extra dice are added to your first roll. However, as soon as you roll a 1, your clip is empty and you must reload (see above).

**Mounted Weapons:** Many large mounted weapons have magazines so big that they don't need to be reloaded in combat. Full auto fire with these weapons works the same as with other weapons, but a result of 1 on the extra automatic fire dice instead means that the shooter loses control over the weapon and must stop firing. No reloading is necessary.

**Multiple Targets:** When you fire full auto, you can choose to distribute your dice – those in your original roll and/or the extra full auto dice – against new targets. You can do this after rolling. The first six you roll for a new target means that you inflict Weapon Damage on it. Additional sixes against the new target mean bonus effects as usual. Every new target you direct your fire against must be within Close Range of the previous target. You can fire at any number of targets, until the burst is cut off by you rolling a 1.

### ⚙ OVERWATCH FIRE

As a fast action (1 AP), you can assume an overwatch position, aiming in a specified direction. Your aim covers a 90-degree fire arc with your line of sight in the middle. You cannot assume an overwatch position when engaged in melee combat.

**Effect:** Overwatch means that you are ready to fire your weapon in the direction of your aim any time during the coming turn (i.e. from now until your initiative score comes round again in the next turn). During this time, you can fire a normal shot (costing 2 AP) whenever you want to, before any other actions are performed – even after they have been declared.

For example, if an enemy within your fire arc wants to shoot at you, you can shoot him first. Your enemy cannot change her declared action after your overwatch attack. If you and an enemy both are in overwatch position and are in each other's fire arc, an opposed RANGED COMBAT roll (a free action for both of you) decides who goes first.



**Broken Overwatch:** As soon as you perform any action other than shooting at a target in your fire arc, your concentration breaks and your overwatch position is gone. This also immediately happens if:

- You become engaged in close combat.
- You take damage.

## WEAPONS

Weapons make you more effective in close combat, and they are a direct necessity for ranged combat. Chapter 6 lists and describes common weapons in the Third Horizon.

**Bonus** tells you what Gear Bonus modifier you get to your attack roll (i.e. to the number of dice you can roll for your attack). It can be positive or negative.

**Initiative** on a weapon modifies your initiative score – on the condition that you attack with the weapon in the turn. If you apply the weapon's initiative modifier to your initiative score, you must make an attack with the weapon during the turn. Other actions that somehow include the weapon in question don't count: to get the weapon's initiative modifier, you must attack with the weapon, or you lose all AP for the turn.

**Weapon Damage** determines how many points of damage are inflicted on your enemy if your attack hits. Extra sixes on your attack roll can inflict more damage.

**Crit** tells you how many extra sixes beyond the first one you need on your roll to inflict a critical injury on your opponent.

**Range** is the maximum range within which the weapon can be used effectively.

**Light Weapons** require only half a row in the gear list on your character sheet.

**Heavy Weapons** require two rows in your gear list.

**Automatic Weapons** can fire in fully automatic mode.

**Special** means special features and modifications, which are found on some weapons.

## STRESS

You start the game with a pool of Mind Points (MP) equal to your Wits plus your Empathy. When you are attacked in combat or when someone tries to use **MANIPULATION** on you, you might suffer stress (which lowers your number of MP) from the mental strain. Contact with the Dark between the Stars can also have this effect.

### BREAKDOWN

If something puts you at zero Mind Points, you suffer a breakdown, collapsing from fear or anxiety. You can follow simple commands but not take any action that requires dice rolls. After D6 hours, you regain some control of yourself and 1 MP is restored; after that, you can begin to recover the rest of your MP normally.

**Skills:** You can use either **COMMAND** or **MEDICURGY** to treat someone who has suffered a breakdown. If your roll is successful, the person you are calming down regains MP equal to the number of sixes on your roll. Each attempt is a slow action, and each person can try only once.

### RECOVERY

You automatically recover 1 MP per hour when resting. If you have suffered a breakdown, however (zero MP), you run a risk of permanent trauma. Roll one die. If the result is a one, your maximum total of Mind Points is permanently reduced by one. If you drop permanently to a zero MP total, you become a raving lunatic – time to create a new PC.

## DAMAGE

You run the risk of being injured in combat. Everything from exhaustion to bleeding cuts and broken bones is summarized as damage. How much damage you can take is determined by your number of Hit Points (HP).

**Starting Hit Points:** You start the game with a number of HP equal to your Strength plus your Agility scores. Talents can modify your HP total.

### ARMOR

To protect yourself from harm, you can wear armor (see Chapter 6). The effectiveness of a piece of armor is described by its Armor Rating. You can only wear one suit of armor

at a time. When you take damage from an attack, roll a number of dice equal to your Armor Rating. Each six you roll lowers the damage by 1. The armor roll is a free action. If the damage from the attack is reduced to 0, you escape any critical injuries as well.

### COVER

In a firefight, taking cover behind something could save your life. Choose something sturdy, like a metal doorframe or a brick wall. Taking cover is a fast action, separate from any movement required to reach the cover itself. Covers also have Armor Ratings and work just like armor (above), but they only work against ranged attacks. Cover and armor can be combined. Simply add the dice together.

**Fire Support:** If you are behind cover, you can also lean on it when shooting. This gives a +1 modifier, but not on quick shots.

**Being Prone:** If you are prone, enemies firing at you suffer a -1 modifier. This can be combined with the effect of cover (above). Also, you can claim the +1 fire support bonus when prone, even if you have no cover.

### BROKEN

If you drop to zero Hit Points, you are "broken" – unconscious or paralyzed with pain, and in no condition to keep fighting. You cannot perform any actions and may not test any skills. All you can do is writhe in pain and cry for help. Further normal attacks that would put you below zero HP have no effect, but you can still suffer additional critical injuries.

### GETTING BACK UP

Being broken is not fatal; only critical injuries can actually kill you. There are two ways to get back up after being broken.

**First Aid:** Someone can help you back onto your feet by administering first aid to you. This is a slow action demanding a **MEDICURGY** test of the helping player. The medical equipment at hand determines what modifiers apply to the dice the player rolls (see below). Without any medical equipment, the test cannot be attempted at all – you need to at least improvise something. If the roll is successful (i.e. if the player rolls at least one six), you get back up immediately, regaining HP equal to the number of sixes on the **MEDICURGY** roll.

#### TRACK YOUR DAMAGE

**When your PC takes damage, tick the corresponding number of boxes next to the Hit Points section on the character sheet.**

***Example***

*A mercenary is firing a Vulcan carbine (Weapon Damage 3) at Sabah. The mercenary rolls three sixes and uses them all in order to maximize damage. Luckily, Sabah is wearing an armored suit (Armor Rating 3). She rolls 3 dice and gets two sixes, canceling 2 points of damage from the attack.*

**TABLE 5.4 COMMON COVERS**

| COVER | ARMOR RATING |
|---|---|
| Divan | 2 |
| Table | 3 |
| Door | 4 |
| Inner wall | 5 |
| Outer wall | 6 |
| Brick wall | 7 |
| Foxhole | 8 |

***Example***

*Sabah is sneaking through a corridor on a spaceship when a corsair suddenly fires at her. The first shot misses, and Sabah takes cover around a corner in the corridor (fast action) to return fire. In the next turn, the corsair shoots again, hitting Sabah with two sixes. Given Sabah is in cover behind the corner (an inner wall) she gets to roll 8 dice when testing her armor (5 for the inner wall and 3 for her armored suit).*



Administering first aid to someone who isn't broken has no effect – no HP are restored.

**Pushing on:** When you have been broken and no one is around to treat you, you automatically recover 1 HP after D6 hours, and can then get back up on your own.

#### ⚙ RECOVERY

When you are no longer broken, you recover 1 HP per hour until you are fully healed. Critical injuries can still affect you after all your HP are restored, however.

## CRITICAL INJURIES

Normal damage can be fatigue, bruises or smaller cuts – painful, to be sure, but easily overcome. Critical injuries represent a much more dangerous form of injury – these can maim or kill you.

When attacking an enemy, in melee combat or from afar, you can spend any extra sixes you rolled beyond the first one to inflict critical injuries. How many sixes you need (beyond the first one) depends on the weapon you are using. You must spend sixes equal to your weapon's Crit value.

When you inflict a critical injury on an enemy, roll D66 on Table 5.6 to see which critical injury you inflict. Note that a critical injury won't necessarily cause someone to be broken.

#### ⚙ SEVERITY

If you have even more sixes to spend than those which you need to score a critical injury, you can use them to increase the severity of the injury. For every extra six spent to increase the severity of the critical injury, you get to reroll the D66 crit roll once. You need to determine how many sixes you want to spend on this before you start rerolling. You are allowed to go back to an earlier result if you reroll.

#### ⚙ EFFECTS OF CRITICAL INJURIES

Most critical injuries have two effects – one immediate (such as making you fall over or being stunned), and one long term (usually giving you negative modifiers to one or more skills).

**Stunned:** The effect "stunned for one turn" means that you lose all your remaining AP in the current turn (if you have any left), or in the next turn (if you have none left this turn).

**TABLE 5.5 MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

**There are many kinds of medical equipment in the Third Horizon. More details can be found in Chapter 6. The skill bonuses below are not cumulative.**

| EQUIPMENT | BONUS | COMMENT |
|---|---|---|
| Improvised | -1 | No effect on critical injuries or radiation |
| Doctor's Bag | 0 | No effect on radiation |
| M-Dose | +1 | |
| Ballistic M-Injector | +1 | Requires a Vulcan firearm, Short Range |
| Medkit | +2 | |
| Med Lab | +3 | Ship module |
| T-Dose | +2 | |
| Traumakit | +3 | |
| Trauma Lab | +4/+5* | Ship module |
| C-Dose | +1 | |
| P-Dose | +2/+3* | Automatically restores 2 HP with successful MEDICURGY |
| Spider Doctor | - | Has Wits 5, MEDICURGY 3, see page 113 |
| Healing Scarab | - | Automatically restores 2 HP |

*When treating a critical injury

**Modifier to Skill:** The listed modifier is in effect until the critical injury is completely healed (see below).

### DEATH

If you suffer a critical injury described as fatal in Table 5.6, someone must give you first aid or you will die when the listed time runs out. First aid is a slow action and requires a successful MEDICURGY test, modified by the available medical equipment (Table 5.5).

Note that some critical injuries are so severe that a negative modifier is applied to the MEDICURGY test. As long as you are not broken (above), you can try to give yourself first aid, but you get a -2 modifier to the roll. Each person who attempts to treat you can try only once – to get a second chance, better medical equipment is needed.

**Broken:** If you are both broken and have sustained a fatal critical injury, two separate MEDICURGY rolls are needed: one to get you back on your feet, and another one to save your life. You can make these two rolls in whichever order you prefer.

**Instant kill:** There are two critical injuries in the table – numbers 65 and 66 – that simply kill you outright. If you roll one of these two, the Lady of Tears has come to claim you. Time to make a new PC!

### HEALING

Each critical injury below lists its healing time in days (usually rolled with a number of D6). If someone gives you medical treatment during your recovery time, that person tests MEDICURGY, modified by the available medical equipment (see above). If the roll is successful (i.e. if the roll includes at least one six), the remaining recovery time is reduced by half. Earlier MEDICURGY rolls to stabilize a fatal injury or to bring you back on your feet from having been broken don't count – a new roll is required to shorten the recovery time.

## ATYPICAL DAMAGE

There are many ways to get hurt in the Third Horizon. Some examples of "atypical damage" are described below. As a rule, atypical damage is determined through a dice roll where each six means you take 1 point of damage.

TABLE 5.6 CRITICAL INJURIES

| D66 | INJURY | FATAL | TIME LIMIT | EFFECT | HEAL TIME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Wind Knocked Out | No | - | Stunned for one turn. | - |
| 12 | Disorientated | No | - | Stunned for one turn. | - |
| 13 | Sprained Wrist | No | - | Drops held item, then -1 to RANGED COMBAT and MELEE COMBAT. | D6 |
| 14 | Sprained Ankle | No | - | Falls down, then -1 to DEXTERITY and INFILTRATION. | D6 |
| 15 | Concussion | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -1 to all advanced skills. | D6 |
| 16 | Bruised Lower Leg | No | - | Falls down, then -1 to DEXTERITY and INFILTRATION. | 2D6 |
| 21 | Broken Nose | NO | - | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to MANIPULATION. | D6 |
| 22 | Broken Fingers | No | - | Drops held item, then -2 to RANGED COMBAT and MELEE COMBAT. | 2D6 |
| 23 | Broken Toes | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to DEXTERITY and INFILTRATION. | 2D6 |
| 24 | Teeth Knocked Out | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to MANIPULATION. | 2D6 |
| 25 | Groin Hit | No | - | Stunned for two turns, then 1 point of damage per FORCE, DEXTERITY, and MELEE COMBAT test. | 2D6 |
| 26 | Dislocated Shoulder | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -3 to FORCE and MELEE COMBAT. | D6 |
| 31 | Broken Ribs | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to DEXTERITY and MELEE COMBAT. | 2D6 |
| 32 | Broken Arm | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -3 to RANGED COMBAT and MELEE COMBAT. | 3D6 |
| 33 | Broken Leg | No | - | Falls down, then Movement Rate halved, and -2 to DEXTERITY and INFILTRATION. | 3D6 |
| 34 | Shredded Ear | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to OBSERVATION. Permanent ugly scar. | 3D6 |
| 35 | Gouged Eye | No | - | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to RANGED COMBAT and OBSERVATION. | 3D6 |
| 36 | Punctured Lung | Yes | D6 days | Stunned for one turn, then -3 to DEXTERITY. | 2D6 |
| 41 | Lacerated Kidney | Yes | D6 days | Stunned for two turns, then 1 point of damage per FORCE, DEXTERITY, or MELEE COMBAT test. | 3D6 |
| 42 | Crushed Foot | Yes | D6 days | Falls over, then Movement Rate halved, and -3 to DEXTERITY and INFILTRATION. | 4D6 |
| 43 | Crushed Elbow | Yes | D6 days | Stunned for one turn, then -2 to FORCE and MELEE COMBAT. No use of two-handed weapons. | 4D6 |
| 44 | Crushed Knee | Yes | D6 hours | Stunned for one turn, falls over, then Movement Rate halved, and -3 to DEXTERITY and INFILTRATION. | 4D6 |
| 45 | Crushed Face | Yes | D6 hours | Unconscious D6 hours, then -2 to MANIPULATION. | 4D6 |
| 46 | Pierced Intestines | Yes | D6 hours | Stunned for one turn, then 1 point of damage per hour until first aid is administered. | 2D6 |
| 51 | Broken Spine | Yes | D6 hours | Unconscious D6 hours, then paralyzed from the waist down. Unless medical aid is given during the healing time, the paralysis becomes permanent. | 4D6 |
| 52 | Broken Neck | Yes | D6 hours | Unconscious D6 hours, then paralyzed from the neck down. Unless medical aid is given during the healing time, the paralysis becomes permanent. | 4D6 |

TABLE 5.6 CRITICAL INJURIES

| D66 | INJURY | FATAL | TIME LIMIT | EFFECT | HEAL TIME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 53 | Bleeding Gut | Yes | D6 minutes | 1 point of damage per turn until first aid is given. | D6 |
| 54 | Internal Bleeding | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then 1 point of damage per FORCE, DEXTERITY, or MELEE COMBAT test. | 2D6 |
| 55 | Severed Artery (Arm) | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then -1 to DEXTERITY. | D6 |
| 56 | Severed Artery (Leg) | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then -2 to DEXTERITY. | D6 |
| 61 | Destroyed Arm | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then -2 to DEXTERITY. The arm is permanently lost. No use of two-handed weapons. | 3D6 |
| 62 | Destroyed Leg | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then -2 to DEXTERITY. The leg is permanently lost. Movement Rate is halved. | 3D6 |
| 63 | Severed Jugular | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then -1 to DEXTERITY. | D6 |
| 64 | Severed Aorta | Yes, -1 | D6 minutes | Unconscious D6 hours, then -2 to DEXTERITY. | 2D6 |
| 65 | Pierced Heart | Yes | - | Your heart beats one final time. Create a new PC. | - |
| 66 | Crushed Skull | Yes | - | You are instantly killed. Your adventure ends here. Create a new PC. | - |
| - | Atypical Damage | Yes | Varies | Unconscious until death, or until first aid is given. | - |

**Atypical Weapon Damage:** Atypical damage usually has a Weapon Damage of 1 – the first rolled six causes 1 point of damage – but in some cases the Weapon Damage can be 2 or more.

**Critical injuries:** Atypical damage can result in critical injuries as well, but only if the attack leaves you broken. If you drop to zero HP and there are extra sixes left unused, check the Crit Rating of the atypical damage in question (below). If enough sixes are left, you suffer a critical injury. A critical injury from atypical damage is usually not rolled on Table 5.6; instead, atypical damage has a special critical injury at the bottom of the table. The time limit until death varies, depending on the type of damage.

### FALLING

A fall of three meters or more ending on a hard surface prompts an atypical damage attack roll. The GM rolls dice equal to the number of meters fallen -2. Armor may be tested. The Crit Rating of falling is 3. Roll critical injuries normally.

### DROWNING

Swimming on the surface works just like movement on land, but your Movement Rate is halved. If, however, you are underwater (by choice or not), you are "attacked" once every turn. The GM rolls the attack at your turn in the turn order, and before you get to act. He rolls a number of dice equal to double the number of turns you have been under water: two dice for the first turn, four dice for the second turn, and so on. As soon as you come up for air, the attacks stop. Armor has no effect. You will continue being attacked even after having been broken, which sooner or later will result in a critical injury. The Crit Rating of drowning is 2, and the time limit to death is D6 minutes.

### FIRE

If you are in, or within Close Range of, a large fire, you will suffer attack rolls once every turn. The GM rolls the attack at your turn in the turn order, and before you get to act. The size of the fire determines the number of dice on the roll, and that is up to the GM to decide. The number of dice

is then increased by one per turn. As soon as you suffer 1 or more points of damage from the fire, your clothes catch fire, and you will continue to suffer the attack rolls even if you get out of the fire itself. Putting out burning clothes demands a successful **DEXTERITY** test (you or someone else within Close Range of you may attempt the roll). Armor may be tested. You will continue being attacked by fire rolls even after having been broken, which sooner or later will result in a critical injury. The Crit Rating of fire is 1, and the time limit to death is D6 turns.

### EXPLOSIONS

The strength of an explosion is measured in its Blast Power. When an explosive detonates, the GM rolls an attack with a number of dice equal to the Blast Power once for each person within Close Range of the explosion. Armor may be tested. The Crit Rating of normal explosions is 2 (but see Shrapnel, below). Critical injuries caused by explosions are rolled on Table 5.6, like regular critical injuries.

**Blast Radius:** Powerful explosives, with a Blast Power of 7 or higher, may wound people beyond Close Range of the explosion. Within Short Range, the Blast Power is lowered by 6. If a lot of victims are within Short Range of the explosion, the GM could make one attack roll against them all, for simplification.

**Shrapnel:** The Crit Rating of normal explosions is 2, but bombs containing shrapnel such as nails or ball bearings, as well as some forms of grenades, are more lethal. Explosives that spread shrapnel damage have a Weapon Damage of 2 and a Crit Rating of 1.

### HUNGER AND THIRST

Coriolis is not mainly a game about survival, but you could well end up in situations where you don't have enough food or water. The GM decides when this is the case.

**Thirst:** If you lack sufficient water, you become dehydrated. You automatically suffer 1 point of damage per 12 hours (no attack roll is made). When dehydrated, you cannot heal any damage or critical injury. If you become broken from thirst, you immediately suffer a critical injury. The time limit to death is D6 days.

#### BROKEN NPCS

**NPCs can get broken, just like PCs. An NPC can give first aid to a PC, and vice versa. When NPCs are treating each other, no dice roll is necessary; the GM can decide the outcome.**

***Example***

*Sabah has suffered the critical injury "Punctured lung" and has been brought back to the group's medlab onboard their ship. The medicurg Vasil (Wits 4,* **MEDICURGY** *2) first manages to stabilize her wounds. Then he rolls again to shorten Sabah's healing time. He gets a +3 modifier for the medlab, rolls his nine dice, and succeeds. The recovery time for the punctured lung, 2D6 days, is halved.*

**Hunger:** If you lack sufficient food, you will starve. You automatically suffer 1 point of damage every 48 hours. In all other regards, see Thirst, above.

### COLD

If you are in a cold environment without the necessary gear to stay warm (the GM decides), you suffer attack rolls with six dice – the frequency of those rolls is up to the GM. Around zero degrees Celsius, a roll per day should be enough, but on a blistering ice planet, you may have to roll once per hour. The Crit Rating of cold is 1, and the time limit to death is D6 hours.

### VACUUM

The Dark between the Stars is a cold and unforgiving place. Without the protection of an exo shell or the hull of a ship, you won't last long in the black void. If your ship suffers explosive decompression or if you are thrown out of an air-lock, your life is in extreme danger. The absence of pressure creates gas bubbles in your blood, causing your whole body to swell up. This results in crippling pain, all while the raw UV radiation from the nearest star sears your skin. You can't hold your breath – if you do, your lungs will collapse – so after about ten seconds you lose consciousness from the lack of oxygen. After that, you are maybe a minute or two away from death.

Rules-wise, you must pass a **FORCE** test every turn you are without protection in a vacuum. The test is a free action, but you must pass it before doing anything else in the turn. The roll is unmodified for the first turn, but you get a -1 modifier for the second turn; in turn three you get -2, and so on. A failed roll means you drop directly to zero HP, become broken and suffer an immediate critical injury. The time limit to death is D6 minutes.

Before going unconscious, you should put all your efforts towards getting an exo shell on, if one can be found nearby. Climbing into an exo shell in a single turn requires a successful **DEXTERITY** test.

### RADIATION

The Dark between the Stars contains many places where you will be exposed to hard radiation – on a spacewalk near a dying star, for example, or when you try to repair your ship's leaking reactor core.

**Radiation Level:** When you are exposed to radiation, you suffer Radiation Points (RP) that accumulate in your body. Check off the RP boxes on your character sheet. The area's Radiation Level determines how often you get RP.

- **Weak Radiation:** 1 RP per day
- **Strong Radiation:** 1 RP per hour
- **Extreme Radiation:** 1 RP per minute

**Effects:** Every time you suffer an RP, you must roll a number of dice equal to your total current number of accumulated RP. For every six in the roll, you take 1 point of damage. The Crit Rating of radiation is 1, and the time limit to death is D6 days.

**Recovery:** When you leave the irradiated area, you heal one RP per day.

**Permanent Radiation:** There is a risk that the radiation will permanently stay in your body. Every time you are about to heal an RP, roll a die. If it shows a six, the RP is not healed but instead becomes permanent. Mark this with a line between the RP boxes on your character sheet. Permanent radiation can never be healed.

## VEHICLES

The Third Horizon is home to many different kinds of vehicles. Driving under normal circumstances requires no dice rolls, but more advanced maneuvers demand **PILOT** tests. Note that **PILOT** is an advanced skill; unless you have a skill level of at least 1 in **PILOT**, you don't get to roll for it and fail the test automatically. Entering or mounting a vehicle is a fast action. Starting a motorized vehicle is also a fast action.

**Gear Bonus:** The modifier you get to your PILOT tests when performing challenging maneuvers. Small, agile vehicles generally have higher bonuses than large and heavy ones.

**Hit Points (HP):** How much damage the vehicle can take before becoming wrecked.

**Movement Rate:** The speed of the vehicle – how many meters the vehicle moves per fast action from the driver.

**Fuel:** All vehicles require fuel, be it fusion batteries or bahtrol. Table 5.7 lists which vehicle needs which fuel type.

**TABLE 5.7 VEHICLES**

| NAME | BONUS | HP | MOVEMENT RATE | ARMOR | PASSENGERS | FUEL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Armored gravcraft | 0 | 40 | 16 | 8 | 8 | Fusion unit |
| Gravcraft | +1 | 20 | 20 | 3 | 4 | Fusion unit |
| Grav Bike | +2 | 8 | 30 | 0 | 1 | Fusion battery |
| Crawler | 0 | 25 | 10 | 4 | 6–8 | Fusion unit/bahtrol |
| Band Loader | 0 | 20 | 7 | 2 | 8 | Fusion unit |

**Passengers:** The number of people that can ride in the vehicle, including the driver.

**Armor:** The Armor Rating of the vehicle.

### VEHICLES IN COMBAT

Combat in a vehicle works just like combat on foot, but you use the vehicle's Movement Rate instead of your own.

**Ramming Enemies:** Most vehicles can be used as weapons – i.e. to simply ram your enemies. It counts as a melee combat attack, but you test **PILOT** instead of **MELEE COMBAT**. Don't forget the vehicle's Gear Bonus. The Weapon Damage is equal to the vehicle's HP divided by five, rounded up.

### DAMAGE TO VEHICLES

Vehicles suffer damage just like people, each point of damage lowering the vehicle's total Hit Points by 1. When the vehicle's HP drop to zero, the vehicle is wrecked. Vehicles don't suffer critical injuries. Most vehicles have armor, which works just like armor does for people.

**Ramming Vehicles:** You can use your vehicle to ram other vehicles as long as your vehicle has at least as many HP (starting value) as the enemy's vehicle. Roll the attack like you would if you were ramming a person. The damage from your attack is inflicted on the enemy vehicle. Passengers in the vehicle are only hurt if the enemy vehicle's HP drops to 0, in which case all passengers suffer the same amount of damage as the vehicle did.

***Example***

*Sabah is riding her grav bike through the Conglomerate slums. She wants to ram a mercenary from Short Range. She uses a fast action to get within Close Range (the bike's Movement Rate is 30 meters), and then her normal action to ram the enemy. She rolls 7 dice (Agility 3,* **PILOT** *2, Gear Bonus +2). After a quick prayer, she finally gets two sixes. The mercenary is hit and takes 3 points of damage (Weapon Damage 2 – the bike's HP (8) divided by 5 and rounded up, +1 damage for the extra six).*

***Example***

*An enforcer from the Syndicate fires a missile against Sabah's gravcraft. The attack hits and deals 6 points of damage. Sabah tests the gravcraft's armor (Armor Rating 3), and rolls one six. The gravcraft takes 5 points of damage.*

### VEHICLES IN THE THIRD HORIZON

**Planetside vehicles in the Third Horizon normally run on wheels or graviton projectors. The former types of vehicle are commonly referred to as "crawlers" and the latter types as "gravs." Most vehicles are powered by small fusion units that run on water, or sometimes they run on rarer isotopes of water. Smaller vehicles may run on fusion batteries or cells. Older, more primitive, vehicles sometimes run on alcohol, or on petroleum products like bahtrol.**







## CHAPTER 6

# WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

*There once lived a tailor in Paheve whose name was known far and wide, and who was said to be the best in the Horizon. His name was Farazmon, and his customers were pashas and sultans from every system. Farazmon's clothes were not only exquisite and beautiful, but also known to contain hidden pockets, strange technology and protective plating.*

**ARTS AND CRAFT – A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW** – Sourush Bourka

The Third Horizon is one big bazaar of trinkets, art, vehicles, weapons and technological marvels. Items like these can be the difference between an affluent life in the Spire of Coriolis or dying from dehydration in the salt deserts of Dabaran. This chapter describes all the kinds of gear and equipment the PCs might need.

## TECHNOLOGY TIERS

The technology of the Third Horizon is divided into different tiers: Primitive, Ordinary and Advanced, plus the mysterious faction technology and whatever the Portal Builders left behind, if it can be understood at all. Primitive technology is the remains of the tech brought by the first waves of Firstcome colonists, adapted to local environments and materials. Ordinary technology is the bulk of everything produced and used by ordinary people, with exceptions for the more barbaric areas or very poor colonies. Ordinary tech is produced in modular designs to make repairs and modifications easy. It is exported and imported all across the cluster. Advanced technology is the high end of the tech available on the open market, as long as you can afford it, have the proper connections and make the purchase in technologically advanced places such as Coriolis, the Conglomerate, the Monolith or other large trade stations and cities.

### RESTRICTED ITEMS

Certain items, regardless of the tech tier, are harder to come by than others – they could require certain licenses, be outlawed or just be available to those with friends in the right places. These items are marked with an asterisk (*) indicating that they are restricted items. Restricted gear can only be purchased by PCs with the Licensed talent (see Chapter 4).

### FACTION TECHNOLOGY

The technology of the factions, usually called Faction tech, differs from Advanced technology mostly in its availability – or rather, lack thereof. Advanced technology can be purchased by anyone on a core world with enough birr, but the faction tech is available only to a select few who have pledged their allegiance to the agenda of the faction in question, or at the very least have formed a strong alliance with it. Huge amounts of birr will of course also be necessary. Faction tech is not described in detail in this book, as it will not be available to new PCs. The only way to come by it is through contacts in a faction, or theft.

### PORTAL BUILDER TECHNOLOGY

Relics from the Portal Builders and other old artifacts are only understood by a few people in the Horizon. Both the Foundation and the Special Branch are rumored to have cracked some of the secrets of the Portal Builders. For common people, only the light globes and the healing scarabs are available, but very expensive. The PCs will most likely not know any more about artifacts than this, unless they are professional archaeologists.

# GEAR

All PCs can purchase extra gear at the start of the game using their starting capital. Below are lists of items that can be found in the Third Horizon, divided by area of application and sorted alphabetically. Each item will have a brief description and modifiers (if any). It will also state its price and tech tier – Primitive (P), Ordinary (O) or Advanced (A), and whether or not it is restricted (*). The lists also contain costs, and the weights of the different items. Light objects (L) need only half a row on your gear list, heavy objects (H) need two rows and tiny (T) take up no rows at all.

## COSTS OF LIVING AND EVERYDAY EXPENSES

In Coriolis, there is a wide range of everyday consumables to buy, as well as food and living expenses. This is not handled transaction

by transaction, but rather generalized as a monthly cost. You don't have to keep track of food and other consumables. Below are some examples of common dishes, beverages and services, things the PCs could find on Coriolis and in similar places.

## EVERYDAY ITEMS

### ARRASH (P)

Strong stimulant with pain-relieving properties. Usually smoked in a hookah or added to so-called dream wine. Leathery pieces of pressed arrash can be eaten directly, but this is considered a sign of strong addiction. The user becomes drowsy and calm. -1 to all skill tests.

### CELL (0)

A hydrogen fuel cell, usually new, but refueled cells can also be used. Refueling stations can be found here and there on Coriolis and in other civilized places. A refueled cell is unpredictable and the GM can deplete it at the cost of 1 DP.

### CLOTHING (P/O/A)

The fashion of the Third Horizon includes many different garments: djellabas, gallabeyas, caftans, dhotis, kurtas, kameezes, casulas, coats, caps, uniforms, veils – and the list goes on, with every possible make, quality and cost.

### COMMUNICATOR (0)

A communicator can send and receive sound and video. It can also be used to take pictures and record shorter film segments. Sometimes called a com link.

- **Personal (I):** Communicator for short distances, about 10 kilometers. Can be linked via other communicators for longer reach. The standard personal com is no bigger than a wristwatch, but some models are sewn into pieces of clothing or mounted into jewelry and other gear. This type of mini-com cost twice as much but has the same capabilities.
- **Short range (II):** Communicator for longer distances, up to 50 kilometers. This model is bigger, but usually still handheld. The antenna design varies.
- **Long range (III):** Communicator for long distances, up to 100 kilometers. Usually handheld.
- **Orbit (IV):** Powerful communicator that can reach the orbit of a planet. This model is so big it must be carried in a harness and require cells to work.

### KNOWN FACTION TECH

Despite the efforts of the factions to keep their technology secret, rumors about it are spread far and wide. The Consortium are known for their technological wonders – gigantic combat exos called Walkers that were field tested during the Uharu conflict, advanced warships and portal blades that are said to cut through armored warriors like grass. The Order of the Pariah are known for their animaturgical skills, resulting in the animated armor suits and their antimatter tech. Most people also know about the Hegemony's fearsome arachnid armors, used by the Astûrban.

### POSSESSIONS ON CORIOLIS

**Some items can be found everywhere in the civilized parts of the Horizon. Most people have somewhere to live and food on their plates, plus common items like tags, transactors and whatever gear they need for their profession.**





**TABLE 6.1 LIVING EXPENSES**

| LIFESTYLE | PRIMITIVE ENVIRONMENT | ORDINARY ENVIRONMENT | ADVANCED ENVIRONMENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spartan | 50 birr | 500 birr | 500 birr |
| Normal | 100 birr | 1,000 birr | 2,500 birr |
| Luxury | 500 birr | 5,000 birr | 10,000 birr |

- **System (V):** The strongest communicator available, reaching anywhere within a system, with the delay times that comes with it of course. The signal travels at the speed of light. The GM decides the delay times, which are usually a few minutes between planets up to at most an hour between the portals by the star and the outer rim of the system.
- **Pulse function (*):** An add-on function available for all communicators. It collects all the data in a message and transmits it in a short burst, making it harder to intercept, triangulate and decrypt (-2 to TECHNOLOGY). Pulse function is a restricted technology.

### COMPUTER (P/O/A)

Regular computers are voice operated and self-programming. A calm user will be assisted by the computer with whatever she needs, but stress can make it more difficult.

### HOLOGRAPH (A)

The holograph can transmit and receive holographic messages. The holograms are detailed enough to show tiny text and detailed pictures, and can for example be used to see through a disguise. Three-dimensional floor plans and maps can also be transmitted.

- **Personal:** Holograph for short distance communication, about 10 kilometers. Usually designed as a wristband or a tabula.
- **Short, Long, Orbit, System and Pulse** variants exists and work the same way, but with ranges and cost increases equivalent to communicators.

**TABLE 6.2 FOOD, DRINK AND ENTERTAINMENT**

| FOOD | DRINK | SERVICE |
|---|---|---|
| Shish kabab | Ayran | Bath house visit |
| Lamb kofte | Arrak | Iconoscope or fortune telling |
| Aubergine stew | Chai | Courtesan |
| Chicken stew | Kawah | Poet |
| Falafel | Kohôl | Proxy |
| Moussaka | Honey water | Theater/stadium visit |
| Minced mushroom | Wine | Tabak |
| Algae cake | | Arrash |
| Baklava | | Opor |

**TABLE 6.3 EVERYDAY ITEMS**

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arrash | -1 | 25 | Tiny | P |
| Cell | | 50 | Tiny | O |
| Clothing | | 50-1,000 | Tiny | P/O/A |
| Communicator | | | | |
| – Personal (I) | | 200 | Tiny | O |
| – Short range (II) | | 500 | Light | O |
| – Long range (III) | | 1,000 | Light | O |
| – Orbit (IV) | | 2,000 | Heavy | O |
| – System (V) | | 5,000 | Heavy | O |
| – Pulse function | | 1,000 | Tiny | O* |
| Computer | -3/-1/+1 | 10,000/15,000/20,000 | Normal | P/O/A |
| Holograph | | 1,500-7,300 | Tiny-Heavy | A |
| Kambra | +1 | 250 | Tiny | O |
| Language unit | | 10,000 | Tiny | A |
| Library database | +1/+3 | 1,500/2,000 | Tiny | A |
| Modulator | | 12,000 | Normal | A |
| Musical instrument | +1 | 100-1,000 | Light-Heavy | P |
| Opor | -2 | 50 | Tiny | P |
| Proxy helmet | | 500 | Light | O |
| Proxy trip | -2 | 100 | Tiny | O |
| Tabak | | 25 | Tiny | P |
| Tabula | | 2,000 | Light | O |
| Tag | | 50 | Tiny | O |
| Talisman | | 50 | Tiny | P |
| Transactor | | 100 | Tiny | O |
| Voice amplifier | | 400 | Light | O |



### KAMBRA (O)
A drug that induces a state of euphoria, making the user charismatic and happy (+1 to **MANIPULATION**) for a few hours, followed by a bad day of hangover. The user suffers 2 points of stress per use.

### LANGUAGE UNIT (A)
The language unit is worn as a heavy medallion around one's neck. If the wearer speaks slowly, clearly and with pauses, the unit provides real-time translation to another language. The unit can hold software for three different languages. Tags with language software cost half the price of the unit.

### LIBRARY DATABASE (A)
A specialized library database is an encyclopedia of information relating to a specific, usually narrow, topic. It is used via a ship computer or ship djinn to gain a bonus to **SCIENCE** or **CULTURE**, between +1 and +3 depending on how narrow the subject is.

### MODULATOR (A)
A communicator based on modulation – nanotechnological representation of real objects. Has the performance of a personal com (10 kilometers) and can both transmit and receive perfect copies of objects and people. The modulated object is tied to the plate-shaped modulator and cannot be moved, but can be touched and turned as long as it stays above the unit. The copied objects lack the functions of the originals, but their weight and appearance are perfect down to the molecular level.

### MUSICAL INSTRUMENT (P/O)
The Third Horizon contains many different musical instruments, from Primitive flutes and drums to Ordinary cirras, harps and chordophones. Gives a +1 to **MANIPULATION** if used for entertainment purposes. The GM has final say on when this bonus is applicable.

### OPOR (P)
Synthetic arrash, stronger and more addictive. Usually smoked in long pipes or burned on a plate, with the smoke being inhaled under a rag. Can also be injected. Gives the user a powerful high and -2 to all skills.

**PROXY HELMET (O)**
A hood, helmet or some other headdress allowing the wearer to experience other people's recorded brain activity.

**PROXY TRIP (O)**
A proxy experience from the streets, rarely morally acceptable but always very strong. Long term use is very addictive. The user becomes distracted and gets a -2 to **OBSERVATION** for the duration of the trip. Requires a proxy helmet to be used.

**TABAK (P)**
Mild stimulant with a sweet taste. Rolled, dried and ground up to be smoked in a hookah. Essential oils are sometimes added for a deeper flavor. In certain parts of the Horizon, it is dried, rolled and smoked directly, or used to brew a bitter and soothing tea.

**TABULA (O)**
A tablet that can be operated by hand or using ornate stylus pens. Everyday object used to gather information, keep a diary or just to read the Bulletin's news.

**TAG (O)**
A crystalline memory stick for information or birr. Charged at a terminal and not personal, which makes it hard to trace unless you know its specific number.

**TALISMAN (P)**
Picture or symbol representing one of the Icons. Worn on the body or placed somewhere visible in a vehicle, spaceship or shop to bring good fortunes and protect against dark influences. A blessed talisman grants a +1 modifier to one dice roll (see the talent Talisman Maker).

**TRANSACTOR (O)**
A personal identity card that can hold birr and credit as well as other information. Since it is personal, it is easy to trace (+1 to **DATA DJINN** if the tracer has access to the correct personal information).

**VOICE AMPLIFIER (O)**
The amplifier usually looks like a tube one speaks into, carrying one's voice up to 100 meters.

### CELLS AND ENERGY

**A cell is basically a small battery that can power a wide range of portable tech. Refueling a cell with hydrogen can be done in most Ordinary environments for a small fee. In weapons, the cells are usually built into the magazine. Heavy weaponry may require several cells in series or parallel.**

### COMPUTERS IN THE THIRD HORIZON

Anyone who has grown up in an Ordinary environment will have a basic proficiency with computers and databases. All Ordinary computers are voice operated and self-programming, which means that they are ordered rather than programmed by the user. **DATA DJINN** is tested to make a computer perform tasks properly. Ordinary computers are harder to command (-1) than Advanced ones (+1). The most difficult machines are the primitive thought machines that must be operated using keyboards and programmed manually in obscure code languages (-3). They still exist in certain primitive parts of the Horizon in the forms of computing and punch card devices and other rudimentary processing units.

## CLOTHES IN THE THIRD HORIZON

The peoples of the Horizon dress very differently. The Firstcome tend to prefer loose-fitting garments such as djellabas or gallabeyas, while Zenithians prefer shirts such as the kameez or the kurta, as well as vests and veils. Among space station and ships crews, practical clothes with pockets are common, along with tight coats and belts. The fashion changes over time, and different groups are influenced by foreign styles and designs, which makes beautifully embroidered djellabas or gallabeyas common among important Zenithians and wealthy merchants, for example.

- **BURRA:** A wide, straight skirt worn over pants by both men and women. Common in dance rituals performed by preachers or ascetics.
- **DHOTI:** A piece of fabric worn as a loincloth or strapped on as pants. Common together with a kurta or kameez.
- **DJELLABA:** A full-length robe usually made from cotton or wool. Certain local variations include a hood. Belts are sometimes used to accentuate the waist.
- **DUPATTA:** Long shawl that can be worn in many different ways, usually tied around the head.
- **GALLABEYA:** A wide, full-length robe without collar, and sometimes without buttons. The sleeves are usually very wide and sometimes contain small pockets. Most common in hot climates.
- **GUTTRAH:** A smaller piece of cotton fabric worn as a turban-style headdress or fastened with black string, called agal.
- **CAFTAN:** A long coat with wide sleeves. Commonly not buttoned in the front but worn open or with the front parts overlapping, sometimes with a belt.
- **KAMEEZ:** A long pull-on shirt, usually with embroidery.
- **KURTA:** A knee-length, straight shirt or jacket with a round collar.
- **THAWB:** A full-length robe with straight sleeves and no collar. Usually worn with pants underneath.



Mercenary in djellaba.



Courtesan with gallabeya and a guttrah headdress.



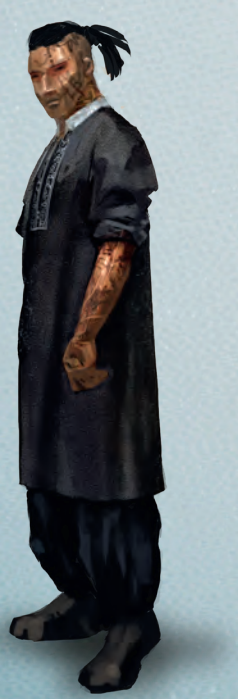
Peddler in caftan and dupatta.



Stevedore with coat.



Pilot in kameez.



Criminal in kurta and dhoti.



Archaeologist in kameez.



Soldier in caftan.

TABLE 6.4 MEDICURGICAL TECHNOLOGY

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ballistic m-injector | +1 | 1,000 | Light | O |
| Bio monitor | | 5,000 | Light | O |
| Doctor's bag | ±0 | 300 | Normal | P |
| Herbal remedy | -1 | 50 | Light | P |
| Medkit | +2 | 700 | Normal | O |
| M-dose | +1 | 50 | Light | O |
| Medlab | +3 | 5,000 | - | O |
| Mind-enhancing narcotics | +1/-1 | 200 | Tiny | O* |
| P-dose | +2/+3 | 1,000 | Light | F* |
| Poison | | 300-3,000 | Tiny | P |
| Spider doctor (Wits 5, MEDICURGY 3) | | 5,000 | Heavy | A* |
| Trauma kit | +3 | 2,000 | Normal | A |
| Trauma dose | +2 | 200 | Light | A |
| Trauma lab | +4/+5 | 20,000 | - | A* |

## MEDICURGICAL TECHNOLOGY

### BALLISTIC M-INJECTOR (O)

A medicurgical injector that can be fired with a Vulcan weapon to lend medical assistance from afar (Short Range). First, test RANGED COMBAT to hit the target – if you hit, the injector counts as an m-dose.

### BIO MONITOR (O)

Attached to the body. Monitors and stores data about the wearer's health. Includes a level II com link that can be activated to transmit the data to medicurgs not on site. This enables someone to assist with MEDICURGY from far away (see Help From Others, page 58).

### DOCTOR'S BAG (P)

Contains medicurgical equipment, needles, cauterization irons and herbal remedies for 10 treatments. Primitive medicurgical gear gives no bonuses when treating wounds, diseases or poisons. Has no effect on radiation damage.

### HERBAL REMEDY (P)

A poultice preferably used together with a doctor's bag. On its own, it gives a -1 to MEDICURGY to treat a broken person. Cannot be used to treat critical or fatal injuries.

### MEDKIT (O)

Ordinary bag of medicurgical supplies for treating wounds, poisonings, radiation damage or severe illness. Contains a diagnostic unit, suture gun, pneumatic needles, bandages and other basic gear, as well as 10 m-doses. The medkit gives a +2 to MEDICURGY. Bonuses from medical equipment do not stack – use only the highest bonus.

### M-DOSE (O)

A one-use injector for stabilizing wounds or treating poison, disease or radiation damage. Called "life insurance" or "first aid" in soldier slang, although the Legionnaires are of the belief that one's carbine is the first aid, instead referring to the m-dose as the "fuse" or the "last aid". An m-dose should be used together with a medkit; on its own it only gives a +1 to MEDICURGY.

**MEDLAB (O)**
A complete med unit. Gives a +3 to all **MEDICURGY** rolls to treat wounds, diseases, poison or radiation. The medlab must be resupplied after 100 treatments which costs half of the original price. If the supplies from the lab are taken away to be used in the field, they count as m-doses. A medlab takes up space equivalent to one spaceship module.

**MIND-ENHANCING NARCOTICS (O*)**
These drugs come in a variety of forms and with many different effects. They can be ingested, injected or applied as adhesive patches. The effects are very strong – one attribute is raised by 1 for D6 hours. The drugs come with serious fatigue after the high, however. When the PC comes down, she suffers 2 points of damage and a -1 to the affected attribute for half a day.

**P-DOSE (F*)**
The p-dose is the Order of the Pariah's version of a regular m-dose. It is more potent but hard to come by, even in the places where it isn't illegal. It is used like an m-dose but gives a +2 to the **MEDICURGY** roll when treating normal injuries and a +3 when treating critical injuries.

**POISON (P)**
A poison that can be applied to a weapon, eaten or injected. Common poisons have a strength of between 1 and 5, but strong ones could have a strength of up to 8. The poison attack is an opposed poison strength vs attribute roll (which attribute to test depends on which kind of poison it is). If the victim fails, she suffers damage or stress equal to the poison strength. If she wins the roll, she suffers only passing symptoms (-1 to the relevant attribute for D6 hours.)

**SPIDER DOCTOR (A*)**
An autonomous field medic unit with a spider-like design. Diagnoses the patient, initiates treatment and reports to other units via a level II com if needed. Applying a spider doctor to a wounded person is a slow action, but after that it acts independently with Wits 5 and **MEDICURGY** 3. The spider has a full trauma kit (no bonus).

**TRAUMA KIT (A)**
An Advanced version of the medkit. Gives a +3 to all **MEDICURGY** rolls. Contains 10 trauma doses. Cannot be used without trauma doses.

**TRAUMA DOSE (A)**
An Advanced version of the m-dose. One use. Preferably used together with a trauma kit or trauma lab. Used alone it gives only a +2 to **MEDICURGY**.

**TRAUMA LAB (A*)**
A state-of-the-art med unit that gives a +4 to **MEDICURGY** rolls, or a +5 when treating critical injuries. The trauma lab must be resupplied after 100 treatments, at the cost of 15,000 birr. If the supplies from the lab are taken away to be used in the field, they count as trauma doses. A trauma lab takes up space equivalent to one spaceship module.

## TOOLS AND REPAIRS

**CUTTING TORCH (O)**
Cell-powered cutting torch. Can cut through ship's hulls and armored doors in a couple of minutes, creating a hole big enough for a person without an exo shell. The cell must be changed before the torch can be used again.

**SPARE PART, PRIMITIVE (P)**
Enough for one repair to Primitive technology. Used without tools, it gives a -2 to **TECHNOLOGY**.

**SPARE PART, ORDINARY (O)**
Enough for one repair to Ordinary technology. Ordinary tools or better are required for the repair.

**SPARE PART, ADVANCED (A)**
Enough for one repair to Advanced technology. Advanced tools are required for the repair.

**THERMAL CUTTER (A)**
A cutting torch with a thermal lance that can cut through ship's hulls, armored doors and similar things in one minute, creating a hole big enough for a person in an exo shell. Powered by three cells that must be changed after each use.

**TOOLS, PRIMITIVE (P)**
Simple tools for repairs. Spare parts are required to repair

TABLE 6.5 TOOLS AND REPAIRS

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cutting torch | | 800 | Heavy | O |
| Spare part, Primitive | | 50 | Light | P |
| Spare part, Ordinary | | 200 | Light | O |
| Spare part, Advanced | | 1,000 | Light | A |
| Thermal cutter | | 3,000 | Heavy | A |
| Tools, Primitive | | 100 | Heavy | P |
| Tools, Ordinary | | 500 | Normal | O |
| Tools, Advanced | +1 | 1,500 | Light | A |
| Vacuum sealer | | 500 | Light | O |
| Workshop, Primitive | +1 | 400 | - | P |
| Workshop, Ordinary | +1 | 2,000 | - | O |
| Workshop, Advanced | +2 | 15,000 | - | A |

or create basic objects. Spare parts used without tools give the user a -2 to **TECHNOLOGY**.

**TOOLS, ORDINARY (O)**
Multitools for all kinds of Ordinary repairs as long as the proper spare parts are available. Gives no bonus, but are necessary for the repairs.

**TOOLS, ADVANCED (A)**
Multitools for all kinds of Advanced repairs as long as the proper spare parts are available. Gives a +1 to **TECHNOLOGY**.

**VACUUM SEALER (O)**
The sealer looks like a big injector. It is used to seal up small holes in exos or hulls. Advanced exo shells have built-in sealers which increase their cost to twice the price of a regular sealer.

**WORKSHOP, PRIMITIVE (P)**
Gives a +1 to all **TECHNOLOGY** rolls when repairing Primitive technology. Contains spare parts for 10 Primitive repairs. Resupplying the workshop costs 100 birr.

**WORKSHOP, ORDINARY (O)**
Enables repairs and construction of basic Ordinary items. Gives a +1 to **TECHNOLOGY**. Contains spare parts for 10 Ordinary repairs. Resupplying the workshop costs 500 birr.

**WORKSHOP, ADVANCED (A)**
Gives a +2 to all **TECHNOLOGY** rolls. Contains spare parts for 10 Advanced repairs. Resupplying the workshop costs 2,000 birr.

## SURVIVAL AND COLONIZATION

**ARTIFICIAL GILLS (A)**
The gills are worn around the neck and extract oxygen from the water. The wearer breathes in the oxygen through a diver's mask.

**BALLISTIC CARTOGRAPH (A*)**
The cartograph is a small unit connected to a computer or a tabula. It comes with a pack of tiny missiles that fit Vulcan weapons and spread a cloud of microsensors when they hit a solid target. The sensors then transmit a 3-D map of everything within Short Range of the impact back to the home unit. The missiles could also be programmed to detonate in mid-air in

order to provide a map view from above with a Long Range radius. There are 5 charges in the cartograph and reloading it costs 2,000 birr.

**BINOCULARS (P)**
Optical aid to scouting at long distances. Gives a +1 to **OBSERVATION**.

**BOX TENT (A)**
A small, rectangular module that expands into a two-person tent when activated. Solar panels on the roof power climate systems in the tent that keep the inside temperature normal. A must-have for colonists.

**CHEM EXTINGUISHER (O)**
Neutralizes fire and burning or corrosive chemicals in one turn. The extinguisher can put out one small fire.

**COMPASS (P)**
Gives a +1 to **SURVIVAL** when orientating in difficult terrain – if the local magnetic fields allows it. The compass comes with a built-in altimeter to help when traveling through hills and mountains.

**DIVING GEAR (O)**
Helmet or diving mask connected to an oxygen tube (about 50 x 25 x 10 cm) carried on the back in a harness. The oxygen lasts for 2 hours of diving.

**EMERGENCY FLARE (P)**
A flare shot up into the sky, where it burns in a bright color. They come in different colors if one needs to relay different messages. Burn for one turn as they fall to the ground, dangling from little parachutes.

**ENVIRONMENT SCANNER (O)**
Scans the surroundings and reports any presence of dangerous chemicals, biological threats or radiation. Gives a +2 to **SURVIVAL** to spot environmental threats.

**FILTER MASK (O)**
A simple rubber mask with a plastic visor and respirator that protects against toxins that affect the respiratory system. The filter lasts for one to three days depending on the toxicity of the environment before it needs changing.

**HYPER ROPE (O)**
A thin and incredibly strong rope that is 50 meters long. Can be fastened to most materials. Cannot be climbed without special hand and foot grips as the rope cuts like a knife. The grips are included. Gives a +1 to **DEXTERITY** when climbing.

**MOISTURE CONDENSER (O)**
Gathers and condenses moisture from the surrounding air. In a normal climate, the unit can produce enough water for two people per day, in a humid climate the water is enough for five people and in an arid climate, such as deserts or



TABLE 6.6 SURVIVAL AND COLONIZATION

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Artificial gills | | 2,500 | Light | A |
| Ballistic cartograph | | 4,000 | Tiny | A* |
| Binoculars | +1 | 100 | Light | P |
| Box tent | | 2,000 | Normal | A |
| Chem extinguisher | | 300 | Normal | O |
| Compass | +1 | 100 | Tiny | P |
| Diving gear | | 1,000 | Heavy | O |
| Emergency flare | | 50 | Light | P |
| Environment scanner | +2 | 400 | Light | O |
| Filter mask | | 300 | Light | O |
| Hyper rope | +1 | 200 | Tiny | O |
| Moisture condenser | | 2,000 | Tiny | O |
| Nutrition pills | | 250 | Tiny | A |
| Nutrition recycler | | 3,000 | Tiny | A |
| Portable laboratory | +2 | 2,000 | Heavy | O |
| Pressure tent | | 1,200 | Heavy | O |
| Spider suit | +3 | 4,000 | Light | A* |
| Survival mask | | 500 | Light | O |
| Survival rations | | 100 | Tiny | O |
| Thermostatic suit | +1 | 1,100 | Normal | O |
| Water purifier | | 1,000 | Light | O |

tundra, it is enough for one person. The water is automatically purified. Powered by a cell that needs changing once a week.

### NUTRITION PILLS (A)

One's daily need of energy and nutrition compressed into three tiny pills, usually fruit or berry flavored and designed to provide the user with a sense of being full. Must be taken with at least half a liter of water or they will cause serious stomach pains and massive constipation.

### NUTRITION RECYCLER (A)

Biomolecular de- or reconstruction technology that processes waste and turns it into food. Used by expeditions, long-haul freighters or in prison camps to recycle all organic waste into nutritious (if foul-tasting) food. For both taste and associative reasons, the end product is appreciated by very few. Powered by the reactor if on a ship or by a fusion battery if in a camp or ground vehicle. Produces enough disgusting food per day to feed six people.

### PORTABLE LABORATORY (O)

A portable lab unit that can be used for most analyses. Comes with bio, rad, chem and spectral sensors. Gives a +2 to **SCIENCE** when analyzing foreign substances and objects.

**PRESSURE TENT (0)**
A four-person tent that regulates pressure and gas levels to make the inside atmosphere pleasurable to humans. Comes with enough oxygen for four people in a completely oxygen-free environment for one day. In low-oxygen surroundings, the oxygen will last proportionately longer. If the tent absorbs some oxygen from the surrounding atmosphere, harmful substances are filtered out.

**SPIDER SUIT (A*)**
The suit consists of gloves, boots and pads for elbows and knees that stick to most materials, letting the wearer climb completely flat surfaces and hang upside down from the ceiling. Gives the wearer +3 to **DEXTERITY**. The suit can be turned on and off.

**SURVIVAL MASK (0)**
Full-face mask connected to an oxygen tank. Recycles exhaled oxygen and lasts for one hour in a completely oxygen-free environment and for one day in low-oxygen surroundings. If the mask absorbs some oxygen from the surrounding atmosphere, harmful substances are filtered out.



**SURVIVAL RATIONS (0)**
Bland but nutritious. Enough for one person for one day of hard work. Add half a liter of water per meal and it will cook itself. Warm water will give a tastier meal, but cold water is also fine.

**THERMOSTATIC SUIT (0)**
A suit that monitors and chemically corrects the wearer's body temperature. No extra energy source is necessary. Works between +70 degrees Celsius and -80 degrees Celsius. Collects the wearer's sweat and urine, purifies it, and fills up an internal compartment with clean water. Gives a +1 to **SURVIVAL** and supplies one ration of water per day.

**WATER PURIFIER (0)**
Purifies water from toxins and chemicals as well as biological and radioactive threats. Can purify enough water for one person per day. Powered by a cell that needs changing once a week.

## EXOS AND VEHICLES

**ARMORED GRAVCRAFT (0)**
An armored version of the gravcraft with more powerful projectors, heavier hull and a wedge-shaped design. Usually between 5 and 10 meters long. Can reach altitudes of about twenty meters.

**CRAWLER (0)**
Vehicle with wheels or tracks designed for difficult terrain and hostile climates. A common version is one with tracks, a cabin that can fit six passengers and an internal cargo capacity of 400 kilograms, plus an external platform in the back for another 400 kilograms. The cabin is thermostatic and can compensate for temperatures of between -20 degrees Celsius and +70 degrees Celsius. There is a hatch in the ceiling that can be opened with hydraulics to get out of a buried crawler, after a sandstorm for example. The top speed is 80 kilometers per hour on level ground, and about 50 kilometers per hour in hilly terrain. Most crawlers are constructed or modified to run on whatever fuel is locally available, but fusion batteries are the optimal choice as they also make the thermostatic cabin function better. Crawlers have level III com units and explosive harpoons to fasten the crawler to the ground during a storm.

TABLE 6.7 EXOS AND VEHICLES

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Armored gravcraft | | 40,000 | - | 0 |
| Crawler | | 6,000 | - | 0 |
| Drone | | 4,000 | - | 0 |
| Exo shell | -2 | 2,000 | - | 0 |
| Grav bike | +2 | 3,000 | - | 0 |
| Gravcraft | +1 | 15,000 | - | 0 |
| Gravity belt | | 4,500 | Heavy | A |
| Ground loader | | 10,000 | - | 0 |
| Hand jet | +1 | 700 | Heavy | 0 |
| Jet pack | +1/+2 | 1,600 | Heavy | 0 |
| Loader exo | +2 | 3,000 | - | 0 |
| Remote control module | | 2,000 | Tiny | 0 |
| Track loader | | 4,000 | - | 0 |
| Water jet | +1 | 1,100 | Heavy | 0 |

### DRONE (0)
A small recon drone controlled from a computer or a tabula. Unlike the smaller recon probe, the drone can interact with its environment using its tool arms. Many different models are available, tailored to different tasks and situations.

### EXO SHELL (0)
A shell suit to protect the wearer in vacuum and other dangerous situations. Contains oxygen for eight hours and vacuum soles that stick to level surfaces such as ship hulls. Provides a little protection against external violence (Armor 2) but is difficult to move around in (-2 to **DEXTERITY**).

### GRAV BIKE (0)
A one-person vehicle with graviton projection propulsion. Can reach high speeds and an altitude of about 50 meters. Powered by a fusion battery.

### GRAVCRAFT (0)
Graviton projection vehicles, powered by either a small fusion reactor or a fusion unit. Usually designed as transport vehicles, but passenger versions are available to those with enough birr. They normally hover about one meter above the ground, but the projectors of some models can be pushed to perform jumps about ten meters high. The Miran Dhol is an open gravcraft, usually boat-shaped, that can reach the same heights as a grav bike, if not even higher.

### GRAVITY BELT (A)
A harness of belts and buckles crowned by a heavy pack worn on the back. The belt normalizes the wearer's gravity to 1 standard G. Powered by a fusion battery also worn on the back that lasts for about one hour.

### GROUND LOADER (0)
A grav platform used to move heavy cargo. Operated from a control panel onboard.

### HAND JET (0)
A handheld jet unit designed as an engine for one person in zero-G. Gives a +1 to **DEXTERITY** in zero-G.

### JET PACK (0)
A jet system worn as a backpack enabling rocket flight for one person. Works best in zero-G (+2 to **DEXTERITY**) but can be

used in gravity as well, although with weaker speed and thrust (+1 to **DEXTERITY**). Must be refueled after one hour of flight.

**LOADER EXO (O)**
An exo reinforced with heavy-duty servos designed for heavy lifting and loading. The wearer can lift up to 500 kilograms without problems (+2 to **FORCE**) but the exo is slow to maneuver which makes it unfit for melee combat. The loader exo is otherwise treated as a normal exo shell.

**REMOTE CONTROL MODULE (O)**
A control unit for a computer or tabula that allows for remote control of a vehicle within Extreme Range by testing **DATA DJINN**.

**TRACK LOADER (O)**
A container rack platform running on tracks, between 30 and 50 meters long. There is a small driver's cabin in the front from which the operator directs the movement of the platform. Radio beacons help the driver maneuver the enormous platform in spaceports or other industrial areas, allowing the vehicle to reach a speed of between 50 and 60 kilometers per hour, but in settlements without beacons, the top speed is about 15 kilometers per hour as manual navigation of the platform is a very delicate affair.

**WATER JET (O)**
A water jet propulsion system worn as a backpack. Gives the wearer +1 to **DEXTERITY** under water. Powered by a cell that lasts for two hours.

## RECON AND INFILTRATION

**CHAMELEON SUIT (A)**
A suit that fools both sensors and the naked eye by evening out signature differences between the wearer and the surroundings. Gives a +2 to **INFILTRATION** to hide and stay hidden.

**FIBERSCOPE (A)**
A fiberoptic cable connected to a small tabula from which the tip of the scope can be maneuvered. The cable is fed manually and is five meters long. Can be used to scout out a building through the vent shafts or to look around a corner.

**NESTERA'S GRAV BELT**

Nestera's grav belt is a very popular product with a very misleading name – it is actually anti-gravity technology. The belt is based on the drop armors used by the Legion for quick deployment of a strike team from above. It is especially popular in the so-called flying theaters on Mira, acrobatic performances that traditionally used complex systems of ropes, pulleys and wires but that nowadays have moved on to grav belts instead. The scene where the Dancer comes flying across the stage in a red kharonicle with flowing veils in "Jasmine Mourning" has been described as magical by the theater critics, and has given Nestera massive publicity on Mira. Less romantic and artistic areas of use for the belt include morbid obesity, wall climbing or visits to high-G worlds.





### LIE DETECTOR (A)
A small box with wires that when connected to someone who is being questioned can help the interrogator tell if the subject is telling the truth or not (+2 to **MANIPULATION**).

### MECHANICAL LOCKPICK (P)
A lockpick for mechanical locks. Gives no bonus to **TECHNOLOGY**, but with improvised tools instead of a lockpick, the user gets a -1.

### MODULATION MASK (A)
A necklace that projects a modulated image in front of the wearer's face. This makes it easier to disguise oneself. Opponents get a -2 to **OBSERVATION** to see through the ruse.

### PROXIMITY SENSOR (O)
The proximity sensor scans several spectra of the surroundings and displays detailed live information about terrain, vehicles and even individual persons in the area. The information is not exact enough to identify someone or to make out more about a vehicle than type and model. The sensor has two modes:

- **Active mode:** This mode covers Extreme Range in open terrain and forests. Hidden objects and threats require a skilled sensor operator to spot. The sensor allows the operator to test **TECHNOLOGY** to find hidden things in her surroundings. When the sensor is in active mode, it is easy (+2) to discover it using other sensor tech.
- **Passive mode:** This mode has Long Range but is less risky to the user as it won't reveal the user's location (no bonus to **TECHNOLOGY** to spot the sensor user).

### RECON PROBE (O)
A probe used to scout out the surrounding area. It hovers thanks to a small grav unit. Powered by a cell that needs changing after two hours of use. The probe can be remote controlled from up to Extreme Range. The operator's **OBSERVATION** score is tested to determine how detailed the probe's observations are.

### SECURITY TABLET (O)
The security tablet is a codebreaker and an electronic lockpick, and it counteracts electronic and sensor-based traps. Without the tablet, all of the above is difficult to handle (-2 to **TECHNOLOGY**).

## WEAPON GEAR AND COMBAT

### ADVANCED SCOPE (A*)
An Advanced sensor scope with djinn protocols that calculate recoil and the movement of shooter and target to provide an accurate firing solution. Makes it easier to hit with firearms (+1 to **RANGED COMBAT**) at Short range and above. Does not work for quick shots (page 88).

### COMMAND UNIT (O*)
The command unit allows an officer to issue orders to her squad from afar and coordinate the actions of the fighters. The unit can also be used when exploring in dangerous or difficult

**TABLE 6.8 RECON AND INFILTRATION**

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chameleon suit | +2 | 3,000 | Light | A |
| Fiberscope | | 3,000 | Tiny | A |
| Lie detector | +2 | 1,800 | Light | A |
| Mechanical lockpick | | 50 | Light | P |
| Modulation mask | | 5,000 | Light | A |
| Proximity sensor | | 1,200 | Normal | O |
| Recon probe | +3 | 2,000 | Normal | O |
| Security tablet | | 700 | Light | O |

environments. As long as the unit is active, the person using the controls can **COMMAND** the linked fighters from a distance.

### FUSION BATTERY (O)
A miniature fusion reactor that provides considerable amounts of energy as long as it is fueled by pure hydrogen. Comes with a multi-adapter that allows the battery to connect to most machines and thermal weapons. The battery counts as three reloads in combat.

### NIGHT SIGHTS (O)
A light-sensitive scope that lets the shooter use her weapon in darkness without penalties.

### OPTICAL SCOPE (P)
A scope that provides the shooter with an enlarged view of the target and a crosshair for firing reference. Makes it easier to hit with firearms (+1 to **RANGED COMBAT**) at Long range and above. Requires an aimed shot (page 88). Can also be used as binoculars when scouting.

### RELOAD (P)
Ammunition for Primitive weapons is easy to manufacture but generally not interchangeable between weapon types, as it could be cartridges, arrows, sling stones, or black powder charges. A Primitive reload could be anything from a magazine of bullets to a handful of arrows. If the weapon has the feature Single-shot (see below), every reload is one unit of ammunition.

### RELOAD (O)
Ordinary reloads are usually magazines or single missiles or grenades. If the weapon requires a cell, this is built into the magazine. All weapons that use magazines have the weight of a full magazine included in the listed weight of the weapon. For special ammunition, see Weapons below.

### RELOAD – VIBRO (O*)
These bullets are vibrating flechettes that cut through the target rather than exploding like normal Vulcan rounds. They are mainly used by hunters who don't wish to ruin the hides of their kills, but could also be used for assassinations as the rounds make very little sound, giving the weapon the feature Silent (p 133). Vibro ammo is very effective against unarmored targets but has poor armor-piercing capabilities, which makes it safer to use in a firefight onboard a spaceship or space station than regular Vulcan rounds. The shooter gets a +1 to **RANGED COMBAT**, but all targets get a +2 to their Armor Rating.

**TABLE 6.9 COMBAT GEAR**

| NAME | BONUS | COST | WEIGHT | TECH TIER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Advanced scope | +1 | 5,000 | Tiny | A* |
| Command unit | | 2,300 | Light | O* |
| Fusion battery | | 3,000 | Heavy | O |
| Night sights | | 1,000 | Tiny | O |
| Optical scope | +1 | 200 | Tiny | P |
| Reload, Primitive | | 5 | Light | P |
| Reload, Ordinary | | 50 | Light | O |
| Reload, Vibro | +1 | 200 | Light | O* |
| Reload, Advanced | | 50 | Light | A |
| Sensor scope | +1 | 2,000 | Tiny | O |
| Signal jammer | | 1,500 | Light | O* |



**RELOAD (A)**
Advanced ammunition is completely cell-based. An Advanced magazine can be recharged at a charging station for 50 birr. Normal, "civilian" cells cannot be used in weapons as they require specially made versions.

**SENSOR SCOPE (0)**
A passive sensor that reads the target and provides a firing reference for the shooter as a small dot of light. The scope adjusts contrast and gives information about range, wind drift and other relevant facts. Makes it easier to hit with firearms (+1 to **RANGED COMBAT**) at Short range and above. Requires an aimed shot (page 88).

**SIGNAL JAMMER (0*)**
Generates interference across a specific range of com frequencies, or generally across all bands. Affected coms require a successful **TECHNOLOGY** test to be used despite the jamming. The jammer has Extreme Range. Powered by a fusion battery.

# WEAPONS AND ARMOR

The history of the Third Horizon is a bloody one, and many places are still very dangerous to visit. The unrest caused by the arrival of the Emissaries has made things even worse. Weapons and armor are desirable objects in the Horizon, regardless of who you are or where you live.

## WEAPON TECHNOLOGY IN THE HORIZON

Just like regular gear, weapons and armor are divided into tech tiers – Primitive, Ordinary, Advanced and Factionary.





## VULCAN WEAPONS

Vulcan weapons fire tiny rockets with explosive heads. Firing and reloading is mechanical and the weapons require no cells. Vulcan weapons have a low recoil to enable steady automatic fire. As they are easily pirated, they are common everywhere in the Horizon, and so is the ammunition.



Partisans, rebels, and explorers all use Vulcan weapons, often adorned with mythological or traditional images and patterns. Apart from the explosive rounds, homing and vibrating ammunition is also available, and come with cells built into special magazines.



### SPECIAL VULCAN WEAPONS

- **VULCAN PISTOL ARAX OMIR:** A big, heavy pistol with a nasty reputation for causing wounds that heal slowly.
- **VULCAN SCORPION:** A Vulcan pistol capable of automatic fire. Popular among criminals but very difficult to handle.
- **VULCAN PDW:** A hybrid between a carbine and a pistol, produced and marketed by Nestera as a "personal defense weapon". Used by bodyguards as it is more discreet than a carbine.
- **LEGIONNAIRE CARBINE DAYAL-3:** A carbine produced and used by the Legion. Comes with a built-in grenade launcher, Advanced recoil dampeners and an extra-large drum magazine.



## ACCELERATOR WEAPONS

Accelerator weapons utilize magnetic acceleration of tiny projectiles, hence the name. They are almost recoil-free, but their low rate of fire limits their military use. Thanks to their excellent precision however, they are popular with colonists, hunters and sharpshooters.



The Zenithian Hegemony favors accelerator guns over Vulcans just for the sake of precision. Some accelerator weapons have a "silent" mode, but this limits their capability to pierce armor. Accelerator weapons are hard to copy, unlike Vulcans.



**SPECIAL ACCELERATOR WEAPONS**

- **TWIN CARBINE:** A double barrel accelerator carbine. Both barrels fire at the same time. Has a tendency to overheat easily, and the GM only has to spend 2 DP to cause a weapon jam.
- **ACCELERATOR RIFLE NESTERA PAROX:** Nestera's flagship sniper rifle, known for its tremendous penetrating power. Can even stop an armored gravcraft.



## THERMAL WEAPONS

Thermal weapons fire a slug of superheated matter towards their target. This process requires huge amounts of energy, which means that some thermal weapons even require fusion batteries. The adapter between the battery and the weapon is heavy and cumbersome, and the battery itself must be carried as a backpack.



The weapon still requires a magazine as hydrogen is needed for the actual shot. Heavy weapons are exceptions to this as they instead use big cassettes that are magazine and battery combined into one.



## STUN WEAPONS

Stun weapons – popularly known as zap weapons – send powerful electrical pulses through a corridor of ionized air created by a laser beam. This is very effective over short distances when the shooter doesn't wish to seriously injure the target. Zap tech is available as an add-on to all thermal weapons and as separate weapons.



## PRIMITIVE RANGED WEAPONS

Blowpipes, bows and different kinds of long rifles are all examples of Primitive ranged weapons. There are no uniform principles followed by makers of long rifles, which means that all ammunition is unique to one make of rifle.

## EXPLOSIVES

Explosives in the Horizon can be anything from Primitive detonite capsules to Advanced thermobaric grenades. Detonite is a common explosive sold in standardized units (0.25 kilograms) with modular multi-function detonators, or as satchel charges. Larger so-called breach charges are specially constructed charges designed to destroy roads, bridges, buildinga or slow and parked vehicles. Powerful charges can cause a lot of smoke and tear up dust from the ground, especially in dry environments. The smoke covers the same area as the blast radius of the charge for one scene. Grenades are detonite or thermanite charges with additives designed to create specific blast effects.



## MISSILE AND GRENADE LAUNCHERS

Regular missile systems in the Horizon are mass-produced for military groups and factions. They are usually rocket-based and have explosive warheads that function like grenades or

TABLE 6.10 RANGED WEAPONS

| PISTOLS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vulcan cricket | +1 | +2 | 2 | 2 | Short | Light | O | 700 |
| Vulcan pistol | +1 | +1 | 2 | 2 | Short | Reliable | O | 500 |
| Vulcan pistol Arax Omir | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | Short | +2 to MANIPULATION when threatening | O | 1,200 |
| Vulcan Scorpion | -1 | +1 | 2 | 2 | Short | Automatic fire | O | 1,000 |
| Accelerator pistol | +1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | Long | Silent | O | 700 |
| Thermal cricket | +1 | +2 | 3 | 2 | Short | Light | A | 2,500 |
| Thermal pistol | +1 | +1 | 3 | 2 | Long | | A | 2,300 |
| Stun gun | +1 | +1 | 2 | Stun | Short | Stun | A | 2,000 |

| CARBINES | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vulcan carbine | +1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | Short | Automatic fire | O | 2,000 |
| Legionnaire carbine Dayal-3 | +1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | Long | Automatic fire, High capacity, Built-in grenade launcher | O* | 3,000 |
| Vulcan PDW | +1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | Short | Automatic fire | O | 2,500 |
| Accelerator carbine | +1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | Long | Automatic fire, Armor-piercing, Silent | O | 3,000 |
| Twin carbine | +1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | Long | Armor-piercing, Silent | O | 3,700 |
| Thermal carbine | +1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | Long | Thermal sweep | A | 6,500 |

| GRAPE WEAPONS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saladin grape gun | +2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Short | Single-shot | P | 200 |
| Grape rifle | +2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Short | | O | 400 |
| Sawn-off grape rifle | +2 | +1 | 2 | 3 | Short | | O | 400 |
| Grape carbine | +2 | +1 | 2 | 2 | Short | Automatic fire | O | 600 |

| RIFLES | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Long rifle | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Long | Single-shot | P | 100 |
| Sawed-off long rifle | 0 | +1 | 2 | 2 | Short | Single-shot | P | 100 |
| Accelerator rifle | +1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | Extreme | Armor-piercing, Night sights, Silent | O | 2,000 |
| Accelerator rifle Nestera Parox | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | Extreme | Heavy, Anti-vehicle, Armor-piercing, Night sights, Silent | O | 3,000 |
| Thermal rifle | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | Extreme | Armor-piercing, Night sights | A | 6,000 |

| HEAVY WEAPONS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vulcan machine gun | +1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | Short | Heavy, Bulky, Automatic fire, High capacity | O* | 6,500 |
| Accelerator machine gun | +1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | Long | Heavy, Bulky, Automatic fire, High capacity, Armor-piercing, Silent | O* | 10,000 |

TABLE 6.10 RANGED WEAPONS

| HEAVY WEAPONS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accelerator launcher | +1 | 0 | Grenade | 1 | Long | Heavy | O* | 8,000 |
| Missile launcher | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | Extreme | Heavy, Single-shot, Anti-vehicle | O* | 900 |
| Flamethrower | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | Short | Heavy, Fire 3 | O* | 1,800 |
| Grenade launcher | 0 | 0 | Grenade | Grenade | Long | Single-shot | O* | 1,200 |
| Thermal machine gun | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | Long | Heavy, Bulky, Thermal sweep, High capacity | A* | 22,000 |

| WEAPON SYSTEMS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Missile system | +2 | 0 | | | Extreme | Anti-vehicle | O* | 10,000 |
| – Armor-piercing | | | 5 | 1 | | Armor-piercing | | |
| – Blast | | | Grenade | Grenade | | | | |
| Thermal projector | +2 | 0 | 4 | 1 | Short | Thermal sweep, Fire 5, Bulky | A* | 26,000 |
| Firestorm system | +1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | Long | Anti-vehicle, Slow, Fire 6, Blast Power 5 | O* | 18,000 |

| OTHER | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blowpipe | 0 | +2 | 1 | 4 | Short | Light, Single-shot | P | 50 |
| Throwing knife | 0 | +1 | 1 | 2 | Short | Light | P | 50 |
| Throwing spear | +1 | +1 | 2 | 2 | Short | | P | 150 |
| Throwing axe | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Short | | P | 300 |
| Spear-thrower | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Short | Heavy, Single-shot | P | 600 |
| Harpoon | +1 | +1 | 2 | 3 | Short | Heavy, Single-shot | P | 200 |
| Combat bow | +1 | +1 | 3/Grenade | 2/Grenade | Long | Single-shot | O | 2,000 |

are armor-piercing. So-called firestorm systems fire incendiary warheads.

## GRENADES

The statistics for the different grenades are found in table 6.12 below. A grenade thrown by hand has Short Range.

- **STUN:** the grenade detonates with a loud bang and a blinding flash. Deals stress instead of damage.
- **SMOKE:** the grenade spreads thick smoke covering everything within Short Range.
- **SENSOR SMOKE:** as above, but the smoke also blocks sensors and makes them unusable within the smoke.
- **FRAG:** the grenade detonates with a small explosion but spreads shrapnel.
- **CONCUSSION:** the grenade detonates with a powerful explosion.
- **INFERNO:** the grenade detonates with a very powerful but concentrated explosion.
- **THERMAL:** the grenade spreads a cloud of flames, setting fire to people and gear caught by the blast.
- **THERMOBARIC:** the grenade detonates with a powerful explosion and the shockwave spreads a big cloud of fire.

**SALADIN GRAPE GUN**

A version of the long rifle, but with the bullet substituted for "grapes", tiny pieces of metal that expand in a cloud when the weapon is fired, which makes aiming less important. The generous spread of the grapes plus the impressive damage it can cause in close combat makes the grape gun a very imposing weapon.

**TABLE 6.11 BREACH CHARGES**

| TYPE | WEIGHT | EFFECT/TARGET |
|---|---|---|
| Small | About 5 kilograms | Thin walls, normal vehicles |
| Medium | About 10 kilograms | Thick walls, heavy vehicles |
| Heavy | About 100 kilograms | Entire houses, bridges |
| Massive | About 1 ton | Roads, entire blocks. |

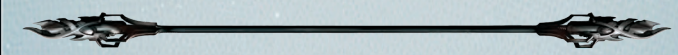


## MELEE WEAPONS

There is wide range of different melee weapons in the Horizon. Only a handful of the primitive variants are described below. Ordinary and Advanced melee weapons were engineered for combat onboard space stations or spaceships, as an alternative to firearms.



Ordinary melee weapons can be purchased from most merchants with flexible morals. Primitive weapons could be anything from blunt instruments and broken bottles to swords and axes.



**Power weapons** have hydraulic pistons that activate on impact for increased damage. Dura weapons have vibrating blades made from duralite that give them better cutting capabilities. Duralite blades are necessary to withstand the force of the vibrations created by the weapon. Dura claws come mounted on a glove and some models are retractable. Extending the claws – "drawing" them – is a fast action. Both power and dura weapons are cell-powered, and work like their Primitive counterparts if the cells are depleted.



**Stun weapons** deliver powerful electric shocks in addition to the damage from the actual blow (page 133). Energy weapons release a thermic blast that is much more dangerous than

TABLE 6.12 EXPLOSIVES AND GRENADES

| EXPLOSIVE | BONUS | INIT | BLAST POWER | DAMAGE | CRIT | RADIUS | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST | WEIGHT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breach charge | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | |
| – Small | | | 6 | 1 | 1 | Close | | 0 | 500 | Heavy |
| – Medium | | | 8 | 1 | 1 | Short | | 0 | 2,000 | Heavy |
| – Heavy | | | 12 | 1 | 1 | Short | | 0* | 10,000 | - |
| – Massive | | | 16 | 1 | 1 | Short | | 0* | 40,000 | - |

| GRENADE | BONUS | INIT | BLAST POWER | DAMAGE | CRIT | RADIUS | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST | WEIGHT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Concussion grenade | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 2 | Close | | 0 | 600 | Light |
| Frag grenade | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 1 | Close | | 0 | 500 | Light |
| Inferno grenade | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 1 | Short | | A* | 1,500 | Light |
| Sensor smoke grenade | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | Short | Blocks vision and sensors | 0 | 1,000 | Light |
| Smoke grenade | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | Short | Blocks vision | 0 | 400 | Light |
| Stun grenade | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | - | Close | Stun | 0 | 800 | Light |
| Thermal grenade | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 1 | Close | Fire 2 | A* | 2,000 | Light |
| Thermobaric grenade | 0 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 1 | Short | Fire 3 | A* | 4,000 | Light |

the hit itself. A certain amount of force is required to trigger the thermic effect, a function that has been added to limit the risk of self-harm. Some energy weapons also come with stun capabilities. Both stun and energy weapons require cells. When a cell is depleted, the weapon works like its Primitive counterpart.



**Mercurium weapons** are based on Advanced technology where liquid metals in the hilt of a weapon are activated and form a blade, after which they turn solid. Drawing and activating a mercurium weapon is one fast action. A cell is required to power the weapon. When the cell is depleted, the blade is extended and stays in solid form. A recharged cell used in a melee weapon can be force depleted by the GM at the cost of 1 DP.

## PERSONAL PROTECTION AND ARMOR

The inhabitants of the Horizon have always used body armor for protection, from simple leather suits to mechanized battle exos.

### PRIMITIVE ARMOR

Primitive body armor is used only by the least civilized of tribes and nomads. It is commonly crafted from organic fibers, pelts, wood, bone or antlers. Jackets, coats and suits of leather are common garments for travelers and could be considered light Primitive armor.

**Heavy Primitive armor** is usually carbide or metal plates linked together and shaped based on the wearer's body, or an armanite shell riveted onto flexible overalls.

### ORDINARY ARMOR

Ordinary armor is designed to protect against the common weapon types and is based on flexible but tough weaves of armanite. The heavier models have extra carbide plating and duralite reinforcements in sensitive areas.

TABLE 6.13 MELEE WEAPONS

| KNIVES AND SWORDS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knife | 0 | +1 | 2 | 2 | Close | Light | P | 50 |
| Sword | +1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Close | | P | 200 |
| Dura knife | 0 | +1 | 2 | 1 | Close | Light, Cell-powered | O | 500 |
| Dura sword | +1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | Close | Heavy, Cell-powered | O | 1,600 |
| Mercurium knife | +1 | +1 | 3 | 2 | Close | Light, Mercurium, Cell-powered | A | 1,500 |
| Mercurium sword | +2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | Close | Light, Mercurium, Cell-powered | A | 3,000 |

| AXES | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Axe | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | Close | Heavy | P | 150 |
| Dura axe | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | Close | Heavy, Cell-powered | O | 2,000 |
| Halberd | 0 | +1 | 3 | 2 | Close | Heavy, Long | P | 300 |
| Dura halberd | 0 | +1 | 3 | 1 | Close | Heavy, Long, Cell-powered | O | 2,500 |

| BLUNT WEAPONS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baton | +2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | Close | | P | 100 |
| Baton, expandable | +1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | Close | Light | P | 200 |
| Staff | +1 | +2 | 1 | 3 | Close | | P | 50 |
| Staff, expandable | +1 | +2 | 1 | 3 | Close | Light | P | 250 |
| Mace | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | Close | Heavy | P | 100 |
| Power sledge | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | Close | Heavy, Cell-powered | O | 1,000 |
| Power glove | +1 | +1 | 2 | 3 | Close | Light, Cell-powered | O | 1,500 |

| STUN AND ENERGY WEAPONS | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shock stick | +2 | 0 | 1 | Stun | Close | Stun, Cell-powered | O | 500 |
| Shock whip | 0 | +2 | 1 | Stun | Close | Light, Flexible, Stun, Cell-powered | O | 800 |
| Energy staff | +2 | +2 | 2 | 3 | Close | Stun, Heavy, Cell-powered | A | 1,000 |
| Energy stick | +2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | Close | Stun, Cell-powered | A | 1,200 |
| Energy whip | 0 | +2 | 2 | 3 | Close | Light, Flexible, Stun, Cell-powered | A | 1,800 |
| Hand fan | +1 | +2 | 2 | 1 | Close | Light, Cell-powered | A | 2,500 |

| OTHER | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unarmed | 0 | +2 | 1 | 3 | Close | | P | - |
| Brass knuckles | 0 | +2 | 2 | 3 | Close | Light | P | 50 |
| Claws | 0 | +2 | 1 | 2 | Close | | P | - |
| Dura claws | 0 | +2 | 1 | 1 | Close | Light | O | 600 |
| Spear | +1 | +2 | 2 | 2 | Close | Long | P | 200 |
| Whip | 0 | +2 | 1 | 4 | Close | Flexible | P | 50 |

**Exo shells** are space suits designed to protect against vacuum and other hazardous environments, but they also offer some protection from violence, especially the heavier models. Exo shells have an oxygen supply that lasts for eight hours and vacuum soles that stick to level surfaces, such as ship hulls for example.

**Protective clothing** is made from thin armanite weaves and are available as overalls, coats, jacket or pants.

**Light armor** is also made from armanite weaves. A light helmet is included, with a visor that protects the eyes. Light armors are the standards uniform of the Coriolis Guard and many freelance bodyguards and mercenaries.

**Heavy armor** consists of thick armanite sheets or duralite and carbide plating fastened in special pockets sewn onto a regular light armor. The helmet covers the entire head and has a full-face visor. The armed forces of most of the factions wear heavy armor only if they expect combat.

Putting on the heavy plates takes several minutes which means it cannot be done in combat. The soldiers of the Order of the Pariah have special black armanite mail with duralite reinforcements, easily recognizable from afar and associated with both oppression and strength.

### ⚙ ADVANCED ARMOR

Advanced armor is designed to protect against thermal attacks, something other armors offer weak protection from. Advanced suits of armor are expensive and hard to come by.

**Ablative pads** are materials that dissipate energy when hit by high-power attacks, to make less energy penetrate and reach the wearer. Ablative pads are add-ons to other armor and must be renewed after every hit. Doing so requires a **TECHNOLOGY** roll and a space part (A).

**Battle exos** are massive things, designed only for storm troopers and palace guards. They are based on a standard suit of heavy armor mounted on an exo skeleton with reinforced servos. As the exo gives the wearer extra strength and endurance, the armor can be made very strong and heavy. A superconductive mesh under the surface helps to spread out thermal attacks over a larger area. The suit is vacuum-proof and has built-in sealer technology that repair holes to keep the suit pressurized.

### AHLAM'S HAND FAN

The courtesans of Ahlam's Temple prefer subtle energy weapons. Rumors accuse them of using poison applied to hair needles, or that they use poisonous lipstick and kiss their victims to death, they themselves being immune to the venom from slow, gradual exposure. A weapon confirmed to be in the courtesans' arsenal is the hand fan, a weapon with Advanced energy technology. The tips of the fan discharge energy in silent bursts when the fan is open and quickly strikes at a target. The energy burns like a very sharp knife through most known materials, as long as they are fairly thin. Opening and closing the fan is a fast action. Opening it can be done in the same action as the weapon is drawn. The fan can only be parried with if it is closed.



### BATTLE EXO XOAR JANISSARY

The Janissary exo is advertised as Xoar's version of the Order's animated armor. Its quick spring servos, vacuum suit, jet actuators and built-in weapons make it a monster on the battlefield. The sheer size of the suit makes it unfit for use onboard ships or in bunkers, however. The Janissary is equipped with a grenade launcher, the Xoar Pulse accelerator carbine (bonus +1, Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 1) and a duralite axe blade (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 1). The exo is used by the Hegemony's janissary unit.

## SHIELDS

Shields come in many forms, from simple leather and wood shields used by Sogoi tribes to armanite shields. Advanced shields are only available as faction tech. The riot shield is made from partly transparent armanite and is used mainly by riot police. Combat shields are expandable covers for one soldier, with small holes to fire a gun through and transparent armanite windows for scouting.

## LICENSES

Without the proper licenses, purchasing, using and producing weapons is illegal in the civilized parts of the Horizon. Without a license (or the talent Licensed, page 73), you can only obtain weapons and armor illegally through contacts in the right places or factions. Licenses purchased on Coriolis will be valid in affiliated places as well, with some local variations. Most space ports and portal stations have sensor equipment that scan for weapons and contraband.

TABLE 6.14 ARMOR AND SHIELDS

| ARMOR | ARMOR RATING | FEATURES | EXTRA FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Light Primitive armor | 2 | Bulky | 0 | P | 300 |
| Heavy Primitive armor | 3 | Bulky | 0 | P | 600 |
| Flightsuit | 1 | - | 0 | 0 | 500 |
| Protective clothing | 3 | - | 0 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Exo shell | 2 | Bulky, Thermostatic suit, Vacuum suit, Oxygen supply | 0 | 0 | 2,000 |
| Reinforced exo shell | 3 | Bulky, Thermostatic suit, Vacuum suit, Oxygen supply | 1 | 0 | 3,000 |
| Light armor | 4 | - | 1 | 0 | 5,500 |
| Heavy armor | 6 | - | 1 | 0 | 10,000 |
| Ablative pads | - | Reduces damage from one hit by 3 | 0 | A* | 2,000 |
| Armored exo | 9 | Thermostatic suit, Vacuum suit, Oxygen supply, Reinforced exo servos | 2 | A* | 25,000 |
| Battle exo | 10 | Thermostatic suit, Vacuum suit, Oxygen supply, Reinforced exo servos | 5 | A* | 60,000 |

| SHIELDS | ARMOR RATING | FEATURES | EXTRA FEATURES | TECH TIER | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shield | 2 | Heavy | - | P | 100 |
| Riot shield | 4 | Heavy | - | 0 | 500 |
| Combat shield | 6 | Heavy | - | 0 | 800 |

## WEAPON AND ARMOR FEATURES EXPLAINED

Weapons and armor can have different features and add-ons. These are explained in detail below. Unique rules for specific models are explained in the descriptions above.

### WEAPON FEATURES

The list below describes the different features a weapon might have.

- **Anti-vehicle** means that the weapon is designed to take out vehicles or fortifications. The weapon does +2 damage against these targets.
- **Armor-piercing weapons** fire very fast or extra heavy projectiles that penetrate armor more effectively, but tend to cause less damage to soft targets. The Armor Rating of the target is reduced by 2, but the damage is reduced by 1 if the target has no armor.
- **Automatic fire** means that the weapon is capable of fully automatic fire (page 89).
- **Bulky weapons** cannot be used standing up without a weapon harness, or the shooter will suffer a -2 to **RANGED COMBAT**.
- **Cell-powered melee weapons** require a cell to function. Without a cell, they are treated as their Primitive counterparts.
- **Fire** makes objects and targets catch fire when they are hit by the weapon (see Fire in Chapter 5). The number tells you how many dice to roll for the fire each turn.
- **Flexible weapons**, such as whips, can be used to pin an opponent even without rolling extra sixes (see page 86) – the first six rolled can be used to achieve a grapple hold.
- **Light weapons** only count as half an item in the character inventory (page 27). They are also easier to carry concealed, requiring an **OBSERVATION** test for someone to spot the weapon.
- **Heavy weapons** count as two items in the character inventory.
- **High capacity weapons** have extra-large magazines or extra cells that enable the shooter to ignore the first 1 rolled when firing fully automatic fire (page 89).
- **Long weapons** add a +2 to the weapon's initiative bonus – but only in the first turn of combat.
- **Mercurium** means that the blade of the weapon is hidden inside the hilt, requiring an **OBSERVATION** test with a -2 modifier to spot during a search.
- **Reliable weapons** are simple and robust, and will almost never break. The weapon jam effect will cost the GM 4 DP instead of 3.
- **Slow weapons** can only be fired every other turn.
- **Single-shot weapons** have no magazines and must be reloaded between each shot.
- **Silent** is a function that can be activated (a fast action) to make the weapon quieter and harder to detect when it is fired (requiring an **OBSERVATION** test). A weapon in silent mode does -1 damage.
- **Stun** means that the weapon inflicts stress instead of damage.
- **Thermal sweep** means that the weapon can fire a continuous thermal beam that can be swept across several enemies. This works like automatic fire above.

### ARMOR FEATURES

Some armor suits listed above have one or more extra features. Choose the corresponding number of extra features from the list below.

- **Built-in weapon:** The armor has a built-in weapon – a pistol, dagger or short sword. The weapon must be purchased separately.
- **Bulky** armor gives the wearer a -2 to **DEXTERITY** rolls.
- **Camouflage unit:** When activated, the unit creates a camouflage field around the suit that makes it almost invisible and very difficult to detect (-3 to **OBSERVATION**).
- **High-density armanite:** +1 to Armor Rating.
- **Hydrostatic gel:** +3 to Armor against explosions or falling.
- **Oxygen supply:** Eight hours' worth of oxygen, in a closed helmet.
- **Magnetic boots:** The boots of the suit have electromagnets to make them work in zero-G and stick to ship hulls.
- **Micro servos:** Give a +1 to **DEXTERITY** for jumping and running.
- **Reinforced exo servos:** +2 to **FORCE** rolls. Throwing weapons have their damage increased by 1.
- **Thermostatic suit:** See details under Survival and Colonization on page 117.
- **Vacuum suit:** Protects against vacuum and radiation.
- **Zero-G jet:** Tiny thrusters give increased maneuverability in zero-G (+1 to **DEXTERITY**).

### AMMUNITION, CELLS AND RELOADS

One unit of ammo is included when you buy a weapon. It could be a magazine, a cell or just a handful of arrows or bullets. In Coriolis, you don't keep track of your ammo shot by shot, but you could still run out and need to reload. Extra ammunition – abstracted as "reloads" – will cost you differently depending on what weapon you are using. If you have purchased three extra units of ammunition for example, write "reload x 3" in your gear list.



# CYBERNETICS AND BIONICS

Many cultures in the Third Horizon regard the body as holy, a vessel the Icons have blessed with a soul. Thanks to this, many see cybernetic or bionic modification as something bad, or even blasphemous. Extremists on the matter include the Zenithian Hegemony, whose members are obsessed with blood purity, and certain Icon cults such as the Face of Truth on Sadaal.

To many colonists and mercenaries, however, cybernetic prostheses and mods or bionic sculpts could be the difference between life and death. To the Legionnaires, it is even a status symbol to have prosthetic limbs, cybernetic modifications and scars from wound staples. It also makes them look more menacing – an important trait in their line of work.

Specific cybernetic implants and bionic sculpts are handled as both equipment and as talents, and they are described in detail in Chapter 4.

## BIO SCULPTING

Just like cybernetics has its place within certain groups in the Horizon, so does bionic sculpting – although bigots and the narrow-minded strongly disagree. Tattoo Alley next to the Ozone Plaza on Coriolis houses several bio sculptors' shops. Most customers come for small cosmetic sculpts such as eye shadows, longer eye lashes or more accentuated cheek bones, but sometimes also for more controversial things like longer legs, micro hearts or other exotic mods.

Bio-sculpting thrives more openly on the independent station Ahalimm and among the nomads, and even sculpts as absurd as wings, tails and gills can be found out in the fringes of the Kua system – things that would cause riots or even lynchings in the core.

## CYBERNETICS

Cybernetic implants are treated as both talents and gear. They will cost you both XP and birr, and require healing after the procedure. During the healing process, the painful wounds give the PC a -2 to all skill tests. All cybernetics are Ordinary technology.

PCs with cybernetic implants will likely look heavier and larger than others, move somewhat mechanically or stand out in some other way. Cybernetics are hard to hide. If the PCs encounter an NPC with cybernetics, it will probably be fairly obvious to them that the person is modified in some way. Some people, such as legionnaires, choose to make their implants extra visible.

## BIONICS

Bionic sculpts are treated as both talents and gear. They will cost you both XP and birr, and require healing after the procedure. During the healing process, the painful wounds give the PC a -2 to all skill tests. All bionics are restricted Advanced technology.

Sculpts are subtler than cybernetics. Close observation of a person over time is often required to spot the extraordinary abilities. There are many different sculpts with many different purposes in the Horizon. The sculpts described here have both their talent name and a commercial name listed, given to them by the company or the sculptor.

**TABLE 6.15 CYBERNETIC IMPLANTS**

| TALENT | EXAMPLE OF COMMERCIAL NAME |
|---|---|
| ACCELERATED REFLEXES | Celer-Delekta Flexplant |
| ACTIVE SENSORS | Nyala Sonar Implant Exxis |
| BODY ARMOR | Nestera Bio Armor MK II |
| ENDO SKELETON | Tilides EndoX |
| BUILT-IN WEAPON | Xoar Thermal Wrist Indigo |
| WEATHERPROOF | Celer-Delekta Endothermic Capsule |
| SKIN ELECTRODES | Xoar Shockhand |
| COM LINK | Hyperion Head Link MK I |
| LIE DETECTOR | Hyperion Linguistic & Socio-Arithmetic Unit |
| CYBERNETIC MUSCLES | Celer-Delekta Sprintplant |
| TARGETING SCOPE | Nestera AccVision |
| PASSIVE SENSORS | Nyala Thermo Sensors |
| VOICE AMPLIFIER | Hyperion Larynx Implant MK II |
| SERVO LOCKS | Tilides ServoX |
| LANGUAGE MODULATOR | The Foundation's Linguist Base |
| WATER BREATHING | Nestra Aqualung Dipridon |

### THE FURY OF THE MOB

The Horizon is not always a place of enlightened dialogue. In some places, divergence is something foul that should not be allowed to exist. A PC with one or more visible implants or sculpts might be subjected to threats and verbal abuse, or sometimes even violence. A society's technological level will affect the population's view on implants and sculpts, as will the context of the situation – whether the PCs talk to a fiery end-of-days preacher or a forgiving beggar matron will likely have a drastic impact on the way they are treated

**TABLE 6.16 BIONIC SCULPTS**

| TALENT | EXAMPLE OF COMMERCIAL NAME |
|---|---|
| REGENERATE | Yahmin's Closing Wounds |
| BUILT-IN WEAPON | Hamurbi's Bone Claws |
| INTELLIGENT | Doctor Zvijamin's Logic |
| MORPH | Afrat's Winged Morph |
| NIMBLE | Djimad's Refined Touch |
| QUICK | Bio-Nerves of the Jaguar |
| BEAUTIFUL | Nefriti's Grace |



CHAPTER 7

# SPACESHIPS AND STAR TRAVEL

*Each culture of the Horizon has its own tradition for spacecraft construction. Firstcome shipbuilders, like the Cheleb dockyards on Mira, construct elegant craft with flowing, soft silhouettes, while the Darkos docks and other Zenithian builders tend to put function before form, their ships all sharp angles and massive hulls.*

**THE VOIDFARERS – Biez Tulsa**

In Coriolis, your PCs will travel the stars in a ship of their own. This chapter details star travel in the Third Horizon, how to create your own spaceship, and how space combat works.

## STAR TRAVEL IN THE THIRD HORIZON

Star travel in the Third Horizon requires both steady nerves and plenty of time – how long the trip will take can be affected by anything from corsair attacks and asteroid fields to the immense distances of binary or trinary star systems. No captain should leave port without doing solid research about the route. Help is provided by the Bulletin's Astrostradium – an enormous database describing a large number of routes, coordinates and space stations all across the Horizon. Interplanetary travel times can also vary greatly depending on the orbit of the planet you are traveling to.

Chapter 12 describes the minimum distances from the sun to the planets in the Kua system. Spaceflights are rarely longer than the shortest distance between the planetary bodies, as the pilots will chart courses toward their destinations' approaching orbits. Thus, the ship and the planet are moving towards each other. Calculate travel times using the shortest distance listed between two planets.

## TRAVEL BETWEEN SYSTEMS

Travel between systems is via the portals – mysterious wormholes left behind by the Portal Builders (read more in Chapter 13). The portals are found close to the sun of each system, closer than any of the planetary orbits. Some stars have more than one portal, each one leading to a different system. The entry field into a portal is not the same as the exit field; they lead to and from the same destination but are separate from each other.

Travel between two portals in a system takes about one day, and the preparations before the jump also take about a day – usually spent waiting for a convoy to come along to split the jump fee with. The jump itself is instantaneous. Heavily trafficked systems like Kua usually see one or two convoys per week, while convoys in the outer systems could be whole segments (p 232) apart.

Bulk haulers are the highest priority for the portal stations

### THE BULLETIN'S ASTROSTRADIUM

The section of the Consortium tasked with gathering information about star systems is called the Foundation, but it is the Bulletin, through its Astrostradium, that supplies captains with data about routes, portal stations, space ports, astronomical anomalies and other useful information. For a small fee, any ship can update its astronical database at a portal station. Unfortunately, the data is not always up to date, and an unlucky crew could find itself in an ion storm or a corsair ambush even on a "safe" route.

### CALCULATING TRAVEL TIMES

**Interplanetary distances are measured in Astronomical Units (AU). The distance between two planets is calculated like this:**

- **SHORTEST DISTANCE: The difference between the planets' individual distances from the sun.**
- **FARTHEST DISTANCE: The sum of the planets' individual distances from the sun.**
- **Divide the distance in AU by the spaceship's speed to get the travel time (in number of days).**

### COMMUNICATION DELAYS

Communication waves travel at the speed of light, which is roughly one AU per eight minutes – thus, getting a reply to a question takes at least 16 minutes per AU between you and the other party. No communication waves can pass through portals. Instead, a ship or a probe must make the jump and then transmit the message on the other side. This leads to great communication delays between systems. The Bulletin keeps multiple probes ready on every portal station, and anyone can pay to use them to send information. This is both expensive and not without risk however, as you never know who might be listening on the other end.

### PORTAL JUMPING

- **FEES AND CONVOYS.** For a price, the portal stations can calculate the portal fields' movements and current size, making the jump relatively safe. The fees are usually high, between 5,000 and 10,000 birr, which means most skippers prefer to share the cost by forming convoys and jumping together. Portal jumps with coordinates calculated for a convoy gives a +3 to the pilot's **PILOT** test.
- **BULK HAULERS.** Another way to jump is to wait for a bulk hauler to come by and jump alongside it. The haulers always get their coordinates and entry vectors on approaching the portal station, and tagging along with them is free, but requires an Easy (+1) **PILOT** test. Unfortunately, bulk hauler jumps are few and far between.
- **SOLO JUMP.** The broke skipper's last resort is to have the ship's crew itself make all jump calculations. This takes about four hours and requires a successful **SCIENCE** test. Each extra six reduces the time by one hour (to a minimum of one hour). The jump itself requires a **PILOT** test at -1.
- **JUMPING BLIND.** The truly desperate, often corsairs on the run and other criminals, can choose to jump blind, without any astronical calculations. This requires an unassisted **PILOT** test at -3.

and are cleared to jump straight away. They usually arrive at Kua once per segment, on the way to or from either Mira or Dabaran. One in five bulk haulers have Kua as their final destination, the rest only pass through. Smaller ships dock and unload some of their cargo as the space hulks pass by. The Kua portals are 3 AU apart, a journey the bulk haulers make in three days, but smaller vessels do much faster.

## PORTAL JUMPS

Jumping through a portal means traveling into the portal fields close to the sun of the system. Exactly how the portal fields function is unknown, but their proximity to the stars would indicate that they are powered by the stars' radiation or gravitation. The portal fields themselves are in constant movement, seemingly connected to the phases of their suns. Advanced mathematics are necessary before any portal jump to compute the field's current size, and a safe entry vector. Without such calculations, there is a great risk of only partly hitting the field – for the unlucky crew this means an instant of bright light, after which the ship simply disappears, or at the very least suffers enormous damage.

No human can travel through a portal field while awake. The crew must be put in stasis (cryogenic sleep), or they will suffer terrible mental and physical trauma (called "bad stasis", "hyper sickness" or "frostbite"), if they are unlucky enough to survive. On voyages through several systems, most of the crew is left in stasis for the entire time and only woken up at the final destination. In dangerous systems, such as Odacon, all of the crew is woken up after clearing the jump.



## PLANETSIDE LANDING

Making a trip from orbit down to a planet's surface usually takes one to a few hours. All ships must make preparations for atmospheric entry or take-off. This includes warming up the graviton projectors, securing the cargo and adjusting heat shields. Most freighters in the Third Horizon are too big for it to be practical for them to land planetside, instead docking with space stations in orbit above the planet where they unload their cargo to smaller vessels. Orbit ports are found above most planets with large enough populations, while systems with fewer inhabitants instead rely on spaceports on the portal stations.

In the orbit ports, cargo from the bulk haulers is redistributed to smaller spaceships and then brought down to the surface below. Some cargo is put up for auction (usually in planetside souks) where free traders bid on contracts for transporting it to colonies and space stations farther from the hub of the system. Systems on the periphery of the Horizon, outside of the circle of Dabaran and the Miran chain, are not visited by bulk haulers at all.

**TABLE 7.1 JUMP MODIFIERS**

| FACTOR | MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| Prayer and sacrifice | +1 (takes about four hours) |
| Chapel onboard | +1 |
| Anointed priest onboard | +2 |

**TABLE 7.2 FAILED PORTAL JUMPS**

Roll on the table when a portal jump fails. All results but the last one mean that the ship remains in the system it attempted to leave. If you failed when jumping blind, add a +1 to the die showing the tens.

| D66 | OUTCOME |
|---|---|
| 11-14 | The ship enters the field at its very edge, causing explosive decompression in a random module. |
| 15-22 | The field absorbs the energy of the ship's reactor. The ship is disabled, requiring D6 days of repairs. |
| 23-26 | The ship enters the portal but is flung out again, after taking D6 points of damage. |
| 31-34 | The ship is hit by powerful discharges from the portal, suffering a -1 to Maneuverability until repaired in a dockyard. |
| 35-44 | The ship collides with another ship or some debris on its way into the portal. This has the same effects as ramming (page 169). |
| 45-53 | The ship enters the portal and is lost there for D6 hours. Then it returns, now haunted by something from beyond the Darkness. The GM decides the details. |
| 54-61 | The ship disappears into the portal for D6 days, but is then spat back out in the system it tried to leave. One PC onboard suffers a Mania (page 337). |
| 62-66 | The ship disappears into the portal for D6 months, but is then spat back out in the system it tried to leave. |
| 71-76 | The ship enters the portal, but exits it in a random system. |

# SPACECRAFT IN THE THIRD HORIZON

A multitude of different types of spacecraft travel the Horizon. Most have been constructed recently, albeit using plans and traditions centuries old, but some routes are still traveled by old, pre-Zenith vessels. Thanks to the Consortium's rapid expansion, the shipyards of the Horizon are coming back to life. New types of simple but robust ships are being produced modularly, and then fitted for different purposes. Warships are built in only a few shipyards, and the larger ones are generally hundreds of years old, predating even the Portal Wars. All ships in the Third Horizon are divided into classes by their size, each class having its own set of game stats, as described in the adjacent boxed text. Modules are chosen when the ship is constructed, but can also be added later on. Features are minor additions that improve the ship.



## SHIP STATS

- **CLASS** is a measure of the ship's size, from a small scout ship or fighter (class I) to a bulk hauler (class V). Class determines how much energy is needed to power the ship.
- **MODULES** indicate how many optional modules the ship can hold, beyond the three required modules of bridge, reactor and graviton projector.
- **ENERGY POINTS (EP)** is a measure of the strength of the reactor – how much energy there is to distribute between the different functions of the ship.
- **HULL POINTS (HP)** determine how much physical damage the ship can take.
- **MANEUVERABILITY** indicates how agile and easy to maneuver the ship is.
- **SIGNATURE** determines how difficult the ship is to detect by others.
- **ARMOR** tells you how many dice you get for your armor test.
- **SPEED** is used to calculate travel times in number of days, by dividing the distance (in AU) by the ship's speed.
- **COST** is the base price of the ship, without any features or extra modules.

## TABLE 7.3 SHIP CLASSES

**Below are the different ship classes and some examples of corresponding spaceships. Class 0 are spacecraft so small they should be handled using the vehicle rules in Chapter 5.**

| CLASS | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|
| (0) | Drone, space scooter, probe, torpedo, grav bike |
| I | Breach torpedo, fighter, ground loader, gravcraft |
| II | Torpedo ship, armored hovercraft, shuttle |
| III | Light freighter, patrol ship, gunship, courier ship, destroyer |
| IV | Heavy freighter, cruiser, salvage ship, mining ship |
| V | Battlecruiser, bulk hauler, portal station |

**TABLE 7.4 SHIP TYPES**

| SHIP TYPE | CLASS | APPROPRIATE GROUP CONCEPT |
|---|---|---|
| System Shuttle | II | Agents |
| Torpedo Ship | II | Mercenaries |
| Light Freighter | III | Agents, Free Traders, Explorers, Pilgrims |
| Medium Freighter* | III | Free Traders, Explorers |
| Courier Ship* | III | Agents, Free Traders, Explorers |
| Express Freighter* | III | Free Traders |
| Patrol Ship* | III | Agents, Mercenaries, Pilgrims |
| Gunship | III | Mercenaries |
| Assault Ship | III | Mercenaries |
| Blockade Runner* | III | Mercenaries |
| Pleasure Cruiser* | III | Agents |
| Flying Circus* | III | Pilgrims |
| Mining Ship* | IV | Explorers |
| Repurposed Space Station | IV | Explorers |
| Passenger Ship* | IV | Pilgrims |

*Premade ship plans available



# CREATE YOUR SHIP

When creating your group of PCs, you also get to choose a spaceship. Each group concept lists options, which are detailed in the table to the left. Plans showing the layout of some of these ships can be found at the end of this book. If you don't want to choose one of these, you are free to create your own spaceship by following these steps:

**CREATE YOUR OWN SPACESHIP**

1. Decide what kind of spaceship you need.
2. Determine its class and its origin shipyard.
3. Pick a ship problem.
4. Pick modules.
5. Pick three features.
6. Modify the ship's game stats according to the modules and features you chose.
7. Calculate the group's debt.

A ship needs a crew, and the crew's minimum size is determined by the class of the ship. Certain positions must be filled, either by real people or by advanced computers (see Features, below). Some very small ships are crewed only by a pilot.

## TYPE AND CLASS

Your first choice is what type of ship you have – a fast courier vessel, a trusty freighter or a rugged gunship? Decide on what you need in terms of cargo space, torpedoes, defense systems, etc. Use the premade ships on page 158 for inspiration if you want. Class III is usually a good fit for a normal group of players. Table 7.5 details the starting game stats for the different classes. The game stats can be modified by your choice of modules and features.

**SHIPYARDS IN THE HORIZON**

- **CHELEBS** – Mira: Beautiful, lean and fast ships. +1 to Maneuverability, but +1 to Signature. +5% to base price.

- **HARIMA** – The Monolith: Fast ships designed for pursuit or courier missions. Luxurious. +1 EP, but -1 HP. +5% to base price.
- **KARRMERRUK** – Zalos: Pariah ships, antimatter propulsion. Unlocks the feature Antimatter Rockets. No price increase unless you pick this feature.
- **DARKOS** – Kua Asteroid Belt: Practical, armed freighters. +1 HP, but -2 to armor. +5% to base price.
- **HALGRIA** – in orbit between Coriolis and Kua: Cheap freighters of low quality, also bulk haulers. -1 to Maneuverability, but +(Class) extra modules. -5% to base price.
- **DAHARAB** – Sadaal B (the Syndicate/Ferekam): Freighters and battleships with illegal armaments. -1 to extra modules, but +(Class) modules reserved for weapons. +5% to base price.

## THE SHIP'S PROBLEM

To make your ship feel more unique, you should give it a problem. The problem will not always be active – the GM can activate it using his Darkness Points. Choose from the examples below or use your imagination.

- **FAULTY THRUSTERS:** The ship's thrusters are unreliable, especially when under stress. When the problem is activated, the ship suffers a -1 to Maneuverability, lasting during a combat encounter or some other event requiring dice rolls, such as docking.
- **CURSE:** The Icons have turned their gaze away from the ship, making portal jumps and longer space travel dangerous. When the problem is activated, you get a -1 when rolling for a portal jump, and space travel counts as one danger level higher (page 140).

***Example***

*Sabah's group is about to create their spaceship. They want something fast, and with the ability to land planetside. They find a small courier vessel they like, and name it Narzalus.*

***Example***

*The ship Narzalus is built in the Chelebs shipyards on Mira, and is therefore slim and streamlined. Its starting game stats are modified with a +1 to Maneuverability but also a +1 to Signature. The Narzalus is a class III ship and its starting stats are as follows: Maneuverability +1, 5 EP, 6 HP, Signature +1, Armor 5, Speed 2 and up to 10 extra modules.*

TABLE 7.5 SHIP CLASSES

| CLASS | MANEUVER | MODULES | EP | HP | SIGNATURE | ARMOR | SPEED | TYPES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | +2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | -2 | 3 | 4 | Fighter, space scooter |
| II | +1 | 6 | 4 | 4 | -1 | 4 | 4 | Shuttle, torpedo ship |
| III | 0 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 2 | Light freighter, courier ship, gunship, patrol ship, medium freighter |
| IV | -1 | 20 | 6 | 9 | +2 | 7 | 1 | Heavy freighter, mining ship, passenger ship |
| V | -2 | 40 | 7 | 12 | +3 | 9 | 1 | Battlecruiser, bulk hauler |

**TABLE 7.6 COST**

| CLASS | BIRR |
|---|---|
| I | 100,000 |
| II | 200,000 |
| III | 1,000,000 |
| IV | 2,000,000 |
| V | 10,000,000 |

***Example***

*The group thinks that a bickering ship intelligence seems fun, and therefore pick "eccentric ship intelligence" to be the problem of Narzalus.*

**USING DARKNESS POINTS ON SHIPS**

**Darkness Points can be used during travel and combat in space. Below are effects that the GM can trigger:**

- **BROKEN SYSTEM: A system onboard stops working. It could be anything from a weapon system to life support. A TECHNOLOGY or DATA DJINN roll is required to repair it. Costs 3 DP, or 1 DP if the system in question was poorly tended to.**
- **SHIP PROBLEM: The ship's problem is activated. Details are specified in the list of problems above. Costs 2 DP.**
- **OVERLOAD: A system is overloaded, either from neglected upkeep or a temporary malfunction. The system stops working for three turns (see Service, below). Costs 1 DP.**

- **UNRELIABLE SENSORS:** The sensors of the ship are of poor quality. When the problem is activated, all **DATA DJINN** sensor rolls suffer a -1 during a combat encounter or some other event requiring dice rolls.
- **WORN-OUT SHIP COMPUTER:** The ship's computer has seen better days. When the problem is activated, all **PILOT** rolls suffer a -1 during a fight or some other event requiring dice rolls.
- **SLOW ACCELERATOR:** The grav projector's accelerator unit is slow and unresponsive. When the problem is activated, moving the ship in combat costs one extra EP.
- **OBVIOUS SIGNATURE:** The hull reflects radiation, making it easy to spot on sensors. When the problem is activated, all opponents get a +2 to their **DATA DJINN** rolls to detect the ship.
- **ECCENTRIC SHIP INTELLIGENCE:** Requires the feature Ship Intelligence. When the problem is activated, the intelligence will refuse to perform a specific task and instead begin to protest loudly over the ship's intercom. The effect lasts during a combat encounter, or a few hours.

## MODULES

A ship has a number of modules, each one supplying some important function. All spaceships in the Third Horizon have three required modules:

- Bridge
- Reactor
- Graviton Projector

All other modules are called optional modules. How many of these that can be fitted on a ship depends on the ship's class. The starting number of modules can be modified by the feature Extra Modules (see below). To serve its purpose, different ships need different combinations of the modules listed below. Small ships can fit few modules, while larger ships usually have plenty of space. The cost of optional modules is added to the ship's base price – see the adjacent list.

## REQUIRED MODULES

### BRIDGE (0)

The bridge is the brain of the ship, housing the stations of the captain, the pilot and the sensor operator. Sensors and propulsion are controlled from the bridge, and from here, you can gaze out into the Dark between the Stars. On small ships, the bridge is called a cockpit.



TABLE 7.7 MODULES

| MODULE | BONUS | FUNCTION | BIRR |
|---|---|---|---|
| Salvage Station | | Salvaging wrecks and debris | 55,000 |
| Docking Station | | Docking with other ships | 15,000 |
| Hangar | | Harboring other ships | 10,000 |
| Cabins – Coffins | | Cramped sleeping spaces | 15,000 |
| Cabins – Standard | | Decent living quarters | 25,000 |
| Cabins – Suite | | Luxurious living quarters | 40,000 |
| Chapel | +1 | Worship of the Icons | 10,000 |
| Cargo Hold | | Storing cargo | 5,000 |
| Medlab | +3 | Tending to the wounded | 10,000 |
| Escape Pods | | Abandoning the ship | 20,000 |
| Mining Station | | Mining for gas and minerals | 75,000 |
| Service Station | | Used for ship repairs and maintenance | 45,000 |
| Smuggler's Stash | | Hiding contraband | 5,000 |
| Stasis Hold | | Needed for portal jumps | 25,000 |
| Torpedo and Mine System | | Storing and firing torpedoes/mines | 20,000 |
| Weapon System | | Destroying enemy ships | Varies |
| Workshop | +1 | Fixing broken gear and systems | 7,500 |

**TECH LEVEL**

Just like regular gear, ship modules and features have a tech level (page 104). Usually, spaceships and their associated technology is of Ordinary tech level (O), but some modules and features are Advanced (A), and some rare ones even Factionary (F). Some modules are restricted (marked *) – to purchase these, someone in the crew must have the talent Licensed (page 73).

**THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCKING STATIONS**

**The Docking Station module, while optional, is almost a necessity for ships above class II. Without it, you won't be able to dock with space stations or other spaceships, and thus you will need to land in a hangar to enter or exit the ship.**

**REACTOR (O)**

Almost all ships in the Third Horizon use hydrogen based fusion reactors to power their engines. Each ship class has its own reactor size. There are features that increase reactor output.

**GRAVITON PROJECTOR (O)**

A large generator and an exhaust system, ejecting gravitons that push against nearby gravity fields, thus propelling the spaceship forward. The graviton flow can be directed in different directions, enabling the ship to maneuver. The exhaust stream can cause gravitational phenomena – the gravity closest to the projector exhaust is severely increased, followed by dangerously violent shifts in the gravity farther away. The area around a craft about to take off is generally cleared out in advance, and the pilot will slowly turn up the projector's effect. The graviton projector is generally located at the rear of a ship.

## OPTIONAL MODULES

**SALVAGE STATION (O)**

To be able to salvage wrecks and space junk, you will need lots of empty space, a system of derricks, some mechanized grabber arms and a good hull cutter. The salvage module can be used to salvage debris or ships up to one class below that of your own ship.

**DOCKING STATION (O)**

The ship has a docking hatch and extendable tunnel that enables you to dock with other ships. The station includes an airlock that can perform rudimentary decontamination of visitors and foreign objects. A ship without a docking station must land inside a hangar, or let smaller ships into its own hangar, for the crew to enter or exit the ship.

**HANGAR (O)**

Being able to let smaller spaceships into one's own ship has many advantages. How big a ship the hangar will fit depends on the class of your ship – the ship entering the hangar can be two classes below that of your ship at the largest. Normally, only one ship at a time can be in the hangar, but for every additional step of class difference, the number of ships the hangar will fit is multiplied by four. Thus, a class V ship

hangar will fit one class III vessel, four class II ships, or 16 class I vessels. You can have more than one hangar on a ship. Hangars are very handy when it comes to repairs (page 168).

### CABINS (O)

Cabins for crew or passengers. The passenger capacity depends on the type of accommodation, but also means different levels of comfort – and in turn what kinds of people might see the ship as a viable mode of transportation.

- **COFFINS:** Small, coffin-like compartments in rows and layers. A shared hygiene unit.
- **STANDARD:** Personal cabins of about 3x2 meters. Each cabin has a bed and a hygiene unit. The module contains a shared small recreational space with a table and chairs.
- **SUITE:** A big suite with an enormous bed and spaces for hygiene and recreation as large as possible on a spacecraft in the Horizon.

The passenger capacity per module depends on the type of accommodation and the ship's class:

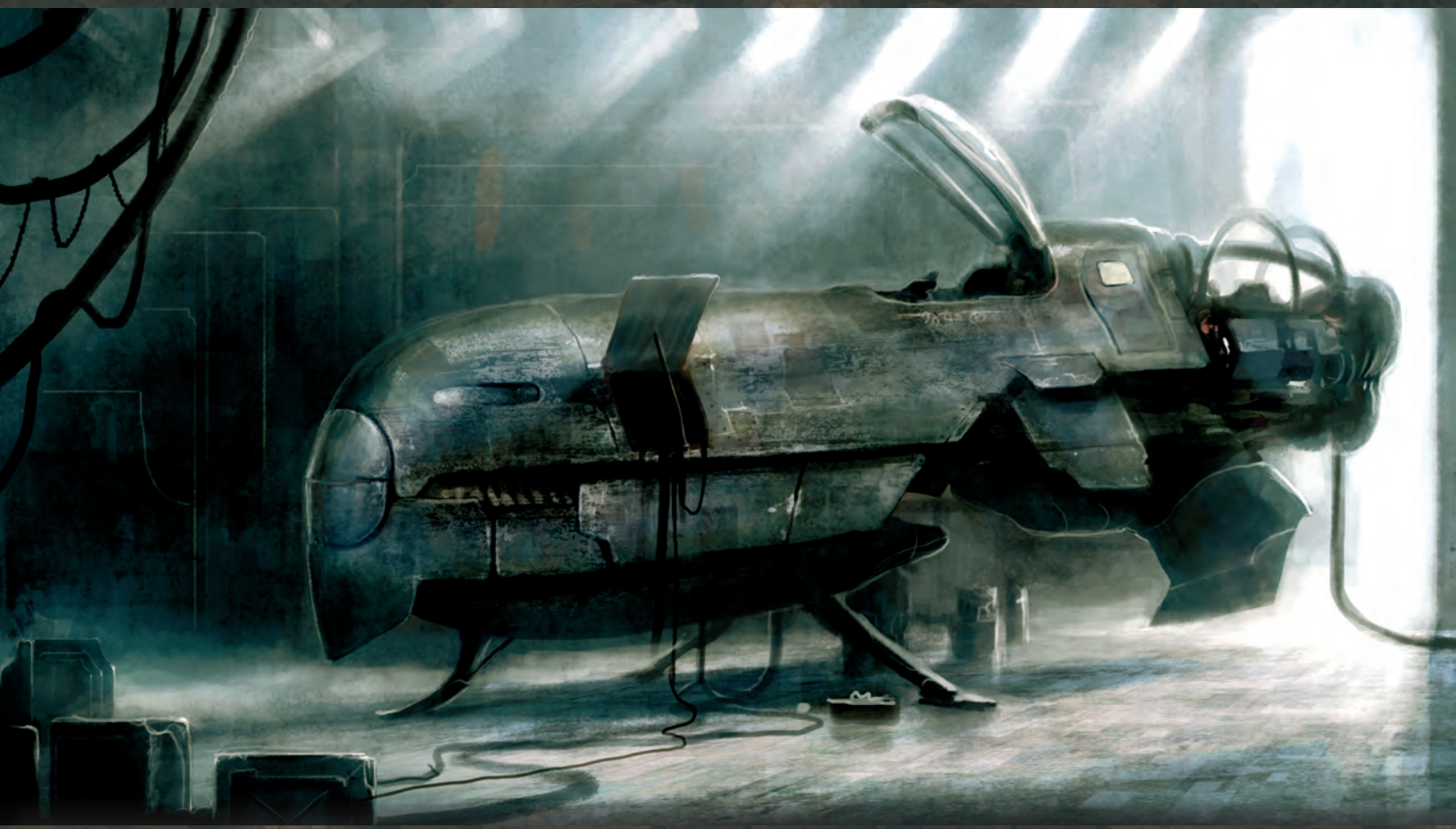
| CLASS | COFFINS | STANDARD | SUITE |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | 1 | - | - |
| II | 4 | 1 | - |
| III | 16 | 4 | 1 |
| IV | 64 | 16 | 4 |
| V | 256 | 64 | 16 |

### CHAPEL (O)

An area reserved for worshipping the Icons, with eight visible Icons, and an asymmetry in their placement (or an empty alcove) for the Faceless One. Grants a +1 to the prayer reroll for the entire crew (page 55), as well as a bonus to portal jumps (page 139).

### CARGO HOLD (O)

The area has atmosphere and climate control systems for the cargo to survive the journey. How much of a load the cargo hold can take depends on the class of the ship. See the table on the next page.



| CLASS | LOAD/MODULE |
|---|---|
| I | 1 ton |
| II | 5 tons |
| III | 50 tons |
| IV | 250 tons |
| V | 1000 tons |

### MEDLAB (O)

The medlab is a module used when treating wounds. Read more in Chapter 5.

### ESCAPE PODS (O)

These "lifeboats" allows the crew of a doomed ship to escape certain death. Activating a pod is a normal action. The pods contain oxygen and supplies for a week, and are sometimes equipped with exo shells, medicines and other useful items. An emergency transmitter is installed in every pod, but they lack any means of propulsion. The number of emergency pods per module is determined by the class of the ship. Class I ships are too small to fit any pods at all.

| CLASS | PODS/MODULE |
|---|---|
| I | - |
| II | 1 (4 people) |
| III | 2 (8 people) |
| IV | 4 (16 people) |
| V | 16 (64 people) |

### MINING STATION (O)

This module is a necessity for a crew who wants to prospect for valuable gases and minerals. It contains drills, ore nets, some smaller magnet trawls and equipment for the crew – handheld drills, vibro picks, and pry bars for manual labor. To store the findings, you need a cargo hold.

### SERVICE STATION (O)

The service station is a non-pressurized cargo unit loaded with whatever the ship might need in terms of repairs. The module aids the engineer with repairs during travel. Crews that travel far across the stars would do well to keep a fully stocked service station on their ship. Read more in the sections Service & Maintenance (page 155) and Ship Combat (page 162).

### SMUGGLER'S STASH (O)

A hidden compartment for sensitive cargo. Since the stash needs to stay hidden, most of the actual module is filled with something else – perhaps a relaxation unit or just ordinary cargo. The hidden stash can hold only 20% of the weight that a regular cargo hold can hold (above). Finding a hidden stash requires a successful **OBSERVATION** test.

### STASIS HOLD (A)

The stasis hold contains beds for cryogenic sleep. Without stasis, portal jumps are basically suicide, or at the very least a one-way ticket to chronic hyper madness. Stasis is sometimes also used during long interplanetary trips. Ships with a destination several jumps away usually won't wake passengers or non-essential crew until after the final jump is completed. The number of stasis beds is determined by the class of the ship:

| CLASS | STASIS BEDS |
|---|---|
| I | 1 |
| II | 4 |
| III | 16 |
| IV | 64 |
| V | 256 |

### TORPEDO AND MINE SYSTEM

A module for storing and firing torpedoes and mines. Can hold up to four torpedoes or eight mines (a mine counts as half a torpedo). The actual torpedoes and mines need to be purchased individually. A critical hit in the torpedo room destroys all of its torpedoes, and could be disastrous to the whole ship.

### WEAPON SYSTEM (O/A/F*)

Weapon systems are not bought like other modules. Each system is a separate module, with its own cost in birr – see table 7.9. Torpedoes and mines are not a weapons system as such. They require a torpedo and mine system, and each torpedo/mine needs to be purchased separately.

### WORKSHOP (O)

This module is a complete workshop for making repairs onboard. The module gives a +1 to all **TECHNOLOGY** rolls, including repairs of the ship itself. The workshop can only be used for repairs of up to Ordinary level equipment (but see the feature Advanced Workshop).

**TABLE 7.8 WEAPON SYSTEMS DESCRIPTIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Countermeasure Dispenser | A powerful sensor buoy launched from the ship to lure away incoming torpedoes. A "hit" firing this weapon means that the target torpedo misses its target. May also be used for defensive fire (page 170). |
| Data Pulse | A pulse of harmful data that damages the systems of an enemy ship. Inflicts systems damage instead of hull damage. |
| Data Meme | A meme, a self-learning program, is broadcast into the systems of an enemy ship. A data meme attack has two stages. First, the sensor operator (page 169) analyzes the ship. This counts as an action in space combat, costs 1 EP to perform, and requires a DATA DJINN roll, modified by the Signature of the enemy ship. The target doesn't need to be locked. If the roll is successful, the sensor operator learns what modules are present on the enemy ship. The second stage is launching the meme itself. Only a ship that has been analyzed can be attacked. This also counts as an action in space combat, costs 1 EP and requires a DATA DJINN roll, modified by the Signature of the enemy ship. Targeting lock is not needed. The sensor operator chooses which module on the enemy ship to target. If the attack is successful, the targeted module is disabled, as if critically hit (page 172). The three required modules bridge, reactor and graviton projector cannot be targeted by a data meme. |
| Ion Missile | A missile that on impact delivers a powerful ionized discharge. Deals equal damage to both systems and hull. |
| Accelerator Cannon | A powerful magnetic railgun that fires metal projectiles at high velocity. |
| Meson Cannon | A cannon that fires disruptor beams. Ignores the effects of armor. |
| Thermal Cannon | A cannon firing rays of superheated plasma. |
| Heavy Accelerator Cannon | A cannon with a longer and bigger accelerator, dealing more damage. |
| Autocannon | A small Vulcan cannon used to counter boarding attempts or incoming torpedoes. Can be used for defensive fire (page 170). |
| Ion Cannon | A cannon firing beams of ionizing radiation. Deals equal damage to both systems and hull. |
| Nestera Mangler | An accelerator cannon with a high rate of fire and explosive slugs for very high damage. |
| Torpedo | A conventional torpedo. |
| Plasma Torpedo | A torpedo with a plasma warhead. Reduces the Armor Rating of the enemy ship by 1 until repairs are made. |
| Ion Torpedo | A torpedo with an ionized warhead. Deals equal damage to both systems and hull. |
| Antimatter Torpedo | A torpedo with an antimatter warhead. The detonation deals damage to all ships within Short range of the blast. |
| Nuclear Torpedo | A torpedo with a nuclear warhead. The detonation deals damage to all ships within Contact range of the blast. |
| Mine | Conventional mine. |
| Antimatter Mine | A mine with an antimatter warhead. The detonation deals damage to all ships within Short range of the blast. |
| Nuclear Mine | A mine with a nuclear warhead. The detonation deals damage to all ships within Contact range of the blast |

## FEATURES

The last step in creating your ship is picking features. You will start with three features, but you can add more later. There is no limit to how many features you can have, except your personal financial limits. The cost of features depends on the size of the ship. A feature will have its cost listed as a percentage of the ship's starting cost, usually 10%. Two features results in a cost increase of 20% and so on, see table 7.10.

### ABLATIVE ARMOR (A)

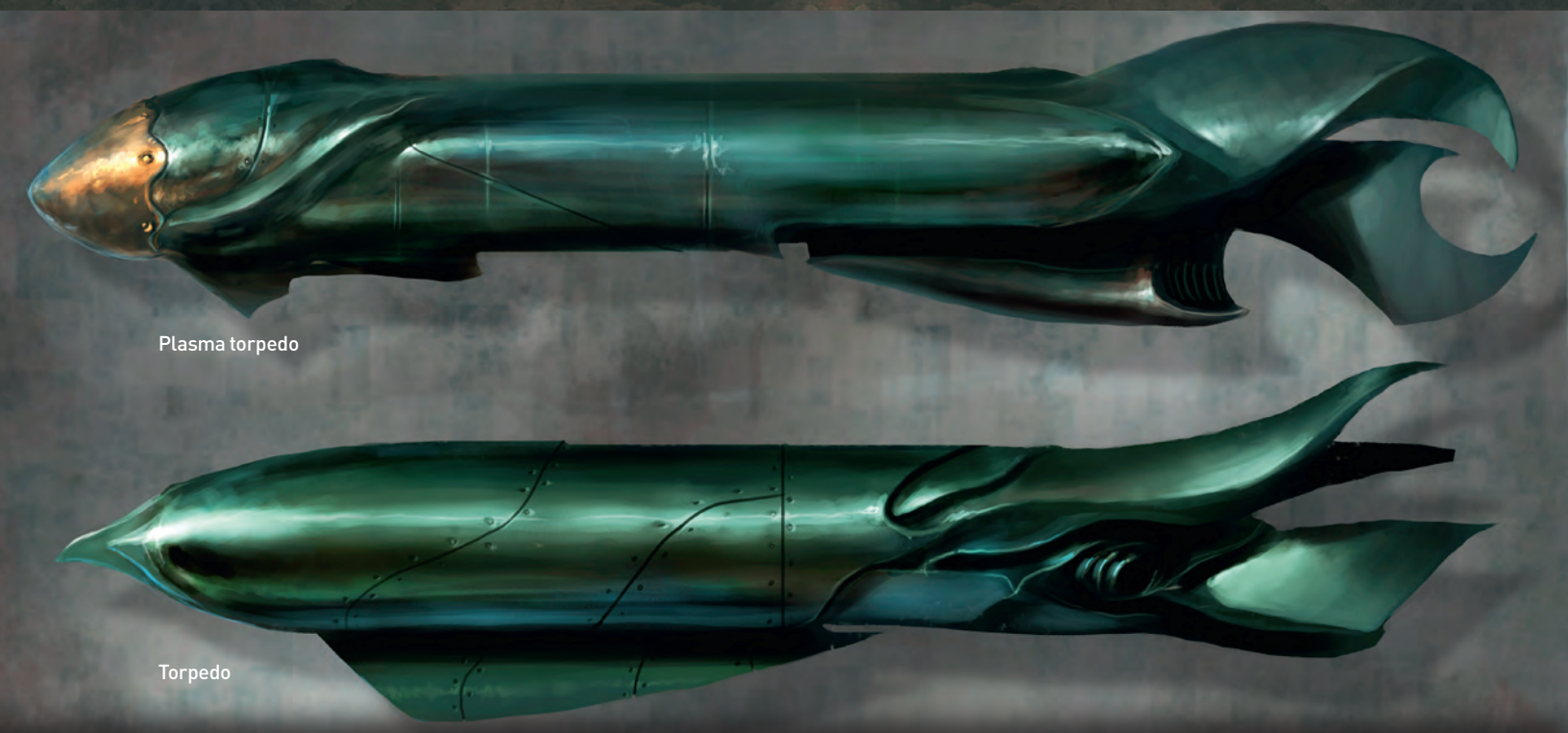
Reduces the damage of one hit by 3. The hit disables the armor which must be repaired by an engineer to function again.

### ADVANCED COUNTERMEASURES (O)

Countermeasure dispensers with smart jammers, duralite shrapnel and thermal globes. Gives +1 to using countermeasures.

**TABLE 7.9 WEAPON SYSTEMS DATA**

| WEAPON | BONUS | RANGE | DAMAGE | CRIT | TECH | COST | SPECIAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Countermeasure Dispenser | +2 | Short | - | - | O | 5,000 | |
| Data Pulse | 0 | Long | 1 | - | O | 50,000 | Armor has no effect. |
| Data Meme | 0 | Long | - | - | A | 75,000 | See page 149. |
| Ion Missile | +1 | Short | 1 | 3 | O | 7,500 | Inflicts both system and hull damage. |
| Accelerator Cannon | +1 | Medium | 1 | 2 | O | 25,000 | |
| Meson Cannon | 0 | Short | 2 | 1 | F* | N/A | Inflicts both system and hull damage. Armor has no effect. |
| Thermal Cannon | +1 | Long | 1 | 1 | A* | 70,000 | |
| Heavy Accelerator Cannon | +1 | Medium | 2 | 1 | O | 40,000 | |
| Autocannon | +2 | Contact | 2 | 3 | O | 15,000 | |
| Ion Cannon | +1 | Medium | 1 | 2 | O | 40,000 | Inflicts both system and hull damage. |
| Nestera Mangler | +1 | Medium | 1 | 1 | O | 50,000 | |
| Torpedo | +2 | Long | 2 | 2 | O | 5,000 | Moves 2 CU/turn. Price listed is per individual torpedo. |
| Plasma Torpedo | +2 | Long | 1 | 2 | A* | 10,000 | Moves 2 CU/turn. Degrades armor. |
| Ion Torpedo | +2 | Long | 1 | 2 | O | 8,000 | Moves 2 CU/turn. Inflicts both system and hull damage. |
| Antimatter Torpedo | +2 | Extreme | 4 | 1 | F* | 400,000 | Moves 2 CU/turn. Price listed is per individual torpedo. |
| Nuclear Torpedo | +2 | Long | 3 | 1 | A* | 30,000 | Moves 2 CU/turn. Price listed is per individual torpedo. |
| Mine | 0 | Contact | 2 | 2 | O | 3,000 | Price listed is per individual mine. |
| Antimatter Mine | 0 | Contact | 4 | 1 | F* | 300,000 | Price listed is per individual mine. |
| Nuclear Mine | 0 | Contact | 3 | 1 | A* | 20,000 | Price listed is per individual mine. |



Plasma torpedo

Torpedo



Ion missile

**TABLE 7.10 FEATURES**

| FEATURE | EFFECT | COST INCREASE |
|---|---|---|
| Ablative Armor | Reduces damage by 3 for one attack only. | 10% |
| Advanced Countermeasures | Gives +1 when launching countermeasures. | 10% |
| Advanced Targeting Computer | Gives +1 when locking onto targets. | 10% |
| Advanced Torpedoes | Gives -1 to the target ship's countermeasures. | 10% |
| Advanced Weapon System | Gives +1 when firing a specific weapon system. | 20% |
| Advanced Workshop | Can repair Advanced technology. | 10% |
| Antimatter Rockets | Maneuverability +2. | 20% |
| Arboretum | Helps the crew to recover Mind Points. | 5% |
| Atmospheric Entry | Land on/take off from planets. | 10% |
| Blessed Ship | Bonus +1 to portal jumps. | 5% |
| Bonus Modules | Increased capacity for carrying extra modules. | 20% |
| ED Fields | Protects against explosive decompression. | 20% |
| Ejector | Escape pod on the bridge. | 10% |
| External Cargo | Cargo on the outside of the hull, in vacuum. | 10% |
| Heavy Armor | Armor Rating +1, Maneuverability -1. | 10% |
| Library Database | Gives you +3 to CULTURE or SCIENCE rolls. | 5% |
| Precise Thrusters | Bonus +2 to PILOT when docking or landing. | 10% |
| Reactor Burst | Gives +3 EP when overloading reactor. | 10% |
| Research Computer | Gives +1 to SCIENCE for analyses. | 5% |
| Robust Hull | Gives +1 Hull Point. | 10% |
| Salvage Unit | Enables salvaging. | 10% |
| Sensitive Sensors | Gives +1 to all sensor rolls. | 10% |
| Ship Intelligence | Versatile AI, all attribute scores 1, relevant skill levels 3. | 30% |
| Ship System | Replaces one crew member, attribute 3, skill level 3. | 20% |
| Stealth Technology | Decreases ship Signature by 1. | 20% |
| Supercharged reactor | Gives the ship +1 Energy Point. | 10% |
| Super Sensors | Increases range of ship sensors to Extreme. | 20% |
| Trauma Lab | Gives bonus to MEDICURGY rolls. | 10% |
| Tuned Accelerator | Bonus +2 to the advance/retreat action. | 10% |
| Turbo Projector | Gives +1 to Maneuverability and Speed. | 20% |

### ADVANCED TARGETING COMPUTER (O)
An advanced computer with dedicated djinn systems for active locking. Bonus +1 when locking onto targets.

### ADVANCED TORPEDOES (O/A/F*)
Torpedoes fitted with their own djinn intelligence, and blessed by the docks priest just in case. Gives -1 to the enemy's countermeasures.

### ADVANCED WEAPON SYSTEM (O/A/F*)
A system with smart targeting algorithms, modified cobalite rounds (accelerator cannon) or perhaps bigger lance chambers (thermal cannon). Bonus +1 to the weapon system in question.

### ADVANCED WORKSHOP (A)
A cutting-edge workshop with all the latest tools such as nanite saws, mercury jets, intelligent tools etc. Enables repairs of Advanced level equipment.

### ANTIMATTER ROCKETS (A)
The ship utilizes antimatter rocket propulsion, a technology demanding advanced antimatter control systems so far only mastered by the Order of the Pariah. The antimatter rockets require less space than other propulsion systems – since no reactor is necessary, and the rockets only occupy the space normally reserved for the graviton projector, the ship can hold one additional extra module. The Order's fighters and gunships are small and lightning fast compared to those of other factions, and gains a +2 to Maneuverability when it comes to acceleration. The downside of the antimatter rockets is of course that they need refueling with pure antimatter instead of hydrogen, and that a critical hit in the rockets module counts as a critical hit in a reactor. The rockets are also expensive, more so than a normal reactor and projector combined.

### ARBORETUM (O)
A garden of green plants, a small hydroponic system and perhaps even fauna. The crew can recover stress here twice as fast as normal (2 MP/hour) and the arboretum supplies emergency food for a few days.

### ATMOSPHERIC ENTRY (O)
The ship has been streamlined and fitted to withstand atmospheric entry, enabling it to land on, and take off from, planets. Ships without this feature must stay in orbit and use shuttles to descend to the surface. All ships can make an emergency planetside landing, but without this feature they will be stuck where they land as their construction will make taking off again impossible.

### BLESSED SHIP (P)
Some event in the past has resulted in the ship being blessed by the Icons. +1 to all **PILOT** rolls when portal jumping or traveling long distances.

### BONUS MODULES (O)
The ship has an additional five extra modules. This feature can be purchased several times for larger ships:

| CLASS | MAXIMUM NUMBER |
|---|---|
| I | 1 |
| II | 2 |
| III | 4 |
| IV | 8 |
| V | 16 |

### ED FIELDS (O)
ED fields are force fields designed to plug hull breaches, reducing the effect of explosive decompression (page 99). ED generators are installed all over the ship, and are automatically engaged if the hull is breached. Ships without this technology must repair all breaches manually, which means that the collapsed module cannot be used without exo shells until the damage is repaired.

### EJECTOR (O)
This feature means that the work stations on the bridge are built into escape pods, automatically ejected from the ship in case of a catastrophic systems failure. This feature is most common on ships designed for combat, such as fighters, but could be installed on any ship. The size of the ejector depends on the class of the ship and can fit as many crew members as the bridge can.

### EXTERNAL CARGO (O)
The ship is modified to carry external cargo, using a system of grabber arms and magnetic hooks. For each cargo hold

on the ship (see above), specify if it is an internal or external one. External cargo holds can hold four times the tonnage of internal ones but lack atmosphere – put an exo on if you need to visit them.

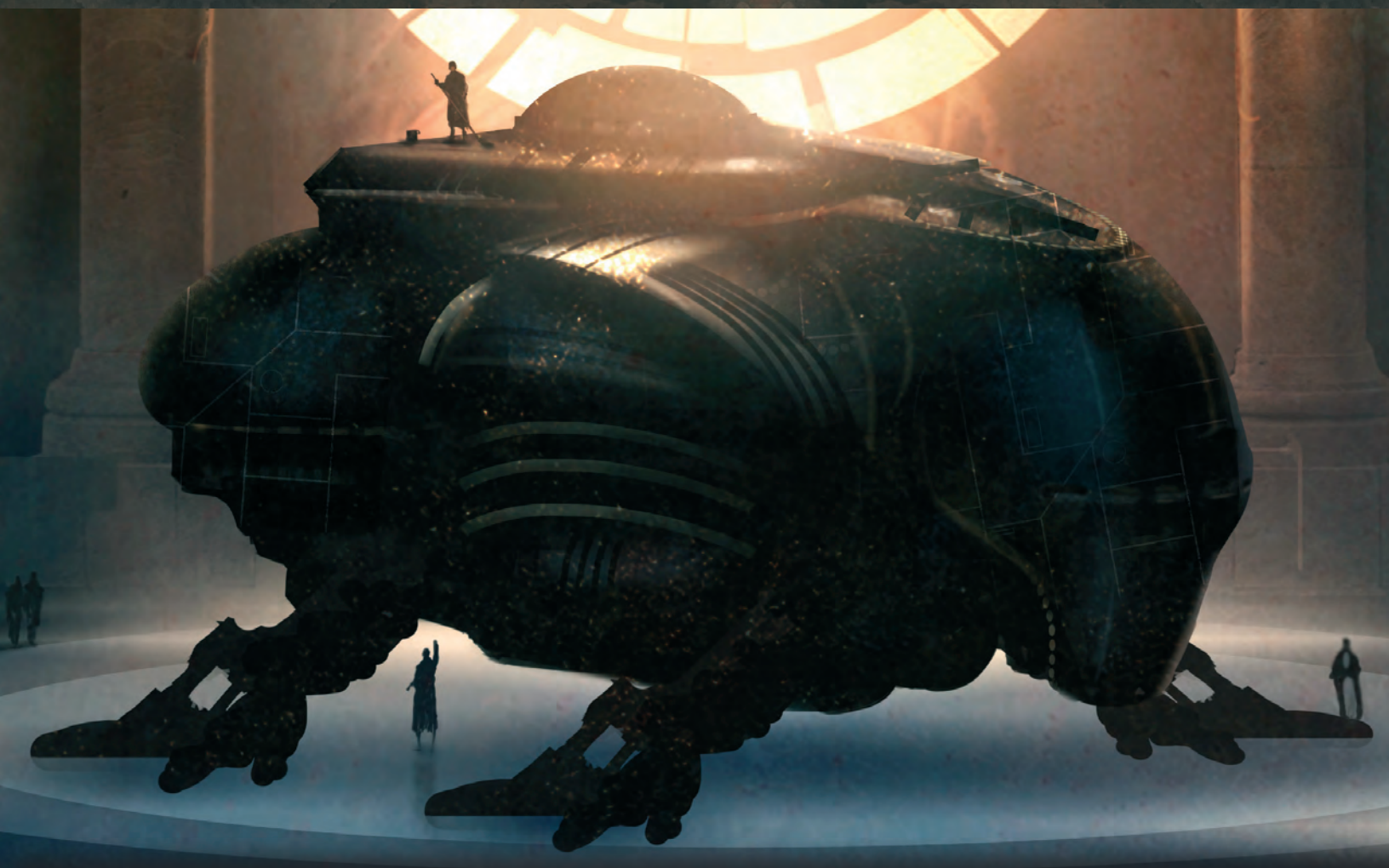
**HEAVY ARMOR (O)**
The ship's armor is reinforced with duralite sheets and sometimes even nanite patterns modeled after the Order's martyr armors. Gives +1 to the ship's Armor Rating, but also decreases Maneuverability by 1. The feature can be purchased three times.

**LIBRARY DATABASE (A)**
A database giving you a +3 to **CULTURE** or **SCIENCE** within one defined area, for example astronics, humanities or artifacts.

**PRECISE THRUSTERS (O)**
The thrusters have been fitted with brand new magnet flux cores and nanite membranes. Nimble and easy to maneuver, the ship gains a +2 to docking, landing and evasion (see Space Combat).

**REACTOR BURST (O)**
The reactor can be pushed to its very limits, giving an automatic 3 extra EP when overloading the reactor (page 168), plus any EP from sixes on the roll. The ship takes 2 points of hull damage from this, regardless of whether the roll succeeded or not.

**RESEARCH COMPUTER (A)**
The ship computer has been upgraded and now contains tools for measuring. Gives +1 to **SCIENCE** when measuring something and analyzing the results. Can be combined with a Library Database.



***Example***

***The group is equipping their ship Narzalus with extra modules (other than the three fixed modules of bridge, reactor and graviton projector) and chooses the following: cabins (4 standard cabins), a chapel, a medlab, a service station (as they expect to be traveling to primitive planets), a stasis hold (to be able to portal jump), a workshop (to analyze artifacts and other findings), a cargo hold, a countermeasure dispenser and an accelerator cannon. They also pick the following features: Atmospheric Entry, Ship Intelligence and Turbo Projector. The Turbo Projector gives the Narzalus Speed 3 and Maneuverability +2.***

**LIVING WEAR AND TEAR**

While the ship is getting worn down, lots of less essential systems will also start to malfunction. While not always giving penalties in the game mechanics, they can add some color to the game and help create drama – airlocks closing just a little too slow, flickering lights, unresponsive landing gear, doors refusing to open etc. These problems can be activated using DP (page 56).

**ROBUST HULL (O)**
The beams and joints of the hull have been replaced with duralite and smart nanites. Gives +1 Hull Point.

**SALVAGE UNIT (O)**
This feature enables you to salvage ships up to two classes below your that of your own ship, using a mining station.

**SENSITIVE SENSORS (O)**
The sensors of the ship are extremely fine-tuned. Each tier of this feature gives +1 to all sensor rolls. Can be bought up to three times.

**SHIP INTELLIGENCE (A)**
The ship's main computer is very capable and verbal. It can perform any function on the ship with a 1 in the attribute and a 3 in the skill relevant for that function. It can perform only one function at a time, cannot replace more than one crew member at a time, and cannot help (page 58) crew members with their rolls. Some ship intelligences become eccentric over the years, acting erratically and refusing to carry out certain commands.

**SHIP SYSTEM (A)**
One crew position on the ship is replaced by a dedicated computer system. The system has a 3 in both the attribute and the skill relevant to the position. More than one ship system can be installed – all crew positions can be automated except for the captain.

**STEALTH TECHNOLOGY (A)**
The ship is fitted with the latest in high absorbent duraceramics and zero-signature radiation shields. Gives -1 to Signature. The ship can disappear during combat (page 169).

**SUPERCHARGED REACTOR (O)**
The fuel rods in the reactor use hydrogen isotypes with higher energy output. Gives the ship +1 Energy Point.

**SUPER SENSORS (A)**
High output sensor cores, reinforced sensor chambers, and nanite membranes. Increases the sensor range to 8 Combat Units.

**TRAUMA LAB (A)**
The medlab has been upgraded to a trauma lab (see Chapter 6).

**TUNED ACCELERATOR (0)**
The accelerator core powering the graviton projector has advanced exhaust controls and djinn intelligences for higher effect. Gives a +2 to the **PILOT** roll for the advance/retreat action.

**TURBO PROJECTOR (0)**
The projector's graviton coils have been reinforced. Gives +1 to Maneuverability and Speed. Can be purchased twice.

## SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE

Your adventures will sooner or later start to wear down your spaceship – micro meteorites or frost damage, a clumsy docking or maybe an uncontrolled landing – it will happen to even the best of crews. Servicing your ship (a **TECHNOLOGY** test) also resupplies food, drink and other consumables, as well as reactor isotopes, antimatter etc. Your service roll is modified depending on where you are. If you fail the roll, you still pay half the listed cost (table 7.11). You should service you ship after any longer space travel (10 AU or more), short travels that include portal jumping and after every completed scenario.

If you have a service station onboard, ignore the penalty for doing service in primitive environments. If you have the antimatter rockets feature, service costs are doubled. If you choose not to service your craft, or if you fail the roll, the ship will start to break down – roll on the table to the right to see which systems are affected. For each missed tune-up, the wear effects stack. If you roll the same system twice on the table, it breaks down completely and the ship is disabled until repaired (page 172).

**TABLE 7.12 SHIP WEAR**

| 2D6 | SYSTEM | EFFECT |
|---|---|---|
| 2-3 | Sensors | -1 to sensor rolls |
| 4-5 | Reactor | -1 EP |
| 6-7 | Thrusters | -1 to **PILOT** rolls |
| 8-9 | Weapon System | -1 to **RANGED COMBAT** rolls |
| 10 | Graviton Projector | All actions in space combat cost 1 extra EP. |
| 11-12 | Random Module | -1 to use if applicable, otherwise reduced functionality decided by the GM. |

**TABLE 7.11 SERVICE COSTS**

| ENVIRONMENT | MODIFIER | COST |
|---|---|---|
| Smaller space station or space port in primitive settlement, for example on remote, uncivilized planets or farthest out on the system arms. | -3 | 1/500 of ship value |
| Standard space stations or space ports in ordinary settlements, for example portal stations or systems with only sparse traffic. | 0 | 1/1,000 of ship value |
| Large space stations or advanced space ports, for example Coriolis | +1 | 1/2,000 of ship value |

# LIGHT FREIGHTER, SCARAB

**FACTS**

- **CLASS: III**
- **SHIPYARD: CHELEBS, CC 46**
- **CREW: 5**
- **LENGTH: 49 M**



*The bug-like scarab freighter with its round shapes is a common sight in the Horizon. Many skippers praise it for its spacious build, reliable projectors and all-round usefulness. The latest model introduced a both beautiful and practical onboard garden, making the Scarab even more popular in the free trader community.*

| STANDARD MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +1 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 2 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, cabins x2, stasis hold, chapel, cargo hold x2, medlab, accelerator cannon, counter-measure dispenser. |
| **FEATURES:** Arboretum, Atmospheric Entry, Precise Thrusters. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** None. |
| **PROBLEM:** Worn-out ship computer. |
| **COST:** 1,435,000 birr. |

| PASSENGER SHIP |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +1 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 2 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, cabins x 4, stasis hold, chapel, cargo hold, medlab, countermeasure dispenser. |
| **FEATURES:** Arboretum, Atmospheric Entry, Blessed Ship. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** None. |
| **PROBLEM:** Unreliable sensors. |
| **COST:** 1,465,000 birr. |

| BLOCKADE RUNNER |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +2 |
| **SIGNATURE:** 0 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 3 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, cabins, stasis hold, chapel, cargo hold, medlab, accelerator cannon, countermeasure dispenser, data pulse. |
| **FEATURES:** Tuned Accelerator, Turbo Projector, Stealth Technology. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** None. |
| **PROBLEM:** Curse. |
| **COST:** 1,560,000 birr. |

## GUNSHIP, AZUK

- FACTS
- CLASS: III
- SHIPYARD: DAHARAB, CC 32
- CREW: 5
- LENGTH: 48 M



*The Azuk is one of the Horizon's true work horses. Originally designed and constructed at the Daharab dockyards on Sadaal B in CC 32, it has been a favorite among mercenaries and military adventurers ever since. Its heavy weaponry, thick armor, powerful Berdal projectors and swiveling engines strike fear in the hearts of even the most dreaded of corsairs.*

| STANDARD MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 7 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** 0 |
| **SIGNATURE:** 0 |
| **ARMOR:** 6 |
| **SPEED:** 2 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, hangar, cabins, medlab, stasis hold, countermeasure dispenser, accelerator cannon, autocannon, torpedo room. |
| **FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry, Robust Hull, Heavy Armor. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Space scooter. |
| **PROBLEM:** Obvious signature. |
| **COST:** 1,580,000 birr. |

| PATROL SHIP MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +1 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 4 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, hangar, cabins, cargo hold, medlab, stasis hold, accelerator cannon, data pulse, countermeasure dispenser. |
| **FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry, Turbo Projector, Tuned Accelerator. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Space scooter. |
| **PROBLEM:** Obvious signature. |
| **COST:** 1,665,000 birr. |

| FLYING CIRCUS |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 7 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** 0 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +1 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 2 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, hangar, cabins, cargo hold, medlab, stasis hold, accelerator cannon, torpedo room, countermeasure dispenser. |
| **FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry, Advanced Torpedoes, Tuned Accelerator. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Space scooter. |
| **PROBLEM:** Obvious signature. |
| **COST:** 1,685 000 birr. |

## COURIER SHIP, ORYX

**FACTS**

- **CLASS: III**
- **SHIPYARD: CHELEBS, CC 33**
- **CREW: 5**
- **LENGTH: 49 M**



*The slim Oryx turns heads wherever it docks. Its elegance and beautiful hull patterns are typical of the famous models produced by Chelebs during its golden thirties. Fast, nimble and with excellent capabilities for atmospheric flight, the Oryx is a true classic.*

| STANDARD MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 6 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +2 |
| **SIGNATURE:** 0 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 3 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, cabins x 2, chapel, medlab, cargo hold, stasis hold, workshop, countermeasure dispenser, accelerator cannon. |
| **FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry, Turbo Projector, Supercharged Reactor. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** None. |
| **PROBLEM:** Unreliable sensors. |
| **COST:** 1,610,000 birr. |

| PATROL SHIP MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** 0 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 2 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, cabins, chapel, medlab, stasis hold, workshop, countermeasure dispenser, accelerator cannon, torpedo room. |
| **FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry, Sensitive Sensors, Advanced Accelerator Cannon. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Space scooter. |
| **PROBLEM:** Slow accelerator. |
| **COST:** 1,710,000 birr. |

| EXPRESS FREIGHTER |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 5 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 6 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** +2 |
| **SIGNATURE:** 0 |
| **ARMOR:** 5 |
| **SPEED:** 3 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, cabins, chapel, medlab, cargo hold x2, stasis hold, workshop, countermeasure dispenser, accelerator cannon. |
| **FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry, Sensitive Sensors, Turbo Projector. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** None. |
| **PROBLEM:** Faulty thrusters. |
| **COST:** 1,600,000 birr. |

## SALVAGE SHIP, KAMRUK

**FACTS**

- **CLASS: IV**
- **SHIPYARD: DARKOS, KUA, CC 41**
- **CREW: 5**
- **LENGTH: 75 M**



*The long and heavy Kamruk is a common sight in the asteroid belts and ship cemeteries of the Horizon. Although designed as a salvage ship, the Kamruk is just as often used by mining crews or scrappers. Its long grabber arms, large empty spaces and sturdy build makes it a vessel fit for demanding jobs far from civilization. Comfort was not a priority for its designers, and many Kamruks look like scrapyards on the inside as well.*

| MINING MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 6 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 10 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** -1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +2 |
| **ARMOR:** 7 |
| **SPEED:** 1 |
| **MODULES:** Mining station, docking station, hangar, cabins x2, cargo hold x3, medlab, escape pods, stasis hold, service station, workshop, accelerator cannon. |
| **FEATURES:** Research Computer, Ship Intelligence, Sensitive Sensors. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Shuttle. |
| **PROBLEM:** Curse. |
| **COST:** 3,315,000 birr. |

| SALVAGE MODEL |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 6 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 10 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** -1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +2 |
| **ARMOR:** 7 |
| **SPEED:** 1 |
| **MODULES:** Salvage module, docking station, hangar x2, cabins, cargo hold, medlab, escape pods, stasis hold, service station, workshop, accelerator cannon. |
| **FEATURES:** Ship System, Robust Hull, External Cargo. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Shuttle. |
| **PROBLEM:** Obvious signature. |
| **COST:** 3,165,000 birr. |

| FLYING CIRCUS |
|---|
| **ENERGY POINTS:** 6 |
| **HULL POINTS:** 11 |
| **MANEUVERABILITY:** -1 |
| **SIGNATURE:** +2 |
| **ARMOR:** 7 |
| **SPEED:** 1 |
| **MODULES:** Docking station, hangar, cabins x4, cargo hold x3, medlab, escape pods, stasis hold, service station, workshop, accelerator cannon, countermeasure dispenser. |
| **FEATURES:** Blessed Ship, Robust Hull. |
| **EXTRA GEAR:** Shuttle. |
| **PROBLEM:** Slow accelerator. |
| **COST:** 2,810,000 birr. |

# OTHER SHIPS

## SPACE SCOOTER

A small, slim craft for travel between larger ships or for longer space walks. Fits 2-4 people.

**CLASS:** I
**ENERGY POINTS:** 3
**HULL POINTS:** 2
**MANEUVERABILITY:** +2
**SIGNATURE:** -2
**ARMOR:** 3
**SPEED:** 4
**MODULES:** -
**FEATURES:** -
**PROBLEM:** -
**COST:** 100,000 birr.

## SHUTTLE

A ship used for transport down to the planet's surface. Most shuttles hold 6-8 people.

**CLASS:** II
**ENERGY POINTS:** 4
**HULL POINTS:** 4
**MANEUVERABILITY:** +1
**SIGNATURE:** -1
**ARMOR:** 4
**SPEED:** 4
**MODULES:** Docking station, cargo hold.
**FEATURES:** Atmospheric Entry.
**PROBLEM:** -
**COST:** 235,000 birr.

## FIGHTER

A cheap ship, using its small size and speed to engage enemies at close range. Come in many models, some with heavier weaponry. Crewed by a pilot only.

**CLASS:** I
**ENERGY POINTS:** 3
**HULL POINTS:** 3
**MANEUVERABILITY:** +2
**SIGNATURE:** -2
**ARMOR:** 3
**SPEED:** 4
**MODULES:** Autocannon.
**FEATURES:** Ejector, Tuned Accelerator, Robust Hull.
**PROBLEM:** -
**COST:** 145,000 birr.

## CORSAIR SHIP

No two corsair ships are the same, but their crews usually prefer speed to heavy weapons and armor.

**CLASS:** III
**ENERGY POINTS:** 5
**HULL POINTS:** 6
**MANEUVERABILITY:** +1
**SIGNATURE:** 0
**ARMOR:** 6
**SPEED:** 3
**MODULES:** Docking station, hangar, cabins, medlab, stasis hold, countermeasure dispenser, accelerator cannon, autocannon, torpedo room.
**FEATURES:** Heavy Armor, Turbo Projector.
**PROBLEM:** -
**COST:** 1,450,000 birr.

| AVERAGE CORSAIR CREW | | |
|---|---|---|
| **POSITION** | **ATTRIBUTE** | **SKILL** |
| Captain | **EMPATHY 4** | **COMMAND** 3 |
| Pilot | **AGILITY 3** | **PILOT** 4 |
| Sensor Operator | **WITS 3** | **DATA DJINN** 3 |
| Gunner | **AGILITY 4** | **RANGED COMBAT** 4 |
| Engineer | **WITS 3** | **TECHNOLOGY** 3 |

## DESTROYER

A fearsome sight for both corsairs and free traders on the run. A skilled destroyer crew is a formidable foe to practically any ship.

**CLASS:** IV

**ENERGY POINTS:** 6

**HULL POINTS:** 10

**MANEUVERABILITY:** -1

**SIGNATURE:** 2

**ARMOR:** 8

**SPEED:** 2

**MODULES:** Docking station, hangar x2, cabins, medlab, stasis hold, countermeasure dispenser, accelerator cannon x2, auto-cannon, torpedo room, escape pods, data pulse.

**FEATURES:** Heavy Armor, Turbo Projector, Sensitive Sensors, Robust Hull, Super Sensors.

**EXTRA GEAR:** Shuttle.

**COST:** 4,015,000 birr.

| AVERAGE DESTROYER CREW | | |
|---|---|---|
| **POSITION** | **ATTRIBUTE** | **SKILL** |
| Captain | **EMPATHY 4** | **COMMAND** 5 |
| Pilot | **AGILITY 4** | **PILOT** 4 |
| Sensor Operator | **WITS 4** | **DATA DJINN** 4 |
| Gunner | **AGILITY 4** | **RANGED COMBAT** 4 |
| Engineer | **WITS 4** | **TECHNOLOGY** 4 |







# SPACE COMBAT

Space travel in the Third Horizon is generally peaceful. The long distances in the Dark between the Stars are usually just monotonous and claustrophobic. However, the time may come when you are met with hostility and must defend yourselves. This section deals with space combat, and describes how to play out a violent encounter in the void.

## SCALE

The system described below is designed to manage combat between only a few ships per side – the most common combat encounter is a one-on-one ship duel. Large battles between whole armadas are a part of the history of the Third Horizon, but are very rare nowadays.

## CREW POSITIONS

All spaceships have specific crew positions that must be covered. Small vessels can be constructed so that the same person can perform several function at once, while large ships may have many crew members per position – more on this below. The five crew positions are:

- Captain
- Engineer
- Pilot
- Sensor Operator
- Gunner

As soon as you have acquired your spaceship, you should decide within the group who should do what job onboard. When the torpedo alarm warns of imminent attack, everyone must know exactly what they are supposed to do. In the Icon Card Deck, each crew position has a corresponding crew card detailing the actions of that position. The crew cards are not needed to play, but they are helpful.

## DISTANCE AND SEGMENTS

The distances in empty space are huge, too vast for it to be meaningful to keep track of the exact distance between two ships. Instead, the game uses the abstract term Combat Units – CU. One CU can be tens or even hundreds of miles. The combat area is divided into segments. On the space combat map (in the back of the book, and available for download from our website), the space between each horizontal line is one segment. The distance between each segment is one CU. All movement in space combat is handled by moving between the segments on the map. The rules manage movement in space in only one dimension – an abstraction of the three-dimensional movement that is actually taking place.

**Movement:** In space combat, the "terrain" between the combatants is not important – the Dark between the Stars is endless. What matters is the relative distance between the ships. To move one CU towards or away from an enemy ship, test PILOT (more under Crew Positions, below). The movement roll can be modified negatively (-1 or -2) by obstacles in the segment you intend to reach, such as asteroids, space junk or gravity wells.

### RANGE

Just like in ground combat, the range between you and your enemy is divided into four steps:

- **Contact:** 0 CU (the same segment). Ramming and boarding possible.
- **Short:** 1 CU (adjacent segment). Visual contact limit.
- **Medium:** 2 CU. Passive sensor limit.
- **Long:** up to 4 CU. Active sensor limit.
- **Extreme:** up to 8 CU. Extreme sensor limit.

## SENSORS AND SIGNATURE

When you approach another spacecraft, the question is who detects the other first. Sometimes, this can determine the outcome of the entire

battle. How far away you can detect other spaceships depends on your sensors, and how you use them.

**Passive Sensors:** This is the standard setting on any sensor. The sensor range is Medium (2 CU) and your Signature is unaffected.

**Active Sensors:** The sensors are set to maximum effect. The sensor range is Long (4 CU), but you get +2 to your Signature. The active sensor mode costs 1 EP per turn (see below).

**Extreme Sensors:** If you have the feature Extreme Sensors, your sensor range in active mode is increased to Extreme (8 CU). Otherwise, they work like normal active sensors.

### TRANSPONDERS

All spaceships are required to travel with their transponders switched on – this is both the law and common courtesy. The transponder transmits data about the ship's position, name, class, home docks and destination. A ship with an active transponder is automatically detected as soon as it enters sensor range.

### SILENT RUNNING AND SIGNATURE

Traveling with your transponder switched off is regarded with extreme suspicion – only smugglers and military vessels do that. If a ship with its transponder switched off enters your sensor range, it is not automatically detected. The GM will ask your sensor operator to test DATA DJINN. The roll is modified by the Signature of the target (page 162), the distance between the ships and other factors (table 7.14), as well as some ship features.

The same applies if you are the ones traveling without an active transponder and enter another ship's sensor range. If both you and the enemy ship are traveling without active transponders, and have the same sensor range, you both roll simultaneously to detect the other when you get close enough.

**Radio Silence:** If the enemy ship does not adhere to radio silence – it is in some way using its off-ship communications – you get a +2 to your detection roll.

**Reactor Shutdown:** A ship that really wants to avoid detection can perform an emergency reactor shutdown. The operation

#### GAME AIDS

Space combat is a little more complicated than planetside combat. To help you keep track of things, the following game aids can be useful:

- **THE SHIP SHEET** – found in the back of the book and can be downloaded from our website.
- **THE CREW CARDS** – included in the Icon Card Deck, which is sold separately.
- **THE SPACE COMBAT MAP** – found in the back of the book and can be downloaded from our website.

How to use these aids is described below.

#### YOU AND THEM

**The rules in this chapter are written from the point of view of your PCs and their ship, but they apply for NPCs as well – unless stated otherwise.**

**TABLE 7.13 SENSORS**

| SENSORS | RANGE | SIGNATURE | EP COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| Passive | Medium | 0 | 0 |
| Active | Long | +2 | 1 |
| Extreme | Extreme | +2 | 1 |

**TABLE 7.14 SHIP DETECTION**

| CIRCUMSTANCE | MODIFIER |
|---|---|
| Contact Range | +4 |
| Short Range | +2 |
| Medium Range | 0 |
| Long Range | -2 |
| Extreme Range | -4 |
| No Radio Silence | +2 |
| Reactor Shut Down | -3 |
| Weapons Fire | Automatic Detection |

### SPACE COMBAT MAP

The space combat map is found in the back of the book, and can be downloaded from the Free League website. Use any markers you like to represent the ships involved in the battle. Please note that the space combat map is used only when two vessels have detected each other and engage in combat. Only then are **PILOT** rolls needed to move towards or away from the enemy ship. Before both parties have detected each other, the GM only needs to determine the range between the ships.

requires a successful **TECHNOLOGY** test by the engineer of the ship. To determine how many minutes the shutdown takes, roll a number of D6 equal to the class of the ship. Only one person at a time may attempt the shutdown, but several attempts can be made.

With the reactor shut down, the ship is "dead" – you lose all your Energy Points and cannot change course, use weapon systems or active sensors. The artificial gravity onboard is also lost. The reserve batteries power passive sensors, emergency lights and life support systems – but only for a number of days equal to the class of the ship. Restarting the reactor requires another **TECHNOLOGY** roll. To determine how many hours the restart takes, roll a number of D6 equal to the class of the ship.

**Success:** If your sensor roll is successful, you detect the enemy ship and may now engage with it. Your level of success determines how much information you get (table 7.15). You can of course contact the ship and inquire after more details, but whether or not they reply is up to the captain of that ship. You get to make another sensor roll only when the circumstances change (see below).

**Failure:** If your sensor roll fails, you detect nothing. The GM reveals no information. The sensor operator gets to roll again when the circumstances change in your favor, for example if the enemy ship moves a range step closer to you, makes an active sensor sweep, uses its radio etc.

**Avoiding Contact:** If you detect the enemy ship, but remain undetected yourself, you can choose to change course and avoid contact. If you move a range step closer to the other ship – or takes some other action that makes your Signature more noticeable – its sensor operator will get to make another attempt to detect you.

**Confrontation:** When you have detected an enemy spaceship, you can choose whether or not to attack it. If you in turn also have been detected, roll your initiative scores and place your ships on the ship combat map. If the enemy has not detected you however, you get what is called a free turn – read more below.

Instead of attacking, you can choose to hail the captain of the other ship using your radio system. This will of course cost you the element of surprise if things turn violent later on.

**Disappearing:** When you have been detected, you will remain on the enemy's radar screen as long as you stay within their sensor range, unless your ship is equipped with stealth technology (see below) – if it is, your sensor operator can make you disappear from their screens.

## TURNS AND INITIATIVE

Space combat is divided into turns just like ground combat (Chapter 5), but a turn in space is longer – usually several minutes.

### INITIATIVE

Initiative scores are determined at the beginning of the fight just like in ground combat, but in space, only the captains of the engaged ships roll. They each make a **COMMAND** roll. The highest die each captain rolled will be her ship's initiative score for the rest of the battle. The scores can be changed during the course of the fight, just like in ground combat. In case of a tie, the number of dice showing the highest number determines who goes first – two fives beat one five, for example. A second tie is broken by the highest **COMMAND**

**TABLE 7.15 SENSOR ROLLS**

| DEGREE OF SUCCESS | INFORMATION |
|---|---|
| Limited (1-2 sixes) | Distance in CU, current course |
| Critical (3+ sixes) | Distance, class, course, weapons |

**THE ICON CARDS**

**You cannot use the Icon deck (page 83) to substitute the initiative dice in space combat. You can use the cards to keep track of the turn order, however.**



***Example***

*Narzalus is en route to the Djachroum station and has to pass through the Corsair belt. The crew opts to run silent, turns the transponder off to avoid detection and sets their sensors to passive mode. The GM has decided that the corsair vessel Tigris, also silent and with its sensors set to passive mode, is out hunting in the belt as the Narzalus passes by. When the two ships are two CU from each other, their sensor operators both test* DATA DJINN *to detect the other ship. The GM (the operator onboard the Tigris) gets a ± 0 because of the Medium range, and a +1 because of the Tigris' sensitive sensors. The roll shows one six, and the Narzalus shows up on the screens. Sahab, the sensor operator on the Narzalus, rolls an unmodified sensor roll, succeeds, and detect the Tigris. Time to take out the space combat map and place the ships two CU from each other. This space combat example* *continues on page 173.*

### STARTING PLACEMENT

**When two ships engage in combat with each other, place ship tokens on the space combat map. Make sure to place the tokens the correct distance from each other. Which segments on the map you choose is not important – try to place the ships equally close to the center of the map.**

skill level among the captains. If that still leaves some combatants tied, chance decides who goes first.

### TURN PHASES

One turn of space combat is divided into five phases – one per crew position. All pilots act in the pilot phase, all engineers in the engineer phase, and so on. The turn order within each phase is determined by the initiative scores of the captains. The five phases are detailed below, but here is a brief overview:

1. **Order Phase:** All captains choose their orders secretly, and roll COMMAND.
2. **Engineer Phase:** The engineers distribute their ships' EP, and perform any necessary repairs.
3. **Pilot Phase:** The pilots maneuver to get either closer to, or farther away from, their enemy ship.
4. **Sensor Phase:** The sensor operators lock onto targets, break locks on their own ships, and perform data attacks.
5. **Attack Phase:** The gunners fire their weapon systems, including countermeasures.

In each combat phase, crew members on a certain position get to perform one action. The available actions are described below. Unlike regular combat, actions in space combat are not divided into slow, normal and fast actions – there is only one kind of action, and you get one action per turn.

### 1. ORDER PHASE

During the first phase of the turn, the captains act. The captain's action is to give orders. A captain cannot force crew members to obey her, but by following the given orders, the other crew members can get positive modifiers later in the turn.

- **Repair!** Grants a bonus to ship repairs (Phase 2).
- **Evade!** Grants a bonus to evasive maneuvers (Phase 3), and to attempts at breaking an enemy lock-on (Phase 4).
- **Retreat!** Grants a bonus to movement away from the enemy ship (Phase 3).
- **Attack!** Grants a bonus to movement towards an enemy ship (Phase 3), and to all attacks (Phase 5).

**Giving Orders:** The captain chooses her order without showing it to the other captains (usually only the GM). Write down

your order on a piece of paper, without showing it to the opposing captain. The other captains do the same, and then you all reveal your orders at the same time.

When you have revealed your order, and it is your turn to act, test **COMMAND**. If you pass, your order gives a positive modifier equal to the number of sixes on your roll. If your ship can perform more than one action of the same kind (for example more than one attack), the modifier applies to all of these actions.

Your crew are free to follow your order (benefiting from the modifier) or to disregard it (forfeiting the bonus).

**Other Instructions:** Your function as captain is, as far as the rules are concerned, only to give one of the four orders above, but there is nothing stopping you from giving other orders as well – how the engineer should distribute the EP, or which target the gunner should attack, for example. Your crew is then free to obey you (or not) as they see fit.

### 2. ENGINEER PHASE

The second phase in the turns belongs to the engineers. Their actions are not chosen secretly – one engineer at a time performs her action, in the established turn order.

**Energy Distribution:** The most important task for the engineer is to distribute the energy from the reactor. The power generated is not enough for all systems all the time, meaning that the engineer must prioritize. In the game, this is represented by Energy Points (EP). Each ship has a pool of EP to spend every turn. If your ship takes damage, the EP pool can decrease – read more under Ship Damage, below. Each turn, the engineer distributes the entire EP pool to the other crew members. To keep track of EP, you can use any token you like, and place them on the respective crew cards (if you have access to the Icon Card Deck). EP pools are refreshed at the beginning of each turn. EP cannot be saved between turns.

As a rule, all actions in space combat performed by a crew member cost 1 EP, but there are some exceptions:

- Captain's orders (Phase 1) cost no EP.
- Overloading the reactor (Phase 2) costs no EP.
- The pilot's actions (Phase 3) cost a number of EP equal to the class of the ship.
- Firing a torpedo (Phase 5) costs no EP.

#### GROUND COMBAT AND SPACE COMBAT

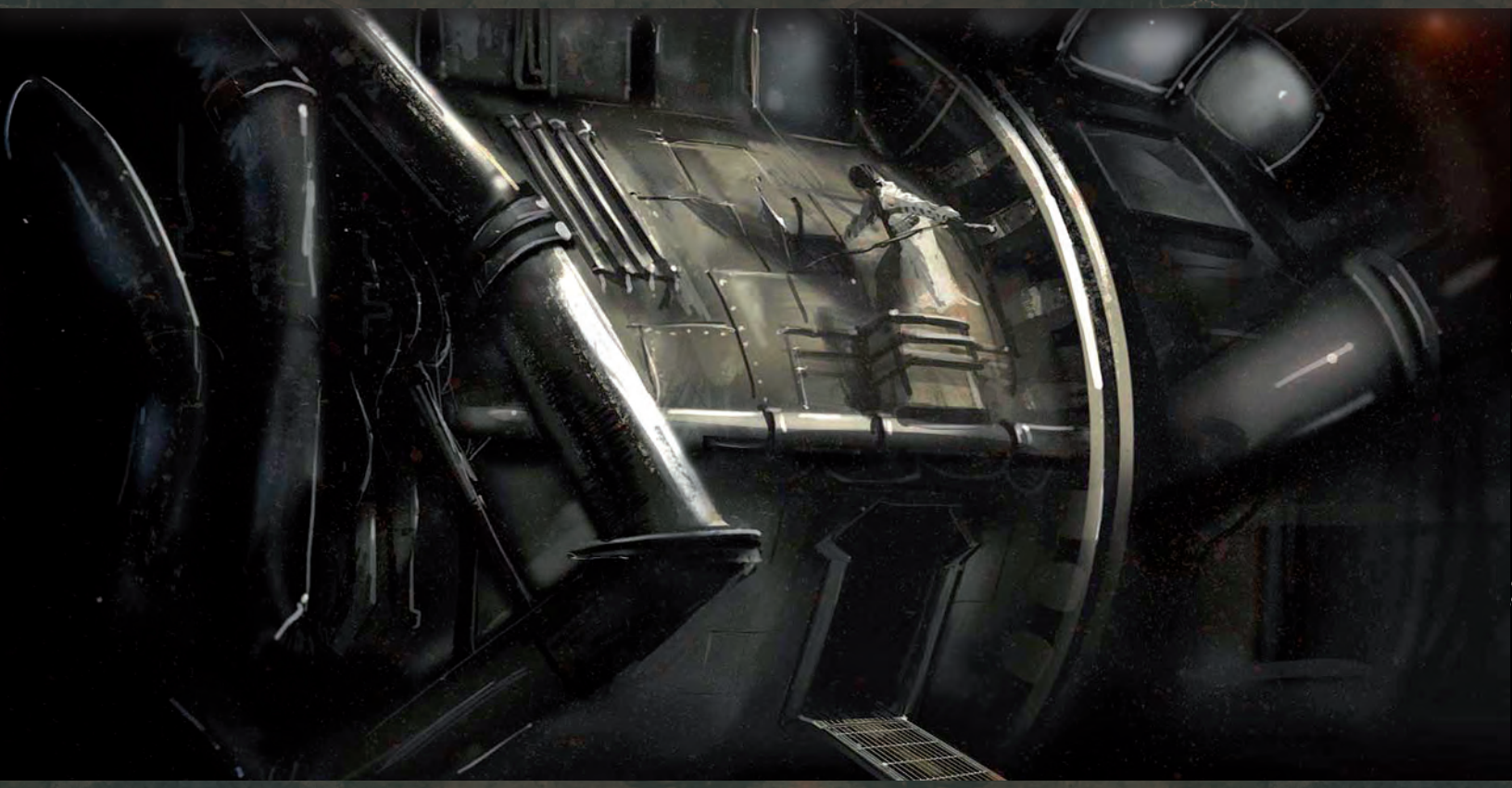
Ground combat and space combat can happen at the same time. Perhaps a firefight breaks out on your ship while it is at the same time engaged in space combat. For simplicity, we recommend that you alternate between the two – one turn of space combat, then one turn of ground combat, space combat, ground combat, and so on. You cannot be an active combatant in both fights at the same time. If you are engaged in ground combat in a turn, you cannot participate in the space combat in that same turn.

#### SURPRISE ATTACK

**If you attack an enemy ship that has yet to detect you on its screens (see above), your attack counts as a surprise attack. In the first turn of the battle, only you get to act – this is called a free turn. After the first attack, you are automatically detected, and all parties roll initiative scores like you normally would, and the fight continues normally.**

#### NPCS AND EPS

**The GM distributes EP to his ships just like the players do. If you have the Icon Card Deck, use the GM crew card – it holds up to four ships.**



**Overload:** If a crew member gets additional EP to spend on an action, the action becomes more effective. Each additional EP above the base cost of the action gives a +1 bonus to the roll. Three extra EP means a +3 modifier, for example.

**The Engineer's Actions:** Distributing EP is no action per se, and requires no dice roll. After the EP have been distributed, the engineer can perform one of the following actions (all demanding **TECHNOLOGY** tests):

- **Overloading the Reactor:** A successful roll gives you extra EP equal to the number of sixes on your roll. Distribute the extra EP immediately. The ship suffers 1 point of HP damage per extra EP generated. A failed roll means 1 point of HP damage.
  **COST:** 0 EP.
- **Repair Hull Damage:** A successful roll restores Hull Points equal to the number of sixes on your roll. A failed roll has no effect.
  **COST:** 1 EP. Requires one Ordinary spare part (page 113). Without a service station, you get a -2 to the roll.
- **Repair System Damage:** A successful roll restores lost EP equal to the number of sixes on your roll, taking effect at the beginning of the next turn. A failed roll has no effect.
  **COST:** 1 EP. Requires one Ordinary spare part. Without a service station, you get a -2 to the roll.
- **Repair Critical Damage:** A successful roll repairs one critical damage, provided the ship has not been vaporized. A failed roll has no effect.
  **COST:** 1 EP. Requires one Ordinary spare part. Without a service station, you get a -2 to the roll.
- **Repair Module:** A successful roll restores a disabled module to working condition. A failed roll has no effect.
  **COST:** 1 EP. Requires one ordinary spare part (page 113). Without a service station, you get a -2 to the roll.
- **Open an airlock** to an enemy ship that the pilot has docked with in the previous turn. See Boarding (phase 3), below.
  **COST:** 1 EP.

### 3. PILOT PHASE

The pilots all act in the third phase. This phase in played openly, just like Phase 2. The pilots act one by one, in the established turn order. The pilot can perform a variety of maneuvers, each one requiring a **PILOT** test. Each maneuver is modified by the Maneuverability of the ship (page 141).

A failed roll means that the intended maneuver is not performed. Unlike other crew members, the pilot can perform multiple actions at once – if she has been allotted enough EP. Each additional action after the first one gives a -2 to all actions. The pilot chooses the order of her actions. These are the available actions:

- **Position:** The pilot attempts to move into a better position. Each six on the roll raises the initiative score of the ship by one for the coming turns.
  **COST:** EP equal to the class of the ship.
- **Advance/Retreat:** The ship moves one segment on the map in the direction of your choice. For each additional six on the roll, you can move one extra segment.
  **COST:** EP equal to the class of the ship.
- **Evasive Maneuver:** An unexpected maneuver that gives a penalty to all attacks against the ship for the rest of the turn, equal to the number of sixes on the roll.
  **COST:** EP equal to the class of the ship.
- **Ramming:** If the ship is in the same segment as an enemy ship (Contact Range), the pilot may attempt to ram the enemy. The action is an opposed **PILOT** roll for the two pilots. It counts as an action for the attacker, but not for the defender. Both rolls are modified by the Maneuverability of the ships. Read more about ramming on page 171.
  **COST:** EP equal to the class of the ship.
- **Boarding:** If the ship is equipped with a docking station, the pilot may attempt to dock with an enemy ship to send a boarding party over. Just like ramming, this is an opposed **PILOT** roll modified by Maneuverability. The attacking pilot suffers a -2 however, as docking during combat is incredibly difficult. If you win the roll, the engineer may (in the next turn) test **TECHNOLOGY** to open an airlock into the enemy ship. Once the docking is complete, the target ship cannot Retreat from the attacker.
  **COST:** EP equal to the class of the ship.

### 4. SENSOR PHASE

The sensor operators act in Phase 4 – openly, just like Phases 2 and 3. One operator at a time performs her action, in the established turn order. The sensor operator can perform one of several key actions during a fight, all requiring **DATA DJINN** rolls.

- **Target Lock:** To attack the enemy effectively, the sensor operator should attempt to lock the targeting computers on the enemy craft. The roll is modified by the Signature of the enemy ship. A successful roll means that the target is now locked, giving a positive modifier to attacks against this target equal to the number of sixes on the roll. Note the lock strength down or use a die to indicate it. Torpedoes cannot be used at all without first locking the target. Other weapon systems can be used without a lock, but suffer a -2 modifier. Only one target at a time may be locked – if you establish a new lock, the previous lock is lost.
  **COST:** 1 EP.
- **Breaking Target Lock:** To avoid attacks, the sensor operator may attempt to break an enemy lock on the ship. The is modified negatively by the strength of the enemy lock. A successful roll breaks the lock.
  **COST:** 1 EP.
- **Pulse and Meme Attacks:** The operator launches a data pulse or meme attack against the opponent. The roll is modified by the enemy's Signature. Pulse attacks deals EP damage (not HP damage). Read more about meme attacks on page 149.
  **COSTS** 1 EP.
- **Disappear:** If the ship is fitted with Stealth Technology (page 154), the sensor operator may attempt to drop from the enemies' screens. If the ship has a lock on it, the roll is modified negatively by the strength of the lock (the highest value in the case of multiple locks). A successful roll ends the combat. The enemy ship may of course try to detect you again.
  **COST:** 1 EP.

### 5. ATTACK PHASE

In the last phase, the gunners get to act. Their actions are declared openly, as in Phases 2-4. One gunner acts at a time, in the established turn order (with a few exceptions, see below). The gunner fires the ship's weapon systems. If there are more than one weapon systems onboard, the gunner must choose which system to fire. The attack roll is a **RANGED COMBAT** test.

- **Fire Weapon System:** The attack is modified by the bonus of the weapon system, certain features (above), and by the strength of the lock on the enemy ship. Firing without a target lock gives the gunner a -2 to the roll. Incoming torpedoes may also be targeted. On a successful roll, the target suffers damage (below).
  **COST:** 1 EP.
- **Launch a Torpedo:** Like the action above, but requires a lock on the target. Torpedoes don't hit their targets immediately – they approach them at a speed of 2 CU per turn, including the turn they were launched. Use a token of some sort to represent

the torpedo on the combat map. Torpedoes can be fired upon and destroyed by the defender. A ship can carry only a limited number of torpedoes.

**COST:** None, but extra EP may be spent for a bonus.

- **Defensive Fire:** A ship equipped with an autocannon or a countermeasure dispenser can fire defensive fire against an incoming torpedo, even if the torpedo is launched from 2 CU or less (and thus strikes in the same turn). The defensive fire is rolled for right before the torpedo strikes, and is considered to occur att Contact range. The defensive fire replaces any offensive fire by the gunner in the same turn. Thus, a gunner on a ship acting early in the turn order will need to hold off on firing offensively, if she wants to retain the option of defensive fire later in the turn. If the ship has multiple gunners (and weapon systems), if can fire offensively and defensively in the same turn. The defensive fire roll is modified by the strength of the enemy's target lock. A successful defensive fire roll means that the torpedo is destroyed or misses its target.

  **COST:** 1 EP.

#### SMALL CREWS

On smaller ships, designed for fewer than five crew members, the crew positions are changed:

- **Four (class II):** The pilot takes on the captain's role as well. In phase one, the pilot rolls the initiative score, but is unable to give orders that carry positive modifiers.
- **Three (class II):** The engineer takes on the sensor operator's role as well. The **DATA DJINN** and **TECHNOLOGY** rolls are rolled normally. The engineer simply gets two actions per turn.
- **Two (class I and II):** The pilot takes on the gunner's role as well. The **RANGED COMBAT** attack rolls are unmodified. The pilot simply gets two actions per turn.
- **One (class I):** The pilot covers all crew positions, getting four actions per turn.

All of the changes above stack – on a ship crewed by three people, the pilot also acts as captain, and the engineer acts as sensor operator.

**Lost Crew:** The above only applies to ships designed purposefully for the specified number of crew members. If a ship designed for a larger crew loses some members, the roles are still combined as above, but for every extra action a crew member performs, she gets a -2 to all her actions. Everyone onboard must declare at the beginning of the turn in which phases she intends to act. The initiative roll is not an action. A single person could try to manage a ship designed for a crew of five, but if she wants to act in every phase, all her actions carry a -8 modifier.

**Ship Systems:** A ship with the features Ship System or Ship Intelligence can have these features cover some positions. Read more on page 154.

#### LARGE CREWS

Large ships may have more than five crew members. There can only be one captain, but you may have more than one of the other positions.

**Pilot:** Only one person maneuvers the ship in combat, but a co-pilot can take over when necessary.

**Engineer:** Only the head engineer gets to distribute the EP, but all engineers get an action during Phase 2. Each individual action may only be attempted once per turn, however. Extra engineers can also help (page 58) each other with an action.

**Sensor Operator:** Extra operators can be used to get more actions in the sensor phase. Each individual action may only be attempted once per turn. Extra operators can help each other with an action.

**Gunner:** Ships armed with multiple weapon systems may use more than one gunner to make extra attacks. Each gunner gets one attack. Two gunners may not use the same system. Remember that only one target may be locked at once – if the gunners wish to fire at multiple targets, all but one of them must fire without the guidance of a target lock (at -2).

## SHIP DAMAGE

Spaceships take damage just like people, but the scale is different. Ships can suffer two kinds of damage: hull damage and systems damage. Hull damage decreases the ship's Hull Points (HP), which are a measure of how big and robust the ship is. Systems damage decreases the ship's Energy points (EP), which are a measure of the reactor's output. EP are used to power the different systems of the ship, as described above. When a ship suffers EP damage, its effectiveness drops.

Systems damage first eliminates EP not already spent in the turn, and after that destroys EP already used.

### HULL DAMAGE

When a ship is hit by an enemy weapon system, it suffers damage just like people do in ground combat: One six on the roll inflicts hull damage equal to the weapon's Weapon Damage. Some weapon systems inflict EP damage instead of HP damage, and some systems inflict both HP and EP damage. For each additional six after the first one on the gunner's attack roll, she gets to choose a bonus effect:

- **More Damage:** The target takes one additional point of damage. This effect may be chosen multiple times.
- **Critical Hit:** The target suffers a critical hit. This costs a number of sixes after the first one equal to the weapon system's CRIT rating (page 150). If even more sixes are rolled, the severity of the critical damage may be increased. More on critical damage below.

### ARMOR

The armor of a spaceship works exactly like body armor in ground combat. If you take a hit, roll a number of dice equal to your Armor Rating – for each six you roll, lower the damage by one. This roll is not an action for any crew member.

**Critical Damage:** If the armor roll reduces the damage suffered to zero, any critical damage is also eliminated. The attacker must declare whether or not she intends to score a critical hit before the armor roll is made.

### DISABLED SHIP

When a ship drops to either zero HP or zero EP, it is disabled.

**Hull Collapse:** On a ship reduced to zero HP, the reactor and all weapon systems stop working, and the ship also suffers explosive decompression – time to get to the escape pods or into an exo! Read more on page 99. A disabled ship is not blown to bits, however – it can be repaired using the right equipment.

**Systems Collapse:** On a ship reduced to zero EP, the reactor stops working. The life support systems will keep functioning, but no system that requires EP can be used. The ship is dead in space, continuing on its present course with its present speed, and will be lost in the darkness unless towed to safety or repaired.

### SHIP RAMMING

**When one ship rams another (see the pilot phase, above), both ships suffer damage – each ship takes damage equal to the class of the enemy ship. The defender then suffers extra HP damage equal to the number of extra sixes on the attacker's roll (after the sixes necessary to win the opposed roll).**

### DAMAGE TO CREW

If the bridge, or some other module where crew members or passengers are located, is destroyed, its occupants risk grave injury. The attacker rolls six dice for each person in the module. The roll works like a normal ranged attack, but skill level and weapon bonus are ignored. Use the weapon system's weapon damage and CRIT value (the scale of the damage is of course off, but the person is not hit with full force).

Torpedoes explode when they hit their target, causing more shrapnel damage than other weapons. On a torpedo hit, roll nine dice against each person in the module. On top of the risk of being killed in the blast, the destroyed module also suffers explosive decompression (page 99).

### CRITICAL DAMAGE

Critical damage will seriously affect some of the core functions of the ship. Roll 2D6 to determine the effect.

**Severity:** If you have more sixes to spend than those which you need to score a critical injury, you can use them to increase the severity of the injury. For every extra six spent to increase the severity of the critical injury, you get to reroll the 2D6 crit roll once. You need to determine how many sixes you want to spend on this before you start rerolling. You are allowed to go back to an earlier result if you reroll.

**Cumulative Effects:** All effects from critical damage that modify skill tests stack – if the ship suffers the same critical damage again, add the modifiers.

**Destroyed Modules:** Modules destroyed by a critical hit can be repaired by the engineer. The feature Ship System can also repair destroyed modules.

### SHIP REPAIRS

Repairing a damaged ship requires **TECHNOLOGY** rolls, tools and spare parts. Read more under the engineer phase on page 168. Ships are usually made up of Ordinary technology, and can therefore be repaired using Ordinary spare parts (page 113). Some modules and features are Advanced tech however, requiring Advanced parts. Repairs are easier to perform while in dock or in a space port. Repairs during travel or combat suffer a -2 to the roll, unless the ship has a service station.

**Disabled Ship:** A ship that has been disabled from either zero HP or zero EP requires more extensive and time-consuming repairs. For every HP or EP you want to restore to the ship, you must spend a whole day on repairs.

**TABLE 7.16 CRITICAL SHIP DAMAGE**

| 2D6 | CRITICAL DAMAGE |
|---|---|
| 2 | **LIMITED DECOMPRESSION.** The integrity of the bridge or some other populated module is breached, venting oxygen into space. Roll a die at the beginning of each following turn – on a six, the module suffers complete explosive decompression (page 99). The engineer can repair the breach in the engineer phase. |
| 3 | **STRUCTURAL DAMAGE.** The Armor Rating of the ship is reduced by 2, and Signature is increased by 2 until the damage is repaired. |
| 4 | **DAMAGED SENSORS.** The sensor operator gets a -2 to all her rolls until the damage is repaired. |
| 5 | **DAMAGED THRUSTERS.** The ship becomes harder to control. Maneuverability is decreased by 2. |
| 6 | **DAMAGED POWER COUPLING.** The power flow from the reactor to the rest of the ship is reduced. The ship's EP pool is decreased by 2. |
| 7 | **DESTROYED MODULE.** A random module is destroyed – it cannot be used until the damage is repaired. Use dice to randomly determine which module is affected. The three required modules bridge, reactor and graviton projector cannot be hit (they have their own critical damage rules). If the module is populated, its occupants risk injury (see the box on the previous page). |
| 8 | **DISABLED WEAPON SYSTEM.** One of the weapon systems on the ship is hit and stops working. If you have more than one weapon system, determine which is hit randomly. If the ship has no weapons at all, reroll this result. |
| 9 | **DISABLED GRAVITON PROJECTOR.** The ship loses its propulsion. It continues forward at a constant speed. The pilot can no longer perform any actions. |
| 10 | **DESTROYED BRIDGE.** The ship can no longer be maneuvered. The captain, pilot and sensor operator can no longer perform their actions. The engineer and gunner stations are normally not on the bridge, so they can act normally. Everyone on the bridge risks damage, and the module suffers explosive decompression. |
| 11 | **CHAIN REACTION.** Roll twice on the table. |
| 12 | **REACTOR DETONATION.** A critical hit in the reactor is the worst possible outcome. Reactors in the Third Horizon generate enormous amounts of energy, and a critical hit in the reactor releases all this energy at once. The effect is disastrous – the ship is broken apart and lost forever. Everyone onboard risks serious damage (see the boxed text), and are of course subjected to immediate explosive decompression. |



# SPACE COMBAT EXAMPLE

*The PCs' vessel the Narzalus and the corsair vessel the Tigris have detected one another and the battle has begun. The distance between them is two CU. The captains roll their initiative scores, a* COMMAND *roll. They both get one six. Both their* COMMAND *skill levels are 3, so chance determines who goes first. The GM rolls the highest – the Tigris is first up. Both ships have an initiative score of 6.*

***TURN 1 – order phase***

*Both the GM and Nikodema, captain of the Narzalus, secretly choose their orders, and then reveal them. They have both chosen the Attack! order. The GM tests* COMMAND *for the captain of the Tigris and succeeds – one six. The Tigris will have a +1 bonus for moving towards the Narzalus as well as to any attack rolls for the rest of the turn. Nikodema tests her* COMMAND *but fails. She chooses not to pray to the Icons for a reroll, so the PCs will not get any modifiers from Nikodema's order.*

***TURN 1 – engineer phase***

*The EP of the two ships are now being distributed. Both are class III vessels with unmodified reactors – that means they have 5 EP each. EP distribution is done openly. The GM spends 3 EP on the pilot, 1 on the sensor operator and 1 on the gunner. The engineer on the Narzalus, Nima, spends her EP the same way. None of the engineers wish to perform any actions.*

***TURN 1 – pilot phase***

*The pilots openly declare their actions, the GM going first as he has the initiative. The GM chooses to advance towards the Narzalus, and tests* PILOT *with a +1 because the pilot follows the Attack! order given by the captain in Phase 1. The GM gets one six and moves the Tigris one segment closer to the Narzalus. The ships are now only one CU apart. Onboard the Narzalus, the pilot Jovun attempts an evasive maneuver (with no bonus). This costs 3 EP. She gets two sixes on her roll, which means that all attacks against the Narzalus suffer a -2 this turn.*

***TURN 1 – sensor phase***

*Time for the sensor operators to act. The GM is up first, and chooses to attempt target lock (1 EP) on the Narzalus. The GM tests* DATA DJINN *and gets one six. There is now a lock on the Narzalus with a strength of 1. The sensor operator on the Narzalus, Sabah, immediately attempts to break the lock (1 EP), and tests* DATA DJINN *with a -1 (the strength of the enemy lock). Sabah succeeds with two sixes. The lock is broken.*

***TURN 1 – attack phase***

*The GM begins, activating the Tigris' gunner. He chooses to use the advanced accelerator cannon that costs 1 EP, and tests* RANGED COMBAT *with a +2 from the weapon (+1 for the cannon and +1 for the "advanced" feature), +1 for the Attack! order, -2 for the evasive maneuver performed by the pilot of the Narzalus, and finally -2 for not having a lock on the target – resulting in a total modifier of -1. Still, he is triumphant – three sixes – and spends two of them on a critical hit. The PCs test the Narzalus' armor, but rolls no sixes. The Narzalus suffers one point of HP damage, as well as the critical damage "damaged thrusters", giving her a -2 to Maneuverability. Now, it is time to return fire. As the PCs are fewer than five, they have equipped the Narzalus with the feature Ship Intelligence that acts as gunner, firing their accelerator cannon. It rolls for* RANGED COMBAT *with a +1 from the weapon bonus. This costs 1 EP. The roll succeeds, showing two sixes, and after the GM fails his armor test, the Tigris suffers two points of hull damage.*

***TURN 2 – order phase***

*The GM and captain Nikodema choose their orders secretly. The GM has picked "Attack!" again. Nikodema chooses "Retreat!". The GM rolls* COMMAND *and gets two sixes. The Tigris will get a +2 to movement towards the Narzalus and to all attacks. Nikodema rolls* COMMAND*, also scoring two sixes, which means that the Narzalus will get a +2 to movement away from the Tigris.*

***TURN 2 – engineer phase***

*This turn, the GM spends 3 EP on the gunner, 1 on the engineer and 1 on the sensor operator. The engineer on the Tigris uses the EP for the action "repair structural damage", but fails the* TECHNOLOGY *roll. Nima of the Narzalus spends 3 EP on the pilot, 1 EP on the engineer and 1 EP on the gunner. Nima then attempts the "repair critical damage" action, and succeeds – the thrusters are now working again.*

***TURN 2 – pilot phase***

*The GM didn't spend any EP on his pilot, who in turn can't perform an action. Pilot Jovun on the Narzalus chooses to obey Nikodema's "Retreat!" order, getting a +2 to her* PILOT *roll. Despite this, she fails, and the distance between the two vessels remains the same.*

***TURN 2 – sensor phase***

*The GM once again chooses to try and establish a target lock on the Narzalus. He tests* DATA DJINN *and gets one six. A strength 1 lock is now in place on the Narzalus, to aid the gunner of the Tigris in the coming phase.*

***TURN 2 – attack phase***

*The GM has prepared a mighty attack for the gunner of the Tigris. He chooses to launch a torpedo. He gets a +7 to the* RANGED COMBAT *roll (+1 for the torpedo, +2 for the "Attack!" order, +1 for the target lock and +3 for the extra EP allotted to the gunner). The torpedo is launched and hits its target. The GM rolls two sixes, inflicting three points of hull damage. The PCs test their ship's armor and get one six, but still suffer two points of hull damage. The Narzalus, now down to three Hull Points, fires its accelerator cannon again, testing* RANGED COMBAT *with a +1 from the weapon bonus, and gets one six. The GM tests the armor of Tigris and gets one six – the attack doesn't penetrate the thick duralite hull of the Tigris. The battle continues!*





# THE HORIZON







## CHAPTER 8

# THE THIRD HORIZON

*From Zalos to Menkar, the Horizon is full of wonders. The Crater Dome on Algol, the Eye of Ekharan, the Icon City on Mira - these are only some examples of holy places to which pilgrims flock by the thousands. Yet Kua, most holy, the star at the center of the Horizon, shines the brightest – a beacon of civilization, defiant in the endless black.*

**THE THIRD HORIZON, AN ASTRONICAL OVERVIEW** – Elder Maehad

The Third Horizon is the game setting of Coriolis, a cluster of thirty-six star systems connected by ancient portals. From the hub, the cosmopolitan space station Coriolis, to the far reaches of Menkar and Eanu, the peoples and societies of the Third Horizon are all linked by fate.

**THIS BOOK WILL** present the Third Horizon in all its multifaceted glory. We will begin with the history of the Horizon, then move on to describe the current political tensions and take an in-depth look at the dominant factions. After that, this book will describe the different cultures and peoples of the Horizon, as well as the key star systems. The last chapters – only for the GM's eyes – describe the creatures and secrets that lurk in the Dark between the Stars as well as the introductory adventure.

# THE HISTORY OF THE HORIZON

Your story in Coriolis will take place in the network of star systems called the Third Horizon – or, more commonly, just the Horizon. Via the ancient portal fields, interstellar travel connects the people of the Horizon through commerce and cultural exchange. Mankind has called the Horizon its home for five centuries now, and since the Portal Wars ended just over a hundred years ago, its only home. Songs, poems and books still recount the memories of what came before, however - the Third Horizon is not the first place mankind colonized.

## THE THREE HORIZONS

When mankind left Al-Ardha, taking its first hesitant steps out into the universe, hundreds upon hundreds of simple vessels departed for unknown destinations beyond the big black. Most were never heard from again, a few reported having found only empty star systems or uninhabitable planets, their missions failures. But then, a lone ship returned with the news that they had found a strange artifact of unknown construction, and the fate of humanity was forever changed. The expedition, the names of its crew long lost in the fog of the past, had found a star portal.

When the full importance of the discovery became clear, new worlds suddenly lay before the feet of mankind. The cluster of stars that waited only a portal jump away was named the First Horizon. The ruling powers of Al-Ardha wasted no time – one by one, the newly accessible stars were colonized. Earth-like planets were discovered. Humanity established itself as a spacefaring civilization once and for all. A while later, the Second Horizon was discovered. A new wave of colonists conquered it, world by world. Centuries passed, and what had started as a new golden age slowly turned into something else. Few details have survived to this day, but it is clear that a schism arose between the two Horizons. Eventually, a Third Horizon was discovered, giving hope of refuge to those who wanted to escape the older Horizons' increasingly monolithic cultures.

## THE FIRSTCOME

The first to arrive in the Third Horizon were fortune seekers, religious dissidents and rebels – none of them had any love for the empire-builders of the First Horizon, or any means of competing for resources in the rapidly overcrowding Second Horizon. Some of them would permanently put their mark on the Third Horizon: the group that eventually became the Order of the Pariah, the colonists who founded the beautiful cities on Mira, and the Odacon dynasty are some examples. The Firstcome laid the foundation for the Third Horizon of today, colonizing the larger systems, building magnificent cities and creating a free and tolerant new order. It was the Firstcome who introduced the Third Horizon to the Icons and the Dark between the Stars; today it's the region's largest religion. It was a civilized era. There was peace and commerce between the peoples, cultures flourished and evolved. But like all good things, the peace couldn't last forever.

## THE PORTAL WARS

How and why the Portal Wars began, no one really knows anymore. Some historians believe that rebel groups wished to end the imperialism of the First Horizon, others that the wars were only a tragic side effect of a conflict between the two older Horizons. There are even those who claim that the

First and Second Horizons started the wars together, with the intention of isolating the Third Horizon and leaving it to crumble in the empty void. When the wars began, the armadas and servants of the first two Horizons were spread all over the Third Horizon, but after a long and bloody campaign, the peoples of the Third Horizon, with the fleets of the Order of the Pariah leading the charge, managed to push their remaining enemies into the affluent Odacon system.

The final battle above Odacon ended in disaster – whole fleets and eventually the entire system were destroyed. The Order and the Third Horizon emerged victorious, but paid a terrible price for it: the portals back to the older Horizons collapsed, ending communication and trade forever. The peoples of the Third Horizon were now alone. A recession followed immediately after the end of the war. With the supply of important resources from the older Horizons cut off, general standards of living plunged.

## THE LONG NIGHT

An age of darkness, isolation, and decay began. The portals connecting the systems of the Third Horizon still worked, but trade diminished rapidly. Many cultures became planet-bound. The dream of the stars that had been realized for such a short time was again just a dream. The advanced technology that many of the Horizon's wonders relied upon was forgotten, cities and outposts fell, and civilization receded. The Long Night, as this period is known today, was an era without progress and with a declining population. Here and there, lights in the darkness struggled on: the university in the Icon City that never shut its doors, the temple city of Lotus in perpetual bloom, the Order's regime on Zalos that held their own against the dark with vigilance and strict discipline. But these are the exceptions – the story of the Long Night is one of famine, plague and despair – whole cultures vanished in the sands of time. The peoples feared that darkness had arrived to stay – until a strange ship suddenly arrived in the Dabaran system.

## ZENITH AND NADIR

Over a millennia ago, the desperate rulers of Al-Ardha gazed dreaming towards the distant stars, and one of those stars was Dabaran. Two gigantic ships took off, headed for the red giant. The twin colossi were named Zenith and Nadir, and onboard they carried colonists meant to settle in the system now called Dabaran. The colonists were in stasis, cryo-sleep,

### THE PORTAL BUILDERS

**The origins of the portals and their creators are unknown. That the portals were engineered by some highly intelligent beings is beyond questioning, but no remains found anywhere give any clues as to the hidden architects' appearance, or even when they lived. The Portal Builders, as they are usually called, are veiled in mystery. Many theories exist of course, substantiated to varying degrees. Some researchers believe them to be an ancient human civilization, others that they were envoys of some omnipotent intelligence.**

### MEMORIES OF HORIZONS LOST

Few, if any, today still remember the First or Second Horizons. Rumors would have it that some ascetics, like the God Child of the cliffs of Garuda, are old enough to tell stories of the lost Horizons, but most people in the Third Horizon nowadays are too busy with current affairs to fantasize about the old days. Not even the crew of Zenith can really say much – the portals were not even discovered when they left their dying world. The songs about Al-Ardha, the lost home, are few but colorful – they tell of cities covering whole continents, towers so high they reached the atmosphere and an impossibly blue sky, beautiful beyond description.



several hundred thousand per ship. The fate of the crew was different however – through the generations they remained awake, tending to the ship and its sleeping passengers in the quiet, starry night.

From time to time, the crew would also go into stasis for a few years, but essentially they lived and died at the post to which their family had been appointed. The captain family Quassar, the helmsmen of the Yriedes clan and many other families in essential crew positions, saw birth, life and death on the bridge of the Zenith. Their voyage lasted nearly a full millennia, and at some point towards the end, contact with Nadir was lost. Alone, Zenith finally arrived in the Dabaran system to assess the conditions for colonization. They found that the system definitively could support human life – and that it already did. Mankind had already colonized the systems around the red giant more than five hundred years earlier!

### THE ZENITHIANS

What the astounded crew of the Zenith discovered were thirty-six linked star systems, homes to a myriad of scattered outposts and colonies. The cults, orders and tribes that lived across the Horizon were largely without interest in communicating with each other, or lacked the technology to do so. The occasional contact that did occur was mainly in the form of repression or outright war. The crew of the Zenith, called the "Late-come" by the old colonists and "Zenithians" by themselves, traveled the Third Horizon for a long time while trying to agree on what to do next, eventually putting their ship in orbit above Kua as the discussion intensified.

The heart of the issue was what to do now that their colonization directive seemed pointless. The crew kept the colonists in stasis as they debated their future. The captain family, the Quassars, proposed to carry out the mission despite the new situation, while others, led by the Yriedes family, argued that everyone should be free to decide for themselves – the directives were redundant and thus, the contract void. A third faction within the crew lost patience as the discussions dragged on, and woke the colonists from stasis on their own. The traitors, now called the Draconite faction, left the ship in the chaos of the awakening.

### THE FOUNDING OF CORIOLIS

Complete disorder seemed imminent, and the captain of the Zenith, Abarren Quassar, responded to the threat of mutiny by offering all crew and colonists the choice to go wherever they pleased and to bring with them the resources they needed for survival at their destinations. The Quassar family themselves descended to the planet below and founded a colony there, on and around the Monolith. The newly awakened colonists quickly formed gangs and groups, choosing leaders mainly from the crew, who had more knowledge of the situation. Some factions left to found colonies in other systems, but many remained in the Kua system. The remains of the Zenith became the basis for the construction of a giant space station – Coriolis – dominated from the very beginning by the Yriedes clan and their faction, the Consortium.

## THE NEW ERA

In the wake of the expeditions suddenly departing for destinations all across the Horizon, the Consortium began opening the trade routes again. Their proud bastion, Coriolis station, became a place where the Firstcome groups, long isolated from each other, could meet, and interact with the newcomers, the Zenithians. Powerful groups that had up until now lacked both the incentive and the resources to communicate off-world now suddenly had both. Soon, the courts of Dabaran traded as much with the theocrats of Sadaal as they did with each other, all thanks to the Consortium, and convoys from Mira, packed with supplies from their rich home world, became a regular sight in both these systems. With travel suddenly accessible again, the traditional pilgrimages resurged, and holy sites such as Lotus and Dabaran, the Icon City on Mira and the Dome of the Icons on Coriolis were soon flooded with believers from every system. The Monolith, home of the Quassars, quickly joined the flow of commerce through its dominance over the booming economy on primitive Kua. Goods from the surface of the planet were transported up to Coriolis and unloaded for distribution on the Net – the spindly skeleton of the Zenith, orbiting Kua as a sister satellite to the space station.

### THE COUNCIL OF FACTIONS

With the opening of the Horizon, other factions, less locally and more ideologically based, re-entered the stage. From their remote headquarters, possessing strange knowledge and mythical technology to back up their ideological strength, many factions and cults sent representatives to Coriolis. With few exceptions, they all bought seats on the station's political council to try and influence the fragile, reborn Horizon to their factions' benefit. This became the foundation of the Council of Factions. The recent arrival of the Emissaries has brought the stability of the Council into question, and only time will tell how many of the faction members will continue to place their trust in its ability to keep the peace.

# THE HORIZON TODAY

As Coriolis – The Third Horizon begins, a series of destabilizing events have shaken the Third Horizon to the core.

### THE ARRIVAL OF THE EMISSARIES

With the new age, balance and the grace of the Icons has returned to the Horizon. Trade and new Zenithian ways have replaced armed conflict and isolationism. Ancient traditions have been abandoned, which upset some of the factions. Luckily, the Council of Factions seemed to live up to its civilized reputation, and careful negotiations resolved issues that in the past would have resulted in bloodshed. And then, the Emissaries arrived. It started with reports of faint sensor echoes from the depths of the gas giant Xene, and then they emerged – ghosts from another world. They arrived at the Foundation's research installation monitoring the gas giant, numbering five, and on an unknown mission. One of them remained at the station, three set off into the Horizon and the last one headed straight for Coriolis to demand a seat on the Council.

### THE BIRTH OF THE MYSTICS

When the Emissaries arrived, so did something else – ordinary people suddenly began changing. Minds twisting, rampant madness, but worst of al – mystical powers, thought only to exist among the ascetics of the Circle of Seekers, were suddenly manifesting themselves at random. From prince to beggar, Firstcome to Zenithian – anyone could suddenly fall victim to the illness, known as Mystic's disease, or simply the Blight. The medicurgs of the Foundation compete with the Order's prophets to try and explain the phenomena as either a mind meme or an evil curse from beyond the darkness. People with mystical powers are being hunted and killed – even just suspicions of the illness are enough to place someone in mortal danger. Mystics who wish to live stay silent and disappear while fear and hate has the Horizon in a stranglehold.

### THE ZALOSIAN CONFLICT

When the Emissary on the Foundation station at Xene declared itself the Judge incarnate – an Icon – the Firstcome factions were outraged by the blatant heresy. The Order of the Pariah threatened to leave the Council, but was persuaded to stay. Instead, the Order closed their home system and stopped all traffic through the Zalos system, effectively shutting down the pilgrims' route to Mira. This also threatened the trade flow vital to the Consortium, which has responded by posing an ultimatum – reopen the routes or the Legion will be sent in to deal with the situation. The Order says that they will keep the system closed until the blasphemous emissary is extradited to Zalos to stand trial. The other factions watch and wait, the Council does nothing. A secret arms race begins. Docks on Kua and Sadaal increase their production. The Consortium sends spies and agents all across the Horizon for information. Zalos remains silent.

### THE TAOAN DISTRESS CALL

Suddenly, something happened. A distorted distress signal arrived from one of the Colonial Agency's largest settlements, Tsubari on Taoan – a desperate cry for help. Only a fragment of the whole message had gotten through, but it spoke of an attack. The Zenithian factions convened and assembled a rescue mission. The fleet departed for Taoan only to face death and destruction – just a handful of ships returned. Silence descends upon the Horizon yet again, but something stirs beneath the surface. The prophets and astronics read terrible omens in the stars – or in the Dark between them.



Monastery Cruiser Hamijara of the Order of the Pariah.





## CHAPTER 9

# FACTIONS

*Kua is the seat of power, Coriolis its focal point and the Consortium its uncrowned emperor. There can be no doubt about the fact that the Zenithian faction is the largest organization in the Horizon, but there is no shortage of aspiring usurpers either. The dethroning is coming. May the Icons have mercy.*

**IN THE SHADOW OF THE CONSORTIUM – POLITICAL LANDSCAPES OF THE THIRD HORIZON – Zidaldin Zou**

The Horizon is not dominated by a single power, but instead a wide range of groups struggle to claim the title – these are the factions. These monolithic organizations are divided into two groups, fighting economic, cultural, and military wars among each other to further their individual agendas.

**THE HORIZON IS** full of large corporations, institutions and orders, but only a few – those with strong enough ancestry and political power – are called factions. Despite some disagreement on the issue, the general consensus is that there are ten active factions in the Horizon today, divided into two groups: Firstcome and Zenithian. The dividing line between the early colonists and the late-come Zenithians is the Third Horizon's most prominent cultural conflict, taken to its extreme in the power play of the factions. The Firstcome share a strong belief in the Icons, while the Zenithians base their ideology on the austere pragmatism introduced by the arrival of their arkship, Zenith. There are some exceptions: the Church of the Icons is a young faction, but counts as Firstcome thanks to their strong religious foundation. The Legion on their hand have a Firstcome history, having fought together with the Order of the Pariah at Odacon, but counts as Zenithian because of their current alliance with the Consortium.

## ZENITHIAN FACTIONS

The Zenithian factions, headed by the Consortium, all promote the pragmatic Zenithian culture and focus on function and effectiveness. They acknowledge the Icon faith, and many Zenithians have adopted the Icons as their gods, but view religion as something separate from politics and refuse to let the Icons influence their ideology. Their common goal is to consolidate their power in the Horizon and act as guardians and shepherds for the Zenithian peoples as they believe this to be the way into a new golden age.

The Zenithian factions have a natural leader in the Consortium, who through their myriad subsidiaries and trade networks have gathered riches and resources second to none. Thanks to their alliance with the Legion they also possess considerable military strength, dominating Coriolis and controlling large territories throughout the Horizon. Not all Zenithians are happy with their leadership, however – the proud Zenithian Hegemony regards themselves as the true rulers of the Zenithians and they are steadily growing stronger. The smallest factions, the Free League and the Syndicate, have less direct power on the political scene, but work with precision in the shadows, often together. They are also the most ideologically flexible of the Zenithian factions, open to negotiations and compromises for mutual benefit with the Firstcome factions.

## FIRSTCOME FACTIONS

Unlike their Zenithian counterparts, the Firstcome factions place great belief in religious and mystical ideas about destiny and morality – in the legendary words of Icon Mother Saresha: "Without the Icons, the suns would go out. Without prayer, the Horizon would stop." Faith and morality can be discussed just as intensely before drafting a new trade agreement as when debating whether or not humanites have souls. The Firstcome factions are known for their inability to agree with each other, often leaving it to the Zenithians to mediate between them. Only on one occasion have the Firstcome factions joined forces to achieve a common goal: when they crushed the Nazareem's Sacrifice.

There is no obvious leader among the Firstcome factions, but as far as wealth and size goes, the Church of the Icons and the Order of the Pariah are the strongest. With the Order's recent seclusion and the Church of the Icons lack of any real military strength, the Firstcome factions are more divided than ever.



## ZENITHIAN FACTIONS

- The Consortium
- The Free League
- The Legion
- The Syndicate
- The Zenithian Hegemony

## FIRSTCOME FACTIONS

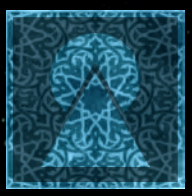
- Ahlam's Temple
- The Draconites
- The Church of the Icons
- The Order of the Pariah
- The Nomad Federation

### NAZAREEM'S SACRIFICE

Factions are mighty, but not invincible. Nazareem's Sacrifice was a cult-like faction of great power, until they were wiped out in a single, devastating blow and erased from the annals of the Horizon. Not much is known of this Firstcome faction, other than that they were hunted down by their brothers and sisters in the Order of the Pariah and the Draconites, supported by the other Firstcome factions and the Legion. The history of the Nazareem is more or less taboo to discuss, but there are of course many theories, most of which agree that the Nazareem turned to the Dark between the Stars, thus sentencing themselves to death.



# THE CONSORTIUM



*"Expansion is life."*

The Consortium is the largest faction in the Third Horizon. It consists of a group of large corporations which together dominate trade, manufacturing, media, science and colonization.

**THE CONSORTIUM AND** the Coriolis station are one – so closely tied together that most people in the Horizon can't tell them apart. Coriolis was constructed using materials from the dismantling of the Zenith, on the orders of the Yriedes family, the seconds-in-command. The Yriedeses had a vision that became the Consortium's motto: "Sell everything to everyone". The Yriedes clan, together with the families Parr, Nestera and Evgeni founded the core group of companies that now, some sixty years later, have grown into one huge faction. The Consortium of today consists of about twenty larger companies, all owning installations and factories throughout the Horizon. Most production facilities are located on Kua or in the larger systems, but new colonies are established all the time. The larger corporations have representatives on the board of directors, the faction's governing body, and the three largest ones – the Bulletin, the Foundation and the Colonial Agency – each have their own seat at the Council of Factions. The current faction director and council member is Tiera Yriedes, closely associated with the military industrial trinity Parr-Nestera, Tilides and Xoar, and a personal friend of Legion general Ekaterina Hierida. The new, aggressive policies promoted by Tiera have begun to escalate conflicts across the Horizon. A storm is coming.

### THE COMPANIES OF THE CONSORTIUM

The companies of the Consortium cover most areas of production, save perhaps the food industry where they are represented only by the Parr bio sculptors' ready-made meals. They have many famous products on the weapons market, manufactured by Xoar, Dayal, Tilides or Nestera all over the Horizon. Entertainment and information is handled by the Bulletin and Exeter, while companies like the Foundation, Celer-Delekta and Nyala dominate virtually all advanced manufacturing and research. The industrial corporations have the greatest amount of autonomy within the faction, often acting as a counterweight to the three largest members. They are also the ones who are spread the farthest across the Horizon, Alkarra's Daharab dockyards on Sadaal and Xoar's research center in Trigon, Mira, being clear examples of this.

External security is handled by the Legion with their mighty star fleet and fearsome Legionnaires. Most of the big companies have private corporate brigades however, such as the Nestera brigade who cleared the Conglomerate of rebel elements, or the Colonial Rangers, the Agency's tactical teams. Police matters are handled by the Coriolis Guard with the help of the Judicators, hired from the Hegemony. They are not trusted with internal security however – this falls under the jurisdiction of the intelligence service, the top secret Special Branch. Very few within the Consortium know any details about the affairs of the Special Branch, but they are said to have access to all of the Foundation's latest research and the corporations' most advanced technology.

## THE BULLETIN

The largest news agency in the Horizon is the Bulletin, a Coriolis-based media conglomerate. Their motto is "Newsworthy and Accessible", something that colors both their news coverage and their other programs. Being Coriolis-based, both news and other programs are mainly from the station itself, or from the portal stations, most of which have some degree of Bulletin presence. They do of course send correspondents to the far reaches of the Horizon if some event there is sensational enough, and to the sites and planets most visited by pilgrims. They usually contract freelancers for the most remote jobs – this keeps both the costs and the risks to a minimum.

Other than news and entertainment, the Bulletin also offers a post and courier service called the Ermes Courier. Ermes ships carry mainly the Bulletin's own news, but also other messages and information, and, in rare cases, physical mail.

### THE FACES OF THE BULLETIN

A sure ticket to fame in the Third Horizon is to become a known face on a Bulletin broadcast. Jalab Korihan, the star anchor, and morning hostess Nana Elide, who hosts her shows from the top of the Spire, are famous throughout the Horizon and their take on current affairs carries great weight. Jasmin Amliki, star of the popular series "The Plantation Owner's Daughter", and Hija Tara Kono from the fashion show "Gilded Veils" are other examples of Bulletin celebrities. The out-of-system correspondents are few but well known, like Alandro Shanatar on Mira or the recently jailed Yvev Dakour in the Zalos system. The Bulletin runs the only real media school in the Horizon – the Lyceum of Propaganda on Coriolis. This is where the reporters and show hosts come to train, but the school has also seen spies, diplomats, and a few successful private detectives pass through its halls over the years. As of late, the Bulletin has become troubled with an increase in independent voices challenging their media dominance – the Red Spider out in the Rimward Reach, Zuraya in the Sadaal system and the Freedom Call on Algol. The recent jailing of the Bulletin's correspondent to Zalos has led to a diplomatic crisis between the Consortium and the Order.

## THE FOUNDATION

The secular Foundation is the part of the Consortium mainly concerned with research and development. They

### PRODUCTION

The production units of the Consortium are spread across the entire Horizon. How they operate differs, from simple factories of the Conglomerate to more advanced orbital facilities on dedicated space stations. Modular production of things like Vulcan weapons, tags and m-doses runs continuously, while larger and more expensive items are only made-to-order, for example ships of the heavier classes, advanced weapon systems, reactors etc. Things like these are huge investments, which is why the Consortium also has a large network of banks for financing and risk diversification.

TABLE 9.1 THE LARGEST CONSORTIUM COMPANIES

| COMPANY | MAIN INDUSTRY |
|---|---|
| Alkarra | Larger ships |
| The Bulletin | Information, entertainment |
| Celer-Delekta | Cybernetic prosthetics, bionics, medicurgy |
| Exeter | Reactors, cruises, tourism |
| Hyperion | Bulk haulers, logistics, freight |
| The Colonial Agency | Mineral prospecting, mining operations, colonization |
| Nestera | Advanced body armor, ground vehicles |
| Nomo | Graviton generators, inertia dampeners |
| Nyala | Computers, hardware, software |
| Parr | Intermediate goods (foods), ship armor |
| Parr-Nestera | Accelerator weapons, body armor |
| The Foundation | Research, education |
| Tilides | Exo suits, smaller ships, probes, torpedoes |
| Vulcanor | Vulcan weapons |
| Xoar | Advanced body armor, shock weapons, thermal weapons |

are known for their starkly rational and scientific – that is to say, Zenithian – view of the world. To the Firstcome, the Foundation is a bastion of non-believers and is shameful to the entire Horizon. The company is, as the name suggests, run as a foundation, selling and leasing their breakthroughs to third parties. Most production methods and patents used by Consortium companies were developed by the Foundation. The Foundation rediscovered the algorithms necessary to understand and use the portal fields, and due to this is a strong presence within the Consortium. This knowledge was at the time only in the hands of the Order and the Nazareem, and they kept it a secret.

Apart from portal field and astronics research – which takes place at institutes spread all across the Horizon, like the Kander-Mall in the Rimward Reach for example – the main areas of research for the Foundation are socio-arithmetics, intelligence research, portal archaeology and bionics. The intelligence research is mostly focused on ship intelligences and is highly classified, conducted only in secret units under the supervision of the Special Branch. The bionics research on the other hand is completely open for review in an effort to challenge the Order's monopoly on hospitals and sanatoriums.

### NEW SCIENCES

Socio-arithmetics is a field of study in which mathematical algorithms are applied to whole populations to make macro-political predictions. The Foundation claims that their methods are accurate, but their critics present the fact that they failed to predict the arrival of the Emissaries as proof of the opposite. The professors at the Foundation's Mathematical Institute say that not every individual can be accounted for in their studies as a response to the criticism. The Bulletin has had great results when using the methods to tailor programs more to the preferences of their viewers.

The fields of xeno- and portal archaeology receive huge backing from the Foundation. Several expeditions are launched each year, usually in association with the Colonial Agency, to explore ruins, remnants of Portal Builder technology or other artifacts. The biggest site is off-limits to the expeditions however – the inside of the Monolith, closed to rival factions by order of the Astûrban, the Hegemony's secret police.

The Foundation's College of Engineers on Coriolis offers the best natural science education in the Horizon. The generous scholarships offered to promising scientists and students also add to its reputation.



## THE COLONIAL AGENCY

When the Horizon was new and unknown to the Zenithians, the Yriedes family started an agency tasked with financing, launching and establishing new colonies. Nowadays, they rarely find new colonies themselves, and the Colonial Agency, through its extension the Colonial Bank, has shifted its main focus to financing, educating and tech leasing to independent entrepreneurs looking to start mining operations, colonies and factories. They also run a school on Coriolis, the Colonial Agency's Higher Education Center, where they train the Horizon's best scouts, explorers and colonists. The top students are recruited to the Colonial Rangers – special ops teams used to secure sensitive investments that require a little more finesse than the blunt fist of the Legion.

Through investments in the Consortium's heavy industry, the Agency has access to dust trawlers, mining drones, mobile smelters and other heavy machinery that an entrepreneur might need to lease. Hyperion shuttles and bulk haulers handle transportation.

The Zenithians and the Consortium are not the only ones who employ the Agency – many Firstcome rulers and merchants, including recently the Iconocrate of Sadaal, are clients here.

### A HATED FACTION

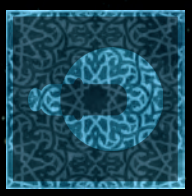
Being a colonial agent is a responsibility that comes with many perks, but also risks. Many view the Colonial Agency as an exploitative, parasitic corporation, thieves that ship resources off-world and pocket the profit – especially so on Algol, where they are strong but despised. They are accused of having caused a terrible natural disaster in which an entire ocean was drained in the search for precious minerals on the ocean floor.

The most reputable agents are celebrities whose advice is sought before any large project. Ares Kleon, who found the Uharu-12 diamonds, or Minna Jifha, who discovered the silk fields on Menkar and mapped the monolith there, are names that often come up in connection with new expeditions and Bulletin reports. Compared to them, the Agency's council member, Desaron Kai, is a relatively anonymous figure.

The one area the Agency stays clear of is archaeological expeditions. After the catastrophic failure on Menkar when the monolith there crumbled and fell, all such undertakings are left to the Foundation, although joint efforts are not uncommon.



# THE FREE LEAGUE



*"Unity is strength."*

The Free League organizes the small actors on the otherwise Consortium-dominated market. Having access to a skilled workforce in spaceports and souks, they offer a service the Consortium cannot.

**THE LEAGUE, AS** it is commonly called, was originally created as a counterweight to the Consortium, but had no way of competing in the beginning. They tried to perform the same functions as the Consortium, but have over time changed their attitude towards nurturing a more symbiotic relationship instead. The fact of the matter is that without the League's deckhands, pilots and engineers, all of the Consortium's ships and haulers would wait in dock, their cargo unloaded, and without the free traders, Consortium commerce wouldn't reach as far out on the star arms as it does. In the shadows, both parties are still trying to out-maneuver the other, however.

When it comes to free traders and markets outside of the core systems, the League is practically in a monopoly position. The risks compared to the calculated profit are too great for any of the major Consortium companies to get involved. The League runs several auction houses and souks in the outer systems, as well as a few on both Kua and Coriolis.

The current goal for the League is to keep its control of the outer markets, and to improve the living conditions of its members. No other faction is as open about its membership as the League – counting official members, the Free League is the Horizon's largest faction.

### THE LEAGUE'S DIRTY LAUNDRY

The League's biggest problem is the alleged connection between itself and the Syndicate – something widely proclaimed by the Consortium. The League's council member, Jesibel Niales, has time and again repudiated the accusations in very vivid language. To quiet the rumors, the League has begun hiring bounty hunters to go after corsairs, smugglers and even the Algolan slavers.

Another fly in the ointment is that the League's own so-called Night Hands, the paramilitary wing of the organization previously reserved for dealing with scabs and disloyal members, seems to have become more autonomous. The leader of the Night Hands, the stevedore Zahria, is often seen around the dodgy parts of the Ozone Plaza and is rumored to have dealings with the Syndicate.

It is not all bad for the League of course – living astrogator legend Ehina Kuma still joins a new crew before every trip, bringing the Icons' benevolent grace with her. Other celebrity members include Baris Khan, head pilot on the Net, and shipless captain Fatma Boroudi who takes jobs wherever a captain is needed. Some regard it as a bad omen when she comes walking through a port looking to ship out.

The League is actively recruiting among the plebeians in the Conglomerate, something the local elite, the factory owners and the Consortium are less than happy with.

Some even say that the League supports some of the uprisings in the Conglomerate.



The Slum Queen Yjala Baktou has previously been a League member, but now fights against the Zenithians in the Ara-Ara borough close to the Monolith.

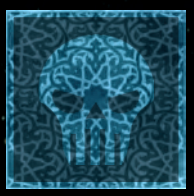
### THE LEAGUE BOROUGHS

In the last few cycles, The League has begun organizing itself in different neighborhoods in the larger cities of the Horizon. In metropolitan areas, such as Akhandar, Cimoran and Daharab, new boroughs with their own militias, hospitals, schools and even sanitation, water and energy plants have formed. The League seems to be on a quest for urban colonization across the Third Horizon, something that the other factions will likely not accept in the long run.

### MEMBERSHIP

The faction is based on paid membership. Every member must pay a license fee of 100 birr per CC, and in return, she is protected by the League through legal counsel, insurance and, perhaps most importantly, the right to bid on auctions. Through better working conditions, higher salaries and better insurance policies, the League makes life better for its members every day. They also run a school in Coriolis, free for members since they still have to work while they study. A new academy for captains and astrogators has just been opened on Coriolis, something the Foundation has protested loudly as they claim the sole rights to all portal stations and the crewing of them.

# THE LEGION



*"The best must die so the rest can live."*

The Legion is comprised of a diverse collection of mercenaries and armed skippers, gathered around the remnants of a fleet squadron from the Portal Wars.

**THE LEGION IS** the youngest of the Firstcome factions – so young that it is usually considered Zenithian, albeit this is mainly due to their close ties to the Consortium. Some say that they might as well just join the Consortium, but this would not be in the corporations' best interest – it would mean one less Zenithian vote on the Council.

The two flagships Shahrazad and Dunyazad and their escort, the only survivors from Shadussar's 2nd Fleet after the Portal Wars, founded the Legion. When the fleets from the First Horizon were about to attack Mira, some of Shadussar's forces were diverted to set up an ambush there, but as the enemies took the Odacon route – and were destroyed there, along with the rest of Shadussar's fleets – they survived. During the chaotic years that followed the end of the war, the survivors traveled the Horizon as warlords and corsairs. Many of the horrors perpetrated during those years can be traced back to the Legion – something they refuse to acknowledge today, of course.

When the Zenith arrived and the Consortium was founded, this new and powerful employer suddenly meant new possibilities. The Legion of today was born. They were originally hired by the Consortium to wipe out the fleets of the Zenithian Hegemony, but suffered terrible losses and retreated, instead being tasked with hunting corsairs, greedy nobles or any other who would threaten the Consortium's interests.

### LEGION ORGANIZATION

The Legion of today is still centered on the two flagships, but is otherwise organized as three separate branches: the fleet, the companies and the Guard. To many, the fleet represents the true Legion. Even though one of the flagships has gone missing – or is away on a secret mission – the fleet is growing, new ships coming in from the docks on Sadaal and many other yards. The exact size of the fleet is unknown. Supposedly, the Legion still has access to secret bases all over the Horizon left behind since the chaotic years, but no one knows for sure. The Consortium is the only faction who uses the fleet today.

The companies are the everyday faces of the Legion. Many different factions employ this branch for all sorts of missions. The companies are not a uniform army as much as they are a jumbled mess of mercenary groups who can access lucrative jobs through their membership in the Legion. The faction has strict rules that detail how a mission should be carried out, and all member companies must obey the rules or face expulsion and have their leaders hunted down and executed. This makes for plenty of jobs available to free companies – they get paid less, but have no rules to follow.

The Coriolis Guard is the branch with the lowest reputation. They answer directly to the governor of Coriolis and are responsible for keeping the peace on the station, but they are too corrupt to be any good at it. Other

Legionnaires view them as fake mercs or proxy Legionnaires. Woe to the unlucky Legionnaire who gets injured badly enough to be demoted to the Guard.

### HEROES OF THE LEGION

Suhaima Taslim, the disabled Legionnaire who represents the faction at the Council, is but one of many war heroes who pride themselves on sporting the Legion's skull tattoo. Jasma "Kyber" Palu is a heavily modified soldier with both visible and hidden cybernetics who leads the half-crazed Steel Skulls unit. She gladly accepts dangerous jobs that come with high risk of injury, and thus, a good chance of new mods. The skipper Skalide dol-Gana in her fast fighter Xantus is famous for her skills as a blockade runner and corsair hunter. Anyone would be lucky to have her as escort out on the star arms.

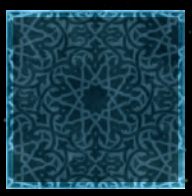
Rumor has it that the Legion gets their new tech from Consortium companies like Celer-Delekta, NimaBionics and Industrial Algebra. True or not, it is evident that many Legionnaires have implants that are unavailable on the open market, sometimes even strange bionic sculpts that cause the faithful to make the sign against the Dark between the Stars when the soldiers walk past.

### THE FLEET

Few know how large the fleet of the Legion really is. The larger ships are well documented by both the Special Branch and other factions, but the disappearance of Shahrazad and the rumors of hidden bases beg the uneasy answer that the size of the fleet may have been underestimated. Only two other factions have war fleets of their own: the Zenithian Hegemony and the Order of the Pariah.



# THE SYNDICATE



*"They have what you need – we have what you want."*

Organized crime in the Third Horizon is controlled by a handful of families and their respective street gangs. The faction is based on Coriolis, but has no seat on the Council, much to their chagrin.

**THE SYNDICATE WAS** founded at the same time as Coriolis, and is viewed by many as the illegal shadow of the Consortium. The faction is made up of a group of wealthy families from the crew of the Zenith who joined forces with Firstcome criminal groups on Algol, Sadaal and Zalos. Together, they took control over the street gangs that had started to form on Coriolis.

The Syndicate wants their operations to run smoothly, and this requires a certain level of law and order. They cooperate with the Guard to combat petty crime because it disturbs their more lucrative forms of business: protection rackets, gambling, pimping, drugs and smuggling. In the first decades after its birth, the Syndicate grew to own almost the entire Guard through threats and bribery.

The courts and the governor needed a drastic change, and asked the Zenithian Hegemony for help. The Hegemony created the Judicators. This new tool of law enforcement decimated the Syndicate's lower levels, especially the street gangs. Soon, however, the crime families learned to adapt, and balance returned once again. Today, the Judicators are less involved with the Syndicate and focus their resources on other forms of crime.

The basis of the Syndicate is the gangs that run the different plazas on Coriolis. Things get violent from time to time, as the gangs' methods include a certain level of territorial disputes and revenge. Outside of the station, the middle layers of the organization, the so-called charpurs, run the operations. They operate above the gangs, organizing things like smuggling and drug production. The only areas the Syndicate stays away from are slave trading and the smuggling of faction tech. Unfortunately, other players are less scrupulous.

### THE FRONT

The Syndicate's contact with the legitimate economy is handled by front men in the Consortium companies, bureaucrats on Sadaal, drug cartels on Algol and supposedly even the rebels on Zalos-B. These contacts are used for smuggling, drug production, proxy trips and illegal research – sometimes with human subjects. The Syndicate is not considered to possess any faction technology of its own, with the possible exception of the rumored "black ships".

The biggest concern for the Syndicate today is the rumors going around that they have begun to associate with the Algolan slavers, which has led to a renewed interest from the Judicators. Both the Church of the Icons and Ahlam's Temple have, unsuccessfully, tried to fight the Syndicate's power.

### THE CHALLENGERS

The Syndicate is the largest criminal organization in the Horizon, but not the only one. There are three rising threats to their power in the Horizon: The Serpent, the Slavers and Ferekam, criminal groups dealing in slave trade and gun running.



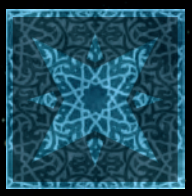
TABLE 9.2 FAMILIES AND GANGS

| FAMILY | ORIGIN | GANG | TURF | DISTINGUISHING MARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adibal | Sadaal | Faris | Mulukhad | Dresses in garish colors |
| Afyana | Algol | Ganiya | Spice Plaza | Secret handshake |
| Birbasil | Zenith | Lama | Ozone Plaza | Lips tattooed black |
| Intisaar | Zalos | Izza | Spring Plaza | Scarification on their backs |
| Rafa | Algol | Wark | Market Plaza | Secret handshake |

### THE BLACK SHIPS

Recently, stories have begun to surface about oddly shaped ships that sensors can hardly detect, and that suddenly vanish in a burst of static. Some crews claim to have spotted the ships near the smuggling routes, most frequently around the moons of Transsurha in the Kua system.

# THE ZENITHIAN HEGEMONY



*"As it once was, so shall it be again."*

The aristocrats of the Zenithian Hegemony are the elite of the Monolith on the planet Kua, and are very clear about their intentions to expand their control, first to Coriolis and then to the entire Horizon.

**MEMBERS OF THE** captain's family and other high-ranking officers of the crew of the Zenith founded the Hegemony after the schism onboard. Captain Abarren Quassar together with the Cabinet of Thousands from the Monolith officially rules the faction, but a divide has been growing within the organization. De facto, there are two factions within the Hegemony: the Hegemonists and the neo-Zenithians, the former led by the Quassar family and the latter by Arianites. Both groups share the view that the Hegemony is the rightful ruler of the Third Horizon and destined to lead its peoples to greatness, but they disagree on how to get there. The Hegemonists are elitist and unforgiving, while the neo-Zenithians prefer cooperation, mainly with the Consortium, but also with other factions. Both groups act as patrons for middle class Zenithians through scholarships, as mentors for entrepreneurs, and invest heavily in Zenithian projects, industrial as well as research.

The two groups both control a few key institutions within the faction each. The Hegemonists control the infamous secret police, the Astûrban, while the neo-Zenithians founded the Judicators and dominate the mighty fleet. The two police forces aside, the different families keep house guards of their own.

### THE PRIDE OF ZENITH

The fleet of the Zenithian Hegemony is neither the biggest nor the most powerful in the Horizon, but when it comes down to quality, it might be the best. The Zenith Aviation Academy in the Monolith is generally considered the best in the Horizon, and a long line of popular holo dramas has elevated the academy to a legendary reputation. The Sky City in the Monolith also houses elements of the Salakhad flotilla, known as the best corsair hunters in system with their elite Nighthawk squadron. Just recently, the patrol routes of the flotilla have been extended and some ships have been tasked with hunting Syndicate smugglers. The Arianites family is believed to control the fleet, but this has not been proven.

The Hegemony has many famous members throughout the Horizon apart from Captain Quassar himself and the faction's council member, Johara Quassar. The duelist Mehot ar-Hrama, a Hegemonist, is notorious for her skills with the mercurium sword and the ritual skafe dagger. From the neo-Zenithians, commander Ehene ar-Eusidia, a Nighthawk squadron fighter ace personally responsible for several corsair kills, is among the best known.

The Hegemony runs two schools of great reputation, the Aviation Academy in the Monolith and the Judicator's Forensics Institute on Coriolis. People from all over the Horizon come to the system to apply, but the school rules allow only Zenithians to become students.

### THE BLOOD CULT

The bloodlines mean everything in the Hegemony. The ruling class is obsessed with

one thing above all others: the preservation of the genetic unity of the survivors from the Zenith. Their worldview is centered on what crew position your family had, and how closely related you are to the original crew. The great philosopher Merkedsar Konstantinides spoke of "the sanctity and perfection of the Zenithian blood" and argued that the Zenithian civilization could only achieve true greatness if they protected their bloodlines from the evil forces that had caused the Third Horizon to fall into darkness. Certain positions are therefore reserved for "pure-bloods" only, and "defiling" one's family could be grounds for expulsion from the faction.

The idea of Zenithian supremacy has spawned a stubborn search for proof of earlier Zenithian settlements in the Horizon. Some patriotic historians claim that the second arkship, Nadir, reached the Third Horizon before the Portal Wars and founded a colony. Several expeditions have searched the Horizon for the remains of this mythical settlement.

The Hegemony controls the Monolith and the surrounding metropolis, the Conglomerate. They have made huge investments in the different districts and factory islands, but leave most of the daily affairs to hired Algolan colonists, who in turn rule the plebeians and slummers with an iron fist. This practice has resulted in the Free League beginning to recruit in the factories and slums, which has led to clashes between the two factions, sometimes involving both house guards and mercenaries.

### ASTÛRBAN

The Astûrban is both secret police and intelligence agency, watching over the Zenithians from their fortress in the Monolith. The name literally means "eye of Astir" – the Astir family want everyone to know the power they hold as founders and supervisors of the organization. What was once the security staff onboard the Zenith has now evolved into one of the most competent, and ruthless, intelligence agencies in the Horizon. The Astûrban is very set in the old ways, seeing themselves as protectors of Zenithians everywhere, regardless of whether they support the Hegemony or not. Astûrban agents are no strangers to carrying out raids on rival factions in what they call "self defense", something the Council have condemned repeatedly.

### THE FAMILIES

| HEGEMONISTS | NEO-ZENITHIANS |
|---|---|
| Quassar | Arianites |
| Din Hrama | Laskarid |
| Konstantinides | Vanna |
| Zenone | Din Eusidia |
| Astir | Aristides |



# THE DRACONITES



*"Through conflict, the truth."*

The Draconites hide their egocentrism behind intricate rituals and imposing robes – if their opponents are to be believed.

**FEW FACTIONS HAVE** such an air of mystery as that which surrounds the Draconite order. They are renowned for their fearlessness in both combat and diplomacy, and are said to make no distinction between the two. The faction originated in the part of the crew of the Zenith that valued resolve and willpower above all else. They viewed the commanding Quassar and Yriedes families as too entrenched in the discussions about what to do with the colonists in stasis, and instead went ahead and woke them up on their own. They were among the first to leave the Zenith after the awakening, disappearing into the dark. Whatever it was that they found out there among the debris and ruins on abandoned worlds no one knows, but they quickly became the stuff of legends, ghosts seldom seen but intensely discussed. The stories claim that their travels in the Dark between the Stars turned them into something cold and purely egotistical. When they reentered the light of civilization, they did it as a disciplined faction of warrior philosophers, possessing secret truths the other factions could only dream of.

### THE SECRETS OF THE DRACONITES

The Draconites wield advanced technology with obvious elements of the lost wisdom of the old Horizons. How they have acquired this technology is unknown, but whispers in the shadows tell of unspeakable pacts with hidden orders from before the Portal Wars, or even alliances with creatures beyond human comprehension. The Draconites themselves say nothing.

The organization of the order is secret, but they would seem to operate in cells centered on strong leaders, with a minimum of contact between the individual groups. Or perhaps someone, or something, is pulling the strings from the shadows, guiding the faction towards some obscure goal. The only thing known for certain is that they have a system of apprentices, where a senior member guides and educates a younger novice through the mysteries of the order. Some people believe that the order is made up of a series of circles, with the members all seeking entry to the next circle and the next, advancing towards the inner sanctum at the center. The select outsiders who have witnessed the arcane rituals where a Draconite warrior appears to be transcending to a higher form of wisdom supports the latter theory.

The philosophy of the order is the subject of much debate and the most outlandish of theories. That they emphasize conflict as a metaphysical concept is clear to anyone. They regard it as a form of both personal and collective growth. Even though most would think this a very violent approach to the world, some say that it is just as much about inner conflict, about the perpetual struggle with the impure parts of the self, and that the Draconites seek to confront and defeat their inner demons,



no matter the cost. This is in many ways reflected in the order's worship of the Lady of Tears in her cold and strict form, the Executioner. Her sword is sharp and always ready for whoever breaks the traditions or codes of the order, but also for the weak of heart. The Executioner protects any and all who are in control of their own lives and who choose their own death.

### NO HOME OR HEARTH

No one knows the location of the Draconites' headquarters. The order is present in many places throughout the Horizon, but usually only with one or a few members. There is much speculation about the order's actual size and distribution. They were recently offered a seat at the Council of Factions, perhaps motivated by the Consortium sticking to the logic of "keep your friends close but your enemies closer".

Only one Draconite is known to reside on Coriolis, the council member Mandragor Ho, who, despite a plain appearance, can make the most seasoned of Bulletin reporters shake in their shoes. The exact role of the spokesperson is unclear.

# THE CHURCH OF THE ICONS



*"There is only one salvation, and only nine ways that will lead you there."*

The movement called the Church of the Icons is a faction both old and new, resting on a basis of ancient cults, but founded in the modern age, preaching the modern ways of the faith.

**THE EXACT ORIGIN** of the Icon faith has been lost to time, but everyone knows that it was introduced to the Third Horizon by cultists and believers from the First Horizon. All but one of these cults, the Circle of Seekers, are dead today but their religious practices have been all but abandoned by the general population. Instead, the Church of the Icons has become the dominant religious faction. They are the Horizon's youngest faction, and have grown strong through collecting, canonizing and institutionalizing the wide, sprawling faith that has existed in the Horizon for centuries. During a live Bulletin broadcast in CC 49, the nine sacred rites were put in writing in the Icon City on Mira, where the Church originally grew into a faction to begin with, during the darkness of the Long Night after the end of the war. A ruling matriarch and patriarch, assisted by an assembly of clergy, head the new faction. Today, the Seekers, whose presence was also strong on Mira, have been marginalized, looked upon as wise ascetics and prophets rather than actual figures of power within the faction.

The key difference between the Church's doctrine and the Iconic folklore is that the faction denies the duality of the Icons' temperaments and vengefulness. Instead, the Church preaches that evil exists within humans themselves, and that it is released when the Dark between the Stars enters someone's life.

### THE CIRCLE OF SEEKERS

The Circle of Seekers remain, but are the strongest on Sadaal, on Mira and her sister systems, and on Dabaran, where they have both the Temple of the Circle and a monastery school in Lotus, the holy city. The Seeker title is only awarded someone upon initiation into one of their monasteries, which are always shaped like circles. It is said that the Seekers possess the same mystical powers as those afflicted with the mystic's disease, but that they are in full control of them.

The Seekers have a reputation for being skillful negotiators. They have often been called upon to end bitter conflicts, such as the Geselem riots on Algol and in the aftermath of the bloody massacre on the Moon of Menkar. Apart from this, the Seekers generally keep a low profile. On Coriolis and in other places, they run meditative stone gardens where believers and Seekers can come to find peace.

### THE MISSIONARIES

The Church of the Icons' calling is to unite all the peoples of the Horizon in the one true faith, and the mission is therefore the first of the sacred rites. Missionary expeditions depart regularly from the core systems out to the star arms, often carrying both missionaries and Seekers.

The most famous member of the Church is not the matriarch or the patriarch as one might

expect, but the council member Wasimah Umm, a former Seeker turned Arch Herat. She has openly declared her views on many difficult questions of morality and ontology, the latest one being the intense debate about whether humanites have souls or not. Aside from Wasimah, the prophet Yesiel Marcos is a well-known face as he frequently appears on the morning shows of the Bulletin with a loud opinion on the "the Blight" and its impact on the Horizon. The father of the mission, Sharif Afta on Coriolis, has initiated the most missionary expeditions, and just recently came back alive from the disaster at Taoan.

### TALISMANS

The faithful often carry a talisman representing their favorite Icon, something the Church has been trying to change, instead encouraging believers to carry a silver sideways eight, the symbol of the Church. The sideways eight symbolizes the eight visible Icons, with the empty spaces representing the Faceless One, but it is also the symbol of infinity in Dabaran mathematics.

### THE SACRED RITES

- **The mission**
- **The life bond**
- **The creed**
- **The blessing**
- **The fast**
- **The confession**
- **The pilgrimage**
- **The giving of alms**
- **The prayer**



# AHLAM'S TEMPLE



*"Every human is a world of its own."*

The faction of Ahlam's Temple is a systematic explorer of the mysteries of experience and the senses. To the public, the faction is best known for their inimitable courtesans.

**LIKE THE SEEKERS,** Ahlam's Temple is an old cult, but instead of the religious traditions of the Seekers or the Church, the Temple's foundation is the eternal importance of the present. To the Temple, the Icons represent the human soul's different positions, both spiritual and physical. Just like the Church of the Icons, the Temple seeks to spread their philosophies. The knowledge of the purity of the present will help the people of the Horizon lead better lives. The teachings of Ahlam are applied to everything from dance and art, to judiciary theory and politics. The Judicators' interrogation methods, which don't use torture, are based on an Ahlamite theory. The origins of the teachings stem from Miran temple dances and poems from before the Portal Wars. Esteemed philosophers like Haraman Hassam and poets like Jasmine Sidat developed the heritage into the Temple of Ahlam of today.

### ⚙ THE COURTESANS

The Temple is mainly famous for the courtesan academies they run on Coriolis and Mira. The education there is completely focused on the eight arts of pleasure. Apart from the courtesans, many influential rhetoricians, prophets, entertainers and officers have attended the academies. Both the Zenithian Hegemony and the Bulletin regularly send employees and aristocrats to the academies to be taught the mysteries of subjectivity and sensory input.

True courtesans are only taught in the academies, and begin their education at an early age. Only the best students complete the program and get their titles. On Coriolis and in other metropolises, true courtesans are in high demand. In some places it would be unthinkable to enter the political arena without a courtesan by one's side. Wealthy families and recently even the big corporations employ a personal aesthete to show off their status. A part of the Temple less spoken of is the Black Lotuses, courtesans who have been trained in the ninth art – the pleasure of death.

These assassins played a crucial role in the destruction of the Nazareem's Sacrifice, but how active they really are today is uncertain to outsiders.

Aside from Terminos Lete, the faction's council member, the Temple is home to famous people like Hija Goua, the bi-gender courtesan from Menele, the war dancer Palmira Ferex from Mira, and Darkes Lamann, the slum poet who in his wall poems mocks rulers and plebeians alike. The Temple possesses an ancient technology – the proxy technology. It was designed for therapeutic and educational purposes and lets you share another person's experiences and knowledge. Unfortunately, the Syndicate has stolen the technology and uses it to manufacture so-called proxy trips. These are usually of an erotic nature, but rumors are going around about "moru trips" that let you experience someone else's death. The Temple is fighting to get their technology back, but have had no success so far.



### AHLAM'S MEMATURGY

Aside from the proxy technology, rumors say that the philosophers of the Temple can create memes of their own. By manipulating light, sound and bio signals the so-called mematurgs can make people believe or do things that are not true to their nature.

For the philosophers and teachers of the Temple, the use of memes is just a means to an end, a way to achieve enlightenment, although the same memes could be used to control people. It is not without reason that the saying goes "a courtesan's whisper is a bond for any man or woman." Rumors say that the Black Lotuses of the faction are trained to use simple verbal memes. Other examples exist of mematurgs, such as the famous tyrant Dziban, who controls parts of the Dziban system with his followers. Tales of the Djinni also say that they can sow thoughts into the minds of people.

### THE LOTUS DEAL

A "lotus deal" is a common idiom in the Horizon and describes secret problem-solving or underhanded negotiations. It can also be used to insinuate that someone has gone to bed with someone to get a position or a favor.

# THE ORDER OF THE PARIAH



*"The end is near."*

The Order of the Pariah has an ambivalent reputation in the Horizon. On the one hand, their work with the sick and the poor on Coriolis is greatly lauded, but at the same time, people whisper about their bloody war crimes during the Portal Wars and their crusade against dissidents in their home system, Zalos.

**ON CORIOLIS, THE** Order is known as the Samaritans. They run a hospital, a sanatorium for the hyper sick, a poor house, several soup kitchens and a renowned medical school. The medical students become neophytes of the Order and their education is heavily influenced by the faction's religious views, but all the students are offered generous scholarships for the duration of their training. When they graduate, they are often offered employment by groups who are otherwise less than friendly towards the Order, a good indication of the quality of the school. The Samaritans appear the perfect believers, helping their fellow human beings out of the kindness of their hearts. This reputation is kept intact on Coriolis thanks to the Samaritan part of their work – the memories of the Order's involvement in the atrocities of the Portal Wars are not something the station's mainly Zenithian population keeps alive.

The council representative for the Order of the Pariah is Sister Almas, headmaster of the medical academy. She is just and resolute, both as a teacher and as a politician. Her students claim that she never sleeps, but instead spends her nights before a statue of the Martyr, deep in prayer.

### THE MARTYRS

Outside of Coriolis, the name Samaritans is frowned upon. Here, the Order is known as the Martyrs and have an entirely different reputation. Their symbol, the martyr's crown, stirs feelings of unease in almost everyone. Stories from the Portal Wars speak of the Order as fanatic Martyr worshippers, merciless in combat and without any concern for their own lives. Their enormous monastery cruisers are said to have carried both crusaders and flagellants into battle, a rumor that is still prevalent.

The Order of the Pariah is of Firstcome descent, and worships the Martyr (the icon commonly known as the Judge). They were an active party in the Portal Wars, and closed their home system, Zalos, at the end of the war, not opening it until many years later, when the Consortium dispatched the Legion to demand passage. This pattern is now repeating itself – Zalos has been closed once again since one of the Emissaries proclaimed itself the Judge incarnate, a sacrilege according to the Order. It is likely only the fact that the space station at Xene is owned by the Foundation, and thus by extension the Consortium, that has kept the Order from showing their more aggressive side in the Kua system as well. A certain amount of fear always arises when their ships dock at Coriolis however, their hulls depicting cataclysmic scenes of war, and the dockworkers whispering about onboard ossuaries filled with the sacred bones of martyred warriors.

### THE ORDER'S BIONICS AND FLEET

Another reason for concern is that the Order possesses a unique form of biotechnology that, among other things, enables the creation of the animate suits of armor their elite holy warriors use. The first reports of this armor came from Bulletin correspondents who smuggled information out of Zalos about the Order's relentless hunt for religious dissidents. The technology has again become a topic of discussion on Coriolis as more and more people expect the day when the Legion will turn their weapons against the Order is fast approaching. How large a fleet the Order commands is unclear, but given the fact that the Consortium has yet to order the Legion to open the route through Zalos with force, it is thought to be of considerable size.

### ANIMATE ARMOR

The holy warriors of the Order cover themselves in adaptive armor that makes their bodies stronger. The armor also "learns" from hits taken, adjusting itself for better protection, which means you generally only get one shot at taking down a Martyr warrior. This has spawned the saying "Like the first hit on a martyr", describing an action that has no effect.



# THE NOMAD FEDERATION



*"We know the secrets of the void."*

The Nomad Federation is a collective of nomadic fleets from across the Horizon, all of whom, in different ways, have come under pressure from the aggressive expansion of other factions.

**THE FEDERATION IS** a jumble of different families, clans, bloodlines, alliances and tribes all claiming nomad heritage. Most nomads in the Federation are from the Quadrant of the Pillar, the Rimward Reach or Nharmada, but the Kyhber swarm from Algol, the salvage nomads from Odacon and the Jebel and Chambi clans from Melik are also represented here. The prime goal of the faction is to strengthen the nomads against the other factions whose claims in the Horizon have grown considerably, especially since the founding of Coriolis.

The spokesperson for the Federation on Coriolis is Abyeia Goharshûd, a proud Quadrant mogul descendant of Housyan blood. She was originally a member of the Free League and tried to lobby for the nomad cause there, but after a falling out, she and her nomad allies left the League and worked independently for a while on Coriolis. The nomads' need for a representative at the Council was becoming increasingly urgent, and bit by bit, rival clans and families came together in support of Goharshûd and the campaign to get her a seat on the Council.

### NEW POLICIES

What kind of issues the faction would address at the Council is uncertain, but it is likely that they would demand that the nomad culture be treated as equal to that of other peoples, and act as political opposition to the Zenithian factions – after all, it is they, not the nomads, who are the newcomers in the Horizon. In the popular assembly on Coriolis, the nomads have argued that the Zenithians must start respecting old laws and decrees, but up until recently, the Zenithian factions have responded to the demands without interest – something they are now beginning to regret. Suddenly a powerful force in the popular assembly, the nomads have demanded a seat on the Council of Factions – or else. Their threats include the disruption of Consortium trade in the Quadrant of the Pillar and Free League activities in the Nharmada system, and a collective strike against the prospectors in the Rimward Reach. Thanks to the impressive armada the nomads could scramble if they wanted to, the threats are taken very seriously.

### A TROUBLED FEDERATION

The giant federation faces a huge internal problem. Not only can they rarely present a unified front – bad blood passed down through generations of feuding tribes makes sure of that – but they also support the ways of old that would see the faction itself divided into different social strata with conflicting class interests. These pre-war alliances and divisions give Goharshûd a difficult faction to unite.

The nomads from the Quadrant of the Pillar, spoken for by Osman Naqsh-i-Jahan, have turned out to be less than inclined to engage in politics that won't directly affect the Miran route, but are more than willing to close the portals to the



Consortium between Kua and Altai if their sovereignty isn't recognized. The Rimward Reach swarms, represented by Urcia Kabu, have witnessed first-hand how the Zenithians in the Consortium can affect whole systems with their insidious schemes. They say the time has come to mobilize the fleet unless the Federation is invited into the Council of Factions. The envoy for the Housyan line, Qur Farabi the Blind, seeks the aid of the Free League to set up trade agreements with the Consortium. Moreover, they advocate that the nomads should approach the other cultures of the Horizon through education and compassion. Whose voice is the loudest at any given time could be hard to discern for an outsider. The nomads are also troubled by language confusion within the faction.

### SUPPORT AT THE COUNCIL

The so-called "nomad question" has become increasingly inflamed, largely due to the Emissary being offered a seat as observer on the Council of Factions, something the nomads have never even been close to. The Nomad Federation has many allies among the Firstcome factions, who think that the Federation should have been on the Council since its inception. Ahlam's Temple and the Draconites support the Federation's claims. These two factions have enjoyed good trade with the nomads for a long time. Not all Firstcome factions feel the same way about the nomads, however. The Order of the Pariah and the Federation are not officially speaking to each other after the attack on the nomad Tanziamat clan on Zalos-B.

The Zenithian factions are not happy with the Federation's new demands. The Consortium and, to some extent, the Free League, both trade oriented groups, are suspicious towards these potential competitors, and the Legion is uneasy with the Federation's naval strength. The Zenithian Hegemony has yet to air an opinion either way about the nomads. Politics is a game of shah, after all.

### THE MIGHTY FLEET

The Nomad Federation controls the by far the largest fleet in the Horizon, although a great part of it consists of civilian ships and it is spread over many systems. Recent reports suggest that the nomads have begun forming larger armed convoys. Suhaima Taslim spoke with force on a Bulletin show, saying that if the militarization of the nomad fleet continues, the Legion will have to respond. Goharshûd countered, saying that more corsairs are stalking the nomad routes than before because the Consortium's bulk haulers have begun reaching the poorer systems where they drive out the local traders, forcing ordinary people to turn to piracy. The relations between the Federation and the Legion have since then been frosty, to say the least.

**TABLE 9.3 FACTIONARIES**

Well-known factionaries on Coriolis and in the Third Horizon.

| D66 | NAME | CAREER | QUIRK | GOAL | FACTION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | Yasmin Yriedes | Diplomat | Hoarse voice | Improve the rep of... | the Consortium |
| 13 | Wali Nimatallah | Bionic | Migraines | Secure bionics for... | the Consortium |
| 14-15 | Heroc Eliades | Reporter | Famous relatives | Get a top scoop for... | the Bulletin |
| 16 | Jira Hamura | Actor | Vain | Improve the ratings of... | the Bulletin |
| 21 | Ares Kleon | Prospector | Hubris | Secure new resources for... | the Colonial Agency |
| 22-23 | Minna Jifha | Colonist | Gloomy | Map a new sector for... | the Colonial Agency |
| 24 | Yusef Kander | Astronic | Cautious | Get more funding from... | the Foundation |
| 25-26 | Ioanna Kouma | Engineer | Practical | Start new engineering projects for... | the Foundation |
| 31 | Niha Salumar | Stevedore akbar | Never stops talking | Improve working conditions for... | the Free League |
| 32-33 | Abdelar Zula | Free trader | Cross-eyed | Get better free trader contracts for... | the Free League |
| 34 | Jasma Palu | Mercenary | Cybernetic | Take high-risk jobs for... | the Legion |
| 35-36 | Skalide dol-Gara | Corsair hunter | Quick | Get more ship kills for... | the Legion |
| 41 | Ghano Birbasil | Gang akbar | Suspicious | Spread the influence of... | the Syndicate |
| 42-43 | Cyrus Izza | Spice peddler | Tattooed | Acquire new trade partners for... | the Syndicate |
| 44 | Ariana Quassar | Bureaucrat | Whispering voice | Undermine the enemies of... | the Zenithian Hegemony |
| 45-46 | Chemona Arianites | Ex-judicator | Burn marks | Fight corruption within... | the Zenithian Hegemony |
| 51 | Hija Goua | Courtesan | Bigender | Sign treaties for... | Ahlam's Temple |
| 52 | Darkes Lamann | Slum poet | Tattered clothes | Spread poetry for... | Ahlam's Temple |
| 53 | Zamira Algrides | Archaeologist | Cybernetic eye | Secure dangerous artifacts for... | the Draconites |
| 54 | Jassar Gherdo | Medicurg | Bites lip | Prevent the spread of dangerous bionics for... | the Draconites |
| 55-56 | Yesiel Marcos | Bulletin prophet | Loud | Stop the mystic's disease for... | the Church of the Icons |
| 61-62 | Sharif Afta | Missionary | Always smiling | Spread the true faith for... | the Church of the Icons |
| 63 | Balthuzar Mifti | Martyr prophet | Misanthropic | Stop the Emissary for... | the Order of the Pariah |
| 64 | Hadassah Arias | Diplomat | Voice like honey | Hinder rival factions for... | the Order of the Pariah |
| 65 | Yineve Siflak | Warrior | Proud | Strengthen... | the Nomad Federation |
| 66 | Herodes Gharifa | Mystic | War paint | Reveal the powers for... | the Nomad Federation |

# THE SMALL PLAYERS

The small players are groups and organizations operating one level beneath the factions. The factions may be the true rulers on the Horizon, but they cannot run everything themselves and some areas of business are, at least officially, better left to players of more questionable repute. The small players operate on the level between the people and the factions and handle all sorts of things, from far-world trade and fringe bazaars to secret missions, detective work and security details.

## FREE TRADER MARKETS

Markets where free traders and peddlers meet up to do business exist all across the Horizon. Larger companies trade directly with their clients and use faction-run logistics, but this is not an option for smaller groups and crews who instead must find contracts locally in the spaceports they visit. Traditionally, the free trader markets all look the same. Merchants and free traders gather in a square or some other open space, clustering around the often loud and charismatic contract brokers, the khabaras. The khabara will then auction off the different trade missions – tonnage, prices, destinations and delivery times are discussed loudly, and the captains offer their ships to the merchants. The khabara gets a small broker's fee for each deal closed. The cost of the jobs is settled publicly on the market so that none of the parties can change the deal afterwards without losing their reputation. While the competition between the free traders can be fierce, some captains and ships are famous enough to ask a higher price and still get the job – in return, the merchant has a higher chance of a safe and speedy delivery.

### SOUK ALESH

Souk Alesh is the free trader market on Coriolis, located in the heart of the Core, and functions as both bazaar and auction house. The large hall is filled with stalls, podiums, crates and all sorts of rubble, and everywhere, khabaras are calling out contracts, some from the station itself, some from the Net and some from Kua below. The open secret about the Souk Alesh is that the Syndicate gangs control the khabaras and that the Guard looks the other way. This has sometimes resulted in the gang feuds spilling over into the market and that captains have been forced to carry extra cargo by the gang controlling their khabara. The higher-ranking Syndicate members try to keep this from happening too often. The equivalent of the Souk Alesh can be found in almost every spaceport and caravan seraglio, usually under the name Souk Eswad.

### "LAST CHANCE" MARKETS

Farthest out on the star arms, in the rim systems or around remote sister stars where the trade routes terminate, you will find the so-called "last chance" markets. The two best-known ones are on Eanu and Menkar, and they are also the wildest. No one sets foot there without packing a Vulcan or bringing a bodyguard. Trade missions to and from the edges of civilization can bring huge profit, but unfortunately, not only desperate free traders visit the last chance markets – corsairs, warlords, local tyrants and the like flock to these markets to get supplies or new tech from the core systems, sometimes leading to captains or whole crews being kidnapped. The last chance market on Eanu is located in an open olive grove outside the Yivem spaceport with a clear view of anyone coming and going for just this reason.

## FREELANCE AGENCIES

For groups of freelancers or agents, jobs will not be as easy to come across as for free traders or mercenaries. The well-paid jobs will most likely be handled by the intelligence agencies that rarely accept external help. Detective work – anything from missing persons to industrial espionage – is generally managed privately and discreetly, and many detective agencies can be found through the infonet. On Coriolis, the best way is to register your business via the Bulletin on the infonet. There are a few larger freelance firms on Coriolis who sometimes hire experts for certain tasks. The largest firm is Under the Lotus, who, despite their name, has nothing to do with the Temple. They specialize in missing persons and suspicions of adultery or other indiscretions, and have a large numbers of lawyers and bureaucrats on retainer to resolve the conflicts that often arise as side effects of the detective work itself.

### THE SMALL PLAYERS AND THE GROUP

The small players are designed as potential employers for the PCs. They will run smaller missions, have ties to local patrons and sometimes act as envoys for factionaries.

## SPY NESTS

Some places in the Third Horizon are more filled with lies and intrigue than others, places where the intelligence services gather to hunt for information and secrets. The world of secrets is of course always in motion, but given the infighting in the Council of Factions and the mounting political tensions in the Horizon, some places are safe bets – the City of Foreigners on the moon of Karrmerruk, Zalos, for example. Spies, company mercenaries, correspondents and freelancers flock to the city in the hopes of finding secrets, precious cargo or valuable contracts. A new hotbed for the intelligence community is the asteroid station Djachroum in the Rimward Reach, Kua, in which the Order of the Pariah have suddenly shown a great deal of interest. The Consortium's Special Branch also maintains a visible presence here with a high security prison, some Foundation research installations and a Legion base. To the common people, Dabaran is the capital of intrigue, with its lords, dars and emirs locked in a constant and very public dance of espionage, murder and negotiation. Freelancers are in high demand on Dabaran as the royalty can deny any knowledge of them if they are caught.



## INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

The larger factions have their own intelligence agencies, both internal and external, and most large corporations have counter-espionage departments. The largest and best known, thanks primarily to a series of Bulletin movies, is the Consortium's Special Branch. They often use freelancers, many of whom are later incorporated into the organization. The Special Branch has spread to almost the entire Horizon and deal in everything from espionage, the securing of resources and assassinations to political blackmail, artifact hunting and sabotage. The runner up is probably the Order's intelligence service, but not much is known about it, and the Black Lotuses are also rumored to run a spy network.

Many factions and regimes also have secret police forces, Sadaal and Zalos for example, and the Zenithian Hegemony has the fearsome Astûrban. They are not prone to hiring freelancers, but it happens, if unofficially. The larger companies – the Colonial Agency, the Bulletin, Nestera, Nyala and Celer-Delekta for example – hire freelancers for all sorts of investigative missions.

## COURIER MISSIONS

Sending messages and information across the Horizon is a physical affair that requires a ship since no signals can pass through the portals. The largest player on this market is Ermes Courier, run by the Bulletin, but people with high secrecy demands often choose smaller firms instead, making for a large market for independent courier crews. Courier missions are common in the free trader souks, where a crew can make a good profit running a courier mission alongside regular cargo. As the souks are public places, mercenaries usually escort sensitive information, but this is not very anonymous. Seeing a demand with no supply here, Captain Masomola Kifri started "Kifri's Courier Bureau" - or just "the Bureau" - a few cycles ago. The Bureau works like a mercenary agency, with full client anonymity. The business is excellent, and their new offices on an artificial island in the Spire are well attended. The Bureau supplies encrypted tags, bags or other larger vessels to secure the secrets of their clients.

## MERCENARY AGENCIES

The mercenary market works similarly to the courier market. Although the Legion is almost the only player here, there are

**TABLE 9.4 MERCHANTS AND TRADING COMPANIES**

**Use the table to roll trading partners for the PCs to interact with.**

| D66 | NAME AND COMPANY | TRADING IN | REPUTATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | Aldair Jubal, Jubal Exports & Imports | Spices, drugs, weapons | No scruples |
| 13-15 | Abdul Nasr, the Free League | Technological artifacts | Good smuggler contacts |
| 16-21 | Lea Marhoun, Zenithian Trade Alliance | Antiquities and archaeological findings | Good customer network |
| 22-24 | Mukthar Sawalla, Hyperion Logistics | Bulk hauling | Syndicate middleman |
| 25-31 | Jiamina Mafout, Kuan Transports | Lumber, semi-intelligences, livestock | Fair trader |
| 32-34 | Azura Behroz, Karrmerruk Spices | Spices, grain | Blunt |
| 35-36 | Darya din Kouf, Monolith Lux | Luxuries, art | Tries to scam everybody |
| 41-43 | Bahram Karebadja, Algol Exports | Ore, industrial products | Alleged drug runner |
| 44-45 | Hashmari Nifara, Chelebs | Gravity projectors, hi-tech | Always looking for fac-tech |
| 46-52 | Nikodreas Ferhad, Hazeram Trade | Noble gases, ship tech | Always masked |
| 53-54 | Amarata Yelizina, Dari Yeliz Exports | Wine, luxuries, foods | Posh |
| 55-56 | Heliotres din Nestera, Nestera Foods | Foods, luxuries, medicines | Contacts in the weapons industry |
| 61-62 | Mustafar dol-Hrama, MustafarTrade | Ore, chemicals, hi-tech | Hegemonist intermediary |
| 63-64 | Hatima Shamaz, ShamazXport | Hi-tech | Artifact smuggler |
| 65-66 | Chelona Mirou, Xpress | Metals, minerals, art | Fast ships |

**TABLE 9.5 FREELANCE AGENCIES**

The table lists a few examples of freelance agencies doing courier, detective or investigation work. Roll or pick a suitable employer.

| D66 | AGENCY | CONTACT | JOBS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | Under the Lotus | Hamira Jedres | Missing persons, adultery |
| 13-14 | Kifri's Courier Bureau | Masomola Kifri | Sensitive information |
| 15-16 | Ermes Courier | Irfan Yriedes | Express deliveries |
| 21-22 | Zark Detectives | Danyala Zark | Discreet investigations on Coriolis |
| 23-24 | Mimosa Problem-solvers | Mara Mimosa | Industrial espionage for sale |
| 25-26 | BlackLion | Aslan Ferred | Discreet courier missions and break-ins |
| 31-32 | Algol Express | Marida par-Chouli | Express passenger and animal transport |
| 33-34 | the Yasara Firm | Yasara Salmi | All kinds of investigations |
| 35-36 | Parrah Security | Memra Parrah-Kesbouli | Security and crime proofing |
| 41-42 | Nevos Surveillance | Alexindra Illudires | Patrol missions and personal security during travel |
| 43-44 | the Archaeology Bureau | Sahab Bouri | Legal aid and equipment lending |
| 45-46 | Tekne | Fihaz Nimatallah | Technical surveillance/espionage |
| 51-52 | Hexagon Express | Bel Djabir | Fast interstellar courier missions |
| 53-54 | Quiro | Amado Quiro | Hacking and security |
| 55-56 | Farrukh Cartographics | Farrukh Hasra | Cartography and building inspections |
| 61-62 | Free Astrogation | Ninive Kalistides | Travel planning, freelance captains and pilotage |
| 63-64 | Xuro Security | Amra Xuro-Dhal | Cargo protection and planetary courier missions |
| 65-66 | Last Chance | Harra Corena | Courier missions to unsafe systems |

certain jobs they cannot take, because of the risks or nature of the missions. Furthermore, their fleet is used only for Consortium missions, meaning that the market for escorting, corsair hunting or sabotage is completely open to other mercenaries. Hubs like Coriolis, Akhandar-O-Sharif and Tirgonum have big mercenary agencies run privately but on Legion contracts – and probably under the supervision of several intelligence agencies. In offices like these, mercenary groups can sign up and list their ships, resources and expertise – sharpshooting, explosives, data djinn, infiltration or whatever it may be – and the prospective client can anonymously pick the company that seems the best fit for the mission. Contract and negotiation meetings are then set up by the agency.

### THE BLACK SKULL

Just off the Ozone Plaza on Coriolis, a modest building decorated in black lotuses and skulls houses the Black Skull. The name and exterior aside, this is not the Legionnaires' favorite bar, Cranium, but a mercenary agency. The house is dark and quiet – surveillance-proof according to a small plaque above the door. The Black Skull specializes in operations in the Kua system, but have contacts on Algol, Dabaran and Sadaal as well. If needed, the agency can also coordinate ship and shuttle transport for ground companies.

### ALKABAR'S ASSISTANCE

Near the center of Akhandar-O-Sharif, the firm Alkabar's Assistance resides in a shiny new ebony and white skyscraper. Elegant panorama windows with views toward the northern dust seas provide a striking setting for the contract signings between the clients and the mercenaries. Alkabar's is a big name in both ground and space escorting, and can bring in many different companies and ships, led by special assistance coordinators, if necessary. The coordinators are often ex-Legionnaires or soldiers or officers from the larger mercenary groups. Alkabar's also have offices on Coriolis – in the nicer parts of the Core – and on Mira, Dabaran, Sadaal and Zalos.

## TRAVELERS AND SPACE CARAVANS

Since the Zenithians opened the Horizon, and especially since the Church of the Icons declared the pilgrimage a sacred rite, travel has multiplied many times over. Both plebeians and lords travel, if under different circumstances. The rich travel onboard Exeter luxury liners or on their own private yachts. The poor can travel the Horizon by working on the ships, or go on the cheap stasis freighters that some of the larger shipping companies run – to still turn a profit, the stasis beds themselves are part of the cargo. Another way is to hitch a ride with nomads, expeditions or caravans.

### OFLIONA'S CARAVAN

For almost ten cycles, captain Ofliona of the Flower of Ibsalim has traveled the Temple route between Mira and Dabaran via Aiwaz and Kua. Over the cycles, other ships have formed a convoy around the giant freighter, whose cargo hold has been rebuilt into a large bazaar lined with living modules. In the aft of the ship there are endless corridors of stasis beds. Anyone is welcome to join the caravan as long as there is a free stasis bed. Smaller ships, together called the Star Flowers, help out with logistics within the caravan and protection if needed, but the Icons seem to be watching over the caravan, and corsairs have never tried to attack it. Similar caravans of skippers who have banded together can be found all across the Horizon – the Rimward Reach nomads, the Birbadir trio and the Aiwaz star sailors on the Sadaal route to name a few. The Pilgrim is a repurposed heavy freighter on loan to the Church of the Icons that help pilgrims travel nonstop between Kua and Mira.

### MARMARA'S FLYING CIRCUS

Several entertainment groups have begun traveling the Horizon over the last few cycles. They are courtesan ships, circuses, theater troupes or artists and they all share the routes between the core systems, landing in ports, markets and bazaars, especially

**TABLE 9.6 CONFLICTS**

Current conflicts in the Third Horizon that could serve as mission destinations for mercenaries.

| D66 | CONFLICT | PARTICIPANTS | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | The Slum rebellion | 3rd Popular Brigade and Nestera defense forces | The Conglomerate, Kua |
| 13-14 | The Jungle war | Mercenary group Azza and the Legion | Kua |
| 15-16 | The Uharan offensive | Mercenaries and the Legion | The forest moons of Uharu |
| 21-22 | Haven | General Yihanna, the Alkarra army and the Colonial Agency | Algol |
| 23-24 | The Marrab cluster | The nomad swarms and the prospector clans | Border Space |
| 25-26 | The Quiet war | Djachroum and the Consortium/Legion | Border Space |
| 31-32 | The War on Heresy | The Order of the Pariah and the Zalos-B heretics | Zalos-B |
| 33-34 | The Bahtrol revolt | The nomads of Lubau and the Colonial Agency | Lubau |
| 35-36 | The Slaver hunt | The Slavers and the Consortium | Tanzim, Algol |
| 41-42 | The Bokor plague | The Bokor corsairs and mercenaries | Anaspora |
| 43-44 | The Hydran uprising | The Hydra flotilla and the Legion | The circle of Dabaran |
| 45-46 | The Water wars | Countess Evarides and the Pasha of Dar Bhouti | Dabaran |
| 51-52 | The Iron conflict | The Tufsur emirate and the Consortium | Algebar |
| 53-54 | The War of Honey | Sadaalian free skippers and Dziban the Mematurg | Errais asteroid belt |
| 55-56 | The marsh conflict | The swamp nomads and the Iconocrate | Sadaal |
| 61-62 | The Fire graves | Mercenaries and the Legion | Pyre, Uharu |
| 63-64 | The Ordana occupation | The Leopards of Ayyutta and the Ayuin cartel | The Quadrant of the Pillar |
| 65-66 | The Corsair crisis | The Altai corsairs and the Consortium | The Quadrant of the Pillar |

**TABLE 9.7 LEISURE TRAVEL AND PILGRIMAGE**

**The following is a list of suggested destinations and events for leisure travel or pilgrimage. Traveling just for fun is mostly reserved for the very rich, however.**

| D66 | DESTINATION | KNOWN FOR |
|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | The Sofia Gora monastery, Border Space | A glass mosaic that is a mathematical wonder |
| 13-14 | The Icon City on Mira | The floating Icon dome on Huraba's Blessing |
| 15-16 | The Temple City on Dabaran | The oasis garden in the holy temple of Baryla |
| 21-22 | The Crater Dome on Algol | The prayer tower designed by Yassa dol-Gardi |
| 23-24 | The Dome of the Icons on Coriolis | The Ghoasan mud temple under the dome |
| 25-26 | Mount Arjjat in Ordana B | The slumbering prophet at the mountaintop |
| 31-32 | The Stairs of Kensa on Zanjire in the Altai system | The bleeding preachers of Darikos |
| 33-34 | Cala Duriha in orbit above Jina | Gambling den and theater asteroid |
| 35-36 | Ahm-Salim on Kua | Beach resort for vacationing Hegemonists |
| 41-42 | The Quassars' opera house, the Monolith | Blood operas, "Nadir" being the most famous |
| 43-44 | The Cloud City on Dabaran | Hovercraft racing, shah tournaments and gambling |
| 45-46 | The white island temple on Amedo | Hike and boat pilgrimage with refreshing baths |
| 51-52 | The emerald Korruvat lake on Sadaal | Healing hot springs |
| 53-54 | The Alburz Icon on Sadaal | Masked dancers and long parades |
| 55-56 | The bazaar of Akhandar on Algol | The elephant market and the fire festival |
| 61-62 | The Graveyards on Lubau | Exo jumping, grav surfing and injector racing |
| 63-64 | The festival of the nomads on Djachroum | Gambling, comedy and showmanship in the Cave of Bridges |
| 65-66 | The Yamra bazaar in Dar Sour | Beautiful fabrics, luxuries and fantastic cuisine |

during festivals. Marmara's Flying Circus is one such group, traveling between Coriolis, Kua, Lubau and the outer colonies in the system. The par-Noftim family, headed by the matriarch Yevina Noftima, commands the circus, which is made up of a large freighter and a few smaller shuttles. They specialize in acrobatics and exotic animals – their stars are the domesticated dirhad from Lubau. The freighter Marmara is in constant need of repairs, and their stops become longer and longer.

## RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Scientists and explorers often join an academy or a larger faculty to get their work funded. The colleges run by the Foundation are the most popular and have the best resources. Portal- and xenoarchaeology is the latest trend, fueled by the pseudo-documentary "Tracking the Scarabaeus" about a witty archaeologist searching for Portal Builder ruins in the cold Dabaran desert. The Foundation and the major universities are reluctant to fund expeditions and not even the Colonial Agency sponsors exploratory voyages anymore. Smaller institutes are left to seek funding from wealthy patrons or local lords. Independent skippers with small ships are hired for the expeditions, plus some mercenaries if the job involves risks. In the Hegemony and the courts of Dabaran, funding expeditions is popular and considered a very noble act.

### ⚙ FERMAL-GAROUD'S MATHEMATICAL INSTITUTE

Despite the name, Fermal-Garoud's in Daddah, Dabaran, is not working only with mathematics, but also have faculties for applied sciences like astronics, portal mathematics, xenobiology and xenoarchaeology. Every year they launch expeditions to famous Portal Builder remains in the Horizon and examine the sites using the latest passive sensor technology. The institute's main sponsor, pasha Nouli-dol-Arahin, also funds independent archaeologists and scientists with interesting ideas. Institutes like Fermal-Garoud's exist in many places, funding all sorts of scholarships and expedi-

tions. The Nestera School of Archaeology, Konstantinides' Astronics Academy focusing on deep space phenomena and space archaeology, and the College of History in Tirgonum, Mira, are a few examples.

## CORPORATE EXPEDITIONS

Some of the larger companies are always on the prowl for forgotten technology. This is done in a number of ways. Historical research into old tomes and databases can reveal rumors of hidden installations. Freelance and mercenary expeditions to the outer systems is another way. To minimize risks for the company, freelancers run the expeditions, but a company agent or scientist goes with them to secure the findings. Both Nestera and Nyala are very interested in ancient technology and portal artifacts. Celer-Delekta sponsor expeditions to look for pharmaceuticals and medicinal herbs, just recently on the Uharan forest moons.

**TABLE 9.8 EXCAVATIONS AND EXPEDITIONS**

| D66 | DIG OR EXPEDITION | RECENT EVENTS |
|---|---|---|
| 11-12 | The Foundation's research expedition to Z-29, Zhau | Professor Gifri has found something in Area Xertes. The site has been locked down. |
| 13-14 | The Kheram dig, led by Reader Seccra of the Foundation's Archaeological Institute | Corsairs have raided the site. The survivors await rescue. |
| 15-16 | The Harballa massif expedition on Surha | The expedition was lost in an ice storm |
| 21-22 | The Foundation's second attempt at an astro-archaeological expedition to the Menkar monolith | Native colonists sabotaged the expedition's base camp to try and stop them |
| 23-24 | ARRCA sponsored investigation of the Awadhi Sunfan | Freelancers with powerful sensors have breached the no-fly zone several times |
| 25-26 | The Quassar institute's survey of the fusion spheres in Anaspora | A sphere has just imploded, causing much distress on the nearby asteroid stations |
| 31-32 | Sensor measuring on the Net veil that surrounds Izar in the Erequ system by the research vessel Doctor Zvijamin | Local fanatics jam the sensors supported by the Order of the Pariah through Faysal's Veil |
| 33-34 | The Darba Institute's expedition to the Amedo-B stone figures | One of the figures seems to be collapsing after an experiment on the site |
| 35-36 | Markadus' excavations in the Merkabra ravine on Dabaran | The local nomads have begged the nearby dar to stop the dig |
| 41-42 | The Zenithian Hegemony's excavation of the Monolith | The project has been permanently canceled since one expedition team disappeared |
| 43-44 | The Foundation and the Colonial Agency's digs in the ruined city of Kah in the Kuan jungles | Dig Chief N'issa Khaba has gone missing in the jungles |
| 45-46 | The lava fields on Ghoasa being excavated by the Church of the Icons | The camp has been sabotaged. The Church blames the Order of the Pariah. |
| 51-52 | Spectrosensory measuring of the Wound from the Madaba research dome on Dabaran | An unknown group has kidnapped Chief Surveyor Janos Mediz |
| 53-54 | The expedition to the Kuan north pole to research the energy sphere, sponsored by the Foundation's Astronics Institute | The expedition's funding has been suspended, rumors say on Consortium orders |
| 55-56 | The investigation of the round temple on Ahm-Salim by Industrial Algebra | The Hegemonists and the Astûrban have harassed the expedition |
| 61-62 | The excavation of the perfect labyrinth in the Kuan Heera crater by Fermal-Garoud's Mathematical Institute from Dabaran | Three archaeologists have disappeared in the maze, leaving a curious artifact behind |
| 63-64 | The excavations of the sand fields near the Mahanji oasis on Lubau | Prospectors have discovered a petroleum field right next to the dig site |
| 65-66 | Astro-archaeological investigations of the Armada of the First-come in the Border Space | The Legion have set up a blockade around the entire ship cemetery |





CHAPTER 10

# THE PEOPLE OF THE HORIZON

*The Sogoi of Kua live in almost perfect harmony with the rain forest in a primitive fertility cult. Despite having lost all civilization, the Sogoi culture has much to offer modern Zenithians – exotic cuisine, herbal remedies, and of course their colorful clothing.*

**SOGOI – BARBARIAN OR BEAST? –** Dahamin dol-Quassar

The people of the Third Horizon are often divided into Firstcome and Zenithian, but reality is of course much more nuanced – hardened colonists, nomads, biosculpted humanites and, at least according to some, even semi-intelligences all make up the vibrant bustle of people inhabiting the cluster.

**A LONG TIME** ago, the Third Horizon was silent. In the ruins left behind by the Portal Builders lived only semi-intelligences, more animal than human. Eventually, the original colonists from the First Horizon arrived through the portals, in self-imposed exile or through forced displacement. They settled on Algol, later spreading to Mira, Zalos, Kua, Sadaal, and Dabaran. Space stations were constructed, grand palaces erected, new colonies founded. The early colonists spread across the Third Horizon like seeds on the wind. They bore many names but most have been forgotten. Today, they are remembered only as the Firstcome.

## THE FIRSTCOME

The Firstcome are a diverse group of people that migrated to the Third Horizon in great colonization vessels in many waves, countless years ago. The order of their arrival has been forgotten, but tradition names Algol as the first planet they settled on. Starting out as a rather homogenous group regarding language and culture, they slowly grew apart over the centuries. Today, almost every system has its own language, although migrants and colonists spread the tongues within the Horizon – the Conglomerate on Kua has a large Algolan speaking minority, for example. The Icon faith is the one constant across all the Firstcome peoples, albeit with many different variations in practice. The Firstcome societies tend to be centered on the extended family or the clan, but this is beginning to change.

For a long time, the Firstcome lived only in the core systems, but when time turned colonists into natives, new waves of pioneers colonized the systems farther out. The war against the First and Second Horizon stopped the spread and laid waste to vast territories however, and the population declined during the Long Night. Today, the Firstcome are expanding again, as a reaction to the arrival of the Zenithians and their trade.

## THE STARFARERS

The space nomads travel the Horizon in ancient ships, often heavily modified and jury-rigged, using whatever spare parts their engineers can get hold of. Just like other Firstcome people, the nomads are clan oriented with large families, passing down a profession through generations. From your early years, you will be an apprentice pilot, hydroponic farmer, life support engineer, security guard, or maybe an exo warrior. The clan organizes all of society's functions.

Since the arrival of the Zenithians, the nomads are increasing in numbers, probably due to the fact that ships are easier to come by and that the best planets are quickly becoming crowded. Many people are faced with the choice of moving away and becoming colonists or making the stars their home, and choose the latter. The nomads fear nothing. They know death is waiting on the other side of the hull and that the smallest mistake could lead them to it. On the other hand, they are freer than any other people – they can go any-





where, jump as they please, and lead adventurous lives. The saying "a drop of nomad's blood in you" is used to describe wild or impulsive people. Most nomadic groups keep to one route or territory, usually remaining within one system. There are reports indicating that more mystics have appeared among the nomads than elsewhere, something that would support the theory that it is the Dark between the Stars that is the source of "the Blight".

## THE HUMANITES

The humanites are a scorned and despised group. They are modified humans created to perform certain functions or endure certain hardships better than base humans. Even the plebeians, whose work is almost the same as that of the humanites, look down upon them.

The humanites often live isolated lives, in remote colonies on hostile worlds or distant space stations, like the Sirb for example. Some humanites live as nomads after their employers or masters have disappeared, like the Xinghur on Lubau. Recognizing a humanite without advanced sensors and biometric scanners can be hard. Tiny sculpts like reptilian third eyelids, extremity hearts, or modified glands are invisible

### LANGUAGE

**The language of the Zenithians, Zeni, has grown into the lingua franca of the Horizon today, as trade and commerce are dominated by the Zenithians. Most travelers (and PCs) speak Zeni in addition to their native tongues.**

| LANGUAGE | SPOKEN WHERE? |
|---|---|
| Zeni | Coriolis and the entire Horizon |
| Dabari | Dabaran and in many of the systems along the Dabaran circle |
| Miri | Mira and Aiwaz |
| Kuan | Kua and Coriolis |
| Algolan | Algol, Kua, and in many systems along the Algolan route |
| Zalosi | Zalos |

**Most Firstcome today live as planet side colonists, plebeians, or slummers, although a sizeable part of the population are space nomads or stationaries, living in fleets and swarms or on lonely space stations.**

### THE BERI NOMADS

The Beri nomads live in the relatively temperate desert regions of Lubau's northern hemisphere, riding their dromedons between the oases that surround lake Mnembau. The Beri are suspicious toward new things, and only a few members speak Zeni or own technology more advanced than a long rifle. They lead a good life regardless of this, masters of the desert in black caftans. Outside of Lubau, they are mainly known for their hot chili stew with chicken and eggs.

### THE PEOPLES OF THE RIMWARD REACH

The three nomad swarms in the Rimward Reach are a motley group without a clear common agenda. They are basically self-sufficient but trade when they need to, and run some rudimentary mining operations. They control a large number of ships, but are spread across all of the Rimward Reach as the new colonists have outmatched them in forming permanent settlements. "Swarm" is the nomadic term for a group of space ships with a common ancestry. A swarm is normally spread over several AUs. Individual vessels can leave the swarm for short periods of time, but it is rare for a ship to change swarm. The three swarms of today are the warmongering Mehtar, the secretive Badjao, and the Yahin-Kabu, the traders. A fourth swarm, Ahilar, was lost at the beginning of the Marrab conflict, a schism that affected the entire Rimward Reach.

### KNOWN HUMANITES IN THE HORIZON

**Although the Foundation's biocode census indicates that as much as 10% of the Horizon's population carries humanite biocode, only a few humanites are publicly known. One known group is the Sirb, usually found on remote space stations or mining vessels. The Sirb have the ability to live as a group without conflicts arising and can emit scent signals that affect feelings and behaviors. The technically skilled Xinghur have an unknown origin, but are in several ways adapted to hot desert climates, and seem to have relatives in the Algolan deserts. The Ichtar, who live on the Kuan north cap, are extremely cold resistant. The Nerids in the oceans of Sadaal can breathe under water and are used by the Iconocracy as workers in the heavy industry located in the planet's oceans and marshes.**

to the naked eye, while larger modifications usually are the result of cosmetic sculpting on Coriolis, the independent station Ahalimm or in the Algolan meat district. According to the stories of some of the more primitive peoples, there are humanites that have lost almost all their humanity and have become more like animals. Rumors claim that the nekatra are actually the result of the Legion experimenting with lupine biocode.

## THE ZENITHIANS

The popular saying "Everyone is a Zenithian and everyone is not" describes how many regard the Zenithian people or themselves. No one in the Horizon, with the possible exception of the hemographers in the Hegemony, knows exactly how many Zenithians there actually are. It is however obvious that a lot more people call themselves Zenithians than the Zenith brought with her. Data from the Mathematical Institute in Daddah show that there are more Zenithians in the Horizon than there possibly could be, given the size of the arkship. This is because many call themselves Zenithians without actually being one.

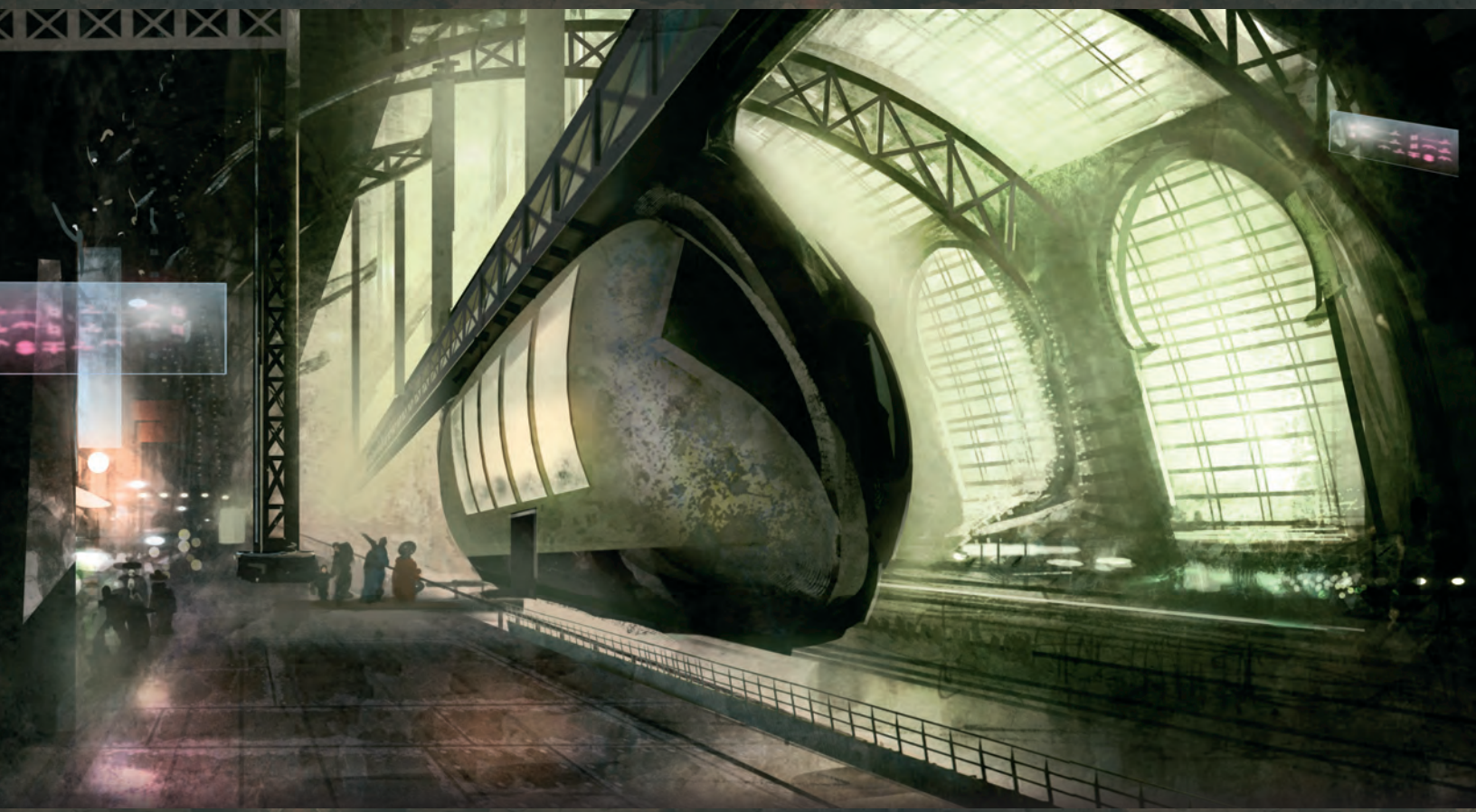
Two generations have passed since the arrival of the Zenith, some 60-odd cycles of marriages and couplings between Firstcome and Zenithians that have created a Horizon far less divided than it appears to be at the Council of Factions.



The Zenithian Hegemony claims to speak for all Zenithians and offers assistance whenever it is in the faction's interests, whether the help is appreciated or not. The best-known example of their aid is probably the storming of the Autumn Palace on Dabaran where a Zenithian noble had applied for asylum with the emir. According to the press release to the Bulletin, he had been "brainwashed by anti-Zenithian interests". During the storming, led by an Astûrban strike team, the emir and all of his family were killed, and the fleeing nobleman was escorted back to the Monolith. Those who call themselves Zenithians feel more modern than the Firstcome, although they are still Icon believers. Zenithians in other systems than Kua are often connected to colonies from Coriolis or Kua, or to a Consortium corporation. Some cities have whole districts populated by Zenithian exiles, such as Little Zenith in Alburz, Sadaal, or the round Par-Corioli block in Tirgonum, Mira. The Zenithians are generally of a more pragmatic nature than the Firstcome, and have replaced family ties with corporations, factions and birr.

### THE EXPATRIATES

On Amedo, far from the hub of the Horizon, lies the dome city Xhi, home of the expatriates, on the forested slopes of the Alantides. The expatriates are a cult that claims direct descent from the mighty families the Zenithians left behind on al-Ardha, but who later joined the colonists who became the Firstcome. Xhi is sponsored by the Hegemony and has been approved as a true Zenithian colony by the faction. The expatriates follow the Hegemony with slavish discipline, and many lower-ranking Astûrban troopers are recruited from Xhi.



# DAILY LIFE IN THE HORIZON

Life for the inhabitants of the Third Horizon is governed just as much by the Icon faith as it is by location and situation. Most people share roughly the same daily routines and the division of the day into four watches: morning, day, evening and night. The morning and day watches are devoted to work and the evening watch to one's family, the Icons, or leisure. During the night watch, decent people sleep, but the party life continues for the privileged, students and criminals. True believers start each watch with prayer, but visits to a chapel or shrine usually take place at the end of the day watch or during the evening. In the larger cities and on Coriolis, life is rather easy in regards to supplies, food, entertainment and information, but the lives of colonists, stationaries, nomads, and slummers are harder as one or more of these resources may be scarce.

## A DAY IN THE COLONY

Planetside colonists struggle each and every day. Keeping the colony safe requires constant work on domes, survival tents, or longhouses. Resources must be gathered and stockpiled, regardless of whether it is lumber, xenoanimals, minerals, or artifacts. The day usually starts with communal breakfast and prayer before the arduous labor begins. There is hardly anything in the way of entertainment, apart from what can be imported by free traders – holo stories, news or, at best, macro tags with some Bulletin shows. The night is spent guarding the colony against external threats.

## A DAY ON THE SPACE STATION

A day in the life of the stationary is similar to that of the colonist, but is centered on the space station's endless cycle of docking, loading, repairs, and service. The cold of space, vacuum, radiation storms, and many other threats force the stationaries to live and work in shifts during all watches. When one group begins their morning watch, another group crawls into bed. The lack of space onboard means that food and supplies must be rationed. Perishable goods, other than what can be grown in the hydroponic greenhouses onboard, are rare luxuries. The supply of news and entertainment such as holo dramas is usually good, unless the station is very remote.

## A DAY IN THE SWARM

For the nomad, every day is a journey, or so the saying goes. The nomads work just as hard as the colonists and stationaries, but enjoy the freedom of waking up to new valleys, oases, moons, or systems, depending on how the group travels. The day is not structured around the watches like that of other people, although the care for the life support, the hydroponics and the reactors is very strict. The available entertainment is often indigenous to the swarm, such as leather ball, storytelling, dancing, or tarrab performances. News and information are acquired at stops along the way, and "what you don't know, you don't know", as the smiling efrite would say.

## A DAY IN THE CITY

In the cities, your social status determines everything, from the slummers at the bottom of the ladder to the privileged at the very top. In between the two live the plebeians, the entrepreneurs and the bureaucrats. A day in the life of a slummer is a naked fight for survival. Whether it is about finding food, shelter, or a safe place to sleep, it never ends. Alms from the faithful make it easier, but never easy.

The slummers' perfect opposites are the privileged – rich business owners, emirs, factionaries, and high-ranking officials who live off their savings – for whom a day is usually spent trying to expand one's personal wealth, power, or influence. The privileged are the only ones in the Horizon who have proper leisure time, perhaps devoted to hunting, racing or just partying. Some of the privileged apply themselves to studying, research, or exploration, although usually as patrons for others who are less well off.

Between the two extremes are the "plebeians", the day laborers, those who make sure the wheels keep turning. From the lowliest factory worker, the carriers in the jungles and mountains, and the palace cleaners, to plantation workers, light globe divers, and dockworkers – they are the ordinary people of the Horizon's cities. Their days are filled with hard work from morning to evening, interrupted only by short breaks and silent prayer. Sleeping is everyone's favorite hobby, with holo dramas and drug use being the runners up.

# TECHNOLOGY IN THE HORIZON

The Third Horizon is full of technological marvels, from the primitive shepherds' flutes found on Zamusa to the advanced grav belts the Miran dancers use. The most basic technology is called primitive, found generally on the fringes of civilized space, in the lost colonies or with certain planetside nomads. The technology that came with the Zenith is called ordinary, and the same goes for most of the Firstcome tech. Spaceships, exo shells, and grav crafts are ordinary technology. The technology necessary for portal jumps, such as stasis beds and complex ship computers, is called advanced technology. The advanced tier also includes the different life lengthening inventions, such as bio sculpting, body part cloning, and certain cybernetics.



A tag

## EVERYDAY TECHNOLOGY

Inhabitants of the Third Horizon interact with ordinary technology every day, using devices such as tags, transactors, communicators, and tabulas. Only primitive tribes and backwater colonies lack this sort of tech.

## TRAVEL AND SPACESHIPS

Travel, once reserved for a select few, is now blooming across all the systems. Planetside transportation varies between the worlds – people use river barges on Kua, shuttles on Dabaran, and trains on Sadaal, for example. Before the Zenithians opened up the Horizon again, there were only a handful of spaceships in operational condition, and they belonged to larger powers such as the Order, royal courts in the fringe systems, or to ruthless corsairs. Interplanetary trade was rare and existed in only a few systems. The new era is boiling with free traders. The most heavily trafficked

### ITEMS EVERYBODY OWNS

Some items can be found everywhere in the civilized parts of the Horizon. Beggars and slummers aside, most people have somewhere to live and food on their plates, plus common items like tags, transactors, and whatever gear they need for their profession. Transactors and tags are common methods of payment on Coriolis, on space stations, and in larger cities. The difference between the two is that a transactor is locked to its owner's biocode while a tag is anonymous, only protected by a numeric code. Direct transfers between bank accounts are of course available in hubs like Coriolis, but other methods are required when one is out traveling. If an even higher level of anonymity is required, one can use physical birr, printed by the company banks, the factions and some of the royal courts. Birr are used for small purchases – using large sums of cash will look suspicious, and some systems have outlawed it all together. To gather information, take notes, or just to read the Bulletin's news, merchants and other wealthy people use tabulas instead of actual paper. A tabula is a tablet in mimetic glass that can be operated by hand or using a fancy stylus pen.

### BIRR AND BIRR

**Birr is the currency of the Horizon, but is actually several different currencies mixed together. Electronic transactions are equal everywhere, but physical money – bills, Miran Icon coins, Algolan gem spheres – vary in worth depending on where you are. Locally, cash money is generally equivalent to tag-based birr, but this may not be true when you travel to another system. The peddler Erbulas learned this the hard way when he tried to purchase Kuan lumber using Algolan gem spheres – in the end he lost his ship, and the spheres became ballast on a river barge.**



The freighter Zarileh docking in port Neoptra

### ARRCA STELLAR A&W DIVISION

The Arrca Stellar Archaeology and Weapons Division – commonly just "Arrca" – is an offshoot of the Foundation's regular science divisions. The Arrca institute's origins are somewhat mysterious, possibly indicating that the Special Branch might have been involved in its founding. Exactly what research they conduct and who their clients are is also unclear, but the corporate emir, Davo par-Allalti, is often seen in the company of Consortium factionaries, and the new Arrca base in Awadhi is under the protection of the Legion fleet. Arrca is generally considered the source of much of the Horizon's advanced technology.

The faction technology is even more complex and usually kept secret. Examples of this tech are the antimatter rockets of the Order of the Pariah, the Draconites' meson weapons, and the experimental giant exos being developed by the Consortium. The last technology tier is the glyphs and artifacts left behind by the Portal Builders – everything from sugar globes and healing scarabs to the soletta in Menkar or the fusion spheres of Anaspora. Some Portal Builder technology is entirely incomprehensible and hints at an alien physiognomy.

route is that between Mira and Dabaran, a trip the bulk haulers make regularly each segment. Big cruise liners with thousands of stasis beds follow the same route, but not as often, maybe once per triad. Yachts, pleasure sloops, and emirs' cruisers carry rich passengers between safaris and exotic shopping on distant worlds, but the masses travel for business or for their faith. Pilgrims make up a large portion of the Horizon's travelers.

## COMMUNICATION

To communicate in a city or on a station, most people use messengers, or communicators if they can afford them. Space stations have relay transmitters onboard that make sure all communicators can reach each other, as long as their users have the identification codes necessary to find the intended receiver. Newer cities usually have enough relays to make communicators fairly reliable, although the variation between cities or systems can be big. Supposedly, Lord Yionid pas-Dasmaku had to wait three whole days to get an audience with the matriarch of Mira because his communicator was unable to reach the guard towers in the Icon City.

## TERMINALS AND THE NET

On Coriolis and in cities with a strong Consortium pres-

ence, you will find the Bulletin's terminals, connected through the encrypted infonet. Notable exceptions include Karrmerruk on Zalos, the City of Prophets in Alburz, and some of the more conservative dars on Dabaran. The infonet can also be used by computers, tabulas, and advanced transactors for information sharing, data storage or birr transactions. The Syndicate has just started to realize that the infonet is a new arena for profit making. Apart from the infonet, smaller networks using power lines or relay towers exist in the modern districts of Algol, Mira, and Dabaran, as well as on larger space stations such as Djachroum. These networks are usually less reliable than the Bulletin's infonet. The Algolan Zou bank was declared bankrupt a few cycles ago after an overload in the AYM network fried the intelligence that administered all of the bank's transactions.

## NEWS AND COURIERS

News has always been distributed by word of mouth in the Horizon. Nomads, merchants, or tarrabs all spread the news on their travels, albeit for different reasons. The larger cities have newspapers, either in printed form or on tabulas. When the systems began communicating again, the free traders were the first to start spreading news and rumors between systems, but it was the Bulletin which really organized interstellar communication when it started supplying the portal stations with their probes. Their ownership of the probes also means that they are the ones who determine which news to spread. The probes go through the portals, and relays on the other side transmit the data to new probes by the next portal, and so on. This way, the news is spread through roughly one system per day, at least along the route between Mira and Dabaran. Farther out, where the portal stations are less secure, information is usually recorded on tags and carried by free traders or the Ermes Courier, the Bulletin's own courier service. Sending mail is generally a slow affair. With a chain of free traders eventually getting from sender to receiver, a package usually takes a week, sometimes a whole segment, to arrive at its destination. For speedy deliveries, one must hire a fast courier vessel, an Ermes ship perhaps, or one of the many other players on the courier market. Couriers are costly but fast, usually making it through a system in two days.

### INTELLIGENCES AND THE NET

Scientists from the Foundation, the Daddah institute, and other elite academies have developed advanced intelligences that can control ships, drones, and other complex systems. Their inventions are based on old ship intelligences from Firstcome ships and from the Zenith. According to a hypothesis presented by the mathematician Ibrahim Hadrogas, these intelligences will spontaneously evolve into true intelligences equal to humans and humanites. This will also, Hadrogas argues, result in them getting a ghost or soul, which is the essence of being human according to the Church of the Icons. Networks such as the infonet are what will act as a catalyst for the intelligences, says Hadrogas. This worries some orthodox believers and several info terminals on Algol, among other places, have been vandalized.

### THE BULLETIN'S COM BASE

**So, how does a communicator work? Personal communicators have specific codes that the caller must know in order to reach you. Some communicators are linked to the bio code of their owners, and newer ones may even be voice operated, like computers. Com codes are usually delivered in person or on tags via messengers. On Coriolis, the Bulletin supplies a registry on its infonet where com codes may be stored through any info terminal. Similar code bases can be found in most larger cities or stations where the Bulletin has a network of terminals in place, such as AYM, the main districts of the Conglomerate, the Icon City, Dar Bahri, and Alburz, to name a few. The wealthy have personal couriers to send messages in cities or on stations, sometimes even off world. This type of courier services can usually be bought from freelancers as well. Dignitaries and the very rich can also afford the powerful planetary or system communicators, with the latter working even in systems without satellite relays.**

# CULTURE IN THE THIRD HORIZON

The Icons and nothing else are what keep the Horizon together, at least according to the old Firstcome proverbs, followed by culture and family. Yesef Megnolim, the famous agitator, summed it up well when he said "The Icons first, family second, and games for the people". The different systems share some cultural references, but what counts as good or popular differs from system to system, or even from faction to faction. The blood operas are appreciated almost exclusively in the Zenithian Hegemony, while conservative factions such as the Order hold chant choirs in high regard.

## MUSIC AND SONG

The cirra is a string instrument played all over the Horizon, its bright notes elevating baria ballads as well as Algolan round dance. Apart from the cirra, the Horizon contains a myriad of instruments with local variations beyond counting, from wooden flutes on Mira and Algol to mechanical music machines on Dabaran. The nine-string Charou lyre is a legendary instrument mastered almost only by Ahlam's courtesans, who can bestow both ecstasy and torment on the listener. There are two major styles of singing: the baria, melancholy and portentous, and the kabbah, which is more dance oriented and backed by computer organs. The kabbah is all the rage in the clubs in the Core of Coriolis and in the dars of Dabaran where popular musicians such as the Gouri Brothers, the Cirras of Dartarlides and Hala-hal perform it. The stars of the baria include Honna Ibrim, Aicha, and modern legend Sani Sowal. A more obscure song style is the prophet songs popular on and around Mira and Zalos – six bar stanzas about the words of the Icons, visions of the future or passages from the holy scriptures. A Zalosian version of the prophet songs are the chant choirs, although they often end in revels of flagellation. The blood operas of the Zenithian Hegemony are the complete opposite – extravagant compositions with huge orchestras, elevating Zenithian order and reason over the Icons.

## LITERATURE AND STORYTELLING

Storytelling is just as strong a tradition as singing in the Horizon. The champions of the craft are often the tarrab, people similar to traveling poets or bards. Literature is also popular and reading is considered a noble pursuit, a sign that one has time to spare. The privileged make sure to always keep books around their homes, and some even have special reading rooms, or balconies with special light reflecting fields around them. The very rich employ courtesans or readers to perform the stories for them. On Coriolis, the well-off often get together to "kawah read", meaning that they listen to a storyteller while enjoying kawah, chai, dates, and sweet fruit. The most famous writer in the Horizon is without a doubt the secretive Mazelman, allegedly living somewhere in the Rimward Reach to research his next book. His earlier works The Siren's Call, The Nightingale, and Stories From a Lost Age are must-reads among the upper classes. The so-called tag stories are very popular among the plebeians and the poor. They are short, adventurous stories, often about brave heroes and captains who defy evil factionaries, bureaucrats or the rich. The series about Captain Imsalima of the Lotus Leaf is a best seller, and comprises about twenty parts to date with many shadow writers working on the project.

## HOLO, PROXY AND PICTORIAL MEDIA

The technology used to spread news across the Horizon is also used by the entertainment industry. The Bulletin is a market leader here as well, through their Seven Stars studio, and people everywhere follow their popular holo dramas The Plantation Owner's Daughter, Guesthouse Brahima, and the comedy show The Avant-Kuarde, centered on the mischief and escapades of the students living in the Mulukhad district. Other players also produce and market holo films – the Iconocrats on Sadaal and a few Algolan trade houses for example – but they are rarely up to Bulletin standards. The theater is very popular throughout the Horizon, from the street corner puppet shows on Algol to the acrobatic Miran theater. The proxy media has spread to the public thanks to the Syndicate's illegal erotic proxy trips, but more and more proxy novellas are beginning to circulate. They are often of impressive quality, which hints at a big corp or faction sponsored production.

## HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Most holidays in the Third Horizon are of a religious nature and celebrate the glory of the Icons in one way or another. Since the founding of Coriolis and the Church of the Icon's Declaration

of the Sacred Rites, the dominant Icon holidays have spread to almost the entire Horizon. Local traditions are still upheld of course, such as the Elephant festival on Algol and the Day of Flowers on Mira. The three big holidays in the Horizon are the Cyclade, the Founding, and the Pilgrimaria. The Cyclade takes place on the last day of the current year or cycle. Big parties are organized and resolutions for the future are made. Many choose to enter their life bonds on this day, or sign important trade agreements. To be born during the Cyclade is considered a sign of good fortune in life. The Founding is a day the faithful spend in prayer, praising friends and benefactors but also passing judgment on liars and traitors. Feuds between families, clans, or business competitors should be settled on this day. After sundown, processions carrying statues of the Judge and the Gambler parade through the cities, villages, and stations. The faithful end the day in quiet reflection.

The Pilgrimaria is the proper day to start one's pilgrimage. For those who have already completed theirs, or who are unable to travel, the day is devoted to remembering the dead. In recent years, the Algolan tradition to sculpt skulls out of fruit, sugar, or colored clay has spread to the rest of the Horizon and what used to be a very solemn celebration is now more festive. Dancers with skulls painted on their bodies dance in the Core to the sounds and flashes of firecrackers. Big fireworks shows are common in planetside cities.

**MIRAN ACROBATICS**

For as long as anyone can remember, acrobatics, dancing, and martial arts have been a part of Miran culture. The flying theaters – acrobatic performances traditionally using advanced systems of ropes and pulleys – tell the stories of King Macaque, Sah Mahib, the Dancer's incarnate, and many other often-humorous adventures. The theaters use grav belts instead of ropes nowadays and this has propelled the art form to new aesthetic heights. The scene where the Dancer comes flying across the stage in a red kharonicle with flowing veils in "Jasmine Mourning" has been described as magical by theater critics, and it gave Nestera, who manufactures the grav belts, massive publicity on Mira.



**Proxi star Zhila Zaandian, most famous for The Algoli Butterfly.**

# ICON BELIEF

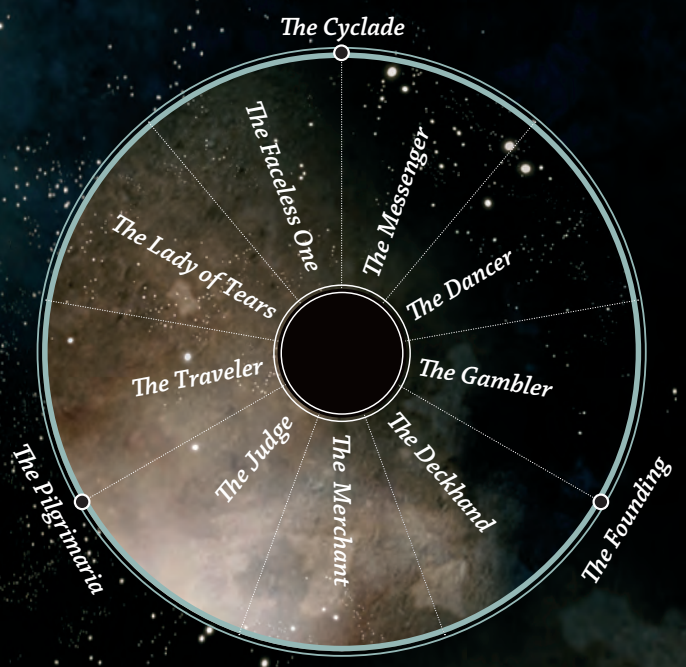
Mankind's existence on scattered oases in the endless darkness is an almost unfathomable mystery. The Icons are what fill the void and provide comfort in the absurdity of life in the dark.

## THE NINE ICONS

It is not clear exactly where the Icons come from; this knowledge was lost during the exile from Al-Ardha. The Zenithians can shed no light on the matter, but this is of no consequence to the faithful – the fact that the Icons exist is enough. The Icons link everyday life with spirituality in many ways. The figurines on the altars of people's homes, the talismans on dashboards and bridges, the temples and chapels along the trade routes, in the villages, and on the space stations – all are links between the individual and eternity. The nine Icons are worshipped differently depending on profession, faction and personal beliefs. In some places they are even praised under different names but, according to the Church of Icons, they are still the same Icons. The nine Icons and their followers are presented below.

### CALENDAR

In the Third Horizon and on Coriolis, time is usually measured in cycles – or Coriolis' Cycles, CCs – instead of years, as the length of a year differs from system to system. One CC is the length of a Kuan year and is divided into three triads of three segments each. Each segment is dedicated to one Icon. There is one odd day between each of the triads. These odd days are special holidays and are celebrated in a fashion reflecting the coming triad's Icons.



**THE ICONS**

| ICON | SYMBOL |
|---|---|
| The Messenger | Scroll |
| The Dancer | Sweeping Shawl |
| The Gambler | Dice |
| The Deckhand | Key |
| The Merchant | Chalice |
| The Judge | Sword |
| The Traveler | Ship |
| The Lady of Tears | Tear |
| The Faceless One | No symbol |

## THE MESSENGER

The fleet-footed Messenger brings news, prayers, and omens to wherever the faithful might be. The Messenger is portrayed as a pale boy with a stern face and flaming eyes. He is sometimes depicted holding a winged messenger rod, and in some places he himself is portrayed with wings, such as in the Hafra chapel on Algol, for example. He is sometimes called the Whisperer, the one who knows all your secrets, or the Seducer who drives people mad. Many view the Messenger as the Icon that escorts your ghost to the afterlife when your body dies, often as a host of sparrows or some other small birds. Sacrifices to the Messenger are often made when a message must be delivered or cargo secured, or together with intercessory prayer to bring someone good luck. A common sacrifice is the burning of a prayer written on a piece of paper or putting a small vessel carved out of sugar in the alcove of the Messenger in the temple. Woe to all who neglect the temperamental Messenger.

## THE DANCER

The Dancer is the Icon of inspiration and perseverance. Sometimes woman, sometimes man, but most often androgynous and ungendered like the hijras. The Dancer represents the bond formed in the life union between two lovers, but also unbridled lust when appearing as the Musician, playing a nine-string lyre or a cirra. Darker folklore speaks of the Beast, representing mankind's true nature and, according

**DAR SALUB'S GRIEF**

Legend has it that the sultan Dar Salub on Dabaran sent his son on an important diplomatic mission during the Water Wars, but offered no tribute to the Messenger. The son was supposed to hoist white sails upon his return, but forgot, and was shot down by the sultan's accelerator batteries. The bereaved ruler ordered the construction of a gigantic sailing palace in which he had himself immured as an offering in the hopes of good fortunes for his son in the afterlife.



The Messenger

### THE AFTERLIFE

Philosophers, priests, and prophets everywhere debate the nature of life beyond the corporeal. To common people, the afterlife is a heavenly place, reminiscent of Al-Ardha before it was destroyed by industry and progress. Ascetics in the Circle of Seekers dispute the existence of an afterlife altogether, instead believing that the spirit is reunited with the Icons in the eternal Aoum. The Church of the Icons has no official view on the afterlife, but has denied all claims that the ghost or soul of a deceased can be trapped in the Dark between the Stars and transformed into a dybbuk, a sarcofagoi, or some other mythic creatures.



The Dancer

to some, her inherent evil. The Beast has no place in the temples, but some of Mira's forest nomads worship it as the Icon of strength and portray it as a dragon-like creature with fur and nine eyes. Sacrifices to the Dancer are a small but exquisite meal, a dance, or a beautiful song, but preferably all three combined.

## THE GAMBLER

For the adventurous, the intelligent, and the gifted, the Gambler is a perfect fit. Curious children who speak the truth as they see it and think quickly on their feet are the Icon's protégées. The Icon is often pictured as a young man stretching his hand towards you, urging you to take a risk, to roll the dice. Myth and folklore across the Horizon usually describe the Gambler as a trickster, such as in the forms of the Laughing Hyena on Algol, King Macaque on Mira, or as juggling tarrab. The darker aspect of the Icon is surrounded by stories of monsters and the Dark between the Stars. On Mira, one incarnation of the Gambler is the Ensnarer who comes for the cowardly and the weak that are afraid to take risks in life. The Gambler appreciates simple offerings, such as dice, Gambler cards from an Icon deck, a mug of wine or some other kohôl. Lingering memories from the Long Night speak of goat blood sacrifices, and ever fouler things.

### OFFERINGS

A suitable sacrifice can be just about anything one has at hand – as long as the act of faith itself is pure – but trading in offerings is nevertheless a lucrative business. Outside larger domes, chapels, or temples there is usually a row of traders selling myrrh, tabak, or olibanum incense sticks, tiny sugar sculptures holding bowls of vinegar, bone fragments, dice, cards, decorative rope work, Algolan paper sculptures – basically everything even faintly faith related. The Church of the Icons has not done anything about this yet, but concerns are being raised about the dangers of commercializing the faith, the "Zenithism" of it all.

## THE DECKHAND

The Deckhand is usually portrayed as a tired boy holding a broom or a switch key. The Deckhand can bless homes,

ships, and stores, if they're well-kept and the right offerings have been made. The Deckhand protects the unfortunate as the folklore always depicts the Icon sharing their fate – tricked out of a well-earned reward. Some stories describe the Deckhand a bit differently, as a rascal that disturbs commerce, destroys electronics on ships, or makes sure the shelves in the shops are dusty and crooked. This aspect of the Deckhand is called the Waba, or the Fox. The best sacrifice to the Deckhand is a well-kept shop, balanced accounts, and meticulous service to one's ship. In the chapels, a common offering is to wash the altar of the Icon and read a fairytale for the tired boy.

## THE MERCHANT

The portly Merchant, an older man dressed in embroidered silk robes, is the Icon of prosperity, forward thinking, and success. The kind and generous side of the Icon is often depicted as an elderly, smiling woman giving alms to the poor. She is revered by colonists who live off the land and plantation owners and farmers who pray for a good harvest. The darker side of the Merchant is the Miser who can be found in caricature form in many plays and holo dramas. The Miser has an insatiable lust for birr, precious stones, and power, and is oblivious to the consequences. Commonly, a sacrifice to the Merchant is birr (although sometimes gold leafed sugar birr) or fancy raw materials, delicacies or cut crystals.

## THE JUDGE

An old matriarch with a grave face and a sword at her side is the common way to picture the Judge. The Judge's realm is that of justice and due punishment, hence the name. Early Icon myths name the Icon either as The Blind or the Warden, and many believe that it is the Judge who presides over the afterlife, accompanied by the Gambler and holding a pair of scales. The famous mosaic in the Sarras temple on Menau depicts the Judge together with the hyena-headed Gambler who is trying to lead the ghosts of the dead astray. The Martyr is another aspect of the Judge and the most important Icon to the Order of the Pariah. The Martyr accepts unjust punishments, such as in the story "The Woes of Chigas" where the Martyr takes Chigas' place when Kahaz, the monster of the deep, is coming to devour her. The only sacrifice the Judge desires is confes-



The Gambler



The Deckhand


The Merchant


The Judge

sion of one's failings and lies, and remorseful penance. Flagellation in honor of the Martyr can be appropriate under certain circumstances, but is almost exclusively practiced by the Order.

## THE TRAVELER

For free traders, caravaneers, explorers or colonists, the Traveler stands for protection. The Traveler is often a man with his eyes on the horizon, holding a walking stick, a compass or maybe an astrograph. A Firstcome variation of the Traveler is the Star Singer, who is a spreader of wisdom and who anchors reality with song and story. Yet another aspect is the Demiurge worshipped on Menkar, believed to be the original portal creator. In this origin story, the Portal Builders never existed, but instead it was the Icons themselves who wove the network of gates between the Horizons. The malicious side of the Traveler is the Spider, who controls the web of star ways and traps reckless ship crews in the darkness between the portals. Offerings to the Traveler are usually a knotted hemp rope or crude string, a figurine of a ship, a dromedon, a horse or some other transportation craft.

## THE LADY OF TEARS

On their way toward the Judge's justice, the Lady of Tears accompanies the dead. She also consoles the ones still living. The Lady of Tears is a woman dressed in the white of mourning, traces of tears still on her cheeks, but with a mysterious smile. Her element is fire, the cleansing fire that destroys the body to set the spirit free. A dark aspect of the Lady is the Butcher or the Executioner, who cuts or hacks off body parts until nothing is left, but still leaves the ghost trapped. A less grim incarnation is the Lady of Tar, who covers the pyre and the corpse in pitch for a quick and intense fire. The Lady of Tears is praised with offerings of burning myrrh, white candles, or small fires – not inside the chapel, though.

### MOURNERS AND PYRES

It is customary in the Horizon to hire mourners for the funerals of loved ones. Preferably, one should endeavor to hire courtesan-trained mourners, with their beautiful white silk dresses, carrying palm leaves and flowers of the light. Mourners are a

high status profession and they are believed by many to have a mystical contact with the Icons thanks to the nature of their craft. Iconoscopes written by a mourner always seem to come true. Funeral pyres or cremation is the main form of funeral rite in the Third Horizon. According to Foundation historians, this is probably related to the practical benefits of these methods to life on spaceships or space stations, but the Firstcome scoff at such heathen theories – fire is the only thing that can release the spirit from the body, hence the tradition. Only the most holy of bones are spared from the flames, as this will keep their saintly spirits in the Horizon where they can continue their righteous work. Myths about sarcofagoi who feasts on corpses – or even worse, about bokor or necrographers who reanimate the deceased as their slaves – is likely a part of the explanation as well. Only a few asteroid communities or very remote space stations keep from burning their dead, instead letting the station's recycling systems take care of the corpses, but this is a custom of bad, almost unholy, repute.

## THE FACELESS ONE

The Seeker among the Icons is never pictured. In temples and on Icon walls there is instead an empty place or alcove, or an asymmetry in the placement of the other Icons. Not so long ago, many did not even know of the existence of the Faceless One, but the rise of the Church of the Icons changed that. On stage, the Faceless One is portrayed as a masked figure all in black that sneaks about the set, rearranging the props and giving or taking away objects from the actors. The most common aspect of the Icon is the Shadow, although for a long time many thought of it as an evil spirit rather than an Icon. The Shadow brings madness by luring the soul out into the Dark between the Stars. The anonymity of the Faceless One makes for few sacrifices in its honor, except by those who have known and revered the Icon for a long time, such as the Black Lotuses of Ahlam's Temple or the Karvor nomads in Aigi, Uharu. A proper offering is often a mask, black or white stones, or a drop of blood from the believer. Unsubstantiated but persistent rumors claim that certain unsavory cults on Mira and Dabaran worship a perverted aspect of the Faceless One with human sacrifices to quench the Icon's thirst for souls.



The Traveler



The Lady of Tears

# THE CHURCH OF THE ICONS

The rise of the Church of the Icons has changed the way the Icons are worshipped in the Horizon. Through the canonizing of the holy scriptures and the Declaration of Sacred Rites, the faith has been formalized in a way it never was before. The dark aspects of the Icons have officially been cast out, but still remain among most of the general public. From Mira, Coriolis and Dabaran, the matriarchs and patriarchs rule the Church, living in life bonds with one another but without children, as they are firmly devoted to the Icons only. The pinnacles of the faith are the sacred rites and they are equally important to all believers, although local customs may weigh in depending on system, culture and clan.

## THE SACRED RITES

There are nine sacred rites, just like there are nine Icons, but many hold prayer and blessing as the two most important ones. The Order has their own version of the blessing, incorporating elements of flagellation and martyrdom.

### THE MISSION

The mission is what separates the new faith from the old ways found on Mira, Zalos, and Sadaal. The mission rite requires a believer to leave her home and travel the Horizon for one segment, spreading the faith. Low-ranking preachers or prophets are often sent to the fringes of civilization to serve in a chapel or monastery there, sometimes for a whole triad.

### THE LIFE BOND

At some point during one's lifetime, one should form a life bond with someone of the same or opposite gender. The orthodox believers meant that the purpose of the life bond was to procreate, but this is possible regardless of gender in the Third Horizon, thanks to advanced technology such as nutri-wombs and cloning. Divorce is forbidden. Widows and widowers are supposed to live out the rest of their lives in mourning.

### THE CREED

Once a year, during the Cyclade, a believer should openly declare her faith by reciting the creed together with others in a temple.

### THE BLESSING

Blessing one's home, ship, shop, or other business is done by all believers. The blessing is especially important before going traveling or at the start of a new year or cycle.

### THE FAST

During the segment of the Merchant, between dawn and dusk – during the morning and day watch – the faithful must abstain from food and drink. Children and the sick are excused from fasting. The purpose of the fast is to cleanse body and soul, but also to serve as a reminder of material necessity.

### THE CONFESSION

To purify the mind, the faithful should confess their sins once per segment, preferably to an anointed priest or priestess, but a missionary, preacher, or pilgrim could also do. No believer is free from mistakes and lies, which makes the confession a very important sacrament.

### THE PILGRIMAGE

There are two holy sites that the faithful should visit at least once during their lives – the Dome of the Icons on Coriolis and the Icon City on Mira. Many regard the temple city Lotus on Dabaran as an even holier site and the Church has come under pressure to include Lotus in the pilgrimage.

### THE ALMS-GIVING

Giving alms to the poor pleases the Icons and should be done once per segment. A ninth of one's income is to be given away. The alms-giving is considered one of the most important sacred rites on Mira.

### THE PRAYER

The faithful should pray twice a day, at dawn and dusk. This rule can be broken if the believer's life is in danger or for other special occasions. It is common across the Horizon for people to gather at prayer plazas and pray together. The praying person should be on her knees, and preferably on a prayer rug.

## CHAPELS AND HOLY SITES

The Horizon is full of chapels, temples, Icon walls, and sculptures. Much of the worship takes place at these sites, in homes, or at spiritual focal points such as the Lotus Rock on Dabaran or the Holy Grove in Alchai. Pilgrims flock to three major holy sites: the Dome of the Icons on Coriolis, the Icon City on Mira, and Lotus on Dabaran. The Crater Dome on Algol is smaller and mainly visited by local pilgrims, but the news of its holiness is spreading.

### THE ICON CHAPEL

The typical chapel is an open, octagonal building with eight or nine alcoves in a large room. The alcoves contain statues of all the Icons except the Faceless One. The chapels usually have high ceilings, supported by a pillar in each alcove, and it is common that they have an opening in the ceiling where the sun or the stars can be seen. The local priest or preacher will usually live in a building adjacent to the chapel, although only missionaries or pilgrims tend to very remote sites. No matter how small the dome, chapel or temple is, they always contain a common room where the faithful can relax and spend time together, with food, chai, hookahs, or just a few chairs. Many chapels also have fountains or, in the Algolan fashion, raked stone gardens. Special courtesan temples exist on Mira where more intimate acts are allowed, something the modern parts of the Church want to ban.

## ICON WALLS AND RELIQUARIES

In places where a chapel cannot be built for some reason, you will commonly find Icon walls instead. They are simple brick walls with alcoves for the Icon statues. Icon walls are often built on holy sites, such as on top of the remnants or catacombs of an earlier temple. Some of the older temples have vast networks of catacombs underneath them where holy bones are buried. These catacombs may also contain hidden reliquaries where precious gift or offerings are kept, usually under guard by preachers, warrior monks, or just the watchful eyes of the Icons. On ships and stations, there may not always be room for a proper chapel, but there is almost always a prayer room or an Icon wall onboard. Many believers would not set foot on a ship that didn't have some form of space dedicated to the Icons, which makes such ships rare. In the fifth L-point above Melik lies the temple of Horizon's End, which its proprietors claim to be unique in all the Horizon: the visiting pilgrims can meditate and pray with only an ED field between them and empty space, under the flames of the Melik sun.

## SPIRITUALITY AND SCHISMS

Despite the Church's efforts, the Icon faith is not a uniform religion but filled with variations, deviations, and schisms. Common people regard the Icons as multifaceted and unpredictable, capable of both blessings and curses. This is firmly denied by the Church of the Icons through all the teachings of their missionaries, preachers, and prophets – nothing bad can come from

**TABLE 10.1 SACRED RITES ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH OF THE ICONS**

| SACRED RITE | ICON | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| The Mission | The Messenger | Once in life, during at least one segment. |
| The Life Bond | The Dancer | Once in life. |
| The Creed | The Gambler | Each year during the Cyclade. |
| The Blessing | The Deckhand | Each year during the Cyclade. |
| The Fast | The Merchant | From dawn to dusk during the segment of the Merchant. |
| The Confession | The Judge | Each segment. |
| The Pilgrimage | The Traveler | Once in life. |
| The Alms-giving | The Lady of Tears | Each segment. |
| The Prayer | The Faceless One | Twice daily. |



### THE CATACOMBS OF ZARANDJ

The Zarandji catacombs on Dabaran are said to contain rich offerings made by the wealthy neighboring dars before the temple was destroyed in the Portal Wars. Many archaeologists and grave robbers have gone in search of the fabled riches but have come out empty-handed – if they were lucky enough to come out at all.

the Icons, mankind itself and the Dark between the Stars are the roots of evil. At present, there are two major schisms dividing the faith: the Emissary from Xene and Oikoumene as Nadjim.

### ⚙ THE TROUBLESOME EMISSARY

The ghosts from the gas giant Xene, often described as either spirits or spectral phenomena, have recently declared themselves the "emissaries" of Xene. There are officially five of them, but rumors claim that there are really nine altogether and that the Foundation and the Consortium are hiding the truth. One of the Emissaries has named itself the Judge incarnate, which the Order of the Pariah views as heresy since the Judge – in its Martyr aspect – is the only Icon they worship. The Order has put the Foundation and the Consortium under pressure to extradite the Emissary, threatening to send their antimatter armed warships to the Kua system.



### ⚙ OIKOUMENE AS NADJIM

In the last few cycles, a new subject has sparked debate among philosophers and preachers, especially in the Rimward Reach in the Kua system. The matter concerns whether or not humanites are the spiritual equals of base humans. The issue was first brought up when new colonists questioned the nomads' religious rhetoric. The prophet Ndina addressed the issue in a sermon, and the five head preachers in the Rimward Reach were quick to outline new teachings for the nadjim, the humanites. An ecumenical assembly, Oikoumene as Nadjim, is being organized to establish that there is no spiritual difference between humanites and base humans. Invitations to the assembly have been sent out to knowledgeable preachers and prophets across the Horizon, as well as to the matriarch and patriarch of Mira. So far, there is no consensus on the matter.

## THE FAITH OF THE FACTIONS

The religious practices of the factions differ greatly. The Firstcome factions are all dominated by religious and mystical ideas but in different forms. Two factions praise only one Icon – the Draconites who worship the Executioner, and the Order of the Pariah who bow only to the Martyr. There are even some different practices within the Church of the Icons, where the marginalized cult of the Circle of Seekers view the Icon faith as a rough but practical simplification of the great mystery of life, and that each Icon is its own way to enlightenment. The Zenithian factions distance themselves from the Icons, but not openly – for strategic reasons. An exception to this is the Foundation, which is in direct opposition to a worldview where the Icons have any power at all. Their hardline scientific convictions have put them on a collision course with the Order of the Pariah.

# THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE

To most of the Horizon's inhabitants, the Icons are a real force to worship and placate in order for life to function. Many people have their own favorite Icon – one that has helped them through hard times or brought them luck. A sacrifice can be made to one's favorite Icon before an important event that normally wouldn't fall under that specific Icon's general niche – praying too often to a multitude of Icons is said to bring bad luck and to nourish the Dark between the Stars. Common people believe that the Icons – contrary to the Church's rhetoric – have more than one face, and are as prone to anger as they are to generosity. Sometimes, it can be wise to honor an Icon with offerings just to ward off its gaze. Take care not to treat the Judge this way however: the Judge is an Icon that doesn't take kindly to false worship.

### THE UGLY ONE

There is an old story about a peddler who tried to trick the Merchant in order to turn a greater profit. With offerings and wailing prayers he purported to be on the brink of financial ruin. This was a lie, and instead he made huge amounts of money selling the cargo that was bestowed upon him. The Merchant eventually found out and was very angry. A fire broke out on the peddler's ship that destroyed half of his face. To this day, "The Ugly One" is said to be traveling the Horizon as a prophet, warning of the righteous wrath of the Icons.

## TABOOS

There are many taboos in the Horizon, connected to the Icons' vengeful tendencies. Certain things must not be done, or even mentioned – to speak of the Dark between the Stars is among the worst things one can do, for example. Instead, people use metaphors or euphemisms. Other taboos include certain foods, not showing generosity or hospitality, refusing to accept gifts, and speaking ill of the Icons.

## TALISMANS

Believers often carry talismans representing their favorite Icon or the Church of the Icons. Talismans are holy items and are often miniature sculptures or portraits of the Icon or its symbol. Just like offerings, talismans can be bought in the street markets outside most temples and chapels. The Talisman Market in Icons City is known for its many different and exotic interpretations of the Icons. Many pilgrims wish to return from their pilgrimage with a talisman that has been blessed in the Dome of the Icons. For a talisman to have holy power, it must be blessed in a temple before the right Icon, accompanied by the proper offerings. The talismans are usually left in the temple for one whole day, and to take a talisman during this time is one of the strongest taboos in the Horizon. It is common for people to put their talismans back on the altar during religious festivals to recharge their holy power.

## ICONOSCOPES AND PROPHECIES

For each of the Icons, there is a segment in the calendar and in the sky. The constellations of an Icon can vary between systems, as some of them are so far apart that the night sky shows different stars. It is widely accepted that Iconoscopes – descriptions of how the stars in the segment of one Icon or another interact with other stars along the ecliptic – can predict someone's future. Iconoscopes are personal and centered on the most important Icon in someone's life. Crafting an Iconoscope is a complex process with more exceptions than rules. The techniques vary between systems and cultures, and a sibyl or oracle from one system may have a difficult time trying to read the stars in another system. Making an Iconoscope for someone who didn't ask for it is taboo, as is trying to read one's own future. There are also methods of soothsaying that don't involve the stars. Using an Icon deck to read the future in the cards drawn is one method, while arithmetic is popular on Dabaran. Arithmetic is the art of using unworldly numbers and algorithms to predict the future. The true mathematicians of Dabaran regard arithmetic with disdain, but the practice is in wide circulation on the planet.

## LOCAL ICONS

Almost wherever you go, you will find local Icon variations not acknowledged by the Church or orthodox believers. In some systems, one Icon takes precedence over all others –

such as the Martyr on Zalos – and in some places, important figures in society have been elevated to an almost god-like position, such as Iconocrat Aremerat on Sadaal for example. Certain primitive Firstcome tribes interpret elemental beings, strange phenomena, or wild spirits as Icons, of which the Azaäleans in the Kuan jungles, Ba-yinn the Star Snake or the Ouroboros all are examples. The Kandah cloud in the Rimward Reach and the winking pulsar outside of Algebar are both considered holy by nomads. Regardless of local customs, the nine Icons exist in every system, albeit under different names. Only in a few cases has a local Icon replaced one of the original nine – an important ancestor, some lesser deity or even a spirit or djinn. In the Yastapol system, Ekaterina, a dead malika, has replaced the Judge. Ekaterina represents justice, but also fertility.

# SPIRITS AND MYTHS

Superstition is common everywhere in the Horizon. With the possible exception of the most ardent disbelievers in the Foundation, the Dark between the Stars makes everyone nervous. Stories of black magic, necromancy, and dark covenants involving blood-curdling rituals or mechanical cadaver clocks are common among the Firstcome people. Some scientific studies have even found signs of similar mythology among semi-intelligent species such as ekilbri and skavara. The universe is also thought to harbor many other things that the Foundation's sensors and tomographs cannot explain. Black birr, hadra clouds, djinni, and maajib are all signs that the world is not at all simple or easy to comprehend.

## DJINN

The djinn turn up in almost all Firstcome fairy tales and myths, although sometimes as yin, jinni, janna, or bokor. Djinn are thought to be unpredictable spirits, full of tricks. In folklore, the djinn are sent by the Icons to assist heroes or punish tyrants and liars. They often show up as mirages, whirlwinds, or just a shimmering in the air, but they are said to be able to take human form, or even the forms of snakes



### THE SMILING EFRITE

There is one exception to the common myth of the evil efrite – the tale of how the smiling efrite met the storyteller Salimede. The efrite was so enchanted by her stories, and the fact that she gave him her little finger as a gift, that he promised to only help people from that day forward, as long as they told him a good story. The smiling efrite is said to show up around festivals or circus visits, but you just might find him in a quiet cantina as well, waiting for a story. In return, the efrite will make the storyteller's travels easier.

### SYMPTOMS OF A POSSESSION

**When an evil djinn possesses a human, there is precious little time to call for a preacher to perform an exorcism. The signs of a possession can be many, but in some cases it is only a high fever.**

**SYMPTOMS:**

- **Lingering pain in different parts of the body, even though the medicurgs can find nothing wrong.**
- **Hallucinations.**
- **Depression.**
- **Cannot stand to hear the holy scriptures or the creed being recited.**
- **Constant nightmares, for example about black dogs, cats, snakes etc.**
- **Mood swings.**
- **High fever and disorientation.**

or winged creatures, visible only at the corner of your vision as they shoot past you. The djinn are thought to be able to possess humans and control their actions. It is believed that it was a malicious djinn who caused the prophet Maluk's madness, in which he slaughtered his whole congregation. The most dangerous of the djinn, according to the prophet Hauram, is the efrite, who seeks out catacombs or space stations where corpses aren't cremated in order to possess their inhabitants – living or dead.

As mentioned, not all djinn are evil – some of them can even be of great help. The Nine Muses, masters of all the arts of pleasure, are spirits often worshipped by courtesans who pray for success in their profession. The marids, or maajib, are arrogant djinn with almost Iconic powers who are said to grant wishes, if you can pay the price. The Silver Fox is a trickster spirit, thought by many to be an aspect of the Deckhand. It is said to dwell among forested hills, where it takes the form of a beautiful man or woman to lure unsuspecting travelers down into its hole. The guests are offered cups of chai or kawah and then bewitched, or possessed. Judicator Ahmedi testified to finding the bodies of several children in a hole in the ground just outside of the Conglomerate when the serial killer Atali roamed the planet. The hole also contained fox droppings. Ahmedi was so shaken by the whole affair that he turned in his badge and went to lead an ascetic's life in the jungle.

## SORCERERS

Apart from spirits and djinn, there are many other stories about the dark arts in the Horizon. Parents on Kua and Coriolis scare their children with tales of the man-eating spirits that primitive Firstcome called sarcofagoi. In other versions, the sarcofagoi are spirits who infiltrate spaceships on long hauls, turning the crew against each other and sowing madness. When the crew has finally killed each other in their mania, the sarcofagoi feast on their corpses. Other sorcerer figures in folklore are the bokor, who can reanimate dead cadavers. They are said to hang around slums and tent towns in cities such as Akhander-O-Sharif and the Conglomerate. When it comes to the now extinct faction, the Nazareem's Sacrifice, the worst evils imaginable are mixed with a certain amount of truth. It is commonly believed that they practiced human sacrifice, performed dark rituals, and formed unholy alliances with evil spirits and djinn.



**BAIJAM'S FALSE FACE**

Baijam's False Face is a well-known myth in the Third Horizon. It is a story about the ability to change one's face, which is an act most believers would think utterly depraved and heretical. Some religious ideas locate a person's spirit or ghost in the lines of the face, or as Hauram's third book declares: "Without your eyes and your smile, you are alone before the Icons". Some say that Baijam is a darkmorph, a daimon, djinn, or diyub, that through changing the face of its possessed host can steal the ghost. Others believe that Baijam is actually one of the black sector's most successful biosculpts, designed for infiltration and assassinations. The fact that Bajiam is an anagram from Maajib, which means both "shadow" and "master" and happens to be the name of the biocode magistra from Ahalimm that recently went missing only serves to further the whispered speculations. It is rumored that Maajib created the sculpt for a traveling tarrab, as a masterpiece to complete her training under master Herodes Afrat.





## CHAPTER 11

# CORIOLIS

*Coriolis! Jewel and beating heart of the Horizon, cradle and holy shrine of the Zenithian civilization. Only the Icons themselves can outshine this, the most glorious wonder under the stars. O, Coriolis, your palaces are magnificent and your halls regal – you are my greatest love!*

**ODE TO CORIOLIS – Galbarul**

The Coriolis space station is the hub of the Third Horizon, in more ways than one: it was from this place that the Zenithians brought the Horizon back to life. The station lies at the intersection of all the major trade routes, and houses both the Council of Factions and many other rulers.

**WHEN THE ZENITHIANS** stripped their arkship for parts and created the colossus that would become Coriolis station, they had no idea what it would mean to the Horizon. During the first cycles of the station's existence, many areas were empty and uninhabited. Over time, the station filled up with activity and experienced a cultural boom – while decaying at the same time. From the deep echoes of the Cellar to the floors in the Spire mimicking real planetary nature under blue holo skies, the Coriolis of today is a melting pot of Algolan refugees, masked Sadaalian bureaucrats, and wealthy pashas from Sivas and Dabaran.

### FACTS ABOUT THE STATION

- **POPULATION:** According to the census of CC61, Coriolis has 521,465 permanent residents. The number of occupants with temporary residence permits was at the time of the census 189,453. Semi-intelligences and slummers in the Cellar were not included in the census, but their numbers are kept low by the purges of the Coriolis Guard.
- **PHYSICAL DATA:** The station measures 6,136 meters from the Cellar to the top of the Spire. The diameter of the Ring is 3,540 meters and that of the Core is 1,500 meters at its widest point. The four larger plazas are 604 meters in diameter.
- **CALENDAR:** One Coriolis Cycle is divided into 336 days. Each day is divided into watches of six hours each – morning, day, evening, and night. The cycle is divided into nine 37-day segments, each devoted to one Icon. Each segment ends with an extended rest period, and after each triad – three segments – a special holiday is celebrated. The three holidays are the Founding, the Cyclade (or New Year's Eve), and the Pilgrimaria.
- **LAW AND ORDER:** The Coriolis Guard is the keeper of the peace, both on the station and in the surrounding space, and is under the direct control of the Governor. The Judicators, who have extensive authority to investigate, make arrests, and, in some cases, punish the guilty parties at the scene of the crime, handle serious criminality. The Judicators answer to the courts, who are independent from the Governor and the Council, but who rule in accordance with the laws of the station.
- **GOVERNANCE:** The Governor rules the station with the help of the Council of Factions and the will of the taxpayers through the 2,001 seats of the Popular Assembly. Taxes are optional, and are usually paid collectively by a company, clan, or other group to get a vote on the Assembly, but a number of wealthy individuals also hold seats – 732 people as of CC61. The price of a vote on the Assembly was 9,000 birr in CC61. The Popular Assembly votes on issues where the Governor and the Council need the support of the people. The Assembly always gets to vote in legislative matters.

## HISTORY

The Coriolis station was constructed from the corpse of the arkship Zenith that arrived in the Third Horizon some 60 cycles ago. Portions of the Zenith's components and gear were taken by the Quassar family down to the Monolith on Kua, and some went with the Draconites when they broke the chain of command onboard and vanished into the void. Left in the remnants were the seconds-in-command, the Yriedes clan, and the newly awoken colonists who together formed the Consortium. Coriolis was constructed as a signal to the entire Horizon that a new era was dawning – and because it was a practical use of the Zenith's cadaver. The leftovers became the Net, the reloading port that floats outside the station. In a show of Zenithian fellowship, Coriolis was parked in a geostationary orbit above the Monolith, with the Spire pointing towards the top of the black column below. This is how it all began.

### TIMELINE

| CC | EVENT |
|---|---|
| -5 | The Zenith arrives in the Dabaran system. |
| 0 | The Consortium begins the construction of Coriolis. Desmond Yriedes becomes the station's first Governor. |
| 5 | The fleets of the Legion and the Zenithian Hegemony engage in combat in the Hamura system with none of the combatants gaining the upper hand. Tere Mezzina becomes the second Governor of Coriolis. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 7 | The Legion and the Consortium form a defense pact. |
| 8 | The Legion and the Zenithian Hegemony signs a treaty to form a non-aggression pact. |
| 10 | Construction of the Coriolis station is completed. |
| 14 | The Free League faction is founded as a partner to the Consortium. |
| 17 | Moratio Ischara becomes the third Governor of Coriolis. |
| 21 | All other factions are invited to send representatives to the Council of Factions. |
| 26 | Absina Lekteli becomes the fourth Governor of Coriolis. |
| 34 | The main trade routes through the Horizon are secured by the Legion. The Governor of Coriolis signs the Free Trader Treaty that gives anyone the right to use the star portals and forbids any one group from seizing control of a portal. |
| 36 | Xander Korrida becomes the fifth Governor of Coriolis. |
| 41 | The Order of the Pariah blocks the portals in their home system Zalos, but after being pressured by the other Council members, they back down and guarantee that the Free Trader Treaty will be respected. Ships can pass through Zalos again, but are heavily escorted and not permitted to dock. Reports slip out of the system about horrible events on Zalos, but the Order has no comment on the matter, as it is an internal affair. The Council has had to accept the situation since the Order lifted the blockade. |
| 42 | Nihara Korinth becomes the sixth Governor of Coriolis. |
| 51 | The Order of the Pariah opens the Samaritan Medical Academy on Coriolis, as well as launching a poverty relief program and a sanatorium for the hyper sick adjacent to the school. |
| 52 | Jalaman Ho becomes the seventh Governor of Coriolis. |
| 58 | There are riots in the streets, started by unpatriotic groups backed by anti-republican interests. The Guard restores order, but is unable to arrest the real instigators. |
| 59 | The Judicators are formed with the aid of the Zenithian Hegemony, and go to work supported by new legislation against organized crime and anti-patriotic activity. The Popular Assembly removes Jalaman Ho as Governor through a vote of no confidence. Iria Shuliamaran becomes the eighth Governor of Coriolis. |
| 60 | The ghosts from Xene are discovered, and the Foundation makes the first formal contact with the spectres from the depths of the gas giant. The Governor orders the Guard to perform a series of purges of the Cellar, as it has become a hiding place for slummers and semi-intelligences that refuse to accept the laws of the station. Kemal Dargosian becomes the ninth Governor of Coriolis. |
| 61 | Emissary Alam from Xene arrives at Coriolis and is granted observer status on the Council. Contact with the colonies in the Taoan system is lost and the Consortium, the Colonial Agency, and the Foundation organize a rescue mission. |

# CORIOLIS STATION

Coriolis is divided into three parts, not counting the Cellar. From the top down they are the Spire, the Core, and the Ring. Each part has its own distinctive style and atmosphere, but the friendly and welcoming Coriolis residents are everywhere. The three parts are described below, from the point of view of the arriving traveler.

## THE RING

The Ring of the station is huge, and running along its whole extent is the Promenade, the bustling street of boutiques and shops that characterizes Coriolis. The Promenade is best accessed from one of the four plazas located where each of the four spokes connect to the Ring. Taking a taxi or a grav chair is an excellent way to get there, if you can pay. The Promenade is usually very crowded, making grav chairs, rickshaws, or walking the best modes of transportation.

### NEOPTRA SPACEPORT

The largest of the four commercial spaceports on Coriolis is the Neoptra, located on the Ring just below the Spice Plaza. Each of the plazas connects to one of four larger spaceports, but there are many private ports as well, especially in the Spire. The Neoptra is usually the first impression a visitor gets of Coriolis, and the current Governor has had it modernized and renovated with shining floors in white Kuan marble and beautiful bas-reliefs on the sturdy pillars that support the many balconies that make up the space port's different levels. The outer parts are still kept practical of course, strictly armanite bulkheads and riveted plating. Inside the crescent-shaped balconies that follow the arch of the outer hull is a large terminal full of small cantinas, shops, market stalls, and carts – a sort of miniature of the larger plazas. The terminal has several large exits with security checkpoints and three customs stations. Customs officers and members of the Guard keep close tabs of everyone entering or leaving the station – travel papers are scanned with tabulas and luggage is inspected. The customs station is where you pay for weapon licenses and livestock or semi-intelligences import fees, and they can be used as quarantine stations in the event of disease. There are heavily reinforced bulkheads between the customs stations and the rest of the station that can be closed in case of a threat, but they have never been used so far.

Many of Coriolis' residents work in the Neoptra port, and some even live there – beggars, courtesans, and one or two prophets. The port is also frequented by several chambalas, con artists who make their living pestering naïve travelers. The balcony at the very top of the port is called the Balustrade. Fancy ships that can't afford their own private docks use this level, which also houses a walkway with a mighty view of Kua through a sapphire glass window, like a lush, green sun in the emptiness.

#### STEVEDORE CENTRAL

Below the ground floor of the spaceport runs the maze of corridors and loading bays used for storage and distribution of imported goods, commonly known as Stevedore Central. The slightly larger bays used by the loaders who work the Net are also found here. Stevedore Central is shot through with crawlways, ladders,

and vent shafts running like ant trails below the spaceport. The stevedores who work here can find their way through these secret passages and get between the loading bays and the port above, but an outsider would become lost almost immediately.

## THE PROMENADE

The Promenade is a walkway running along the entire Ring, full of both living modules and shops. Family-run businesses are common, and many people live where they work, or close by. The Promenade itself is wide, with high ceilings, almost reaching the top of the Ring. Bridges, wires, and the occasional grav chair cross between the walls above the crowd as some of the higher levels have balconies with smaller walkways, shops and cafés. Public transportation in the Ring exists in the form of the Ring tube, a fast cablecar service. There is a tube station at each of the four plazas as well as one in the Core. The tickets to go through the Core are more expensive, so most people prefer to go half a lap around the Ring if they need to get to the other side.

The living modules on the Ring are small, rarely larger than two rooms for a big family sleeping in shifts. The living modules form a mosaic of criss-crossing stairs, balconies, balustrades and rope bridges above the Promenade, crowded with people going about their daily chores, children playing, and dogs and monkeys jumping around. Clotheslines share the airspace with beautiful fabric roofs over balconies, and the noise and chatter from the Promenade below can be heard at all hours.

## THE SPICE PLAZA

As hinted by the name, the Spice Plaza is the place for all forms of spice trade on Coriolis, but the marketplace also hosts a wide variety of fruit and vegetable vendors. The Spice Plaza offers exotic flavors from all corners of the Horizon, but especially from Kua: fresh bananas, shiny green melons, mangos, burs, hevon fruit, dried figs and dates, coconut, fresh moist cinnamon, nuts, and almonds. The tiny stalls display beautiful trays of deep red paprika, intense saffron, peppers in every color, chili powder, and cumin seeds. Foreign spice mixes from near and far are introduced into the Kuan cuisine via the Spice Plaza: Algolan kurrah, berberi mix from Lubau, smoked paprika from Sadaal, and many others. Bakeries, pastry shops, baklava carts, and honey trolleys surround the plaza on all sides. Baklava and other filo-based pastries

### MISSING CARGO

During the last few segments, cargo has gone missing from the warehouses below Stevedore Central, usually small quantities of luxuries such as fresh foods or delicacies. No one knows who the thief is, but one of the stevedore aqbars, Xiu XiCharma from Lubau, has been tasked with finding out. She has been unsuccessful so far and is considering looking for external help. The skavara Rauw, the stevedores' mascot and lucky charm, has also gone missing – is it all somehow connected?

### LOCATIONS AND SERVICES IN THE SPACEPORT

- The infirmary run by the medicurg Leio
- The "Journey's End" cantina, famous for its shish kabab
- The Free League's exchange and bank office, where birr and travel currency can be bought
- The "Oasis" courtesan and massage salon, owned by the madrigga Ahia
- An Icon chapel
- The cargo blocks, storage units for light cargo awaiting customs inspection
- Guard point 13, where captain Karou oversees spaceport security
- Giakovo's kawah trolley, with fresh ground kawah
- Customs point 1, where weapon licenses are acquired
- The shuttle service Monolith Round-trips, offering quick but expensive transport from the Balustrade



Everything can be bought for birr on The Promenade

TABLE 11.1 ENCOUNTERS IN THE SPACEPORT

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rawa | Stevedore | Sweaty | Searching | Love |
| 2 | Dafor | Guard | Scratches nose | Has a job to do | Sweet, sweet birr |
| 3 | Ibramir | Street peddler | Rolls eyes | In a hurry | A secret |
| 4 | Mirah | Traveler | Nervous | Looking for a bargain | Debt |
| 5 | Zarah | Street preacher | Angry | Preaching loudly | Salvation |
| 6 | Absalem | Merchant | Smells of arrash | Looking for an opportunity | Living true |

are the main products sold here, and even people from the wealthy Spire come here for a taste of Saba Khouri's masterful baking. Every year there is a bake-off on the plaza, the Baklava Championship, to which bakers from Kua as well as from systems farther away come to compete. Spices, syrup, and the proper amount of cloves, sourness or more exotic ingredients like stone licorice, smoked kas-myrrh, or ginger flowers are the topics of lively debate and heated arguments.

### LIVESTOCK AND PETS

At the side of the plaza you will find a few large buildings, almost like hangars, full of all sorts of cages and enclosures. This is Coriolis' famous livestock market, where large livestock auctions are held once a week. A smaller market for semi-intelligences is located on the lower levels that connect to the Kasitra freighter port. Nekatra and ekilbri are most common here but on rare occasions shipments of skavara will pass through. Yasmian's Pets is a small pet store adjacent to the livestock market. Yasmian markets just about every pet and animal companion there is, from Tersinian snuggle mice, feather snakes, Algolan dogs, and parrots to song finch, white thrush, sloi fish, and coral carp. Pet food and beautifully adorned cages and aquariums are available as well, and direct transport from the store can be arranged.

### SOUK ALESH

The station's official free trader market, the Souk Alesh, is located just off the Spice Plaza, in the outer blocks of the Ring. The Souk's warehouses and docks cover several floors, but the public face of the operation looks roughly like a large bazaar, full of brokers, so-called khabara, loudly yelling out their cargos and missions.

## THE SPRING PLAZA

The crown jewel of the Spring Plaza is the magnificent fountain at its center. The fountain was gifted to the people of Coriolis by dar Bahari, and its gentle babble lends a soothing calm to the nearby cantinas, kawah shops, and taverns. The Spring Plaza is not only a marketplace for exotic goods, but also for ideas. Poets, prophets, tarrabs, writers, and many others from the world of the arts gather here. Cafés like Osmano's, Leverte's, and Buthro's are hotspots for discussions about politics, factionary gossip, or the latest holo dramas from the Bulletin. The discussions blend with open agitation from opinion makers and chanting from prophets and preachers as well as with the latest shows and performances by acrobats, fire-eaters, or painters. When the evening watch begins and the holo sky above the plaza darkens, lanterns are lit, sugar globes are submerged in jars of colored syrup, and the grills are prepared for the evening meal. The goods marketed on the Spring Plaza are mainly of an artistic nature: paintings, sculptures, Algolan paper birds, clay hydras from Sadaal, clock birds from Dabaran, and autonomous abaci from the polytechnicians on Aiwaz mixed with miniature Algolan prayer towers, Icon mosaics from distant Eanu, prayer beads carved by the eternally patient monks in the dusty temples on Amedo, and reliquaries smuggled out from Zalos, maybe even containing the bones of one of the famous martyred holy warriors.

### ARCHAEOLOGY ALLEY

Archaeology Alley is an arc-shaped alley that connects to the Spring Plaza and is crammed full of strange and curious finds for sale – sometimes replicas, but real sugar globes and sometimes even healing scarabs or infinito cubes can be found here. It is illegal to trade in unregistered finds, but rumors

TABLE 11.2 ENCOUNTERS ON THE SPICE PLAZA

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Yosoufa | Khabara (broker) | Looking for a profit | Having a bad day | A contract |
| 2 | Melkar | Animal trader | Wrinkled | Looking for a runaway animal | Finding a lost protégé |
| 3 | Simah | Pastry chef | Proud | On a delivery | Renown |
| 4 | Nastassia | Baker | Clicks tongue | Is baking something | A win |
| 5 | Hewul | Servant | Chews lip | Carrying an important package | Obedience |
| 6 | White Eye | Ekilibri | Huggy | Looking for food | The pack |

say that robber diggers use the Alley to unload their ill-gotten gains. Portal Builder items and unidentified objects are strictly forbidden in the Alley, and judicators often pass through here to keep an eye on the operation. The Alley's many antiques dealers, bookshops, and curiosity shops close when the evening watch begins, their owners and customers continuing their debating and haggling in cafés such as Burhan's or Farid's on the Spring Plaza over the comforting purr of the hookahs.

### THE STAIRDOM

The block between the Spring Plaza and the inner bend of the Ring belongs to the artists and poets. It is a towering complex of living modules painted in bright colors with splashes of white here and there, in the fashion of the whitewashed sanctuaries on Amedo. Between the sloping roofs, porches, balconies, and ledges runs a tangled network of stairs and ladders. If you need a poet or perhaps an artist, this is where to go, but be careful not to get lost.

## THE MARKET PLAZA

The common people of Coriolis visit the Market Plaza to do their daily shopping or just to meet up with friends. From the day watch onwards, the many cantinas and taverns open their doors. Grills are lit, the shish kabab is put on rotation, and the nicer places prepare lamb, rabbit, or byrro for spit roasting. Taverns such as Ila's, Samira's, and Rayhan's are packed full already at lunchtime, so one has to be quick to get a table. Smiling old men, wrinkled ladies, and bearded wabas come early to the taverns to play tavli, shah, or other dice and board games. The plaza also houses many smokehouses, and the smell of smoked meat, fish, sausages, greens, and spices is heavy all over. The wine houses Fidon, Hemerra, and Qui-Nestera have several wine cantinas on the plaza where soothing rosé or hot chamba is served depending on the season. Fudaila's cantina in Jasmine alley is among the most popular, and its small balcony surrounded by thick, climbing jasmine is always full. The tabak isle on the plaza

TABLE 11.3 ENCOUNTERS ON THE SPRING PLAZA

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Loma | Acrobat | Full-body tattoos | Putting on a show | Fame |
| 2 | Samrat | Historian | Scratches beard | Is in doubt | Academic honesty |
| 3 | Koanah | Writer | Smells of myrrh | Doing research | The next book |
| 4 | Almaki | Poet | Intense stare | Reciting poems | Vengeance |
| 5 | Hamsha | Singer | Covered in bells | Flirts | Birr |
| 6 | Mouno | Archaeologist | Stressed | Searching | An artifact |

is the place for all things tabak-, cigar-, or hookah-related. To the connoisseur, dol-Hassan's Tabakery is the number one location, mostly thanks to their divine cherry blends.

## THE OZONE PLAZA

The market in the Ozone Plaza is dedicated to technological gizmos and gadgets, big and small. Loud bartering from the many tents and stalls mingles with the hoarse laughter from off-duty Legionnaires, the purring hookahs, and the rhythmic chinking from the sequin dresses of the belly dancers. Many visitors to the plaza are more or less openly armed, which is uncommon anywhere else on the station. The Guard avoids the Ozone Plaza and instead one will spot patrols from the Lama gang moving arrogantly about the place, distinguishable by their black-tattooed lips. A judicator or two will occasionally come down here to keep an eye on things.

The Ozone Plaza is the place to go for all your technological needs – and, despite the name, the air in the plaza is actually quite pleasant. The workshops here can make repairs to all kinds of gear, as well as make modifications. The best artisans on the station can be found on the Ozone Plaza, especially when it comes to gunsmithing. If one has the proper contacts one can even place an order with a real court appointed gunsmith. Weapons bought here cannot always be claimed right away, heavier weapons and ammunition are kept in storage in the spaceports. The buyer gets a tag with the codes to unlock a storage module and can pick up the goods on departure from the station.

In the alleys around the plaza there are several mercenary agencies, with the Black Skull being the most famous. These

### TURF WAR

A series of fires have recently plagued the Market Plaza and the nearby Promenade. The Guard has had to dispatch their fire drone almost every day. The ventilation systems are set to full effect, but everyone is coughing and the smell of smoke still lingers. The spokesperson for the plaza vendors, Hasman Erbul, has written a letter to the Governor demanding an end to the gangs' turf war, as it is widely accepted that this is the cause of the fires. Everybody knows that both the Arhama and the Goro gangs are challenging the Wark for control of the Market Plaza, but all three outfits deny having anything to do with the fires. Is there a pyromaniac on the station?

**TABLE 11.4 ENCOUNTERS ON THE MARKET PLAZA**

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Uwana | Peddler | Wrinkled | Smiling smoothly | Survival |
| 2 | Ithane | Waiter | Pleasantly perfumed | Working | Her children |
| 3 | Lippo | Waba | Twitchy | Shop-lifting | Thrills |
| 4 | Poharo | Storyteller | Toothless grin | Smoking a hookah | To entertain |
| 5 | Kam-kam | Tourist | Wide-eyed | Shopping | See the Horizon |
| 6 | Grrrah | Skavara | Angry | On the run | Freedom! |

TABLE 11.5 ENCOUNTERS ON THE OZONE PLAZA

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Shamzad | Thug | White makeup | Glaring | Status |
| 2 | Ewanje | Tattoo artist | Fluorescent tattoos | Drinking | Debt |
| 3 | Okane | Enforcer | Huge | On a job | Pride |
| 4 | Kamriza | Legionnaire | Cybernetic eye | On guard | The comrades in the Legion |
| 5 | Chikchik | Macaque | Chatters | Picking pockets | Loot |
| 6 | Yala | Smuggler | Baggy clothes | Searching | Birr |

agencies supply mercenary groups to clients in need of personnel for small security or combat missions. A few detective agencies and investigative freelancers also have offices here, such as the Under the Lotus firm, specialized in extramarital affairs and other indiscretions.

### GABRIL'S AMMO

The elderly one-eyed Legionnaire Gabril is one of the best arms traders on the plaza. Together with his friend and technician Irin and their not-so-housebroken pet macaque Bang, Gabril trades in everything from special ammunition to bespoken firearms. His most well-known creation is the Legion carbine Inferno, which has its built-in grenade launcher replaced with a compact flamethrower.

### THE BIOSCULPTORS' BLOCK

One of the blocks adjacent to the Ozone Plaza holds several famous biosculptor studios, or "slaughterhouses" as they are commonly called. Bionics and cybernetics are available here for those with the birr and the courage. Everything from cosmetic grafts to prostheses and more subtle code splicing such as micro glands, hidden compartments, night eyes, or double hearts can be arranged. The largest studio is CharibaTechne, a large building with many operating rooms, T-suites and rejuvats, as well as recovery wards for more extensive procedures. Kasma Cosmetics is the jet set studio on the block, always up to date on the latest fashion – some even say that it is Madame Kasma herself who creates the fashion.

### TATTOO ALLEY

An alley just next to the bio sculptor's block has been labeled "Tattoo alley" - not because it is the only place on the station where you can get some ink work done, but because it is the most well-known. The studios in the alley offer ink tattoos, scarifications, henna painting, or modern things like moto tattoos that move or glow. The tattoo artist Ameda from Amedo is perhaps the most popular artist in the alley. She is well traveled, speaks several languages and has mastered the skill of micro tattoos, no bigger than the edge of a fingertip.

# THE CORE

The Ring is very obviously a place mainly for commerce, but the Core houses both several important administrative functions and a rich life of culture and entertainment. The Core is also open and airy in comparison to the tight, crowded spaces of the rest of the station. The Core Plaza is located in the heart of the station, open all the way up to the lower levels of the Spire.

## THE CORE PLAZA

The Core Plaza lies at the very center of Coriolis. It is dominated by a large building that contains many of the station's administrative functions and a series of vertilanes and grav shafts that connect the Core to the Spire. The smaller businesses on the Core Plaza are cantinas, taverns, cafés, and courtesan houses, and the clientele is mainly bureaucrats and merchants. What



The Ozone Plaza

empty space there is on the plaza is not covered with market stalls as in the other plazas, but kept clear for the slow-moving clutter of bodies on their way to or from work. There are many tailors and haberdasheries in the streets around the plaza. This is where to go for the latest fashion, even for members of the upper classes in the Spire, although the very rich deal only with the tailors that do house calls. The most famous haberdasheries here are Fermahat & Sons, Yisimi's fabrics, and the Pasha's Flying Palace, which is the most expensive of them all, offering house calls at an extra fee. Many courier agencies also have their offices by the Core Plaza; both the Bulletin's own Ermes and private firms like Kifri's Courier Bureau can be found here.

## MULUKHAD

Coriolis' entertainment district is called the Mulukhad – a potpourri of shady alleys and old buildings housing restaurants, cantinas, bars, and gambling dens. The Mulukhad has everything a thrill seeking resident or visitor could possibly desire. Gambling is clearly the dominant vice, taking place in bars, gambling dens, and in the big Stadium located just next to the district. Restaurants that stand out are the Al-Qadr with its all-red interior and the Mudejar, a classier establishment for refined – and expensive – excitement.

### THE STADIUM

The oval Stadium rises above the Mulukhad almost all the way

### THE LAW OF THE LEGION

Easy access to bio sculptors, prosthetisists, tattoo artists, and guns makes the Ozone Plaza and the nearby stretch of the Promenade attract Legionnaires like moths to a flame. Legion-affiliated bars usually feature skulls or bones in their names or on their signs. The three most infamous watering holes are Mokbaran's, Igal's, and the Cranium Bar, the latter also serving as the unofficial headquarters of the faction and the place one should seek out to join the ranks of the Legionnaires. Many other mercenary agencies can be found in close proximity to these three places. The heavy Legion presence makes the Ozone Plaza a relatively safe place. The so-called "Bone Law", based on military laws and punishment, is enforced in the plaza. The Legion makes sure the peace is kept, and the Coriolis Guard never patrols here. Legally, the Bone Law actually only applies to members of the Legion, and contains some pretty archaic practices, such as the right to trial by combat, and public whipping as punishment. The harshest punishment in the Bone Law is the "promenade", in which the guilty party is simply thrown out of an airlock, but it has never been carried out on Coriolis.

TABLE 11.6 ENCOUNTERS ON THE CORE PLAZA

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dashani | Courtesan | Graceful | On a walk | Siblings |
| 2 | Mweki | Diplomat | Golden | Going somewhere | Lust |
| 3 | Aaryan | Bureaucrat | Sweaty | Is panicking | Lost tag |
| 4 | Parishad | Speculator | Fiddles with hair | Reading | A better tomorrow |
| 5 | Jahanara | Courier | Wiry | On a delivery | Family |
| 6 | Markudh | Merchant | Tanned | Haggling | Wealth |

up to the arced beams of the skeleton of the Core. The Stadium offers every type of zero-G entertainment there is: holographic obstacle courses, thermal duels, graviton ball, scooter racing, Algolan kickball, and much more. There is one main event every night during the evening watch, usually with professional contestants and intense betting. In the hangars underneath the Stadium, visitors can try out the different activities for themselves. There are a few restaurants and bars in the Stadium as well, Talah having the best reputation with its beautiful glass balconies above the scooter track.

More savage forms of entertainment are also offered at the Stadium in the form of modulation or gladiator matches. The violence is often very artistic, but still nothing for the squeamish. The crowds favorite is duels between nekatra and other wild beasts: dirhad, wildlings, azuks and other rare creatures. Humans are not allowed to fight under the same circumstances as beasts, only through modulation. Exceptions used to be made for Dabaran slave warriors pitted against the beasts, but this is not the case anymore. Slavery has also been officially banned on Dabaran.

## THE AMPHITHEATER

The artists on Coriolis who don't live and work in the Ring can be found in the district around the Amphitheater. The open, bowl-shaped theater is based on a Dabaran original and is partly made from yellow Algolan sandstone. Both modern art forms such as holo art, modulator sculptures, and proxy music and eternal classics such as dance, theater, mime, storytelling, and classical music are performed on the stage of the Amphi. The diva Chemara Kour is the artistic director and makes sure the ticket prices are kept reasonable. There are private boxes available for those with some extra birr to spend. The largest events are usually concerts with famous performers like Sani Sowal, The Lotus Flutes, or the dance troop Feather Steps.

## THE LITTLE HORIZON

The Little Horizon blocks are located along one of the Core's outer walls and are home to all new arrivals on the station, from all corners of the Horizon. The street vendors here offer exotic delicacies such as candied hysia bugs, moon fruit, or salted florineys. The architecture is also varied and foreign with Algolan pagodas and round nomad huts crammed in between angular Sadaalian houses and Miran balconies. The Little Horizon is home to the smuggling organization the Serpent, and the Syndicate gangs now and then attempt to claim the area, which often results in street fighting.

## THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CORIOLIS GUARD AND THE JUDICATORS

The headquarters of the Coriolis Guard is located in a pillar that is the center beam of the frame of the station. This is not the only office of the Guard, but it is the largest, with its administration, garages, grav elevators that run through the whole Core, and their arsenal of a few light police vehicles. The offices of the Judicators are also located here, behind thick armor-plated walls and equipped with security gates since the gang war of CC 59. The front of the judicators' section of the building is more imposing than that of the Guard's, in polished marble rather than scratched hyper plastic.

## THE BULLETIN COMPLEX

A brand new complex close to the outer wall of the Core serves as headquarters for the Bulletin. The beautiful facade



The Core

of the building is in old Miran bas-reliefs depicting famous reporters, courier vessels and the faction's spherical portal probes, easy to recognize by their four antennas. The complex contains several broadcast studios, newsrooms, offices, make-up rooms, holo effect chambers, and everything else necessary for the making of a Bulletin show. The wing facing the Core is where you will find the infobase, the hub that connects all the terminals on the station to the infonet. The public is not allowed inside the complex other than as studio audience for a select few shows such as the Wheel of Fatima or News at Dawn.

## THE DOME OF THE ICONS

The Dome of the Icons prides itself on being the largest temple in the Horizon, even if the veracity of this has been questioned. The Dome has a front made of glass from Akhandar sand from the volcanic beaches of Antmira and it is surely a breath-taking sight, stretching one hundred

### GUARD DRONES

The latest addition to the Guards' arsenal is three sensor drones on loan from the Palatena lab owned by the Foundation. They are really a sort of modified sensor buoy of the same model as those used in spaceship countermeasure dispensers, but with remote control via djinn units and holo glasses. They are armed with both Vulcan and stun weapons, and, according to rumors, the new and experimental vomit fields developed by the Foundation. The people of Coriolis hate the drones bitterly and the machines are often met with volleys of rotten fruit or garbage when they are out on patrol.

### THE MULUKHAD HORROR

There is an abandoned block in the Mulukhad. Legend has it that it all started when a boy in one of the families who lived there became possessed by something from the Dark between the Stars, an evil efrite or maybe a dybbuk. The family of the boy tried to get help from preachers and prophets but nothing worked. One day, the whole family was gone and the module they had lived in was drenched in blood. The story was spread around the neighborhood and the other families moved out of the house. More mysterious things happened after that – food and drink spoiling, children suffering from strange diseases – and eventually the whole block was deserted. Residents of the surrounding houses leave offerings to the Icons by the entrance to the block, and no one dares to linger in the nearby alleys come evening.

### POPULAR BULLETIN SHOWS

- **THE BULLETIN SHOW – The biggest morning and evening show, led by dawn hostess Nana Eliades.**
- **THE WHEEL OF FATIMA – A game show where contestants spin a prize wheel to win fancy prices such as an evening at Alkamarr's or luxury cruises in the Hamura system.**
- **NEWS AT DAWN – A news show that reports on the latest happenings in the Kua system as well as the rest of the Horizon.**
- **STREET JUDGE – Holo show about the judicator Amon Hasra solving crimes on Coriolis. Best episode: "Chrysanthemum Red".**
- **THE PLANTATION OWNER'S DAUGHTER – Drama about love and intrigue on a Kuan plantation. Best episode: "Under the Baobab".**
- **STUDIO ZHANA – A news show with investigative reporters digging for scandals and injustice, mainly in the Kua system.**
- **THE VOICE OF THE ICONS – The Church's own Icon show and debate program, hosted by the preacher Alima Souroz.**

meters into the air. The dome itself is a towering sixty meters high, also made of glass, anchored in the twice-as-high central tower with thick steel cables. From the chamber at the top of the tower, the preachers lead the faithful in prayer between the watches. The Dome is always lit by huge spotlights in a representation of the Icons' light in the dark night, and is the only exception in the otherwise perpetual semi-dusk of the Core. The open dome covers an exquisite mosaic floor where the actual shrine is located, a humble nine-sided temple in burned clay, only a few meters high, just below the central tower. The temple is covered in inscriptions and symbols, some hinting at an Iconic connection. A little to the side of the temple sits a small well called the Well of Tears, a quiet place of refuge for people in grief or bereavement. The tiled floor of the well is covered with talismans, handkerchiefs, hairpins, jewelry, and other offerings.

#### ⚙ PREACHERS AND PROPHETS

The temple grounds are full of preachers, prophets, and priests, but only five of them, including the faction's local herat Wasimah Umm, has access to the temple itself, and only at morning and evening prayers and holiday mass. All other holy activity such as prayer, meditation, sacrifice, and the like takes place in the mosaic square under the dome, usually on one's personal prayer rug or on a reed rug loaned from one of the novices. Many novices and priests wish to serve at the Dome on Coriolis as the story of "the Uplifted One" says that true believers can ascend directly to the Icons from the temple grounds.

## THE FOUNDATION'S INFOTHECA

The black, glass front of the Infotheca is the bastion of the unbelievers on Coriolis. The halls inside cannot be accessed without sanctioned business in the building, and contain every possible form of data storage – from holograms, modulates, and proxy to Miran books bound in human skin, papyrus from Dabaran, magnetic memory cubes of meteorite iron from the frozen wastes of Odacon, and much, much more. One can gaze down at all this from the high galleries at the top of the building through volcano-proof sapphire glass, and elite Legionnaries and secret security systems developed by the Foundation guard the whole complex.



The Dome of the Icons

### THE CLAY TEMPLE FROM GHOASA

The Clay Temple from Ghoasa is one of the Church of the Icons' most important relics, found on Antmira during the bloodiest months of the Portal Wars. The preacher Adhar Bakuh was a member of the expedition that found the temple and was the one who realized its importance and value. He had a local humanite clan transport the temple to the Icon City where it was left until CC 48 when it was transported to Coriolis. Through generous donations, the Church of the Icons could buy a whole block in the Core, where they had famous artists design and build the mosaic square and the dome above the temple. Because of a mishap during the transportation and reconstruction of the temple, the inscribed text on the temple walls is no longer readable. The Foundation has asked the Church several times for permission to create a replica of the original temple to decipher the text but has been denied every time.

### SCHOOLS ON CORIOLIS

- The Free League's General College
- The Legion's War Academy
- The Samaritan Medical Academy
- The Foundation's Biomedicurgical Institute
- The Judicators' Forensics Institute
- Ahlam's Courtesan Academy
- The Bulletin's Lyceum of Propaganda
- The Colonial Agency's School of Higher Education
- The Consortium School of Economics
- The Legion's Cadet School
- The Foundation's College of Engineers

#### THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY

One of the wings of the Infotheca houses the Foundation's museum of the Horizon's modern – post-Portal Wars – history. The relics gathered here are divided into three categories: Primitive Era, Arrival, and New Era. The "Primitive Era" exhibition contains things such as scrap armors from the Sarma barbarians, an almost full suit of skin from an Uharan shaman – tattooed from head to toe with the ancient wisdom of a dying people – and a sizeable collection of long rifles and other primitive weapons. Visitors to the "Arrival" exhibition will see a detailed modulate of the Zenith's transformation into Coriolis and the Net, and many other examples of Zenithian technological supremacy. The "New Era" shows pictures from all over the Horizon, but with a focus on Consortium-sponsored projects on the core worlds. The restricted sections of the museum are said to hold great riches such as a broken death clock from Hamura, a mummified Miran family, and taxidermied specimens of curious beasts and darkmorphs of unknown origin. Several failed burglary attempts have taken place here, since the museum's security level is the same as the Infotheca's.

## THE STUDENT DISTRICT

If you are looking for wild parties and daring japes, the Student district is the place to go. The district is jammed in between the academies of the factions and the gambling dens of the Mulukhad, and its tiny apartments make even the living modules of the Ring feel spacious. Peace and quiet are non-existent concepts as the student parties here run around the clock in rolling waves of intoxication, music and laughter. The taverns Wurud's and Azad's are good places to visit if you need a reasonably priced place to recover from the nightlife. The roofside Quadim restaurant with its view of the Mulukhad is somewhat more expensive, but in return, they keep the noisier students away.

## THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

The massive university district contains all the faction-run schools and academies, the Bulletin's gigantic Infotheca, and the rampant decadence of the Student district. The district has one of the larger tube stations on Coriolis – The Academy – where students crowd with ordinary people coming into the Core from the Spice Plaza located just a spoke away. The larger academies have their own student housing, usually in the form of long rows of modest buildings with many floors of student halls. A few parks are scattered across the university district.



The tube station The Academy

### GARBAL'S CURIOSITIES

In a small, anonymous square off one of the winding streets that zigzag away from the center of the Core, you just might stumble across the tiny antiques shop Garbal's Curiosities. It is almost hidden behind a café where elderly men and women slurp sweet kawah, only advertised by a tiny brass sign. The shop looks much bigger on the inside and is a veritable maze of shelves, corridors and staircases full of old books, manuscripts, unreadable tags, strange art, mounted animals from all over the Horizon and the proprietor's two huge collections of light globes and healing scarabs. Garbal is an expert on Horizon history and known in the academies and among the station's would-be historians. Questions about rare artifacts or art are sometimes directed here.

## THE GARDEN OF SEEKERS

The Garden of Seekers is an odd collection of many different miniature landscapes in a space smaller than one hectare. In the middle of the garden sits the Seeker cult's strange temple, constructed in a weird blend of all the garden's architectural styles. The landscapes of the garden are from all across the Horizon: a Dabaran oasis sits next to some steaming Kuan jungle, and a spindly marsh delta from Bahram on Sadaal shares a corner with a dry, Zalosian forest. Several places in the garden are built like small canyons, with rope bridges across seemingly bottomless ravines. There are small benches and tables for visitors to rest at scattered across the garden. All the Horizon's flowers can be smelled here, from poppy to jasmine. The noise from the Core is softened by the lush greenery and mixed with the gentle babble of small brooks, giving the garden an almost

TABLE 11.7 ENCOUNTERS IN THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jiwanna | Student | Dances sitting down | Studying | Party |
| 2 | Sarfan | Teacher | Absent-minded | Hurrying to class | Knowledge |
| 3 | Moahala | Graduate student | Sweet tooth | On a snack break | To achieve |
| 4 | Sammi | Day laborer | Smokes arrash | Relaxing | Taking it easy |
| 5 | Trehore | Activist | Stubborn | Chanting | Change |
| 6 | Feryaab | Professor | Portly | Reading | Power |

### THE MISSING STUDENTS

Every year, students go missing from the universities and academies. Most of them either drop out, find new lives or seek their happiness somewhere else in the Horizon. Some families go looking for their lost ones, but this is the exception. When the elderly waba Corriha one day strolled past the little grove between her block and University Park, she spotted a hand sticking out of the ground. The Guard and eventually the Judicators were called to the scene. When the grove was dug out, the bodies of two missing students were found – both murdered, but the Judicators won't say how. The nightlife is suddenly much quieter in the Student district. Everyone is scared and whispers to one another: Is there a killer among us?

meditative aura. The streets around the garden are far from safe however – the Guard, the gangs, and other violent types usually lie in wait for their victims here or in the surrounding blocks. Some shifty dealings take place inside the garden as well – spies and professional snitches often lurk about the shadowy green.

## THE SAMARITAN SANATORIUM

Just opposite the Infotheca's black front lies the conglomerate of blocks and buildings that have melded together into the Samaritan Sanatorium. Inside the front gates, you come to a hallway where you are supposed to state your business before you are allowed to continue. The vast courtyard of the complex is a wonderland of flowing, green hills and mosaic paths of blue and white – a place of rest and refuge. Visitors to the Sanatorium usually remark that even the air smells better here.

Elevated walkways and balconies stretching high up into the air of the Core circle the courtyard. Patients, relatives, Samaritans, and even pets mingle on the balconies that are full of laundry lines, tables and patios – not unlike the alleys of the Ring. The Samaritans live in a row of low, whitewashed houses made from Kuan clay that also function as wards and chapels in honor of the Martyr. Stairs from the courtyard lead to the open wards above as well as to the rooms for treatment and storage that exist in the deep cellar of the sanatorium – an underbelly of unknown depths.

Anyone is welcome at the Samaritan Sanatorium, regardless of status or wealth, but it is mainly poor people who are patients here as the privileged employ private physicians. There are of course exceptions – rich people afflicted with grave and disgraceful illnesses that have lost them their social status or family support are often forced to visit the Samaritans as a last resort.

# THE SPIRE

The Spire is altogether different from the rest of the station. There is more open space, more light, and less people here than in the Ring or the Core. The ceilings are higher, the ventilation systems make sure the air is fresh and dry, the holo sky is brighter here than down below, and the street lights in the narrow streets keep the shadows away. The Spire consists of some two hundred floors. The lower ones are numbered from 1 upwards, while the higher levels have fancy names like Therr, Ardha, Lunah, Afridate, or Alkamarra, which is the top floor where the restaurant with almost the same name can be found. The lower floors are usually a more or less controlled chaos of corridors and streets running between markets, recreational facilities, shopping centers and other public places. The station's commoners reach the Spire via elevators from the Core that run up to the lower floors. To get even farther up, one has to change elevators or, as the wealthy do, continue in a comfortable grav chair or palanquin through private shafts that lead upwards. A few places of interest in the Spire are described below.

## ALKAMAAR'S RESTAURANT

The restaurant at the top of the Spire is legendary across the Horizon, and foodies from every system travel here just for the tasting menu. Taking into account that it usually takes several segments to get a reservation here – unless you are a regular – one can book a table and then begin traveling to Coriolis from practically anywhere in the Horizon. The entrance to the restaurant is guarded by Alkamaar's mythical stone figures – relics of old, vaguely humanoid warriors in pale jade, red marble, and black basalt. When you walk inside, you are welcomed by the smell of spices, orchids, and other flowers mixed with the perfume of the guests and sweet, soothing incense. A real courtesan will take you



Alkamaar's restaurant

by the arm and escort you to your table and then retreat to a nearby divan to rest, only a wave away, during your visit. Through the glass armanite dome above, you can watch the green jungles of Kua far, far below. There are several menus to choose from depending on your palate – and your wallet, as everything here ranges from very expensive to ridiculously expensive. Those who cannot afford a visit can buy a ticket for the Alkamaar's lottery that draws one winner every segment. The lottery tickets can be bought in most places of gambling on Coriolis.

**REGULARS AT ALKAMAAR'S**

- Judge Nigelia Kurahan
- Ambassador Johar Quassar
- Courtesan Domina Ferex
- Merchant and Consortium factionary Ivrahim Nestera
- Technocrat Janos din Nimatallah
- Hegemonist Hiram din Hrama

## KHERIA'S ARBORETUM

The 14th floor of the Spire houses an enclosed grove full of songbirds, exotic plants, and landscapes from all over the Third Horizon. Both visitors and residents come here for a moment's peace or to remember their home planets. The arboretum is a hotspot for acrobats, tarrabs, sibyls, and all sorts of street performers.

## ABHRRA

The 96th floor is really one of a kind as it is dominated by the large, man-made Lake Abhrra. Paths and promenades follow the waterside and along the outer walls there are a few hundred luxurious two-story living modules, each with their own balconies facing the lake and a small jetty where the owners can moor their decorated lake rafts. If a day of solitary fishing is not your idea of a good time you could always take the raft over to the Abhr Minas restaurant among the palm trees on the tiny atoll in the middle of the lake.

### THE RESIDENCE OF THE EMISSARY

The Emissary from Xene lives on the Abhrra level, on a slope just by the lake. The residence is a three-room apartment in a small house where the Council has made sure the other apartments are empty.

## THE IJADRA

The Ijadra is a very popular entertainment complex located on level 12, especially among families with children. Many residents from the Core come here to enjoy holo movies, theater, exhibitions, playgrounds, cafés, or one of the restaurants in the food court.

## ARDHA, LUNAH, AND AFRIDATE

The floors from level 150 and upward contain luxurious palaces for important officials, the wealthiest merchants and high-ranking factionaries. The floors are designed to remind one of the Zenithians' ancient home and are beyond extravagant. The climate here is much more dry and cool than in the rest of the station, modeled after the stories of Al-Ardha, and the holo sky is almost twenty meters high. The residences here are usually three or four buildings erected around one or more courtyards with mosaic floors, fountains, and lush cherry trees.

## THE PALACE OF THE HEGEMONY

The otherwise dry Therr level is also home to the Hegemony's mission to Coriolis. A huge, sky blue dome surrounded by eight Icon towers in an octagonal shape crowns the white-washed palace. The geometric perfection between the dome and the octagon and the ratio between the towers and the dome demands respect from even a Dabaran architect. The towers almost reach the holo sky above. Small jungle oases with Kuan flora surround the palace and special ED fields keep temperature and humidity high. Ambassador Johar Quassar is responsible for the Hegemony's relations with Coriolis, assisted by several courtesans and cultural attachés.

## THE RESIDENCE OF THE GOVERNOR

Not far from the palace of the Hegemony lives the Governor of Coriolis, Kemal Dargosian. His beautifully designed palace surrounded by palm trees, commonly called the Seraglio, contains wide-open halls, tiled floors, and many fountains and pools. The household employs several courtesans and singers to create a pleasant setting. The garden outside features some remarkable topiary work with bushes and trees shaped in geometrical patterns. The grounds are

TABLE 11.8 ENCOUNTERS IN THE SPIRE

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Khamaani | Diplomat | Big hair | Walking | Rank |
| 2 | Lasamsen | Servant | Old-fashioned uniform | On an errand | Loyalty |
| 3 | Oenti | Ambassador | Masked | Conspiring | Personal gain |
| 4 | Qun | Courtesan | Uses hand fan | Watching | Vengeance |
| 5 | Xerxes | Rich brat | Oily hair, tanned | Mocking | Become like daddy |
| 6 | Devenah | Royal successor | Sequined clothes | Mingling | Make a difference |

circled by a low wall above which black globes hover – they are not ornamental, but rather something advanced from the technical divisions of the Consortium. The plethora of theories about the matter suggest that that they are attack drones, field generators, explosive charges, and many other things. There is a big party in the Governor's residence once per triad to which voting citizens, special dignitaries, and factionaries are invited. The lucky odd contestant on the Wheel of Fatima could also get an invitation to the party as a prize on the show.

## THE PALACE OF THE COUNCIL

On the 145th floor of the Spire you will find the Palace of the Council, a grand, star-shaped building with many wings. This is where the Council of Factions convenes to decide the future of the Horizon. Each wing can fit an entire faction's staff of bureaucrats, notaries, courtesans and servants, as well as richly decorated offices for each of the council members. At the heart of the building lies the Faction Hall, lit by nine eternity lights – artifacts from distant Amedo.

## THE SPIRE PLAZA

The Spire Plaza can be found on level 66 and is the place where the Popular Assembly gathers all voting men and women of Coriolis to advise the Council. When the Assembly is in session, the Council's private army, the Pretorian Guard, close off the plaza. The public is welcome to enjoy the stunning view of eternity through the panorama windows of the plaza anytime in between the sessions. If you wish to engage with a member of the Assembly, your best bet would be to visit the Core Plaza where they are usually found discussing politics in one of the kawah shops.

## THE DOCKS OF THE CORIOLIS GUARD

The garrison that protects the station and supervises the customs tolls has their docks in the Spire. The pilots of the Steel Hawks Flotilla serve their Nestera Hawk X-9 fighters here between missions. The Steel Hawks and the Nighthawks from the Monolith perform a joint maneuver once per year, ending with a mighty air show outside the dome of Alkamaar's.

## ISCHARA

Levels 165 through 168 are what the locals call "Consortium City". The district is really named after the third Governor of Coriolis, Moratio Ischara, who helped finish the construction of the station. The Ischara is devoted solely to Consortium companies, and the three big ones – the Bulletin, the Colonial Agency, and the Foundation – each has a huge complex here. The most noticeable building here is the leaning, rhombic tower of the Foundation, called the Tower of Letyr after the scientist Osimian din Letyr, a pioneer in the field of intelligence research. Open parks with artificial lawns, sculpture groves, and streams separate the big company buildings. Small cantinas and restaurants gather people from different companies in informal discussion. A central hub holds express elevators directly to the Core Plaza. Large parts of the Ischara are empty however, as many Consortium companies have chosen to move their headquarters closer to their production – to the Conglomerate on Kua.

## THE FOUNDATION'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

On level 164, just below the Ischara, the Foundation has collected many archaeological finds from the Horizon. The faction's xeno-archaeological institute, the wet dream of all ambitious archaeologists, is located nearby. The round

museum has a wide courtyard constructed as a neo-Zenithian interpretation of the circular ruins found on Uharu-9. Its collections contain several Portal Builder artifacts such as light globes, an opened healing scarab, and the mysterious Massara machine – an artifact constructed of what appears to be ceramic plates that slowly change in configuration. Ruins from many different places have also been imported and reconstructed here, the round Uharu-9 houses for example, as well as an old Sadaalian step pyramid and sentinel statues from Aspara. A huge zero-G aquarium holds a floating nanite cloud, supposedly a part of the Scourge of Ashes from Odacon.

# THE CELLAR

Other than the plebeians, who do maintenance on the station's life support, and the members of the Guard on purge patrols, no one visits the Cellar of Coriolis. If you have business in the Cellar, put on some protective gear and buy a gun. As the gravity down here is unstable it is good to be acquainted with zero-G. Roughly speaking, the Cellar can be divided into a higher, less decrepit part, and a lower, very worn down part. The floors of the Cellar are not named or numbered, and the only maps that exist are hand-made by the service personnel with the bitter jobs of tending to the systems down here.

### THE UPPER CELLAR

The higher floors are worn and desolate but basically in working order. They are sometimes used for docking and unloading when the Net is busy with a bulk hauler. The Guard patrols the upper levels and are responsible for repairs. The Syndicate are said to use these floors for smuggling operations. All the locations described below are in the upper cellar.

### THE LOWER CELLAR

The lower levels show a rapidly increasing degree of decay. The gravity comes and goes, and rumors say that only slummers and escaped semi-intelligences, mainly carrion-eating skavara, live here, but no one knows for sure.

## THE SEWERS

An old sewage treatment plant in the upper part of the Cellar has been converted into a massive gambling den, named simply

**LOST ARTIFACT**

The Foundation's xeno-archaeologist Dina Marrakali has returned from an expedition to Uharu-9 with a large haul of Firstcome items and maybe even some Portal Builder artifacts. While everything was being properly logged and processed, the unthinkable happened – a rectangular, white sandstone statuette disappeared. The data djinn can find no trace of a burglary, and so Dina and her archivist Chuma Hirami have become the prime suspects. They deny the accusations, but are unable to explain how the artifact has gone missing.

**THE WAY DOWN**

**The Cellar is a restricted area, but there are ways of getting down:**

- **THE GUARD'S WAY: With contacts in the Guard and some birr to grease the wheels, you can access the Cellar the official way, through the Guard's elevators.**
- **THE SYNDICATE'S WAY: With contacts in the Syndicate and either through payment or after running some errand for the faction, you might get escorted to the higher cellar through secret smuggling tunnels with a black bag over your head.**
- **THE GAMBLER'S WAY: Those who know their way around the gambling circuit or have friends in the Mulukhad should be able to obtain directions for the Sewers, the Cellar's gambling den.**
- **THE STUDENT'S WAY: Many students have visited the aqueduct of Zakara in the Cellar at some point, and most hall guards or morally ambiguous students could give up the location in exchange for birr, exam cheats, or something similar.**

**TABLE 11.9 ENCOUNTERS IN THE CELLAR**

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fero | Maintenance technician | Hums constantly | Repairing something | Vacation |
| 2 | Mako | Party animal | Strung out | Trying to get home | A nice kabab |
| 3 | Lubub | Thief | Long hair | Stealing something | Return home |
| 4 | Renaveh | Revolutionary | Red guttrah | Hiding | Justice |
| 5 | Letui | Smuggler | Fiddles with carbine | Loading cargo | Kohôl |
| 6 | Humgurrl | Nekatra | Matted fur, growls | Looking for food | Survival |



A corridor in the Cellar

"the Sewers". Its reputation speaks of high stakes and even higher takings – if you manage to win and make it out alive, you can live out your days like a pasha. The Sewers are run by the enigmatic Mida, who recently strong-armed the Free League into giving up their control of the place, something they are less than happy with. The Sewers consists of three parts: the Bazaar, Jacinto's Cantina, and the Pit, where actual gladiator matches supposedly take place.

## THE AQUEDUCT OF ZAKARA

The students of Coriolis speak of "Zakara's" in romantic terms as, traditionally, many of them ohave visited the aqueduct for romance as well as for sins of the flesh. The old aqueduct is still in operation, slowly passing water that is more or less clean. This has made the site popular with both slummers and skavara, as clean water is hard to come by in the Cellar.

# THE NET

The Net follows Coriolis like a shadow. Its spindly and seemingly fragile construction is actually the Zenith's old skeleton, nowadays supporting commerce rather than an actual ship. From afar, the Net appears as a strange jumble of light and dark shapes against the starlight. A steady stream of spaceships come and goes, and as one comes closer, the enormity of the Net becomes clear. The old "ribs" of the Zenith, metal beams several kilometers long, act as an outer perimeter, but during the 50-odd cycles since the completion of Coriolis, the Net has been rebuilt, expanding, and breaking down in different sections at the same time, which makes the borders of it all far from clear. At the intersection of the beams are hubs of docks, loading ports, and service stations. Heavy freighters bearing the logo of the Consortium rest against the beams while their precious cargo is redistributed onto smaller vessels to be taken down to Kua. Banged up free trader ships glitter like tiny pearls in the dark as the welders mend the damages from their last trip. Stevedores in exos move across the ships and the beams in a never-ending dance.

## THE PILOTS OF THE NET

To most people, the Net looks like a wild and unpredictable mess of tons of metal and explosive fuel, a disaster of epic proportions just waiting to happen. This is true, and such a disaster would surely have happened already if it weren't for the pilots who work the Net. Pilotage is an invaluable cog in the gears of commerce, and working the Net means working at the very heart of trade. The pilots have their own guild independent from any external interference. Their code calls for them to always act impartially, and their priority is always to make sure everything runs smoothly and effectively. This is how it works in theory at least, but not always in reality, although the guild is very quick to suspend members who take bribes that favor one company's traffic over others. This stern practice means that you will find plenty of ex-pilots in the shadier bars of the station, drowning their sorrows after losing what is actually one of the best-paid jobs a common worker can get.

## BARIS KHAN AND THE SHADOW TRADE

The Net is no place for business, and no money changes hands here. Everything is settled beforehand, and the Net is only a place of logistics and service. Loading and unloading, repairs and modifications – those are the activities of the Net. It is a place of workers, not of merchants in fancy dress or arrogant captains. Hard work and a sense of duty are valued here, not wealth or clan.

This, at least, is the image spread by Baris Khan, head pilot and COO of the Net. Khan is a stern but just leader. He cannot be bought and is absolutely impartial with all the factions in the Horizon. He does have an adventurous side to him however,



which he lets out by allowing shady free traders and others who desire anonymity for their business to use the Net as a meeting point. No one can of course stop one captain from sending a courier over to another ship while on the Net, but Khan takes it one step further by offering empty docks as rendezvous points for negotiations, social gatherings and sometimes even duels.

He never charges anyone for these extra services, instead being content as long as he gets to hear the story of how the meeting turned out afterwards. He operates through intermediaries, but this is actually not necessary as all the factions who use the Net also have need of such informal meetings from time to time. After Coriolis, the Net is the most important station in the Kua system. Without its efficiency, commerce in the Horizon would be significantly hampered. All the factions are very aware of this and there is a careful status quo on the Net just like on Coriolis. Even if the pilots' guild is a powerful force here, they have never had to demonstrate their full potential as all the players who rely on the Net make sure both that their own affairs are in order and that their competitors won't cause trouble.

## HOTEL HANG-SHAWA

The Hang-Shawa hotel is a block of living modules for low income earners on the Net. Via elevators and shuttles, most areas are within easy access of the hotel. The hotel is known for harboring several traveling peddlers who sell proxy tags. The hotel is in terrible condition and is run by slumlords assisted by the Kush mercenary group. The guests pay a small fee to rent a so-called coffin – a small, enclosed unit with a bed that extends from the wall, shelves, and enough space for one or two people, but it is well known that the coffins sometimes house whole families.

### KHILARA 4

The Net has many hubs. One of the smaller ones is Khilara 4, an annex for unloading and redistribution of goods from the sector of the Dancer on the Net. The person in charge is Gulzar, a Dabaran, who tries to keep the hub running with slim economic means of doing so. There are two service platforms that rotate around Khilara 4 in eccentric orbits, Ara 1 and Ara 2. Although Gulzar is the official boss, the supervisor Zobotka is really the person the stevedores and technicians look up to and treat as their leader. Zobotka is a member of the Free League and is a tough negotiator on behalf of the rights of her workers. Khilara 4 has a bad reputation and people say that the workers of the hub add to their meager salaries by dealing in contraband, either for transport to other systems or to Kua and Coriolis. Baris Khan has not sanctioned this, and if it is true, there will be consequences.

### THE SHUTTLES

**From the spaceports of Coriolis, several shuttles per day depart for the Net, the Monolith and the larger districts of the Conglomerate. The Popular Assembly and the Hegemony, who both wish to see blossoming trade between the station and the planet below, subsidize passenger tickets.**

TABLE 11.10 ENCOUNTERS ON THE NET

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fumarra | Stevedore | Mocks everyone | On a break | Having fun |
| 2 | Mouffat | Pilot | Grumpy, mumbles | Preparing for the next job | Getting a ship |
| 3 | Lamsirala | Deckhand | Inquisitive | Looking for work | Adventure |
| 4 | Yrseh | Pilot on a bender | Unwashed | Drinking | Revenge |
| 5 | Bouwoq | Smuggler | Mean stare | Loading cargo | Birr |
| 6 | Aeleni | Captain | Tall | Making repairs | The crew |

# CORIOLIS GOVERNMENT

The government of Coriolis mirrors the internal geography of the station, with the Governor, the Popular Assembly, and the Council of Factions in the Spire. In the Core below you will find Administrative Services, the Coriolis Guard, and the Judicators. The Cellar, the largest part of the station, has no government.

## THE GOVERNOR

The Governor is the ruler of Coriolis and the one who is ultimately responsible for its operations and security. The Governor has personal control of the Coriolis Guard who patrol the station and the nearby space. In the end, the Governor answers to the Council of Factions, but gets a vote on the Council in return. The Governor is elected by the Popular Assembly to serve for a term of four years. "Anyone can become Governor" is a popular idea on Coriolis, but in reality, it is only the faction-sponsored candidates that stand a chance. The Consortium's candidate is always the one who is most likely to win. Formally, the Governor is independent from the factions – if one is to believe such things.

### ⚙ GOVERNOR KEMAL DARGOSIAN

The current Governor of Coriolis, Kemal Dargosian, is a man everyone seems to have an opinion on. Some say that he is a drunk who does nothing but throw parties in the Seraglio, but he has actually done a pretty good job of keeping the Council together through the turbulent times just after the arrival of the Emissary. Everyone is in agreement that he does the Consortium's biddings, however.

## THE COUNCIL OF FACTIONS

The legally acknowledged factions in the Horizon gather in the Council of Factions on Coriolis. The purpose of the Council is, according to its by-laws, to "prevent and resolve conflict, and to develop the Horizon". Each faction has one vote, as has the Governor. The Emissary from Xene has an observer status and cannot vote. After a vote in the Council, the outcome is made public, but not how the individual factions voted. It is usually pretty easy to deduce this anyway from listening to the factions' council members' statements before and after the vote, but not always. The example of the vote on whether the Emissary should be granted observer status or not illustrates this: at least seven of the thirteen votes were needed for the motion to pass, but afterwards, eight factions spoke out in disappointment over the results. The Council usually presents a unified front however, with a smiling Governor who speaks of peace and understanding on the Bulletin shows. The Council can leave a decision to the Popular Assembly, but if they do, they have to follow the voice of the Assembly. This means that the Assembly is a tool mainly used to threaten or manipulate other factions on a specific issue, but a few insignificant matters are passed along to the Assembly each cycle so they won't feel left out.

## THE POPULAR ASSEMBLY

When the Council of Factions is in doubt about the will of the people, they can ask the help of the Popular Assembly – although in reality, this rarely happens on any important issues. The Assembly always gets a say in legislative matters, however. This makes the Assembly a double-edged sword that on the one hand can be used to legitimize the decisions of the Council, but on the other hand could have the complete opposite effect. The members of the Assembly have not been elected – they are Coriolis' 2001 taxpayers. 732 of them are wealthy individuals and the rest represent different companies or lobby groups.

## THE BUREAUCRACY

The massive bureaucracy that executes the decisions made higher up and which handles the daily affairs is a department of the government called Administrative Services. "Admin", as it is often called, is located in the center pillar of the Core and it consists of a staff of bureaucrats divided into tiers. The three at the top are the chief bureaucrats sometimes called before the Council or the Assembly to defend their department or to write new memos regarding the station's operations. Admin handles all the myriad of different licenses that exist on the station.

## THE CORIOLIS GUARD

The police force on the station is the Legion-affiliated Coriolis Guard which is responsible for both internal and external security, as well as firefighting and emergency medical transport. The Guard's most important job is to keep the streets peaceful and to sentence criminals with the proper fines and corporal punishment. Arrests are rarely made, and only when someone is to be handed over to the Judicators. The Guard despises the Judicators who they think are arrogant and authoritarian, a view shared by much of the station's general population. The situation is not made better by the fact that the Judicators can order the Guard around, but the Guard can only ask the Judicators for help.

## THE JUDICATORS

The Judicators are the criminal courts' own detectives used to investigate serious crime. All judicators are recruited from the officers' and pilots' ranks in the Monolith and then given special training in the Judicators' Forensics Institute in the Core. Judicators have far-reaching mandates: they can sentence

**TABLE 11.11 THE COUNCIL OF FACTIONS**

| REPRESENTATIVE | FACTION |
|---|---|
| Kemal Dargosian | Governor, formally independent |
| Terminos Lete | Ahlam's Temple |
| Mandragor Ho | The Draconites |
| Jesibel Niales | The Free League |
| Wasimah Umm | The Church of the Icons |
| Tiera Yriedes | The Consortium |
| Harnek Mara | The Consortium (The Bulletin) |
| Desaron Kai | The Consortium (The Colonial Agency) |
| Morwan Pasa | The Consortium (The Foundation) |
| Suhaima Taslim | The Legion |
| Sister Almas | The Order of the Pariah |
| Johar Quassar | The Zenithian Hegemony |
| The Emissary | Xene, observer |

**TABLE 11.12 GUARDS AND JUDICATORS**

| D6 | NAME | PROFESSION | CHARACTERISTICS | ACTIVITY | MOTIVATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lefner | Guard | Moustache, scarred | Looking menacing | Power |
| 2 | Menjah | Guard | Gang tattoo | Making friendly small talk | Duty |
| 3 | Kander | Inspector | Hollow-eyed | Eating | Retirement |
| 4 | Jour | Guard | Medals on the uniform | Accepting a bribe | Birr |
| 5 | Ninhe | Judicator | Tall | On the lookout | The law |
| 6 | Alexis | Judicator | Red cape | Making an arrest | The people |



Judicator Ninhe Xavor

criminals at the scene of the crime just like the Guard, but can also issue orders to both the Guard and to civilians. They are free to sentence a criminal to whatever punishment they see fit – even death, as long as they can explain themselves to the courts afterwards. They can detain, arrest, and interrogate freely, and in theory use torture. A new paradigm in interrogation techniques, based on the teachings of Ahlam, has limited the use of torture however, as the truthfulness of the confessions they produce has been questioned.

## THE COURTS

The criminal courts of Coriolis are separate from the Governor and the government. They enforce the laws created by the Council and the Assembly. In reality however, the courts are accommodating when it comes to sensitive cases, involving factionaries for example. The courts oversee the Judicators according to the idea that it is the preservation of law and order on the station that is important, not necessarily the methods.

## CRIME

Despite the efforts of the Guard and the Judicators, crime is widespread on the station. It is most noticeable around the four plazas on the Ring and in the Mulukhad, all places where the gangs of the Syndicate operate. The Guard and the Judicators try to keep a low profile here so as not to provoke confrontation unless innocents are in danger, although they have a rather wide definition of "innocent". The Cellar has no police presence whatsoever, but then again, civilized people never go down there.

### ⚙ CRIME IN THE MULUKHAD

The Adibal family, which is a member of the Syndicate, runs the gambling district on Coriolis. They cooperate with the Guard to maintain some level of order. Too much chaos would damage their lucrative betting and gambling operations. The judicators here are mainly concerned with tracking down corrupt bureaucrats and members of the Guard.

### CRIME ON THE SPICE PLAZA

The Afyana family runs this plaza through their gang Ganiyas with the Guard's silent blessing. The Judicators are in turn very active here as this is where much of the drug running on the station starts.

### CRIME ON THE SPRING PLAZA

The Spring Plaza is always nice and quiet; this is something the Syndicate family Intisaar has their gang, Izza, work very hard to achieve. The Guard is almost completely absent here, but the Judicators keep an eye on the Izza to make sure they don't get too cocky and demand too much protection money from the merchants on the plaza.

### CRIME ON THE MARKET PLAZA

The Market Plaza is far from safe, as the gang in control, the Wark, is under constant attack from the two Promenade gangs, the Arhama and the Goro. The Rafa family is trying to mediate in the conflict, but to no avail. Shootings, store fires, and other acts of retaliation are common here. The Guard has many patrols in the area, but if they cannot get the situation under control soon, the Judicators will make a move and start to clean up the mess.

### CRIME ON THE OZONE PLAZA

The Legion runs the Ozone Plaza. The Birbasil family keeps a presence here through the black-lipped Lama gang, sure, but they cooperate with the Legionnaires and demand no protection fees from the merchants, instead focusing on weapons and technology smuggling. The Judicators stay away as well unless asked for by the Legion.

### CRIME IN THE CELLAR

The Cellar is only visited by the Guard when they are on one of their purges, rounding up slummers and semi-intelligences for deportation to labor camps of Kua. Many avoid this fate by hiding in the deep part of the station however. The Legion made a proposition to the Council to nerve gas the entire Cellar now and then to be rid of the problem, but the suggestion was leaked to the Assembly and caused an outrage. It was likely the Syndicate who leaked the documents as they use the Cellar for smuggling and secret storage. Every now and then, honest people also need the docks and hangars of the Cellar when the traffic is too heavy out on the Net.

### PRISONS

There are no actual prisons on Coriolis, only a central jail in the headquarters of the Coriolis Guard and smaller detention centers in the Guard stations of "hot" areas. Violent maniacs are given to the Samaritan Sanatorium where they are supposedly locked up in tiny cells on the lower levels.

### GUARD STATIONS

**The Guard stations are the small, local police offices commonly called "karkolu" kept by the Guard in the Core and Ring of the station. They are often run-down, with cracked facades, and ill kept by the tired members of the Guard. One officer with a handful of grunts to do the paperwork normally runs a station. The stations usually have a weapons cabinet and a small drunk tank.**

# IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT CORIOLIS

If you are new to the station, Coriolis will offer plenty of sights and activities, but there are a few things all new arrivals should know.

### BIRR AND CASH

Monetary transactions on Coriolis are usually handled electronically, by using tags, although smaller payments can of course be made in cash. It is wise to have two tags: one for information (licenses, addresses, insurances, medical records, etc.) and one for your money. A transactor is a safer medium if you wish to keep everything in one place as it is locked to your biocode – ordinary tags are only protected by a numeric code.

### THE INFO TERMINALS

The info terminals on Coriolis supply people on the station with all sorts of useful information, and they are veritable gold mines to a data spider. All information on the infonet will sooner or later leak out, even private messages from forums and password protected areas. The factions' communications use the same network but generally have stronger encryption. The station's security and defense systems run on a separate encrypted network that can only be accessed by the terminals inside Administrative Services, the headquarters of the Guard, and a few other places. Attempts to get at this information are criminal acts and will trigger swift reprisal from the Judicators.



### WORK

Anyone is free to come and work on Coriolis, but to gain access to basic health care you need to purchase a work permit. These are supplied by Administrative Services in the Core at a cost of 100 birr per CC.

### BUSINESS

There are no mandatory taxes on Coriolis, but if you wish to start a business, you need to pay for a business license. The license must be renewed every cycle, and the cost depends on the type of your business.

### HOUSING

If you intend to stay on the station for a longer period of time, renting a room or a module in a family-run boarding house would be a good idea. As the small businesses generally cannot afford any holo or modulate advertising, they can be tricky to find compared to regular hotels. Staying in a hotel for more than a few days will be very expensive however, unless you choose one of the cheap coffin-style hotels common in the spaceports. Buying your own living module is expensive, but a very good investment.

### LAW AND ORDER

The laws of the station is enforced by the Coriolis Guard who answers to the Governor. For serious crimes, there is a special division, the Judicators, who work directly under the criminal courts. Both the Guard and the Judicators are mandated to sentence criminals at the scene for a number of crimes. The Guard can order corporal punishments such as whippings or public humiliation. The Judicators can order public mutilations and also sentence someone to death, if they can justify it. Incarceration on the station is always short and reserved for cases of public intoxication or lunacy. Longer sentences are served in forced labor camps on Kua. Fines are common, often in addition to other punishment. Suicide is a crime that leads to confiscation of all assets to prevent people from indebting themselves and then committing suicide to save their families from repossession.

### HEALTH CARE

Through the work permit you have access to several private medical facilities on the station. There are usually block doctors in the

larger residential areas. Those without a work permit can visit the Samaritan Sanatorium and its adjacent hospital.

### SPIRITUALITY

Icon chapels can be found everywhere across the station and the preachers there are at your service in exchange for some small gift. The Church of the Icons can also help you in their Dome in the Core, but reserve more extensive aid for their members. Membership is free, however.

### TRANSPORTATION

Most people in the center of the station use the Ring tube for longer stretches of transportation. The tube runs around the Ring and into the Core through each of the four spokes. There are five tube stations, one on each of the Ring plazas, and one in the Core. Hover taxis are more expensive but can take you anywhere in the Core, on the Ring or up to the Spire, via the grav shafts. Private vehicles require their owners to purchase expensive vehicle licenses. Bikes, rickshaws, and palanquins are license-free, but ground loaders, grav chairs, and grav craft are not. Crawlers are only allowed on the station for sanitation and transport companies, and for the Guard and the Judicators.

### WEAPON LAWS AND SELF-DEFENSE

All weapons require licenses that cost the same amount as the weapon itself, per year. Heavier weaponry and weapon systems are not allowed on the station. Persons convicted of violent crimes cannot purchase weapon licenses. The self-defense laws of the station state that everyone has the right to defend themselves and their property from an attack, but that the defensive violence should be proportionate to the threat. It is rare for someone to be found guilty of excessive use of force however, unless the person used an illegal weapon.

### SIGHTS

Coriolis is a wondrous sight in its own right, but a visit to the Dome of the Icons is recommended if you wish to experience something out of the ordinary. The Foundation's Museum of History and the Spire Plaza are must-sees. Careful advanced planning could also land you a reservation to Alkamaar's.

### HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS

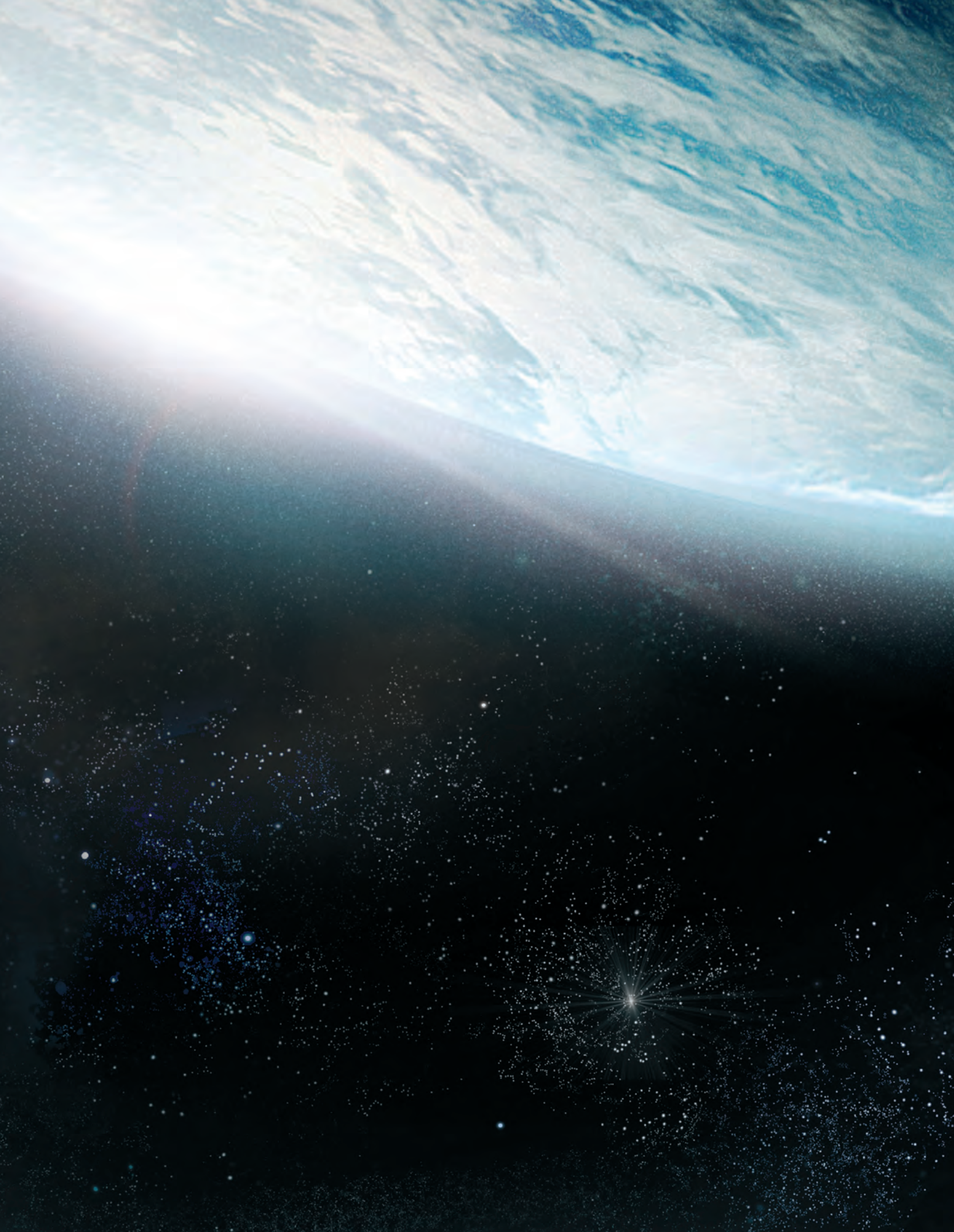
There are three major holidays on Coriolis: the Founding, the Cyclade, and the Pilgrimaria. The Founding is a celebration of



the construction of the station, the establishing of the office of the Governor, and the formation of the Council of Factions. The celebrations are station-wide with food, music, and dancing. In the evening, there is a remembrance ceremony on the Spire Plaza for those who have died defending the station, members of the GuardS and the Judicators, as well as Governors and civilians. The Cyclade is the celebration of the new cycle and contains a variety of events and competitions. The parties are even bigger than during the Founding and the night traditionally ends with a huge concert in the Core. An informal tradition for many is to party all the way around the Ring during the day and then end the night in the Core. The Pilgrimaria is a calmer holiday. The day should be devoted to prayer and reflection. The queues for the Dome grow long already during the night watch of the day before. Processions carrying Icon statues pass along the Promenade with much pomp during the day. The day usually ends with a big dinner for family and friends.

### HOW TO BLEND IN ON CORIOLIS

- Support the Governor, the Council of Factions and the will of the people.
- Accept diversity, and understand that through this, others will accept you.
- Praise the Icons and give proper sacrifice before important decisions and as thanks for a blessed life. Let your actions reflect the Icon calendar.
- Participate in holidays and festivals.
- Never speak well of Dabaran, Mira, or any other place falsely purporting to be the center of the Horizon.





## CHAPTER 12

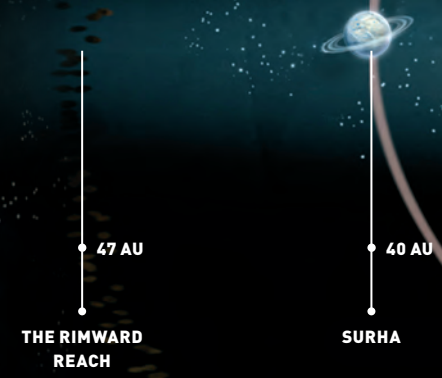
# THE KUA SYSTEM

*Finally to Kua fair, to starlit ruins drawn, to pagan rites and monoliths, the People of the Dawn. The captain, pointing, said: "Press on!" to sleeping children's' promised lands, the People of the Dawn.*

**THE LONG NIGHT** – Salarad Din Hrama

Kua is the obvious hub of the Third Horizon. The system has an invaluable strategic position and is home to the space station Coriolis and the rulers of mankind. But Kua is more than that. This chapter will describe the different planets and regions of the system, from the jungle world that shares its name with the star itself to the emptiness of the Rimward Reach.

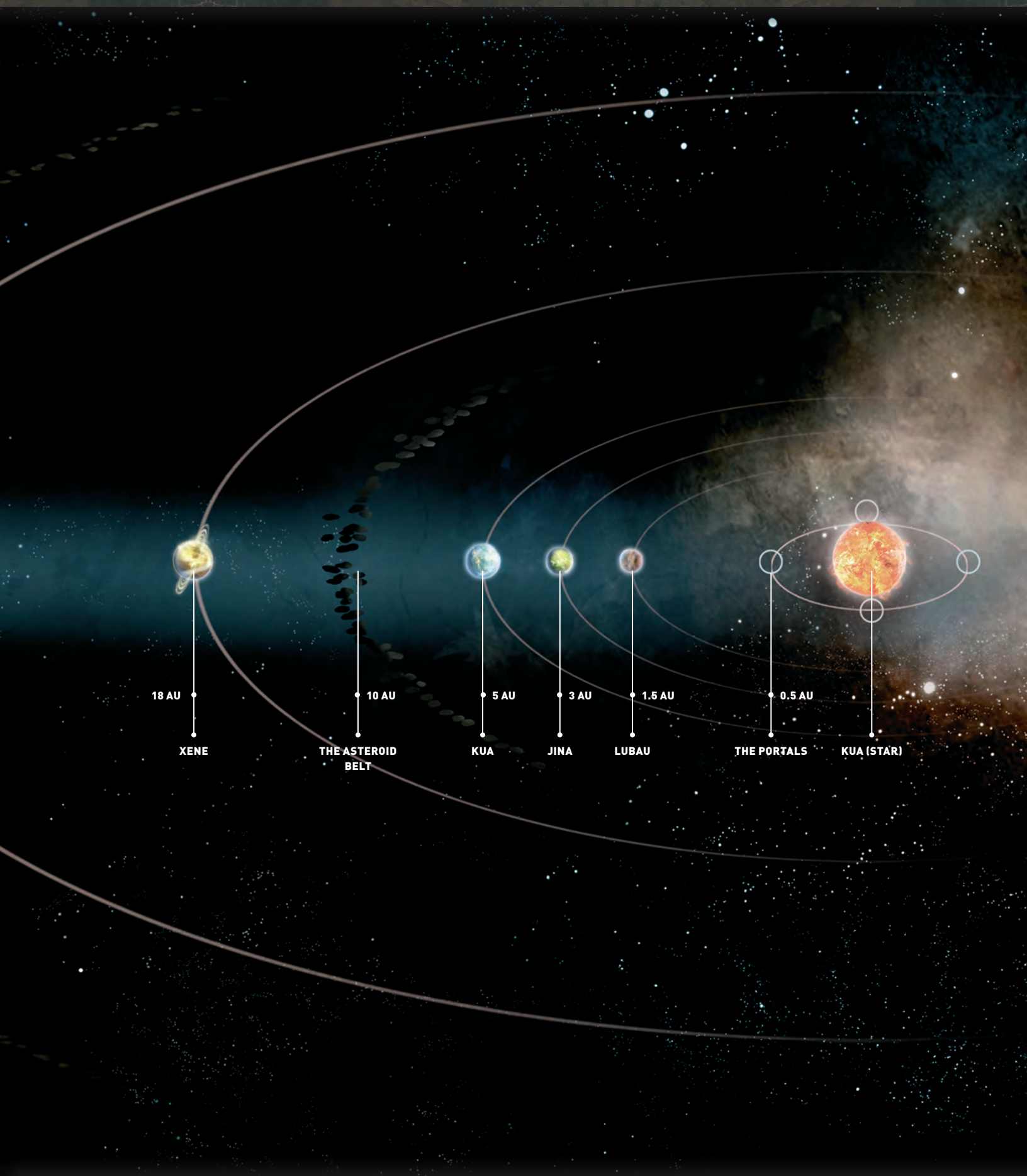
**THE KUA SYSTEM** is without a doubt the most important system of all. The Coriolis station is the seat of political power, and the Zenithian culture is molded in the palaces on Kua below, slowly spreading to and dominating the rest of the Horizon. The system is also a miniature version of the Horizon as a whole. Under the surface, it is rife with conflict – between Zenithian landowners and Firstcome workers on Kua, or between the struggling prospector clans and the traditional nomads in the Rimward Reach. Spies, assassins, and agents from every faction gather in the system. Coriolis and the Consortium are the dominant players in the system, but their authority is challenged by everything from tiny smuggler gangs to whole regions, such as the independent Rimward Reach that is growing stronger day by day.




### THE PLANETS OF KUA

**This chapter will detail the most important locations in the Kua system. Starting from the star and counting outwards, the planets of Kua are:**

- **LUBAU – The desert world closest to the star.**
- **JINA – A hostile world with only one small colony.**
- **KUA – The green planet that takes its name from the star.**
- **THE ASTEROID BELT – Worked by prospectors.**
- **XENE – A gas giant in the depths of which the Emissaries are supposed to have originated.**
- **SURHA – An ice planet that smugglers and pirates call home.**
- **THE RIMWARD REACH – Inhabited by free-minded pilgrims and entrepreneurs.**


18 AU
XENE
10 AU
THE ASTEROID BELT
5 AU
KUA
3 AU
JINA
1.5 AU
LUBAU
0.5 AU
THE PORTALS
KUA (STAR)

# LUBAU

Lubau is a planet full of raw and untamed natural power. From the boiling infernos of the southern hemispheres where gigantic refineries on tracks extract molten ore directly from the ground and the Naar Wind can disintegrate a gold-plated reflective exo in a matter of minutes, to the dry deserts of the north full of green oases, wandering nomads, and rumored Portal Builder ruins hidden under the sand, to the smog-filled skies of the plastic metropolis Mehrabi - Lubau has everything a curious visitor could wish for.

## A MYSTERIOUS WORLD

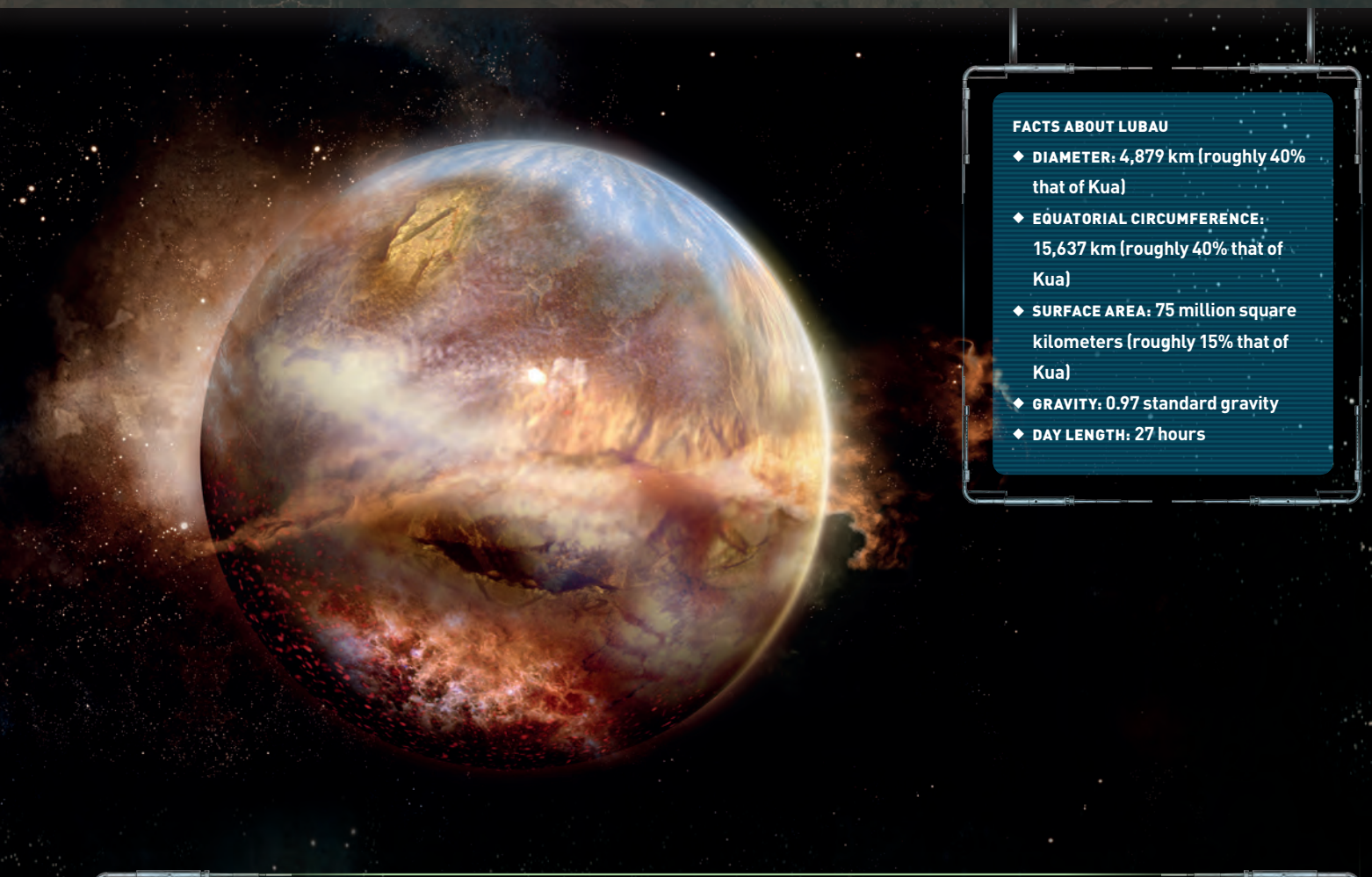
Lubau is the planet closest to the star, giving it a good strategic position near the portals, but the planet is important for many more reasons than its location. The very first thing the starfarers noticed when they arrived at Lubau was that the axial tilt of the planet was 43 degrees and that the same side was always facing the sun. This means that the planet is without seasons and that the variations in temperature between the hemispheres are enormous. Current science says that this is due to an earlier collision with another planetary body that is now missing.

Another quirk that carries practical implications is that the magnetosphere of the planet is slight, but very strong. This explains why the only space station in orbit, Kadcidil ("the eye of the sun" in local dialects), can remain so "close" to the surface and always stay on the nightside. This is also the reason why there are no communications satellites above Lubau. Yet another mystery is that Lubau, despite its small size, has roughly the same gravitational pull as Kua. The astronics of the Foundation have no explanation for this, but it could be connected to the many problems encountered by geochemists here; despite all their advanced technology, they have a hard time getting more than shallow readings from the planet's surface.

## NIGHT AND DAY

The two hemispheres are completely different. The temperature in the hottest areas of the southern hemisphere can reach well over 600 degrees Celsius during the day, while the northern half of the planet has more normal temperatures of between 50 and 100 degrees Celsius. There is no naturally occurring life in the southern hemisphere whatsoever, only traveling ore refineries on giant tracks or anti-grav runners that gather molten ore from the ground. The refineries are isolated, peculiar communities that foster a hard and bleak population. The north has a small belt where natural life exists in the form of a few types of resilient steppe grass, the slow-moving dromedons and the feral dirhad. Sandstone fossils found in the northern desert also indicate that the planet at some point had both forests and oceans. Many Foundation chemists have written their theses about the history of Lubau, but no one has been able to present a solid theory that accounts for the planet's oddities yet.

The northern belt is divided into three provinces: Kerahana, Tersin and Nihar. Firstcome nomads wandering across the wastes between the oases originally inhabited these areas. Zenithian settlers later colonized the belt, especially the Kerahana province, founding what would later become the Mehrabi metropolis. Farthest to the north, where the sun never shines, there are massive glaciers. A handful of mining corporations come here to mine ice for the fusion reactors of the spaceships that visit Kadcidil.



**FACTS ABOUT LUBAU**

- **DIAMETER:** 4,879 km (roughly 40% that of Kua)
- **EQUATORIAL CIRCUMFERENCE:** 15,637 km (roughly 40% that of Kua)
- **SURFACE AREA:** 75 million square kilometers (roughly 15% that of Kua)
- **GRAVITY:** 0.97 standard gravity
- **DAY LENGTH:** 27 hours

## NOMADS AND FACTIONARIES

The indigenous people of Lubau consist of many different nomadic tribes, the two largest being the Beri and the Xinghur. The nomads live on the steppes of the northern hemisphere, although many of them have settled permanently around the new city of Mehrabi.

Mehrabi is the heart of the planet's petroleum and petrochemical industry and the place where the factions have the most power. Both Mehrabi and the city of Nihari are formally under the protection of the Consortium, while Tersin and the oasis settlements in the north are independent communities. The two largest refineries, Horizon and Terminator, are free from faction involvement and run as family cooperatives.

The Icon faith is generally very strong here, with some refineries being almost theocracies. The Free League and the Colonial Agency both own a couple of smaller refineries.

### THE SHARIFS

The nomad settlements traditionally appoint so-called sharifs to keep the peace, but with mandates only in the community or even within a single clan. There is practically no gun control among the nomads, but theft is punished severely. The refineries tend to keep small militias or hire sharifs to uphold the laws of the rulers – often draconically.

## THE FAITHFUL

The population of Lubau is very devout, but practice a version of the Icon faith in which local myths related to the climate, the sun, and the desert play an important part. The Icons are often pictured differently here, especially the Judge. Around the Mahanji oasis, the Judge is revered as Ulung, the stone dragon, and the Faceless One is almost always Zahdak, the black dragon, Ulung's opposite. Several pyromaniac cults thrive in the south, praising heat and fire in a heathen belief that this is the true aspect of the Judge.

# JINA

Jina is the Kua system's second planet counting from the star. The route between the portals and both the planet Kua and Coriolis pass by Jina, but few ships ever stop here. The planet's industry is not big enough to attract traders or transports. There are no spaceships permanently stationed in the settlement of Aram's Ravine either. The Colonial Agency keeps a few ground vehicles, but nothing that can leave the planet. To contact the outside world, the inhabitants have to rely on free traders or other ships which come to the planet to visit the Cala Duriha, a luxury space station on Jina's moon.

**JINA HAS FEW** qualities that make it worth a visit and many qualities that make you want to avoid it – acidified wastelands, frozen poles, and pounding heat over eroded highlands and dried up oceans. There is water below the planet's surface and a few lakes and rivers just north and south of the equator. The poisonous air means that primarily only fungi, bacteria, and a few species of lichen can live here. There is some limited insect life underground and in deep crevices, of which the sturdiest example is a butterfly that in its larval form is well adapted to the climate, but dies shortly after transforming. Apart from the colony Aram's Ravine, intelligent life on the planet is limited to a few tribes of odd acid-resistant barbarians. They could possibly be humanites, but this has not been thoroughly researched. Evidence against the humanite theory includes the fact that no traces of early Firstcome ruins that could have belonged to their masters have been found on Jina, which is common in other places with a humanite population.

## ARAM'S RAVINE

Aram's Ravine is the only colony on Jina, located near the Lamka plateau north of the equator, where a natural body of water is present. The colony is the hub for everyone working the claims along the plateau's fault line or the salt pits in the Desera delta. Aram's Ravine started out as just one of the hundreds of prospecting endeavors that the Colonial Agency started in the Kua system. Like the majority of those projects, Aram's Ravine turned out to be a disappointment – the bauxite findings were bigger on other planets and Jina's toxic air made even small-scale mining expensive. The colonists that remained in Aram's did so against their better judgment, clinging to a desperate hope that the place would somehow deliver what they had been promised.

The ravine is steadily growing, and the rapid erosion has turned the colony into a pillar city full of columns formed of layers of tougher rock upon which the remaining buildings sit. Many houses have been lost over the years, having slid off the pillars and into the darkness below. Some people live down in the actual ravine itself, the bulk of them miners, but rumors say that some among these slummers seem remarkably unharmed by the acidic atmosphere, something attributed to supposed dealings with the wild barbarians that live on the other side of the plateau. The ravine dwellers are growing in numbers, mainly because the ore and salt mining operations work their people until they break, after which the unlucky survivors have nowhere else to go but down below. "Sooner or later, you'll end up in the ravine" as the saying goes, which is doubly true as the ravine also functions as the colony's only burial site.



**FACTS ABOUT JINA**

- **DIAMETER:** 6,790 km (roughly 50% that of Kua)
- **EQUATORIAL CIRCUMFERENCE:** 21,321 km (roughly 50% that of Kua)
- **SURFACE AREA:** 145 million square kilometers (roughly 28% that of Kua)
- **GRAVITY:** 0.37 standard gravity
- **DAY LENGTH:** 20 hours

## ACID STORMS

The acid storms that appear so colorful and majestic from the halls of the Cala Duriha are a lethal threat down on the planet's surface. They are caused by unique weather phenomena that concentrate the acids in the air to dangerous levels. In extreme cases, the acidity can be so strong that it immediately causes chemical burns to unprotected skin. An unfiltered breath during one such storm could be fatal, as the sensitivity of the membranes in the lungs is much higher than that of the skin. How the storms are created is poorly understood. Hand-cranked sirens in Aram's Ravine warn the inhabitants of the coming danger and the streets are quickly empty, even though everybody knows that very few storms are dangerous enough to wound or kill someone in protective gear. People outside of Aram's are warned by crackling messages over the Agency's communicators. When the warning comes, one should quickly take cover underground, inside vehicles or in survival tents.

**CALA DURIHA**

The moon Cala Duriha has blossomed thanks to its strategic location and the fact that Coriolis and the Council have become key players in the politics of the Horizon. The station's wide domes and panoramic windows make it look like a water lily on the surface of the moon, with its heart burrowed deep inside the rock-like roots. The station started out as a dirty mining colony, and exactly how it has been able to transform itself into a luxury resort is debated both in the free trader cantinas out in the Rimward Reach and in the halls of power on Coriolis.

# KUA

Kua is the largest planet in the system, and an important seat of power because of the mysterious Monolith, home to the Zenithian Hegemony. Kua is a planet full of contrasts, with the decadent members of the Hegemony living in affluence in the Monolith while the lives of the Firstcome plantation workers are hard and short, full of bitter toil in the relentless monsoon rain. The palaces of the Monolith, the gleaming spires of the factory complexes, and the moldy river barges are all locations full of intrigue and conflict, but also possibilities, which only strengthen Kua's role as one of the leading planets in the Horizon.

**BEFORE THE ARRIVAL** of the Zenithian arkship, Kua was a backwater planet. None of the groups that later would become factions had their bases here. The native Sogoi and other Firstcome peoples were the only inhabitants of the green jungle world. A few expeditions from Dabaran and Algol had attempted to examine the gigantic stone pillar that stretched all the way up through the clouds and had founded some smaller settlements, but overall, the dangers of the dark jungles were too great for the planet to be of any interest for large-scale investments.

## THE FIRSTCOME

The Firstcome on Kua are almost exclusively different nomadic peoples that live in the jungles around the equator. The most well-known group is the Sogoi, a proud tribe of warriors and trackers. The Sogoi are the group that the Zenithians and their allies exploit the hardest on the plantations, and they are the majority group in the Conglomerate slums.

## THE ZENITHIANS

The arrival of the Zenith changed the fate of Kua forever. The "empty" planet was deemed a possible home for the sleeping colonists. What happened next is history. A quick and well-planned mutiny, led by what would later become the Draconites, divided the crew. The different groups that formed in the chaos were all given reasonable materials and technology to found colonies of their own, but the Quassars, the captain's family, made sure the best ships and resources stayed with them. The Quassars led the group known today as the Zenithian Hegemony down to the planet below the Zenith, to a place on the equator where a curious black monolith rose from the jungle. Through silver-tongued negotiation and superior firepower, they quickly subdued the Algolan trade colony Sheva that was constructed around the base of the column. The Algolan colonists were hired as agents for the Zenithians. The city that began to grow around the black obelisk attracted fortune seekers and colonists from all across the Horizon, and eventually evolved into a giant amalgamation of new and old buildings, quickly losing its original name and becoming known only as "the Conglomerate".

## THE JUNGLE

"The jungle is Kua, and Kua is the jungle" is a Sogoi saying that sums up the general view of Kua in the Horizon: heat, damp, rain, and gigantic trees are what make up the jungles that cover most of the planet. The jungles are inhabited by wild beasts, crazed Firstcome tribes and, if the holodramas are to be believed, mighty Portal Builder relics. The immensely popular Bulletin series, The Plantation Owner's Daughter, is set on Kua, and this is usually where most people's knowledge of the planet ends. Life deep in the



**FACTS ABOUT KUA**

- **DIAMETER:** 12,578 km
- **EQUATORIAL CIRCUMFERENCE:** 39,495 km
- **SURFACE AREA:** 510 million square kilometers
- **GRAVITY:** 1 standard gravity
- **DAY LENGTH:** 26 hours
- **SIDEREAL YEAR:** 336 days
- **AXIAL TILT:** 3 degrees

jungles is a completely different world from the city life in the Conglomerate or elsewhere. Every day is a struggle against the wild forces of nature in the form of heavy rains, monsoon storms, and flash floods, as well as more slowly eroding effects such as damp, rust, mold, and the diseases that thrive in the humid climate. But the jungles can also be benevolent, with their rich supply of fruits, lumber, and other raw materials.

**EKILIBRI**

Ekilibri are small, lemur-like semi-intelligences that can be trained to work on plantations. They are indigenous to the planet and roamed wild in the jungles before the Sogoi began training them. Some zoologists say that the ekilibri are much smarter than they let on, but the slummers who have seen the little creatures rummage through the Conglomerate's garbage piles know that scientists can't be trusted. A rare variant is the silver furred ekilibri who are popular pets because of their beauty and docility. Silver furred ekilibri are considered a status symbol both on Coriolis and in the Monolith.

**THE SOGOI**

**The Sogoi are a proud people who view themselves as the true heirs to Kua. Their stories describe how they turned their back on the stars to lead a simple life in the jungles, and they regard their way of life as the opposite of the hubris of the arrogant Zenithians.**

**REBELS AND MERCENARIES**

Nature is not the only danger in the jungles. Many of society's outcasts have banded together and live as raiders or rebels here. They can be freedom fighters from the slummers' movement in the Conglomerate or Syndicate mercenaries guarding opor factories. Either way, running into them will most likely end in death or imprisonment. The exceptions are some of the rebel groups that fight for the rights of the plebeians who live around the Monolith. The 3rd Popular Brigade under general Zasra Namoul targets only the corporations, mainly their enemies in the Nestera defense forces led by Colonel Jamina Abram.

# THE MONOLITH

No one knows who built the Monolith, or why. The most common theory is that the cryptic Portal Builders constructed the gargantuan pylon as a monument to the civilization they once spread across the Horizon. Despite its unknown origins, it is hard to deny that the strange artifact is among the most impressive sights in the Horizon, and as such, it has become a symbol of the pride the Zenithians place in their own civilization.

The awe-inspiring glory of the Monolith made it the obvious choice of location for the Quassar family and their followers when they left the Zenith six decades ago. After centuries of cryo dreams, the Zenithian colonists longed for a place to call home. The primordial stone reaching for the sky surrounded by an air of might and stability was perfect. That the Firstcome tribes in the area treated the Monolith with superstitious respect only made it an even better place to settle – if the Zenithians could colonize the house of the gods of old, who could possibly question their right to power? Since then, the Monolith has been the symbol of Zenithian civilization, Kua's economic expansion and the new order introduced by the colonists from beyond the stars. If Coriolis, constructed from the remains of the Zenith, is the political focal point of the Horizon, then the Monolith is the undisputable citadel of the Zenithian way of life.

## THE HOUSE GUARDS

The most visible military presence in the Monolith is the house guards of the bigger families in the Cabinet of Thousands. Every family has their own guard and places great pride in presenting themselves as true patrons of Zenithian culture and power. This is expressed through the house guards' colorful uniforms and ostentatious ceremonies – a source of much pride and joy to the Zenithians themselves, but it is all a bit much to an outsider. Conglomerate slang for the house guards is "peacock troops".

### ⚙ PEACOCK TROOPS

Quassar's Janissaries are of course the house guard with the proudest lineage, supposedly descended from military traditions of long lost Al-Ardha. The Janissaries guard the Palace of the Hegemony and view themselves as the crown jewels of Zenithian supremacy. This has resulted in more than one bloody duel between the Janissaries and members of other regiments. Din Hrama's fearsome 1st Sogoi Battalion are among the more exotic of the house guards, demanding both fear and respect wherever they show up with their vivid feather uniforms and antique long rifles. The Arianites' Seraphim Guard are equipped with grav belts and old fashioned sail wings, without question giving them the most spectacular entrance when they dive through the clouds in perfect formation.

### GEOGRAPHY OF THE MONOLITH

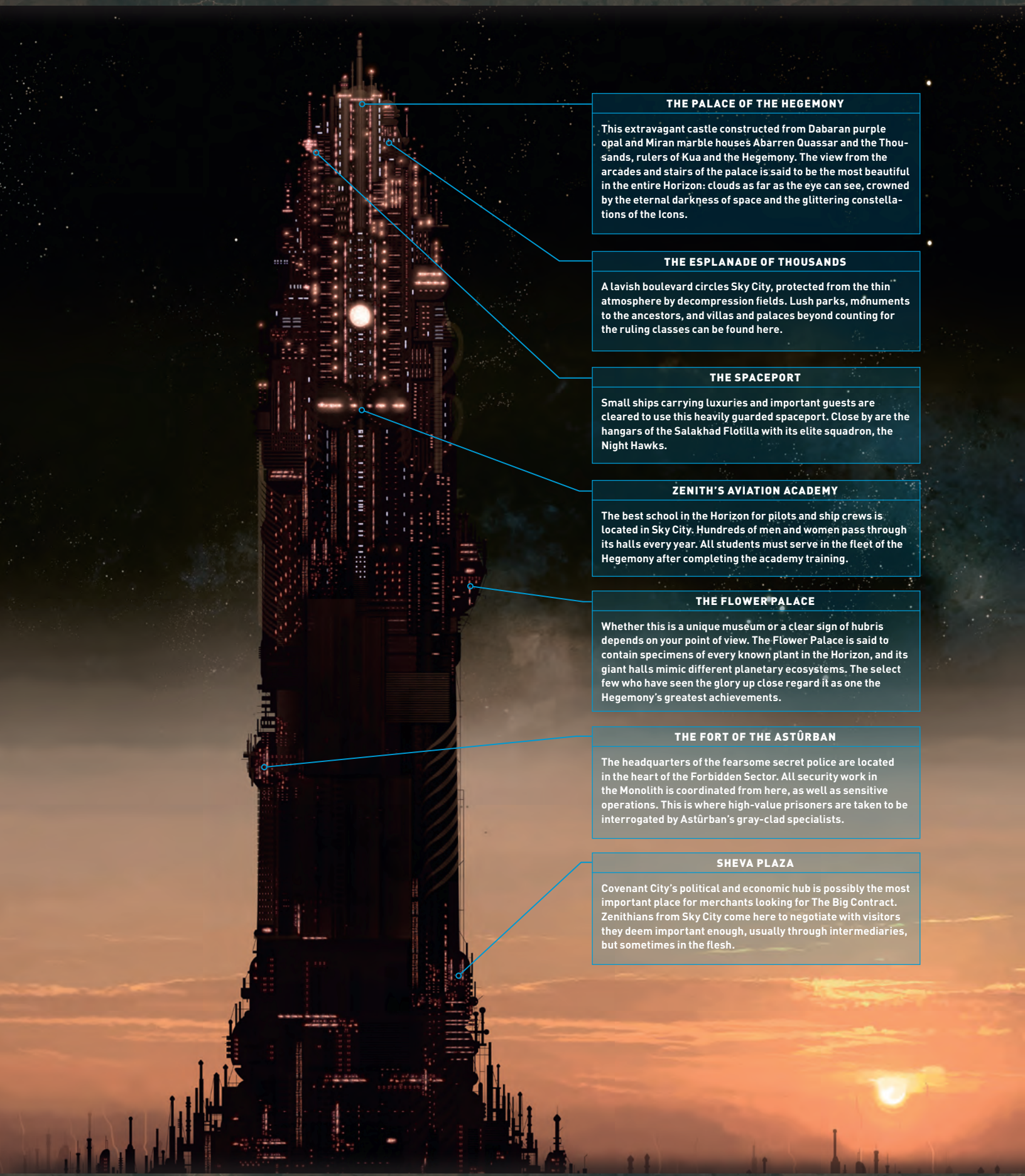
The Monolith is almost unbelievably large. From base to top it reaches a little over 4,000 meters into the air, which makes it the largest known building in the Third Horizon. If you are standing by the base or in the Conglomerate, the top is sometimes lost in the clouds, and it is not hard to understand why some say that the towering artifact is the gate to the Icons' promised lands.

The Monolith can be divided into three parts:

- **COVENANT CITY**, climbing out of the Conglomerate and surrounding the base of the artifact. Visitors from near and far gather here to sign important deals, negotiate with the Zenithian families, or to apply for permits to travel further up the Monolith. Famous locations here include the Covenant ring, full of hotels and restaurants, the Hanging Bazaar with all its exotic goods, and the Wall of the Icons, a holy site covered in mysterious inscriptions.
- **THE FORBIDDEN SECTOR,** the area between the top of Covenant City and the lower levels of Sky City. This section contains only a few smaller buildings, a much publicized excavation and the fort of the Astûrban.
- **SKY CITY,** home to the Zenithian elite. A place of palaces, gilded colonnades, and exotic parks. The seat of Abarren Quassar and the Cabinet of Thousands.

## THE CONGLOMERATE

Most people see the Conglomerate as an endless city covering most of Kua's equator, but this is not entirely true. All the different districts, factory islands, and slums combined do



### THE PALACE OF THE HEGEMONY

This extravagant castle constructed from Dabaran purple opal and Miran marble houses Abarren Quassar and the Thousands, rulers of Kua and the Hegemony. The view from the arcades and stairs of the palace is said to be the most beautiful in the entire Horizon: clouds as far as the eye can see, crowned by the eternal darkness of space and the glittering constellations of the Icons.

### THE ESPLANADE OF THOUSANDS

A lavish boulevard circles Sky City, protected from the thin atmosphere by decompression fields. Lush parks, monuments to the ancestors, and villas and palaces beyond counting for the ruling classes can be found here.

### THE SPACEPORT

Small ships carrying luxuries and important guests are cleared to use this heavily guarded spaceport. Close by are the hangars of the Salakhad Flotilla with its elite squadron, the Night Hawks.

### ZENITH'S AVIATION ACADEMY

The best school in the Horizon for pilots and ship crews is located in Sky City. Hundreds of men and women pass through its halls every year. All students must serve in the fleet of the Hegemony after completing the academy training.

### THE FLOWER PALACE

Whether this is a unique museum or a clear sign of hubris depends on your point of view. The Flower Palace is said to contain specimens of every known plant in the Horizon, and its giant halls mimic different planetary ecosystems. The select few who have seen the glory up close regard it as one the Hegemony's greatest achievements.

### THE FORT OF THE ASTÛRBAN

The headquarters of the fearsome secret police are located in the heart of the Forbidden Sector. All security work in the Monolith is coordinated from here, as well as sensitive operations. This is where high-value prisoners are taken to be interrogated by Astûrban's gray-clad specialists.

### SHEVA PLAZA

Covenant City's political and economic hub is possibly the most important place for merchants looking for The Big Contract. Zenithians from Sky City come here to negotiate with visitors they deem important enough, usually through intermediaries, but sometimes in the flesh.

cover vast areas, but much of it is abandoned and quickly being reclaimed by the jungle. River deltas run through the city and the water is used as transportation routes for hovercraft or boats. The larger districts have paved roads, mainly used to transport goods with heavier grav craft. The buildings in the Conglomerate range from monstrous sky towers to low hangars and shantytowns. Rooftop farming is common on the larger factory islands.

### ⚙ LITTLE ALGOL

Little Algol was one of the first neighborhoods to form when the Zenithians colonized the Monolith, making it even older than Covenant City. What is left of the once vibrant district today is the run-down Dignitary City. Its broken marble stairs and overgrown walkways used to be a place of business and negotiation for the wealthy Zenithian families, but today you will only find a small contract souk here where minor companies, families, and plebeians' representatives settle contracts about trade and labor. Little Algol has spread slowly over the years – much of it is a slum of decrepit shacks, some of it is buildings or factories of slightly higher standards and a growing part is jungle-covered. The Ramishah river market is a bustling place where long lines of river barges have their cargo unloaded and redistributed to other districts. Since the seventh cataract was closed off after the Mibea offensive, traffic in the Ramishah port has increased, and much cargo is taken straight from the barges onto waiting grav craft bound for Ara-ara.

## THE DABARAN INTERMEZZO

The Zenithians are a proud people who take their holy sites very seriously. The Dabaran poet Galbarul had to learn this the hard and painful way after saying this about the Monolith: "It is a true wonder, without a doubt the mightiest member I have ever seen!" His first (and last) visit to the Monolith ended in disaster – his indecent words caused an outrage and he was immediately deported, his collected works were banned in the Hegemony, and the export of Kuan lumber to the Dabaran courts was halted for several cycles. The conflict was eventually settled in the Council and the miserable poet had to write a sonnet celebrating the glory of the Monolith. Galbarul vanished from the cultural world after this, living in self-imposed exile somewhere in the Horizon.

### THE QUEEN SLUMMER

**The Conglomerate is boiling with discontent. The people have had enough of predatory capitalism and Zenithian supremacy and a resistance movement has begun to form over the last few cycles. Its leader is the charismatic young worker Yjala Baktou, scornfully called "the Slum Queen" by the Zenithians in the Monolith. The rebellion has so far been limited to a few neighborhoods on the outskirts of the Conglomerate, but it is spreading inwards quickly.**

### THE AZAËLEANS – DJINN OF THE WOODS

The Azaëleans are the largest creatures in the jungle, and some of the tunnels they create under the surface are so big that they can be seen from orbit. Despite the tunnels being very obvious proof of the size of the creatures, no Azaëlean encounter has actually been proven. The tunnels are used for traveling by the jungle tribes and also seem to affect the ecosystem. An expedition from the Foundation, led by the famous zoologist Henam Mirsak, recently departed for the dark woods to solve the mystery of the Azaëleans once and for all, but is missing since hostilities broke out between a logging corporation and a religious enclave.



# XENE

Beyond the asteroid belt lies the colossal gas giant Xene, known only for two things: the valuable minerals that can be mined on its eleven moons, and the strange beings that recently emerged from the dark depths of the clouds. Xene is a gas giant ten times the size of the planet Kua. Its surface is ravaged by violent storms, many kilometers high and extremely dangerous to all kinds of human vehicles. For a long time, Xene was considered of little interest to anyone but the astronics of the Foundation. The events of the last few cycles have radically changed this, and instead made Xene famous all across the Horizon.

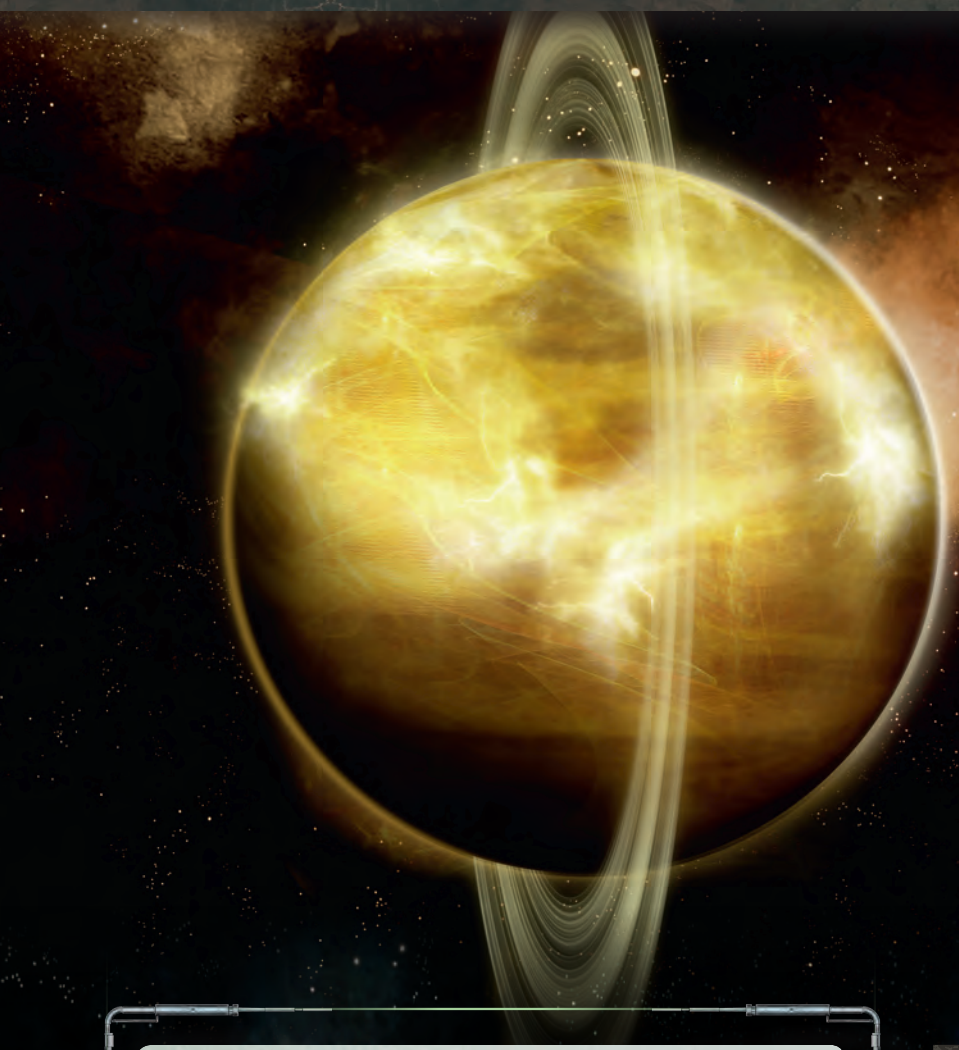
## THE GHOSTS FROM XENE

They rose from the depths of the gas giant – the ghosts from Xene: the Emissaries. They claim to be messengers, but representing who is shrouded in secrecy. Some say they are the descendants of the Portal Builders, others that they are the restless ghosts of starfarers long since dead. There are even some radical theologists who say the Emissaries are the Icons made flesh. Regardless of the creatures' origins – their arrival has changed the Horizon forever.

## MINERAL MINING

When the Foundation's probes discovered huge mineral deposits on Calest, Xene's third





**FACTS ABOUT XENE**

- **DIAMETER:** 143,200 km (roughly 11 times larger than Kua)
- **EQUATORIAL CIRCUMFERENCE:** 449,648 km (roughly 11 times larger than Kua)
- **SURFACE AREA:** 64 billion square kilometers (roughly 128 times larger than Kua)
- **GRAVITY:** 2.15 standard gravity
- **DAY LENGTH:** 9.5 hours
- **SIDEREAL YEAR:** 11 Kuan years
- **AXIAL TILT:** 86 degrees

largest moon, it stirred considerable discussion within the prospector community on Coriolis. More reports of promising findings on other moons came in, and suddenly, Xene was on everybody's lips. The last ten cycles have seen several mining corporations and independent prospectors establishing themselves in the vicinity of the gas giant. It is a dangerous place – many prospectors have been lost in the shadows of Xene.

## THE FOUNDATION'S STATION

The largest human settlement around Xene is the Foundation's research installation FS-7. The old station used to have only a small crew of astronics, planetologists, and geologists, but since the mineral discoveries – and especially since the arrival of the Emissaries – the inhabitants of FS-7 have increased manifold. Today, pilgrims from every corner of the Horizon travel to FS-7 to worship the Emissary that still remains on the station.

**INDEPENDENT MINING COLONY "KALDER'S DREAM"**

Xene's sixth moon, Eod, houses the raggedy prospector base Kalder's Dream. The far-from-dreamlike station has only three permanent residents: the worn-out old prospector Kalder, Lanna the cook and cantina owner, and Xoo, the thieving monkey. Miners and prospectors come here after a hard day's work to drink, eat, and gossip about their finds.

# SURHA

Surha is one of the Horizon's least hospitable planets. It is a world where ice storms beat down on endless tundra, a poisonous atmosphere that makes living here a nightmare, and extreme cold that forces the few settlements that actually exist to retreat behind thermal shields and armanite walls. The conditions make it one of the few planets in the Kua system that has never been colonized as the costs have been too high and the rewards too little.

## ANIALAH'S PHILOSOPHER

It hasn't always been like this, however. During the golden age of the Firstcome, a huge colonization vessel, the Anialah, was constructed and sent to bring the fruits of civilization to Surha. Colonists, thinkers and believers left Kua to turn the ice planet into a promised land. They never did. Contact with the Anialah was lost just after the ship arrived at Surha and it soon became clear that disaster had struck. For a long time, it was believed that the ship had broken apart during its entry into the atmosphere and crashed, leaving no survivors, but then, many years later, a strange signal reached Kua. A person named Adjhani, philosopher and survivor of the Anialah, sent a series of transmissions describing the crash and the time that followed. The story eventually became the "Ramshadra", one of the most important books of the Firstcome reign. Adjhani spoke of an unforgiving world, but also of the rare moments when the storms subsided and Surha rose from the mists in all its majestic splendor.

## THE PHILOSOPHER'S LANDS

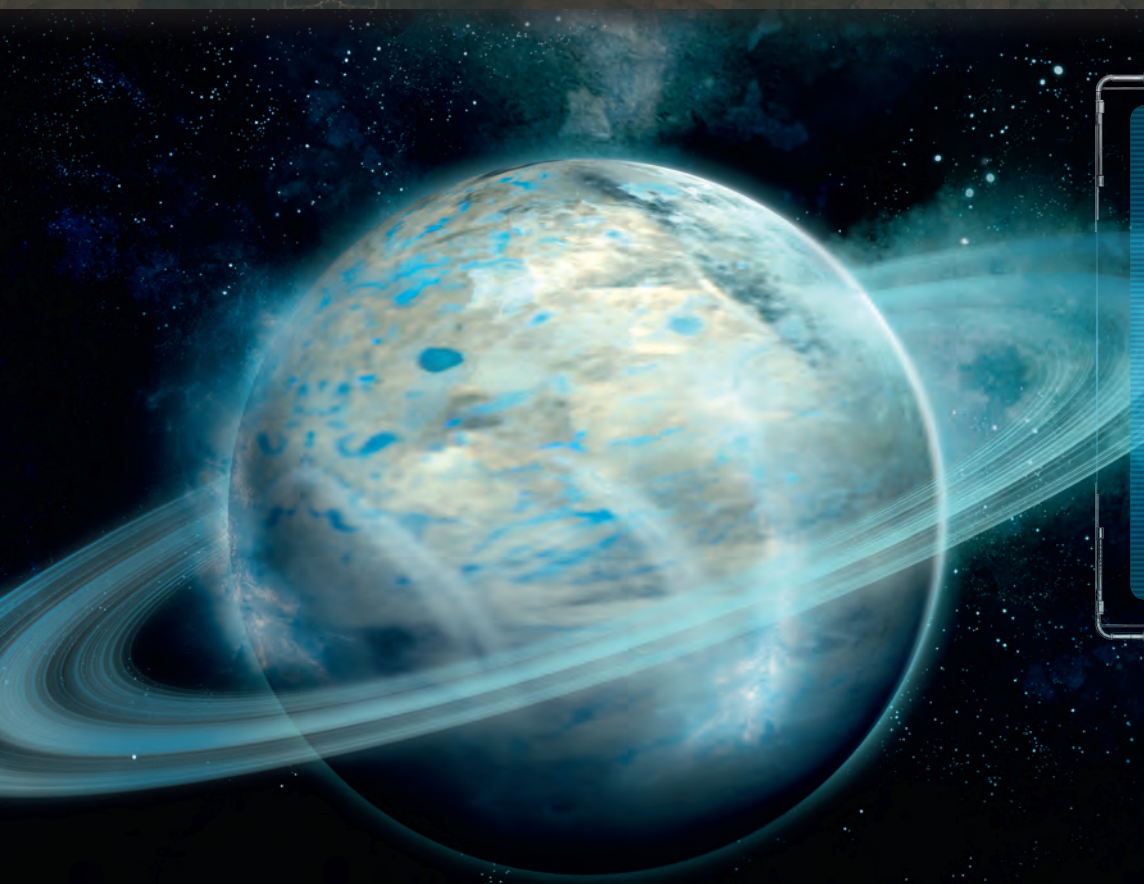
The Ramshadra eventually spawned a religious community that worshipped the words of Adjhani as if they were a message from the Icons themselves. The Ramsha cult is still active today and recruits most of its followers from the Firstcome people. They regard Surha as a holy planet, and the cult's most important mission is to find what they call the "Philosopher's Lands": the place from where Adjhani transmitted the Ramshadra and managed to survive against all odds. But the clues to its location are few and Surha is big and hostile.

## THE SMUGGLERS' HAVEN

Many cycles passed before humans visited Surha again, and this time the visitors had far from noble intentions. As the fleets were purging the asteroid belt, the smugglers had to move their bases farther and farther towards the Oort cloud. The inhospitable world on the brink of the big black was suddenly the smugglers only choice. When the Rimward Reach was discovered and colonized, Surha's location suddenly became very favorable, and more smuggler gangs sought shelter under the icy clouds. Small asteroid stations were constructed in the rings of the planet and surface bases were hidden in remote ice deserts. It is in one such base that Abdul Shey, the Horizon's most notorious smuggler sultan, is said to rest in a magnificent mausoleum designed by the great architect Lovhain.

## THE FALLEN MOON

Surha is mostly covered in ice and snow, enormous wastes of tundra pierced by jagged glacial fangs around which the winds reach hurricane strength. The Harballa massif is the only real mountain range on the planet and its peaks reach tens of kilometers into the sky. The massif, measuring several thousand kilometers in length and a few degrees in width, is actually the remains of what used to be Surha's moon. The ore-rich moon fell to the planet below hundreds of thousands of years ago, today forming



**FACTS ABOUT SURHA**

- **DIAMETER:** 49,764 km (roughly 3.9 times larger than Kua)
- **EQUATORIAL CIRCUMFERENCE:** 156,338 km (roughly 3.9 times larger than Kua)
- **SURFACE AREA:** 7.8 billion square kilometers (roughly 15 times larger than Kua)
- **GRAVITY:** 1.98 standard gravity
- **DAY LENGTH:** 13 hours
- **SIDEREAL YEAR:** 165 Kuan years
- **AXIAL TILT:** 28 degrees

the planet's most visible landmark. The Harballa is ever so slowly sinking through the ice, and in a couple of thousand years it will have disappeared completely. The moon ore is the planet's only valuable natural resource and the reason for the existence of a small outpost on the Harballa's southern slopes. In the last few cycles, the workers' snow crawlers and mining drills have gone deeper and deeper into the mountain in search of the precious minerals and there are rumors going around about a few curious discoveries in the darkness that have caused the most superstitious of the miners to lay down their tools.

## THE LAST OUTPOST

In the shadow of the mighty Harballa crouches Surha's only real settlement, the Surhani outpost, called "Hope's End" by the locals. Underground vaults and protective domes gather hardened miners and indentured freighter pilots as well as the Ramsha followers and one or two bitter entrepreneurs cursing their fate. The settlement is formally owned by the Colonial Agency and the faction's local representative, Malva Sarhal, makes sure everything is running as it should. A few hundred souls call Surhani their home and manage to live here in peace and relative comfort.

## LIFE ON SURHA

The extreme weather, the toxic atmosphere and the strong gravity make living on the frozen world hard and arduous, but with the right gear, knowledge, and protection, it is possible to lead a decent life. Settlements and bases are often dug into the ice or the rock around the Harballa, and powerful grav generators are installed, an absolute necessity to make the bases habitable. For transportation up on the surface, the inhabitants use snow crawlers, slow but reliable vehicles constructed to withstand everything but the worst storms. Reinforced exo shells are needed if one must be out in the open for a longer period of time, but a cheap air filter and warm clothes are enough for a short walk. Terrible ice storms, often thousands of kilometers wide, plague the planet regularly and anyone out in the open when they hit won't live long in the extreme weather.

# THE RIMWARD REACH

In the sector of the Lady of Tears, beyond the far borders of Transsurha, you will find the area known as the Rimward Reach. For a long time, this was just empty space on the edges of the Kua system, but this changed dramatically when a Foundation probe found something deep inside the Kandah cloud. An expedition traveled to the Rimward Reach and found that it hadn't always been empty. Strange monuments and drifting shipwrecks bore witness to a time when Firstcome colonists didn't fear the big black.

**TODAY, MANY YEARS** later, the area is a haven for freethinkers and fortune seekers, but a bloody struggle for the area's resources is being fought under the calm surface. This "end of the Horizon" gathers shady prospectors, cunning spies, and ruthless archaeologists, all fighting for their chance at a better life – a fight with few winners and many losers. The Rimward Reach is not dominated by any one faction, an exception in the otherwise Consortium-controlled system. Because of its remote location, the factions' initial disinterest, and the independent space station Djachroum's strong position, the Rimward Reach is a melting pot of groups both big and small with colliding agendas.

## THE INDEPENDENT SPACE STATION DJACHROUM

Thanks to its strategic position in the Mouth of Kandah, Djachroum has become the most important hub in the Rimward Reach. The head of the station is the enigmatic Aqbar who has turned Djachroum into both a protector of the Rimward Reach and a uniting force for its peoples. The roughly 12,000 inhabitants of the station include every sort of misfit or adventurer the Horizon has to offer, from independent miners and smugglers to radical theologists and eccentric mystics, all drawn to the Rimward Reach to escape the yoke of factionary oppression.

### THE CAVE OF BRIDGES

The beating heart of the Djachroum station is the enormous cavern in the middle of the asteroid called the Cave of Bridges. Wabas visiting for the first time are met with a stupefying view. The circular cave is hundreds of meters high and wide, cluttered with Firstcome stone houses, plastic sheds, rickety ladders, winding stairs and above all, a thick net of stairs and ramps. The cave is never quiet – the sales pitches of the merchants blend with the kabbah from the Governor's Palace and the snickering of the Kuan bantam monkeys that jump between the bridges high above the ground, searching for something shining or edible.

### THE TWIN STATION

The station is split into two by a deep chasm called Eskalom's rift. What caused the rift is unclear but analyses have determined it to be approximately three centuries old, about the same time that the Founders disappeared from the Rimward Reach. The other side of the rift houses the ruins of an old part of Djachroum today called the Twin Station. The restless ghosts of the Founders are supposedly still haunting the halls of the Twin Station. Both Eskalom's rift and the Twin Station are off-limits on the orders of Akbar. Djachroum's inhabitants love a good ghost story about the halls on the other side, but are mindful not to come near the rift. The only ones with any kind of knowledge about the forgotten parts of the station are the mys

## THE LEGACY OF THE FOUNDERS

The Firstcome people that once lived in the Rimward Reach and constructed the Djachroum station are known today only as the Founders. Who they were or where they came from is unknown, but scientists of more or less honest repute have a plethora of theories. Studies of ruins and archaeological findings have shown that the Founders were deeply religious y were also accomplished scientists and researchers; the many advanced machines they left behind are clear proof of this. Many Founder artifacts can be found throughout the Rimward Reach.

## THE MARRAB CONFLICT

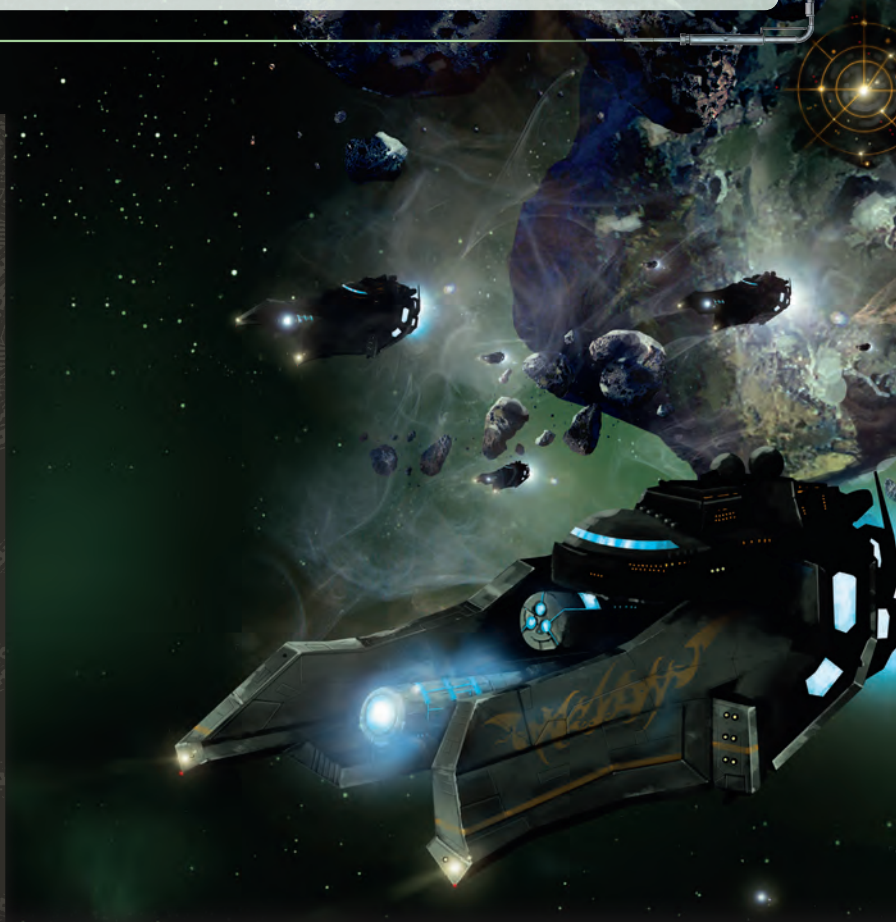
All of the Rimward Reach today is somehow affected by the low intensity conflict between the prospector clans and the nomad swarms. The heart of the conflict is a dispute over who has the rights to the valuable maghdan deposits that exist in the Marrab cluster. When the clans started looking for maghdan around Kandah, they founded bases on several asteroids around the cloud. All was well until one day when they discovered huge deposits of maghdan around the Marrab asteroid, traditionally considered a holy site and used as a meeting place and settlement by the nomad swarms. The nomads would allow no mining to take place and when the hot-blooded prospectors attempted to do it anyway, their ships and drones were shot down, and this is how the violent Marrab conflict started. Recently it has escalated, the confrontations becoming bloodier and bloodier.

## KUAN EXPANSION

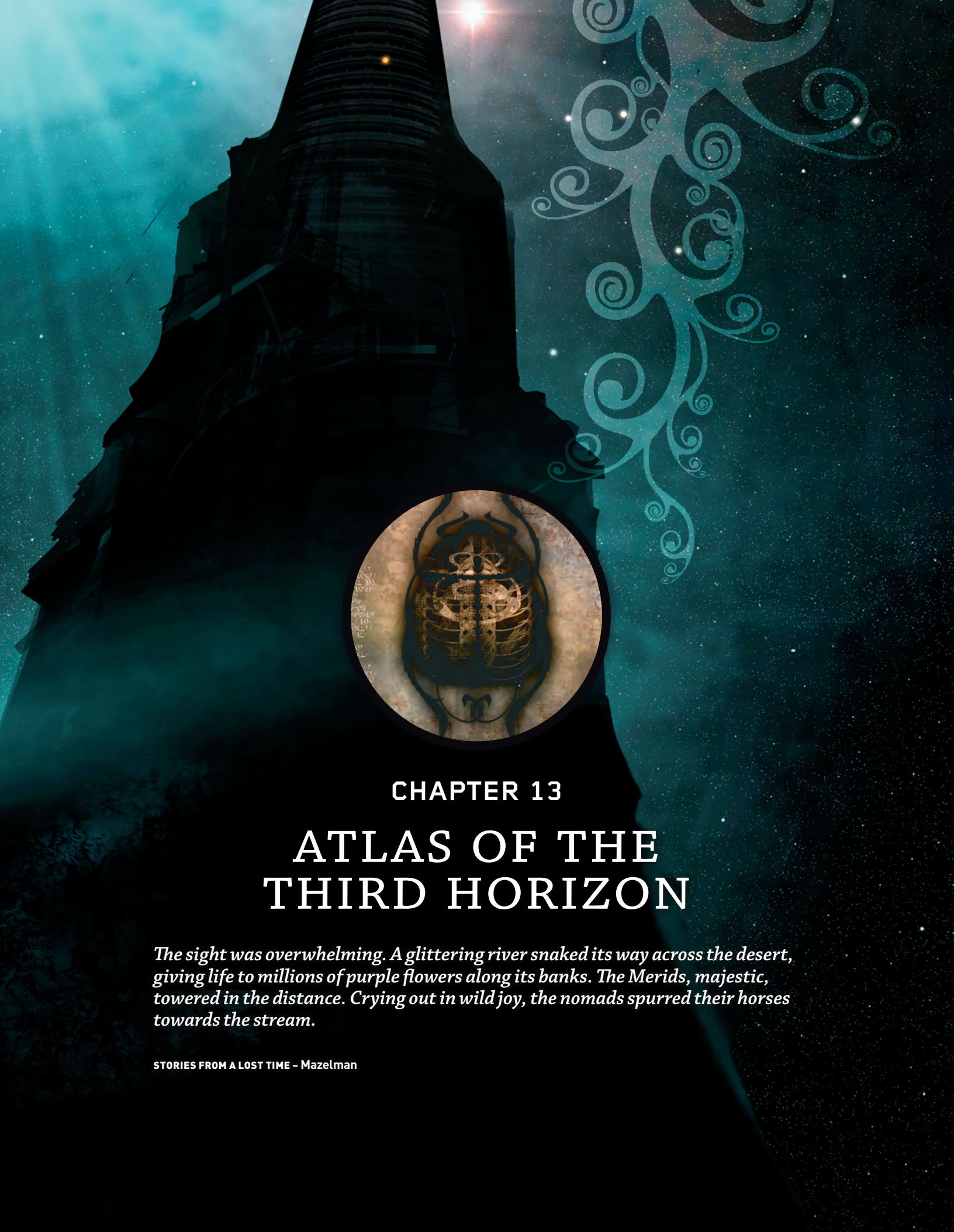
The last few cycles of Kuan expansion into the Rimward Reach, especially by the Consortium and the Legion, have caused tensions, but so far, violent confrontation has been avoided. In just the last few segments, the Legion has increased their presence in the Rimward Reach heavily. It started when they formed a blockade around the Armada of the Firstcome, something that surprised even their allies in the Foundation. Stubborn rumors claim that a bulk hauler under heavy escort is about to arrive at the Thalus base. The seers and info mongers of Coriolis are all in agreement that something is about to happen in The Reach.

### THE ARMADA OF THE FIRSTCOME

One of the greatest mysteries left behind by the Founders is the cluster of ship wrecks called the Armada of the Firstcome – hundreds of wrecks in eerily perfect rows. Some of them seem to have deactivated but operational systems. Investigators are puzzled by the incomprehensible encryption that protects the Armada's slumbering systems – it would almost seem as if the old ships are waiting for their old masters to return. The Legion set up a blockade around the Armada a little while back. Maybe they have succeeded where the ship archaeologists failed?







## CHAPTER 13

# ATLAS OF THE THIRD HORIZON

*The sight was overwhelming. A glittering river snaked its way across the desert, giving life to millions of purple flowers along its banks. The Merids, majestic, towered in the distance. Crying out in wild joy, the nomads spurred their horses towards the stream.*

**STORIES FROM A LOST TIME** – Mazelman

The Third Horizon is a motley collection of star systems spanning a large part of the galaxy. The systems are connected to one another across the unfathomable distances by star portals. All kinds of worlds exist here, some known and busy with human activity, others wild and unexplored. This chapter describes the largest and most important systems, as well as a few of the smaller gems.

# ASTROGRAPHY

The Third Horizon consists of thirty-six star systems. All are probably inhabited, but one cannot be completely sure about a few of them. Some systems see traffic only by way of the portals. Only six systems have large populations: Algol, Dabaran, Kua, Mira, Zalos and Sadaal. The busier routes connect these six systems. The populations in the other systems vary in size depending on the number of planets, the luminosity of the stars and a range of other factors. Many systems house human life only in relay stations, small colonies, outposts or prospector camps – and corsair nests, of course.

## THE PORTALS

The so-called portals are actually fields without any physical structure, made up of exotic particles and waves. Foundation professor Yaqub Fazari believes that the fields can be understood and described mathematically, and when this has been achieved, the people of the Horizon will be able to create new portals. However, this is all just a theory so far. When a ship passes through a portal, it is instantly transported to the next. Each field links two star systems together and jumps can be made both ways, simultaneously and without risk of collision. Jehna Karmathe, the noted Dabaran philosopher, teaches that no two things can happen anywhere at the same time in the universe, and that this explains why parallel passage is safe, but that level of philosophical detail is not something normal skippers care about.

### THE DANGERS OF THE PORTALS

One major problem with the star portals is that they aren't stable. Complicated algorithms and sequences are used to calculate the flux of the field and a good entry vector, and getting the math wrong can lead to the ship being torn apart or swallowed by the field, never to be seen again. A second problem is that no living creature can portal jump while awake without suffering serious neurological and mental damage. Stasis technology is required to provide some measure of safety for the crew during a jump. The factions are devoting massive funding into research about ways to get around this, but no one has succeeded so far. The last problem is the jump itself. No one knows exactly what happens in the moment when the ship makes the jump, but according to folklore, evil djinni and other darkmorphs hunt in the vicinity of the portals. There are stories about whole crews waking up from their frozen slumber possessed by unspeakable things from the Dark between the Stars.

### THE PORTAL JUMP

Because of the dangers and the complicated calculations, preparing for a portal jump takes about a day. To facilitate easier jumping and to prevent accidents, portal stations have been constructed close to all of the portals. The crew of the portal station aids the skippers in calculating the size of the fields, making for quicker preparations, but at a hefty cost. Since several ships can use one entry vector, jumping in groups to share the cost is common. It is not certain exactly how many ships can use the same coordinates – it depends on the flux of the field and the will of the Icons – but no one wants to go last.

The portal stations are also small oases for bored crews and somewhere to make repairs. Larger stations even have vacuum docks for proper service. Poor skippers can wait at the station for other ships to come along to share the jump fee with, or jump solo – using self-calculated coordinates, or piggybacking on another ship. This is both risky and illegal, however. The solo jumper could end up at the edge of the field, collide with the other ships or get too close to their graviton exhausts.

## TABLE 13.1 STAR SYSTEMS IN THE THIRD HORIZON

Below is a list of all the systems in the Horizon. Star names are listed wherever the stars have unique names. Distances between stars in a system are measured in Astronomical Units (AU). The Planet column lists how many planets there are in a system. A stands for asteroid belt, and G for gas giant.

| D66 | SYSTEM | STARS | SYSTEM DISTANCES | PLANETS | IMPORTANT LOCATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | AIWAZ | AIWAZ A-B | 300 | 3G/5AG | |
| 12 | ALGEBAR | Solitary | - | 12AG | |
| 13 | ALGOL | Algol/Persei/Rhaas | 0.1/150 | 6AG/0/2 | Akhandar |
| 14 | ALTAI | Solitary | - | 7AG | |
| 15 | AMEDO | AMEDO A-B | 100 | 10AG/3 | |
| 16 | ANASPORA | Solitary | - | 3AG | |
| 21 | AWADHI | AWADHI A-C | 200/600 | 3/7AG/0 | |
| 22 | CAPH | CAPH A-B | 100 | 4/5AG | |
| 23 | DABARAN | Solitary | - | 7G | Dar Bahri |
| 24 | DAYBUL | DAYBUL A-B | 60 | 3AG/2G | |
| 25 | DZIBAN | Solitary | - | 3AG | |
| 26 | EANU | EANU A-B | 150 | 6AG/3G | |
| 31 | EREQU | Solitary | - | 5A | |
| 32 | ERRAI | ERRAI A-B | 70 | 6A/2AG | |
| 33 | GHODAR | Solitary | - | 3AG | |
| 34 | HAMURA | Solitary | - | 2G | |
| 35 | KUA | Solitary | - | 6AG | Coriolis |
| 36 | MARFIK | Solitary | - | 4 | |
| 41 | MELIK | Solitary | - | 5G | |
| 42 | MENKAR | MENKAR A-B | 80 | 4G/3AG | |
| 43 | MIRA | Mira/Antmira/Menau | 75/1,000 | 6AG/4G/5G | The Icon City |
| 44 | NAGAR | NAGAR A-B | 500 | 4G/0 | |
| 45 | NHARMADA | NHARMADA A-C | 50/400 | 2/7/4AG | |
| 46 | ODACON | Solitary | - | 5AG | |
| 51 | ORDANA | ORDANA A-B | 200 | 7G/6A | |
| 52 | RIGEL | Solitary | - | A | |
| 53 | SADAAL | Sadaal/Bahram | 50 | 9G/3A | Alburz |
| 54 | SIVAS | Solitary | - | 5G | |
| 55 | TAOAN | Solitary | - | 3G | |
| 56 | TARAZUG | Solitary | - | 4G | |
| 61 | UHARU | Uharu/Zuhal | 15 | 3/26A | |
| 62 | YASTAPOL | Solitary | - | 2G | |
| 63 | ZALOS | ZALOS A-B | 10 | 3A/4G | City of Foreigners |
| 64 | ZAMUSA | Solitary | - | 2 | |
| 65 | ZHAU | ZHAU A-C | 80/400 | 6/4G/3A | |
| 66 | ZIB | Solitary | - | 4A | |



**NAMING STANDARD**

A system is usually named after the largest planet it contains. To avoid confusion, one says for example "in Dabaran" when referring to the system, and "on Dabaran" when talking about the planet. Binary and trinary star systems always have their portals by the primary star. The other stars have names of their own, but are usually referred to as "B" and "C". Reaching these stars is done by jumping to the primary star and continuing on – there are no known inter-system portals. Stasis is sometimes used within such a system, as the distances between the stars can be enormous.

The risk of encountering corsairs makes this unwise in some systems, instead forcing the crew to sit through long, boring and sometimes maddening voyages through empty darkness.

# THE ROUTES OF THE HORIZON

The routes through the Horizon were mapped a long time before the Portal Wars, both within and between systems. Some of them fell silent and were forgotten during the Long Night, but the Zenithian rebirth has opened them again, as the lifeblood of commerce is once again flowing in the Horizon. Below are descriptions of the most important routes and the problems and dangers that affect them.

## THE ALGOL ROUTE

Many free traders work the route to Algol as the systems along the way are relatively safe from corsairs, and have yet to be exploited by the factions. The portals are stable and the stations are well manned, up until one reaches Algol and the surrounding systems. After Nharmada, things are much more quiet, and only the most stubborn or desperate crews push on all the way to Eanu.

## THE DABARAN CIRCLE

The busiest route in the Horizon goes from Mira via Kua to Dabaran. The bulk haulers prefer the shorter route across Uharu, but since the rebellion there is pretty much constant traffic and the portal stations are often understaffed, and this way has become increasingly unsafe. The longer Amedo route past Algebar and Rigel is used primarily by free traders, but has also become dangerous since Almida, the corsair queen, has expanded her operations in Caph and Marfik.

## THE MIRAN CHAIN

The Miran chain is not the most traveled route in the Horizon, but perhaps the most important. The shorter route across Aiwaz and Zalos used to be the safest choice, as the portals in the Odacon system are still unreliable from damage they suffered during the Portal Wars. After a bulk hauler going the long way round disappeared when jumping from Odacon, the Consortium forced the Order of the Pariah to open their portal stations again. The Order's tangled bureaucracy still makes the jump across Zalos difficult – expensive customs fees and arbitrary

restrictions often create a queue of ships waiting to jump to and from the system. Desperate free traders still prefer the Odacon route despite the dangers, as trade is good along the way in the Quadrant of the Pillar.

### THE SADAAL ROUTE

The Sadaal route has the least amount of traffic of all the routes, probably because the largest hub along the way, Sadaal, only recently allowed off-world trade. Since the Consortium started factories on Sadaal, the whole route has come alive. The Sadaal portals are easy to use and the high frequency of Portal Builder finds in Ghodar, Daybul and Menkar attracts many explorers and archaeologists. Menkar is also home to the empty portal – a portal no one has returned from, said to connect to an unknown, Fourth Horizon.

# ALGOL

Algol, The Demon Star, is home to plebeians and rebels. The planet is known for its heavy industry, deep mines, vast wastelands and draconian faction- and Consortium-affiliated rulers. The industrial expansion has taken its toll on both the planet and its inhabitants, leaving the people divided between company loyalists and rebels.

Algol is a trinary system containing the stars Algol, Persei and Rhaas. Algol and Persei circle each other in a passionate dance, while Rhaas, the forgotten lover, watches from far away. As the stars are white, only Algol-Persei space contains habitable worlds: Yavan, Algol, Ermenu and Taus. A few worlds orbit the distant Rhaas, but house only a handful of mining colonies.

### CHILDREN OF THE DEMON STAR

Across the Horizon, Algol's reputation reflects its unspoken name: ”The Demon Star”. It is thought to be a haunted place only visited by the desperate and the greedy. The first colonists were likely aware of the stories, but ignored the system's bad reputation to exploit its rich concentration of metals and minerals, and settled in the temperate belts on the planet Algol. When the Portal Wars raged across the Horizon, Algol was hit hard. Many cities were destroyed during a campaign of orbital bombardments remembered today as the ”Year of the Flaming Tears”. The arrival of the Zenithians revitalized the wounded world.

Algol is the hub of the system and most people today, city dwellers and rebels alike, still live in its two temperate belts. Old and newer cities like Yasul, Akhandar-O-Sharif, Belem and Yousfana crowd together, surrounded by wasteland on all sides. Colonies and mines exist across the entire planet, and are common in the whole system, on moons and asteroids as well as in the big debris cloud belt.

### THE CONSORTIUM AND THE REBELS

The Consortium is the largest faction on Algol. With birr, grav cranes and vulcan might, the companies seized control of the ruined cities and began extracting the natural riches. The infrastructure was repaired and expanded, but vulgar displays of wealth next to growing shantytowns has become the face of Consortium-ruled Algol. The Zenithian Hegemony has also invested in several of the planet's cities, thanks to the Algolan diaspora in the shadow of the Monolith. All Algolans are not kneeling before their Zenithian overlords however – the brutal treatment of the planet and the population fuels resistance and revolt. The rebel groups keep to the remote highlands, the forests of the taiga, and the frozen deserts near the planet's poles.

Life on Algol is tough – hard work in the factories in the cities or hard work in the mines and logging camps in the wilderness. But just as the two suns chase each other across the heavens, the toils of the day give way to the pleasures of the night. The entertainment districts in the cities are filled with courtesan houses, pit fights and grav racing – and things like kohôl, opor, arrash and Substance O, the latest drug, help the people forget their worries. The bleak countryside mirrors the hard lives of the population – wide-stretching gravel plains, empty tundra, high mountain ranges and deep, dark forests. Pioneers and prospecting companies defy the hostile landscapes to search for precious metals and ore veins, hoping for that one big find – as the saying goes: ”A miner in the morning can be a pasha by night”.

# MIRA

Mira is a place where time has stood still since before the Portal Wars. Mighty temples, Icon churches and cloister palaces preside in gilded bliss in the hearts of the planet's city-states. Pilgrims and merchants flock to the planet, as does their protectors and exploiters. Mira is full of Firstcome wonders: winding pilgrim trails, the floating traffic in the Icon City, ascetic monks in the forgotten valleys of Menau, and much more. The Horizon's best grav projectors are also from Mira – made in the legendary Chelebs dockyards.

Mira is a trinary system. There is a second star called Mira-B, or Antmira, and a third called Mira-C, or Menau. Both Antmira and Menau have planets suitable for human habitation, but they are nowhere near as rich as the planet Mira. Trigon in Antmira is an industrialized world that seems to be of more interest to the Zenithian factions than to the Mirans themselves. Menau is remote and home to scattered colonies and temples belonging to the Circle of Seekers.

## THE CRADLE OF COLONIZATION

The city-states of Mira are the cradle of Firstcome colonization and considered by many to be its pinnacle – a loose federation of states that have enjoyed centuries of peaceful competition. Today, power is shared between the Church of the Icons, the Cities and the Chelebs-Menau family. The Church controls Icon City from high up in the flying Temple City. The other large cities on the planet, like Bandar Asul, Tifret, and Cimoran, are ruled by local courts, but the Church maintains a presence everywhere through their preachers, bureaucrats, and the warrior nuns of the Weeping Matriarch.

The Chelebs-Menau family shines like a mighty sun across the dockyards in the Icon City from their floating palace high above the Intrapelagic Sea. In recent years, the Chelebs have formed strong ties with the Zenithian Hegemony, and rumors whisper about a coming marriage between the builder masters and one of the purest and most exalted Hegemony families, which would create a blood bond across the whole Horizon. The Weeping Matriarchy is an alliance of convents that are responsible for most of the Church's security on Mira and Antmira. The Triumvirate of Sisters, appointed for life, controls the Matriarchy.

Okra Darma is the closest thing to the Syndicate the Mirans have – a criminal network that lives off robberies and gullible or frightened pilgrims visiting the Icon City. Okra Darma's headquarters are said to be hidden in the deep ravines on distant Menau, but their presence in the Icon City is anything but discreet.

## PILGRIM TRAILS

Pilgrim's trails, paths, channels and all manner of vehicles that ever so slowly transport pilgrims across the holy lands criss-cross Mira and Menau. Neither pilgrims nor Mirans can see the point in rushing – the voyage is often a goal in itself. If speed is required, there is usually a dhol available nearby, and those too frail to walk can ride dromedons on Mira or the wooly, grip-hoofed cria on Menau.

A pervasive myth in the whole system is that of the Ensnarer, or Yal-Shir, who is said to seduce and prey on unworthy pilgrims. The more obscure or sparsely traveled a trail is, the more "active" the Ensnarer is. Several pilgrim groups disappear every year on the Yadaman trail between the Icon City and the Valley of Monuments, something that neither private mercenaries nor the Matriarchy have been able to stop.

# DABARAN

In the warmth of the red star lies the planet of the emirs – Dabaran. The planet contains lush oasis gardens, extreme temperature variations, vast deserts, and a population with a soft spot for philosophy, mathematics, and beautiful mechanical creations.

Dabaran is a binary system, but Dabaran-B is so small that it can hardly be spotted on its fast course past the gigantic Dabaran-A. The main star is a red giant with a few satellites, and only the rock planet Dabaran has a sizeable population. There are some gas mines on the enormous Salamanx and a research installation on the boiling hot Arara.



The Dhol Guard of the Icon City



## HOME OF THE DARS

The arid Dabaran is home to a flourishing class of nobles living in oasis gardens, domed palaces and ravine seraglios. Regardless of whether they are emirs, feriks, pashas or sultans, nobles should be addressed using the royal prefix ”dar” or ”dari”, and the same term is used when speaking of their emirates. The dars are tangled up in a constant struggle to top one another in art, knowledge and wealth. The race for perfection assumes a variety of forms, from intricate mosaics and palaces to shining, mechanical nightingales and owls. Dabaran was mostly spared the horrors of the Portal Wars. The planet was not hit by any major bombardment, and the dars had no fleets with which to engage in the fighting. Concentrated efforts instead went into securing the planet's self-sustainability, fortifying the oasis domes and stopping the spread of the contagious hate and suspicion that gripped the rest of the Horizon in a chokehold. In Lotus, the temple city, alliances and marriages were formed to safeguard the fragile peace and further progress and enlightenment.

The peace has lasted to this day, but the larger dars have begun competing for the planet's most important resource – water. Water is rich in the lowlands around the equator, in underground springs and rivers, but the highlands, where many of the royal courts have their oasis domes, are dry, and water is something one must drill deep for. This has spawned a large and lucrative water rights market, with transactions in the form of either birr or marriage. More and more oasis domes are being constructed, and this has led to physical confrontations over wells and pipelines.

## ZENITHIAN ARROGANCE

The Consortium, with Parr and the Colonial Agency at the forefront, has started to take an interest in the rich soils of the lowlands. With permission from emir Karabah of Lotus, several multi-farms have been founded on the slopes of the Yeva valley. Pumping stations and colossal crawlers are slowly taking over the valley – destroying it, according to many – and this has resulted in dust storms sweeping out towards the neighboring dars. Rumors have it that the Zenithians are attempting to drill their way into the Wound, which is located just north of the Yeva valley – why else would they have mobilized Parr-Nestera's attack brigades?

### THE WOUND

To the nobles of Dabaran, Lotus is the Icons' capital on the planet. It was constructed by the Seekers next to the mysterious Wound, a chasm whose volcanic depths have yet to be measured. The Wound is said to be of Portal Builder origin, but there have been no obvious artifact discoveries in the area that could prove it. Several expeditions have disappeared in the darkness of the Wound. To settle the matter once and for all, the Foundation recently sent a team of xeno-archaeologists to the site.

# SADAAL

The Sadaal system is inhabited by a group of Firstcome people who have taken their version of the Icon faith to absurd levels. The rulers use the faith as a political tool to control their subjects. The head of the masked clergy, Aremerat, is presented as chosen directly by the Icons. It is an insular system, and news from the rest of the Horizon is subject to strict control and censoring. Emigration is not permitted, but the Consortium and a few other groups have been allowed to establish themselves here in recent years.

Sadaal is a binary system. Both stars, Sadaal and Bahram, have one planet each with good conditions for human settlement. High mountains and dry steppes dominate Sadaal, while Bahram is covered in oceans, marshes and wide plains of farmland.

### THE EIGHT WISDOMS

The most powerful group in Sadaal is without question the hierocrats in Amesha Spenta, The Eight Wisdoms. These high priests interpret the words of Aremerat and are the de facto rulers in all matters. Each of the eight Ameshas represents one Icon and leads a sect devoted to the domain of that Icon, as it is understood in Sadaal. The ninth Icon, the Whisperer – called the Faceless One elsewhere – has no representative in Amesha Spenta.

The Ameshas work as a political force to maintain and expand their power. Institutes, bureaus and departments grow and shrink, priests win or lose reputation – it is a constant shadow play that often takes a hard toll on the population.

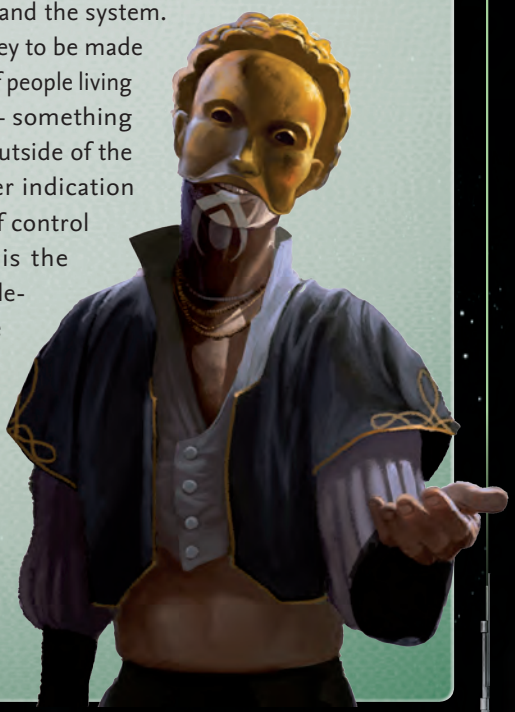
Sadaalians generally live strict, humble lives. They work to feed their families. They wear their talismans and thank Aremerat at dawn and dusk for the great civilization he has created. They meet their confessor at least once a week to confess and scrutinize their actions. Moderation guides all things. There are no decadent pleasures available to common people on Sadaal.

Life on Bahram is somewhat different. Farmers are moving into the big cities to share in the new economy, and a middle class is forming. New districts crop up around shipyards and factories. Bigotry is receding and the citizens no longer fear change.

### DAHARAB AND THE CONSORTIUM

The Daharab dockyards are the center of Consortium power on Bahram. They are located in the Newlands, a group of islands where foreign companies are allowed to establish themselves. Components of enormous freighters are constructed in the huge factories of the yards and then taken up into orbit for assembly.

Daharab is a bustling city. The social strata are much more nuanced here compared to other parts of the planet and the system. There is more money to be made here, but also a lot of people living in actual poverty – something that hardly exists outside of the Newlands. Another indication of the loosening of control in the Newlands is the growing influx of plebeians, drawn here from across the Horizon to work in the factories.



# ZALOS

Zalos has been called the birthplace of the Martyr. The system is ruled by the Order of the Pariah, a faction with a split reputation for being both devout, helpful believers and bloodthirsty fanatics. Not much is known about Zalos as the Order is very strict about who they let in. What little common people in the Horizon know is usually based on rumors and third party sources, and those who actually have visited Zalos in recent years can only share their experiences of the City of Foreigners.

Zalos is a binary system with two habitable planets, one orbiting each star, Zalos and Zahedan. A third planet, Benagia, used to be inhabited, but it suffered such terrible bombardments during the Portal Wars that it is uninhabitable today. Several moons have been colonized, with Karrmerruk, orbiting Benagia, being the most famous. Many small space stations are also scattered across the system.

The Martyr Council, a constantly changing group of priests, prophets, grand masters and elders, governs the Order of the Pariah. Rumors claim that the Council lets archaic rites and divination decide how Zalos should be ruled. Regardless of their practice, the Martyr Council is the dominant political force in the system, and they are seldom contradicted.

## THE WAR ON HERESY

The largest conflict in Zalos is the civil war raging across all of Zahedan. Large portions of the planet's population have succumbed to heresy and started worshipping false prophets. They have left the embrace of the Martyr and taken up arms against their former brothers and sisters. The war is everywhere and very bloody, with everything from small guerilla raids to full-scale military campaigns. The Order focuses much of its resources on crushing the rebels, but has so far not been successful. Both sides in the conflict possess advanced antimatter weapons, golim armors and bionics that don't exist outside of Zalos, making them evenly matched. If it wasn't for the total fleet blockade around Zahedan, the rebellion might have spread to the rest of the system.

## UNDER THE GAZE OF THE MARTYR

All larger communities on Zalos are built around large monastery complexes from which the Order controls the area. The monasteries often house hundreds of order members and are always heavily fortified. Every day, the residents of the surrounding areas make their way to the monasteries for religious services and flagellation in honor of the Martyr. The cities are made of stone, with prayer towers, high pointed roofs, narrow alleys, and few open spaces. The cities of Zalos are busy and labyrinthine, while large parts of the cities on Zahedan have been reduced to ruins and dust by the war.

Certain things remain constant in the lives of the system's inhabitants. Prayer and flagellation are important on both Zalos and Zahedan. Faith defines every aspect of life, from family relations to work and warfare. Several smaller cults within the Order have fled out into space to escape the war. One such cult is the Hymns of the End Times. They have constructed the eight so-called Coral stations that are spread across the system. All day, every day, the End Times' choirs and flagellants are lined up in ingeniously constructed halls, singing. Grand polyphonic choir pieces blended with the wailing from the flagellants are transmitted across many frequencies to the whole system, in the Martyr's undying praise. Visiting traders have had to shut off all incoming radio traffic to avoid the cacophony.

# ODACON

The Odacon system is a broken monument to the madness of the Portal Wars. No one comes here voluntarily, unless they are traveling between Coriolis and Mira, or desperate enough to seek fortune and fame in the ruined system.

The system contains three planets – Sethlen, Rusah, and Qayna – and the scattered remains of a fourth one. None of the planets have any major settlements. The system is much too difficult to navigate for it to be economically viable for any



A monastery cruiser landing at Joh Narida on Zalos

of the Consortium companies to expand here. Odacon has instead become a place for truly daring free trader captains and all sorts of underhanded business. There is no major faction presence here, and the population of the system is spread out in small colonies and independent space stations.

Odacon was colonized by the Firstcome peoples long ago, and used to be a rich system with a large population. Several planets contained big cities and advanced industries. Then came the war. While initially spared, Odacon was hit hard towards the end. The final and most devastating battles of the war took place in the system and caused destruction on a scale beyond anything the Horizon had witnessed before, making Odacon the fragmented system it is today.

## THE DANGERS OF ODACON

That most crews choose other routes than the one through Odacon is no mystery. The dangers here are many, and physical threats like corsairs or the remains of ancient war machines are not the only ones – navigating the system is also difficult. Since the war, the star has become unstable and unpredictable. It has cooled down considerably and creates strange gravitational phenomena. Both portals in the system are unstable and require a seasoned captain to be used. Several inexperienced crews have been left stranded here, unable to read their navigation systems.

## SPACE STATION KHÔBAN

If the system can be said to have an administrative seat at all,

it would be the Khôban portal station. About five hundred souls call Khôban their home, all living in the outer layers of the station while the core modules are slowly decaying. No slummers are allowed in the decrepit parts, but this rule is difficult to enforce. General law enforcement is handled by judicators from Coriolis, but it is the Martyr warriors there to protect Inashar Delion, the Order's consul to the station, and the Legionnaires that guard the Consortium's interests that are the actual deterrents to would-be troublemakers.

### THE ASH BELT

The Ash belt hangs like a dark shroud in the emptiness between the portals in Odacon. It consists of the remnants of Matush, the fourth planet that was destroyed during the wars, and the pulverized wrecks of enormous armadas. The Ash belt is a gold mine for scrapper crews and adventurers but also contains many dangers. Apart from the mythical Bane of Ashes, the belt is also home to bloodthirsty corsairs, automated battle systems and forgotten mines. Several small asteroid and space station communities nonetheless exist in the depths of the belt.

Few things can chill the blood of Odacon's residents quite like the mention of the Bane of Ashes. It is an entity said to be able to destroy a ship by breaking it down, molecule by molecule. Some say that the Bane of Ashes is a semi-intelligent war machine while others believe it to be a chaotic cloud of nanites. The truth about the Bane has yet to be revealed.

## THE QUADRANT OF THE PILLAR

The Quadrant of the Pillar is a lost paradise where Firstcome civilization has triumphed despite the destruction of the Portal Wars. In the four systems of the Quadrant, Firstcome and Zenithians meet on equal terms.

The Quadrant of the Pillar spans the four systems along the newly established Odacon route between Kua and Mira: Altai, Sivas, Ordana, and Zhau. The systems share many cultural traits, from the routines of daily life to governance and civil liberties. The similarities can be traced back to the first wave of colonists that were kept alive over the years thanks to the fact that the Quadrant systems kept trading and communicating with each other during the Long Night. The new colonists in the Quadrant have been integrated into the culture of the systems, but have also contributed with influences of their own. Of the factions, the Consortium is the one who shows the greatest interest in the systems, insistently trying to further its own agenda through alliances, colonization and trade. The Consortium wants to replace the old power structures with usurpers friendly to the faction.

### A PARADISE LOST

The Quadrant of the Pillar has a high concentration of rich, habitable worlds. Reports from the Foundation's investigations here indicate that the Portal Builders likely have had something to do with shaping the systems. Some of the more patriotic scientists in the Quadrant believe that the high number of rich worlds in the systems is to be regarded as a sign that the area has been chosen to serve some higher, sacred purpose. They believe that the Quadrant is a promised land in the dark emptiness, and that all that is missing is a strong, Icon-fearing leader to show the way.

The worlds are only lightly populated, despite their natural riches, and it is only recently that a broad wave of colonists has started to arrive. Colonizing the Quadrant has its risks however – slavers, corsairs, self-appointed freedom fighters and bloodthirsty warlords are just a few of the dangers that await the reckless or the foolhardy.

### THE JANGAHIR FLEET

The mogul fleet constitutes the nervous system of the Quadrant. They cemented their claim to power directly after the Portal Wars. Unlike the rest of the peoples of the Quadrant, they challenged the ancient portal fields and managed to unravel their secrets. The fleet thrived from its monopoly position. Their battered old ships, relics from the Second Horizon, were upgraded and modified, resulting in a fantastic mixture of different technologies and traditions. They have reigned in silent majesty for a long time, but the arrival of

the Consortium in the systems has challenged their rule and started to undermine their power. Mogul trade used to rule worlds and move mountains, but this is rapidly changing. The competition has led to tension in the Quadrant, but open clashes between the Consortium and Jangahir's heirs have so far been limited.

### THE ALTAI CORSAIRS

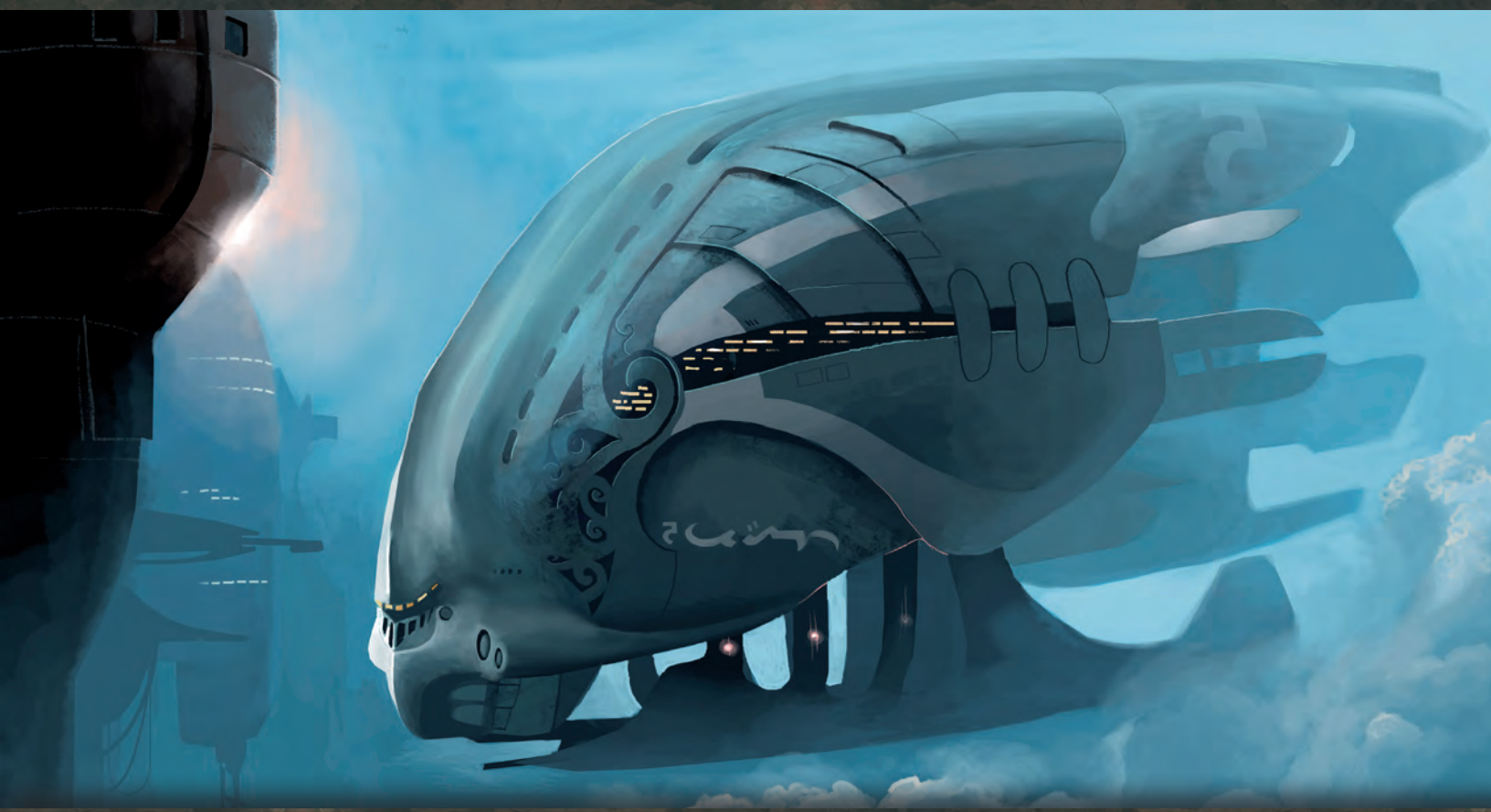
Blood-curdling rumors about the merciless raids of the corsairs from Altai have spread across the entire Horizon. Altai is a haven for smugglers, slavers, pirates and other outlaws, giving the whole Quadrant somewhat of a reputation for being a wild place where the difference between might and right is a bit fuzzy.

## THE SMALL GEMS

Apart from the core systems, the Third Horizon is full of gems along the four star arms discussed above. A few of them are described below. More information can be found on the map of the Third Horizon.

### AMEDO

The binary Amedo system is mainly known for the large number of skavara living on the planet of the same name, roaming across a whole continent in large tribes and packs. Nowadays, the native semi-intelligences share the planet with colonists in cities spread around a large archipelago. Amedo's white island temples are known across the entire Horizon. Closely orbiting the smaller Amedo-B, also known as Ekharan, is a strange planetary body called the Eye of Ekharan. The Eye is a perfect ellipse with a transverse axis of exactly 1,100 km. Since the observations of the Eye began, its orbit has stayed constant. That the Eye is no natural phenomenon is obvious to anyone.



## MENKAR

At the end of the Third Horizon lies Menkar. Only the most stubborn of free traders and the most curious of archaeologists and scientists ever come out this far. But Menkar is the home of the Horizon's second monolith. It looks just like the monolith on Kua, and was likewise inhabited by humans a long time ago. It rises high above the dangerous wilderness below and this made it a logical place to settle. Today, much of its buildings lie in ruins and the rest are scarcely populated. A while back, the monolith suddenly moved and tilted over to its current position, and thousands were killed as their houses fell to the ground. The river delta surrounding the pillar is full of light globes and the area has a reputation for being ripe with artifacts. Scientists come to Menkar in the hopes of learning more about portals from observing the unpredictable fields in the system. There are hopes and theories about possibly opening the Third Horizon towards an unknown Fourth one from Menkar, but no one has been successful so far.

## HAMURA

Kua's neighbor Hamura saw quite a lot of traffic until the incident in Taoan. Today, traffic through the system stops only at the Hamurabi portal station where the Foundation, the Consortium, and the Colonial Agency all keep a presence. The system's inhabitants come to Hamurabi to trade or to work on servicing the warships from the Legion and the Order that have been stationed here.

## TAOAN

Whatever it is that is happening in Taoan is being kept secret. Overzealous admirals commanding mighty battleships and Martyr cruisers guard the portals in Hamura and Uharu. The surrounding space is crowded with attack drones from the Legion and antimatter-powered injectors from the Order of the Pariah. Before all the commotion in the system, Taoan harbored a gas mine circling the gas giant with the same name. Something went wrong, and contact with the mine was lost. Rumors have it that terrible beings from the darkness, or even a group of Emissaries, were behind the disaster.

## UHARU

Uharu is known for its rebels, its Dabaran colonies, and the



asteroid refineries the Consortium runs here. The brown dwarf that has given its name to the system has about twenty moons circling it, several of them with biotopes and exotic fauna. The system was a goldmine to the Firstcome colonists that settled here, but the rich supply of natural resources soon attracted Dabaran entrepreneurs and eventually the Colonial Agency. The newcomers tried to take over the system and, today, more or less open war rages across several of the different ice and forest moons. The lava-covered moon Pyre orbits close to the brown dwarf in a magnetic flux tube, and the Foundation has founded a small base here to study magnetic fields.

## NHARMADA

The Nharmada system is somewhat special in that several planets orbit the third and, counting from the portals, most distant star in the system. This red giant has four natural satellites, but current theories speculate that the dying star has already absorbed at least three planets and that the rest will eventually follow. The system has a small population of mainly Firstcome tribes that operate more or less profitable metal and mineral mines in the so-called Three Colonies – on Gudwara, Zaynad and in the Serpent Belt, respectively. Different alliances of warlords rule the system, offering some protection for the inhabitants in exchange for them signing long contracts of servitude.

## YASTAPOL

The distant Yastapol system is mostly just empty space. What sticks out in the system is the giant shipyards that have given name to the star. The yards are owned and run by the head of the Yastapol family, executive director Anastasiya din-Yastapol. That the shipyards were constructed in Yastapol of all places is explained by the huge wreckage belt that can be found here, possibly even pre-dating the Portal Wars. The belt is dangerous to maneuver through, but full of old ships, some of them in remarkably good shape. Salvage ships from the yards come to the belt and cannibalize the ships for parts to bring back. These parts are then assembled into robust but ugly ships, and sold for a good profit. Freelance scrapper crews have started to show up over the last few years to get their piece of the action, and the Colonial Agency have also begun to show an interest.







## CHAPTER 14

# BEASTS AND DJINNI

*The djinni are beings of unknown origin. Many clerics say that they come from the Dark between the Stars. Some radical scientists think that they are actually diabolical ghost machines from a distant past. Regardless of where they come from, the djinni are a growing problem in the Horizon.*

**ON THE BANISHING OF JINNI** – Zourtan Dar-Zinni

The moons, planets and stations of the Third Horizon are full of life – and so is the Dark between the Stars, although "threats" is probably a more suitable word for its ghastly inhabitants. Some of the beings are altogether alien while others accompanied the colonists from the First Horizon. This chapter will describe the semi-intelligences, beasts and beings of the wild and the void that the PCs and their ship might encounter.

**THIS IS WHERE** you should stop reading if you are not the game master. The rest of this book is reserved for the GM and provides more details about mysteries and secrets that the players shouldn't know. It will be more exciting if the players don't know these rules and game stats – they are not supposed to initially know how a djinn encounter may affect them.

## CREATURES

The umbrella term for all beasts and spirits in the Horizon is "creatures". Creatures cannot be **MANIPULATED**.

**Skills:** Some creatures lack skills – this means they can only test basic attributes for their actions. Creatures cannot pray to the Icons, but they can use Darkness Points.

**Actions:** Creatures can perform the same amount and kinds of actions per turn as humans and semi-intelligences (see Chapter 5). Movement will usually be the only fast action they perform.

**Weapons:** Creatures usually have claws, fangs or other natural weapons. These will have a listed Weapon Damage, but no Gear Bonus.

**Swarms:** Some creatures act as swarms, a large body of smaller beings. There are two rule exceptions for swarms:

- A swarm can divide its attack and target several victims with one action. Simply divide the dice total between all your intended victims.
- Swarms cannot be harmed by normal weapons, only by fire (flame- or thermal thrower) or explosions. If the PCs lack these types of weapons, they have no choice but to run away.

**Special Abilities:** Many creatures have unique abilities that are not handled by any of the fourteen skills. These abilities are explained individually.

### CREATURES AND CULTURE

When the PCs encounter a creature, they may test **CULTURE** to see if they can identify it. Each creature in this chapter will have a boxed modifier next to its name, showing you how rare or incomprehensible the creature is.

# SEMI-INTELLIGENCES

When the first colonists arrived in the Third Horizon, they thought they were the cluster's only intelligent life – but they were wrong. They discovered that several planets housed xenosbeasts that appeared to possess intelligence, language and rudimentary tribal societies: the ekilibri and the nekatra on Kua and the skavara on Amedo. Zoologists from The University of Dabaran regard the huge but sluggish desdemodu as semi-intelligences as well, but their colleagues in the Foundation disagree with this.

### NEKATRA +2

The jungle nekatra are feared across every system. The nekatra walks upright, has hard, sinewy muscles and a thin covering of fur. Large fangs and wild eyes give it a menacing look. Where the nekatra are originally from is unclear, as they seem to have been living in several different systems when the Horizon was colonized. They live in the jungle wilderness of Kua, Menkar and

the forest moons of Uharu, in small packs led by a female alpha. Their predatory drive is very powerful, making them attack all prey they can find in a cold, calculated manner. Nekatra in captivity are often trained to be guards or gladiators, in the Stadium on Coriolis for example. The Legion has experimented on nekatra, reinforcing them with both cybernetics and bionic sculpts.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 5, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 11

**MIND POINTS:** 4

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 16

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Infiltration 2, Observation 2

**ARMOR:** 1

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2), claws (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **THROAT ATTACK:** Nekatra often go for the throat of their enemies. A throat bite has a CRIT value of 1 but can only be performed after the nekatra has spent a fast action to prepare. A successful throat attack also pins the nekatra's opponent (see Grappling, page 87).
- **FERAL HUNGER:** The nekatra enters a state of blind rage, attacking everything around it. It can perform one additional melee attack per turn, but all attacks suffer a -2 modifier and the beast can no longer defend itself. Entering the feral rage is a normal action in itself.
- **LEGION NEKATRA:** The nekatra has been bionically altered, giving it 10 extra HP, stronger bite attacks (Weapon Damage 4) and medi-glands that secrete an m-dose-like substance every two turns. If the nekatra is broken, it can get back up at 3 HP if it passes a **FORCE** test at -1. It can also have one cybernetic implant of the GM's choosing.

## SKAVARA

+1

While originally from Amedo, traders brought these snarling, badger-like semi-intelligences first to Algol, and later to Coriolis, where they have multiplied in the shadows of the Cellar. The skavara keep out of sight and live off what they can find, which usually means garbage and leftovers if they live close to a human settlement. Skavara usually live in leaderless packs or alone. Sometimes they gather around a strong leader for a



Nekatra



Skavara

short time and then disband, and possibly reform the group. The skavara are guarded and vigilant creatures, but also curious and fast learners. Like the glitter thrush, they collect all sorts of colorful and shiny knick-knacks. City dwelling skavara often adorn their fur or simple clothing with copper wires, fiber-optic cables or pieces of shiny plastic. They only wear clothes – capes or gallabeyas mostly – in colder climates such as on Algol or in the Cellar on Coriolis, otherwise preferring just their own fur for warmth. Humans have unsuccessfully tried to train skavara. Their semi-intelligence makes them able to learn human languages, but their throats and mouths are bad at mimicking the sounds. They can usually bark or yap only a few hundred words, but can communicate much more clearly through sounds or body language.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 5

**MIND POINTS:** 5

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 14

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 1, Manipulation 1, Infiltration 3, Observation 3

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Claws (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 3)

- **STENCH:** The skavara have scent glands on their necks, used for marking territories. A scared or cornered skavara can activate these glands in an emergency, letting off a pungent odor that affects mucous membranes and eyes. Enemies within Close Range get a -2 modifier to all actions until they get away from the stench. They also have to test **FORCE**, suffering 2 points of stress if they fail.
- **SNIFF:** Skavara can use their sense of smell to test **MANIPULATION** and determine if someone is hostile or lying. They also get a +2 to **OBSERVATION** if there are scent trails to follow.

## SEMI-INTELLIGENCES AS PCS?

**You are free to play a semi-intelligence if you wish, although the desdemodu are not recommended. If you play as nekatra, skavara or ekilibri, the only restriction is that while on civilized planets, another PC in the group formally owns you. Lone ekilibri or skavara are apprehended by the Coriolis Guard and unsentimentally deported to Kua, while nekatra are sold to the arenas. Skavara are pretty deft negotiators, but could also learn enough technical skills to work as deckhands, and they can use both tools and firearms. They are not much for talking, preferring to communicate with sign language, barking and growling. If you like the idea of playing a primitive peddler or engineer with a good eye for liars and ambushes, the skavara could be something for you. Nekatra are best suited for violent professions such as soldier or scout. Ekilibri often work as petty thieves, acrobats or criminals in human society, unless they are kept as pets.**

## EKILIBRI

±0

The tiny ekilibri of Kua are tribal creatures that look like large lemurs, sometimes reaching a full meter in height. The color of their fur varies depending on caste and tribe.

Fur patterns range from spots and stripes to solid, glaring coats of bright orange or deep red. The tribes are organized in caste systems, where members of different castes, according to the zoologists, have different jobs, from foragers to warriors. Members of the high castes often dye their fur in bright colors using jungle herbs. Ekilibri in captivity can be trained, usually to become servants or pets. Their soft, sweeping tails make them popular with the upper classes in the Monolith and on Coriolis. Ekilibri can easily learn to understand human language but speak in high-pitched chirping, some of it outside the range of human hearing.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 5, WITS 1, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 6

**MIND POINTS:** 4

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Infiltration 3, Observation 3.

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Claws (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 3)

- **BATTLE CRY:** The ekilibri can let out a loud, high shriek that is painful and disorienting at Short Range. Everyone in the area of effect must test **FORCE**. Failure means 2 points of stress and the loss of one's next action. Someone with sensitive or enhanced hearing gets a -2 to the roll.
- **AGILITY:** The nimble ekilibri can jump far and high, as well as squeeze into very tight spaces such as ventilation shafts or pipes.
- **NIGHT VISION:** Ekilibri have good vision even in darkness and get no negative modifiers for bad lighting.

## DESDEMODU

-2

The big and sluggish desdemodu of Dabaran are strange creatures that look like enormous tapirs with two giant horns on their heads. Their skin is hard and crystalline, grey with shimmering spots. They live in small herds, slowly wandering across the Dabaran highlands. Adult desdemodu can reach up to ten meters in height at the withers, while the hornless foals, which are very rare, are no larger than pigs. The reproduction of the desdemodu is unknown – no desdemodu has ever been seen giving birth for as long as mankind has lived on Dabaran. Some zoologists even say that the ones called foals are actually another species.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 8 (FOAL 3), AGILITY 1, WITS 3, EMPATHY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 18 (foal 4)

**MIND POINTS:** 7

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 6

**SKILLS:** Force 5, Mystic Powers 4.

**ARMOR:** 7 (foal 4)

**WEAPONS:** Gore (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **TELEPATHY:** The desdemodu can use telepathic communication within Short Range. Costs 1 DP per use.
- **CALM:** The desdemodu can use its telepathic powers to try and calm someone within Short Range through an opposed **MYSTIC POWERS** roll. The calm remains in effect for several minutes and anyone affected is unable to perform attacks. A new opposed **MYSTIC POWERS** roll can be made every minute to break the effect.
- **TRAMPLE:** The desdemodu can try to trample an enemy (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 3). This attack can only be used directly after a movement action, in the same turn.

# BEASTS OF THE HORIZON

The beasts of the Third Horizon come in many different forms, both on planets and in the darkness of space, but they all have physical form. Beast encounters should always feel new and unique – try to use the encounters in new ways and make the players feel like there is something different every time.



The ensnarer

Azuk

## AZAËLEAN

-2

The mystical Azaëleans live in the Kuan jungles. The jungle tribes treat these mighty forest dwellers with almost the same reverence as the Icons. They come charging through the trees like a battering ram of fur, muscle, and teeth. They have several ring-shaped mouths with rotating rows of teeth, surrounded by watchful eyes and venomous salivary glands. The Azaëleans leave wide corridors of destruction in their wake. The forest peoples use these tunnels through the undergrowth for traveling, but the jungle soon seizes the opportunity to rejuvenate itself, fresh sprouts and plants filling the hole. The tunnels are so large they can be seen from space using the right kind of sensors. Very few can brag about having seen an Azaëlean – if you get in the way of a moving Azaëlean, start running, or death is a certainty.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 7, AGILITY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 14

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 4, Force 3.

**ARMOR:** 10

**WEAPONS:** Mangling jaws (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 2), corrosive spit (Weapon Damage 2, Short Range, test armor normally)

- **ROTATING JAWS:** Anyone hit by the jaws attack will also be pulled into the mouth. The victim must pass a **FORCE** test to break free (a normal action). As long as the victim is stuck, the Azaëlean gets +3 to all attacks against that person. If a victim manages to break free, the Azaëlan usually changes direction and leaves the person be.
- **MENTAL CAMOUFLAGE:** The Azaëlean can camouflage itself from both sensors and the naked eye, giving all onlookers a -3 to **OBSERVATION** and negating all Gear Bonuses from technology. This makes it very hard to spot until it is within Short Range of its victim.
- **REGENERATION:** The Azaëlean regenerates D6 HP at the cost of one slow action and one DP.
- **SLOW:** The Azaëlean moves slowly as it is chewing its way through the jungle. PCs attempting to run away from the beast gets a +2 to **DEXTERITY**.

## AZUK

-1

The azuk is a biosculpted combat beast with biocode from cats, Kuan jungle snakes, whipping lobsters, and now extinct saber-toothed tigers. They have cat-like bodies, but with dark, shimmering scales instead of fur. Their backs are long and flexible like a snake's, and they are usually equipped with retractable teeth and claws. Azuks are kept as pets on space stations thanks to their being easy to rear in confined spaces. They also deal with pests, such as rats, that some stations have big problems with. Azuks that live in the wild are usually not as aggressive as those that have been trained to fight in the arenas. Trained azuks are kept in cages because of their extreme hostility towards everyone but their masters.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 5

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 14

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 3, Infiltration 1

**ARMOR:** 1

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2)

## DHOL

+2

The wild dhol, a sort of prairie dog, lives in the wilderness on several planets but is traditionally associated with the plains of Mira. The dhols live and hunt in packs. Dhols are sometimes captured and trained as guard dogs or arena fighters when ordinary pit dogs are not exotic enough.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 7

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 2, Dexterity 2, Infiltration 1

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2)

## DIRHAD

-1

The dirhad is a predator biosculpted to survive in burning hot climates and to be a tough challenge for hunters. They are mainly found on Lubau in the Kua system, but also on other worlds with hot deserts. The dirhad has the appearance of a large cat but has a light brown skin with black spots instead of fur. To withstand the heat, its blood flow has been extended through special skin flaps between the front and hind legs that function as an internal cooling system. The flaps can be retracted for faster movement. To be more of a challenge to hunters, the dirhad have been made intelligent (but not a true semi-intelligence) and its head and torso is covered in bionic armor that protects against most primitive weapons. "Dirhad" actually means armor or shell cat in the language of the Beri nomads. The dirhad can move very quickly across short distances, but then it has to stop to cool down. It prefers to ambush or sneak up on its prey.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 10

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 20/8 (see below)

**SKILLS:** Infiltration 3, Melee Combat 3, Observation 4

**ARMOR:** 7

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2), scorching claws (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 1)

- **SPRINTER:** The dirhad is capable of explosive bursts of speed. For one turn, it will have a Movement Rate of 20 meters. After such a sprint, the Movement Rate is reduced to 8 for three turns.
- **SCORCHER:** The dirhad can store heat in its exo armor and then release the flames in an attack with its scorching claws (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 2). Recharging the heat again takes three turns.

## DROMEDON

+1

The dromedon is a sculpted derivative of dromedaries and a few other species that are now extinct. It can live on blistering hot planets without problem, such as on Lubau, where it is used for transportation across the deserts. They live off the tough plants the deserts have to offer. To digest the chewy vegetation, their stomachs have eight compartments, which unfortunately means they pass quite a lot

of methane through their rear ends. Zenithian colonists call the dromedons the "stinker of the desert" and many actually prefer motorized vehicles because of the smell. The dromedons are born with one hump but sometimes grow more during their life, as they never stop growing. This eventually leads to the older dromedons dying from heart failure or fractures, usually after reaching a withers height of over four meters. The largest known dromedons were over 7 meters high, but this is rare. Domesticated dromedons are usually put down when they reach a height of three meters. The dromedons are calm and slow animals, but during their biennial estrus they can become aggressive and are known for spitting.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 8

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Force 3, Melee Combat 1

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** Trample (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **ENORMOUS:** Older dromedons can become monstrous in size, gaining +10 HP.



Dromedon

## LAMKA LIZARD

+1

These sculpted lizards can be found on the acidified Jina as well as on a few other inhospitable worlds. The lizards are carnivores but can live off insect larvae and bugs for periods of time if they have to. The lamka on Jina often attack travelers, and the humanite on the planet are said to feed them their prisoners. The lamka lizard is slow and needs to be able to sneak up on its prey or lie in wait, and it prefers to hunt at night. A lamka can be trained and bound to a human master, but it is hard work. On Jina, the lizards seem to have a mystical bond with the humanites' elite warriors, always knowing their master's will.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 10

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 8

**SKILLS:** Infiltration 4, Melee Combat 3

**ARMOR:** 2

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2)

## NAHANG

±0

The nahang lurks in both salt water and freshwater bodies. It is an almost ten meters long, terrifying water beast with serrated teeth, blank, black eyes like something out of the Dark between the Stars and a primal, animalistic hunger. The nahang vary in appearance depending on the planet and water type, from grey and cylindrical with long fins, to mottled green with paddle-like feet and spikes on its back. The nahang is attracted to movement in the water, regardless of whether it is rhythmic or not, and has sometimes been known to attack watercraft or grav craft close to the surface.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 6**

**HIT POINTS:** 18

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12 (under water)

**SKILLS:** Force 2, Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 2, Infiltration 1

**ARMOR:** 3

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2)

- **RAM:** When the nahang attacks, it can choose to crush the hull of a watercraft or try to tip it over by testing **FORCE**. If the roll is successful, the craft begins to sink immediately. To be able to ram something, the nahang must charge along the surface from afar, using at least two movement actions.
- **LEAP ATTACK:** The nahang can test **DEXTERITY** to breach the surface at an incredible speed, leaping up to ten meters into the air, which is higher than the altitude of normal grav craft. If the nahang spent the previous turn picking up speed, the leap attack is only one fast action.

## RED SUN ANTS

-1

The red sun ants can be found in several systems, but where they originated from is unknown. They usually live in high, rock-hard hills that shoot out of the ground like alien monuments to the Portal Builders. The ants protect their homes fiercely, something many prospectors and explorers have found out the hard way. Underneath the hills, hidden chambers contain the highly sought-after umbria, a reddish liquid with both medicurgical and narcotic properties. The sun ants leave their homes now and then to go wandering across the lands like a red, surprisingly fast, mass. Nothing survives in their path.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 10

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 2, Dexterity 2

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 4)

- **SWARM:** The ant swarm can only be damaged by flame- and thermal throwers or explosions.
- **NOVA EXPLOSION:** The sun ants can circle and cover a victim with a successful **DEXTERITY** test. The following turn they ignite and explode with a Blast Power equal to the swarm's current HP.

- **SUN HILL:** A sun anthill is about four meters high and formed from cement-hard secretions (Armor Rating 10). A prospector who digs into the core of the hill can extract valuable umbria.

## UHARU BEAST

-1

The deadly fast Uharu beast lives in the jungles of Uharu's forest moons. It resembles a slim and wiry cat, but with six legs and an over-sized mouth full of fangs. The two pairs of hind legs are thick, strong and equipped with large claws, equally good for climbing trees and rending flesh. The beast's tail is long and sharp. Behind its head, it has a greenish mane that gradually blends into a row of spikes running along the spine. The spikes are venomous and can be raised when the animal attacks. The Uharu beasts hunt in small packs of between two and five members. They usually sneak up on their prey and then fall upon them from above.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 6**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 14

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 4, Dexterity 4, Infiltration 4

**ARMOR:** 1

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2), talons (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **JUMP ATTACK:** The Uharu beast begins a fight by attacking its enemy from the tree crowns high above. If it wins a **DEXTERITY** opposed roll, it lands on top of its prey. This counts as a sneak attack (page 85), but with a +2 modifier.
- **SPIKES:** The beast can hurl itself sideways into an opponent to attack with its venomous spikes. This attack counts as a normal melee attack (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 4). If the spikes inflict one or more points of damage, they inflict a poison attack with the same strength as that of the damage points caused. The victim must win an opposed roll using her Strength versus the poison strength or become paralyzed, losing all actions until someone treats the wound with **MEDICURGY** or until D6 minutes have passed.

## MUZHADJAR

-2

The cold dark of space is home to the mysterious beings known as the muzhadjar. They are most common around ship cemeteries and other wreckage. They were originally created as an advanced defense system for Yahurab-class battleships from the First Horizon and are a mix of bio sculpt and semi-intelligent machine. They are designed to move quickly through tight spaces and to survive in vacuum. Exactly what sort of biocode they are based upon is unknown, but rumors say that creatures from the Dark between the Stars are the source. Like many other sculpted creatures, the muzhadjar's capabilities far exceeded the expectations of their creators. They quickly became autonomous and learned how to reproduce. Wild muzhadjar live off raw materials (both organic and inorganic) and solar radiation, restructuring it into chemical energy and fuel. The muzhadjar usually feed on ship wreckage and small asteroids but are drawn to ships in motion. They communicate using radio signals, which make them easy to detect on ship sensors (+1). A muzhadjar looks like a hybrid between a bat with its wings folded and a spider. Its head is long and angular and folded against the back plates when the creature enters its hibernation and feeding position, making it look like a black rock.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 20 (in space)

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 4, Dexterity 5, Infiltration 5

**ARMOR:** 9

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2)

- **HULL BREAKER:** Muzhadjar who attack ships land on the hull and start to chew through the hull with their powerful jaws. A pack of muzhadjar can break the hull of a ship in just an hour. This works like a spaceship attack (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2).
- **HEAT SENSITIVE:** The muzhadjar are sensitive to strong heat and will retreat if a strong heat source is aimed in their direction.
- **CHEMICAL PROPULSION:** The muzhadjar have organs that work like powerful rockets, enabling them to reach speeds that match a slow ship (Speed 1).



Muzhadjar

# DARKMORPHS

There is nothing as feared in the Third Horizon as darkmorphs. What sinister things the Dark between the Stars spawns or how they affect mankind is not known, but the creatures which folklore refers to as darkmorphs are always of a physical nature, as opposed to djinn and sarcofagoi.

- **Darkmorphs** can channel the darkness to activate their special abilities using Darkness Points. The GM can choose to spend DP to activate an ability. The cost depends on the ability.
- **Darkmorphs** can, unlike djinni in etheral form, take damage from physical weapons, fire and explosions.

## BYARA

-2

One of the creatures from the depths of the void is the byara. The stories about its appearance differ, but Hargama Fattou, the famous prophet and mnemonic, described the byara

### WHAT IS THE DARK BETWEEN THE STARS?

No one can, of course, be sure of what the Dark between the Stars really is – the only thing the inhabitants of the Horizon know of this lurking cosmic evil is the different manifestations it takes in the world, such as darkmorphs, madness, and haunting spirits. The darkness is actually just energy, raw and pure – so pure that it has no goal or direction. The Church of the Icons are right in their supposition that the darkness only affects that which already exists: life, in all its multiplicity. In the First Horizon, mankind has tamed the Dark between the Stars and uses it to create energy and to sculpt life. This practice has in turn warped parts of the First Horizon, especially its rulers.



Byara

like this: “Not quite raven, nor mole, vulture, bug, bat or decaying corpse, but something I cannot and wish never to remember”. Most accounts describe it as a flying, lizard-like creature that is almost one with the darkness. The byara lives in the darkness of space, but is drawn to places where the darkness is especially thick or permanent – solar eclipses, the night side of planets in fixed rotation, asteroid caves or decommissioned space stations. Folk tales describe how lost prophets or darkbound people can ride the byara into the cold black.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 18 (in space)

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 4, Dexterity 3, Infiltration 4

**ARMOR:** 2

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2)

- **DARK VISION:** The byara has perfect vision in all kinds of darkness and smoke.
- **PLAGUE BITE:** At the cost of 1 DP, the byara can transmit a gangrenous disease through its bite attack to a victim. If the victim suffers one or more points of damage, it is stricken with a high fever about a day later that ends in death unless someone treats the diseased with **MEDICURGY**.

## JAYRAT

-1

The high mountain ranges of Tanzim, where the thin atmosphere gives way to black space, is home to the night ravens of the highlands – the jayrat. Like shadows they gather around lights, sounds, and people talking. Many rebels and opor farmers have succumbed to the jayrat when an unkindness, a large flock of the creatures, dives towards them from above, covering them in darkness and leaving only bones behind. Jayrats are described as raven-

like creatures that in large numbers seem to melt into a moving cloud of darkness. With their beaks and talons they attack all living things in their path. Stories about them also suggest that they are drawn to gravitational phenomena, both on planets and in space.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 7**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 16

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 1, Dexterity 1

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 3)

- **SWARM:** The jayrat swarm can only be damaged by flame and thermal throwers or explosions.
- **CLOAK OF SHADOWS:** The jayrat swarm can spend 1 DP to cover a victim within Close Range in complete darkness. The cloak attack inflicts 1 point of stress per turn in addition to any bite attacks.
- **MANIA:** At the cost of 1 DP, the a jayrat attack can cause a victim to suffer a mania (page 337).

## DARKBOUND

-2

The darkbound are regular people that are somehow claimed by the Darkness. Perhaps they have been turned bad by djinn or efrites, been exposed to corrupting dark forces or formed horrible pacts with cadaver clocks or dark cybernetics. The darkbound being will usually look like a thin and twisted human, with only a few torn patches of hair left, and with burning eyes and long claws instead of fingers. They move incredibly fast, closing in on their victims in the blink of an eye to sink their claws into them. Just the touch of a darkbound can paralyze someone completely. The darkbound don't bleed. Instead, they ooze darkness if they are damaged, like dark paint dissolving in water, or like dark smoke. The body is a vessel, and the essence of the being is darkness. If a darkbound is slain, its shadow disappears like smoke in the wind, leaving behind only a shrivelled and fragile corpse.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 9

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 16

**SKILLS:** **MYSTIC POWERS** (roll for the skill level only, as darkbound lack Empathy), **MELEE COMBAT** 4, **DEXTERITY** 3

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Claws (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2).

- **NIGHT VEIL:** The darkbound can affect nearby minds with its own darkness. This works like a mystical attack and costs 1 DP. The victim will experience the world as dark, cold and surreal. Seeing, thinking and acting becomes harder (-2 to **OBSERVATION**, all advanced skills and initiative), unless the victim wins an opposed roll using **EMPATHY** (no skill) against the **MYSTIC POWER** score of the darkbound.

## THE HOUNDS OF TIRIDES

-2

There is a haunting story about how the inhabitants of the blossoming Tirides colony on Menkar disappeared without a trace. The empty colony crumbled, as no believers would set foot there again. Then, a single survivor surfaced and told the story of the gruesome fate of the other colonists. One night, when the two moons of Menkar were only waning crescents in the sky, grey-white smoke suddenly sprang from the corners of all the rooms in the colony. From out of the smoke came dog-like creatures that hunted and devoured all of Tirides' inhabitants before the sun rose again. The sole survivor hid in a round water tank and was spared thanks to that. From this story comes the Horizon tradition of building round houses in several of the outer systems. Since the Tirides incident, other colonies have also described seeing the same canine demon creatures, now called the Hounds of Tirides. The hounds manifest themselves through sharp corners as a mist of black or grey-white smoke that soon transforms into what looks like a sinewy, skinny dog or some strange bird, immediately attacking the first person it sees. The hounds disappear only after having killed their victims. They are most often spotted in spaceports, onboard ships, near star portals or



Darkbound

in other places with graviton projectors. They hunt alone or in packs.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 5**

**HIT POINTS:** 9

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12

**SKILLS:** Force 4, Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 3

**ARMOR:** 3

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1).

- **REALITY WARP:** At the cost of 1 DP, the hound can slip through a tiny crack (such as underneath a door) or manifest itself in a corner of the room where its intended victim is located.
- **THE HUNTER'S HOWL:** At the cost of 1 DP, the hound can let out a primal howl that tears at the souls of victims within Short Range, driving them insane. All victims must test Empathy at -2. Failure results in 2 points of stress.
- **WARP ARMOR:** At the cost of 1 DP, the hound can warp reality to protect itself from physical weapons. Each DP spent negates 2 points of damage.

# CONSTRUCTS

"Constructs" are either new, technological creations or artifacts from the Portal Builders or advanced Firstcome civilizations. They take damage normally and some of them have special abilities that are activated by Darkness Points.

## KINETIC INTELLIGENCE

-1

Kinetic intelligences are autonomous avatars linked to ancient defense systems, ship computers or djinn intelligences. They usually operate humanoid or teratomorphic cyber shells. Two different kinetic intelligences are described below.

### THE KINETIC INTELLIGENCES OF THE CELESTIAL WEB

There is an old, forgotten computer system out in the Rimward Reach that can control humanoid cyber shells that look quite similar to the animate armors of the Order of the Pariah, although with distinct red sensors on their heads. Apart from the sensors, the rest of the shell is matte black with a ribbed, fractalized surface.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 5**

**HIT POINTS:** 13

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 4, Dexterity 2, Ranged Combat 4, Observation 4

**ARMOR:** 8

**WEAPONS:** Thermal carbine (Weapon Damage 6, CRIT 2, Long Range), stun gun (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT stun, Short Range)

- **BROAD SPECTRUM SENSORS:** The kinetic intelligence has sensors that work across all spectrums and are unaffected by darkness or smoke.

### TERATOMORPHIC KINETIC INTELLIGENCE

The teratomorphic kinetic intelligence is completely autonomous and stopped contacting its ship or djinn intelligence for orders or updates a long time ago. As suggested by the name, the creature is monstrous, mostly resembling a dog made of black, ceramic muscles, covered in matte metal reinforcements. The round head has several red sensor lights, attack mandibles and serrated blades.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 6**

**HIT POINTS:** 16



Kinetic intelligence



**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 2, Ranged Combat 3, Observation 3

**ARMOR:** 6

**WEAPONS:** Attack mandibles with saw blades (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1)

- **ARMOR BREAKER:** The saw blade reduces the target's Armor Rating by 2.
- **GRENADE LAUNCHER:** The intelligence has a grenade launcher on its back, loaded with three concussion grenades (page 129).
- **SMOKE DISCHARGER:** Also mounted on the back is a smoke discharger, capable of emitting grey sensor smoke to hide the intelligence and confuse enemies. The discharger can cover everything within Short Range in smoke in one turn.
- **JUMPER:** The cyber muscles in the legs of the intelligence enable it to perform jumps up to 20 meters long and 10 meters high (a normal action). It may not take any movement actions in the turn after a jump.

## MODIFIED MINING DRONE

+2

Mining drones are a common tool for asteroid wallahs out in the belts and gravel clouds. Some of these drones have been converted into weapons. They are generally controlled by a wallah in a small ship within sensor range, but are sometimes equipped with a simple djinn intelligence to be autonomous. If they are controlled by a pilot, her **DATA DJINN** score is used for all actions the drone performs.

**ATTRIBUTES:**

**STRENGTH 7, AGILITY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 12 (in space)

**SKILLS:** Force 4, Melee Combat 1, Dexterity 2, Ranged Combat 2, Observation 1

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** Thermal cutter (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1)

- **PREHENSILE TENTACLE:** The drone is equipped with a long tentacle that can be used to grab victims within Short Range. This counts as a normal melee attack, but if successful, the target is grappled (page 87) instead of suffering damage.

## THE ENSNARER

-2

The ensnarer, or Yal-Shir as the monster is called on Mira, is a forgotten war machine from the time before the Portal Builders. Yal-Shir is said to prey upon disbelievers and the unworthy of the faithful to feast upon their bodies. Survivors of Yal-Shir attacks describe a creature that appears in a shimmer from out of thin air to stab and rend its victims with the claws, tusks, and spikes that cover its body. For some unknown reason, the Yal-Shir is most active on Mira, but reports of similar attacks have come in from other places in the Horizon as well. The known facts about the monster are that it is a humanoid being about three meters tall, with four arms, scalpel-like hooked finger blades, and a constant shimmer in the air around it. Some describe this aura as the light of the Icons – others say that it is as black as the Dark between the Stars.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 5**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10 (but see Phase Shift, below)

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 4

**ARMOR:** 10

**WEAPONS:** Sickle claws (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 2)

- **PHASE SHIFT:** The Yal-Shir can bend the fabric of space-time, allowing it to move in both time and space. Practically, this means that it can move from one victim to the next using only one fast action regardless of the distance, at the cost of 1 DP.
- **PORTAL HEALING:** At the cost of 1 DP, the Yal-Shir can open a portal and leave the fight just as quickly as it entered it. When it returns in the future, it is whole again. If it becomes broken, this happens automatically.

## BAH-JIN

-2

The empty void is home to the Star Snake, the bah-jin – a forgotten, old weapons system equipped with phase shift technology, probably from the Portal Builder era. Many space nomads worship the bah-jin under names like the Ouroboros, the World Eater, the Star Dragon or Ba-Yinn, thought to be the destructive aspect of the Faceless One. The bah-jin is a gigantic, almost ethereal, creation. Force fields that fluctuate between different phases in space-time make it sometimes invisible and sometimes visible, appearing spectral, shimmering and serpent-like, longer than a large ship. The Rimward Reach nomads have, through their abbas, learned the mysterious ways of communicating with the bah-yin and have even gotten it to carry out their commands. Local faiths praise the bah-jin as a guardian of the song routes in the Rimward Reach, keeping threats and outsiders away.

The bah-jin is treated as a spaceship but can only act in the Pilot Phase and Attack Phase. It does not roll for Initiative and always acts last in space combat.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**AGILITY 4**

**SKILLS:** Pilot 4, Ranged Combat 2.

**SPEED:** 4

**MANEUVERABILITY:** +3

**HULL POINTS:** 12

**ENERGY POINTS:** 12

**SIGNATURE:** -2

**ARMOR:** 10

**WEAPON SYSTEMS:** Claw projection (Weapon Damage 4, CRIT 2)

- **RAM:** Apart from wrapping itself around spaceships and attacking them with its claw projections, the bah-jin can also ram them. This works like ramming in space combat (see Chapter 7).
- **RADIATION FLASH:** The bah-jin can disrupt space on the nano level, releasing cascades of light and radiation that work as a ranged attack (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 2, Medium Range).

## SENTINEL

-2

In old ruins left behind by the Portal Builders or other mysterious entities, there are often strange sculptures, like statues of molten stone mixed with what appears to be metal and ceramic alloys. They are sometimes covered in thick mucus that seeps out of the statue itself. They sometimes change form, and structures looking like teeth or tusks can suddenly appear. Touching the statues could be lethal, as the mucus and other surface materials can warp, maim or kill. It is said that one sometimes hears voices around the statues, but it is usually only mystically inclined people who can hear them, like an aura of unrest. The statues can be completely inert, but sometimes they come to life. They are guardians that for unknown reasons decide to awaken to protect the ruin or location they occupy. When a sentinel awakens, it will attack until its enemies flee from the area it is guarding.

Exactly what causes the sentinels to awake is not clear. It could have something to do with sensor sweeps, life auras, darkness, graviton fields or something else entirely. There are stories about how certain Firstcome peoples worshipped these monstrosities, sometimes even carving them into heathen images of anub dogs, statues of the Judge or other horrible things.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 8, AGILITY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 14

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 8

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 2, Dexterity 1

**ARMOR:** 12

**WEAPONS:** Stone fists (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **AURA OF UNREST:** The statues exude an aura of anxiety and unease around them. At the cost of 1 DP, everyone within Close Range gets a -2 to all actions. At the cost of 2 DP, the area of effect is increased to Short Range. The aura lasts for a few minutes.
- **CORRUPTING SLIME:** If someone touches a mucus-covered statue, or is hit by a melee attack, they must pass a **FORCE** test or suffer a random critical injury that takes the form of a body warp, not unlike an involuntary biosculpt. This effect costs 3 DP.



Blood fiend

### BLOOD FIEND -2

The blood fiend is a bionic war beast designed by NimaBionics for the Legion as a substitute for the unruly nekatra. Originally, biocode from nekatra, dirhad, nahang, and baboon was also used. The sculpt was unsuccessful, and instead, NimaBionics chose human biocode as the source of the beast that would become the blood fiends. This was a breach of the bioethical code. Prisoners of war were devolved and sculpted with the codes mentioned above, but were also cybernetically improved with thick, duralite claws. Some fifty units were completed and delivered, but upon testing, the blood fiends turned out even harder to control than the nekatra.

Since the end of production, a few blood fiends have managed to escape the facilities of NimaBionics and can be found in the wild. It is possible that the Legion still has a few individuals kept in stasis as well. As each blood fiend is a biosculpted human, their abilities are somewhat varied depending on the victim's individual susceptibility to certain sculpts. Blood fiends are extremely aggressive and intelligent, always attacking in groups and, if possible, choosing victims in groups smaller than theirs.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 6**

**HIT POINTS:** 10

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 18

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 5, Dexterity 3, Observation 3

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** Nahang jaws (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 2), duralite claws (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **BLOOD LUST:** At a cost of 1 DP, the fiend's mystical blood lust can be activated, giving it a +2 to all attacks, but leaving it unable to flee or parry.

# SPIRITS AND SARCOFAGOI

The Horizon is full of stories about spirits, from evil efrites to benevolent Icon manifestations. The stories vary from system to system, and from Firstcome to Zenithian. Spirits, just like darkmorphs, are manifestations of the Dark between the Stars, formed from channeled lost hopes, dark thoughts, and that which happens in the emptiness of a portal jump. Spirits and sarcofagoi share the trait that they are ethereal beings and as such immune to certain forms of physical violence. They are often just as intelligent as humans, and can be both manipulated and tricked. Just like darkmorphs, spirits have the ability to channel the darkness to fuel their abilities through Darkness Points. The GM can choose to spend DP to activate an ability. The cost depends on the ability.

### DJINN -1

The djinn are spirits that exist in the Dark between the Stars. They are ethereal but can take physical form whenever they wish. When in their ethereal form, they are immune to almost all forms of physical trauma and are only vulnerable to mystical powers and Icon rituals (**CULTURE**). Djinn come in many forms, but are often only visible as a gust of wind or a swirl in the desert sands. They can choose to present themselves as either human or animal, but they are very much just like people: some of them are good, some are evil, and a few are just neutral. Djinn can sometimes play tricks on humans, but just as easily destroy them. There are many different magnitudes of djinn, from the djanna, the weak jungle sprites, to the mighty efrites. The different forms are described below.

#### DJANNA

The djanna are wild forest sprites that feed off the fear and panic of a human being's last moments alive. They cannot kill anything themselves, only wait for death to come. They materialize as tiny specks of lights, like fireflies or ghost lights hovering in the darkness of the jungle. Using their mystic powers, they try to lure their victims into marshes or quicksand. The djanna can be damaged by mystical powers, blessed talismans or fire, something a PC with **CULTURE** would know.



Djinn

**NO SPIRITS?**

Spirits are a part of the story in Coriolis – The Third Horizon, but if you and your group feel that it would be weird or too supernatural to chitchat with an efrite in the catacombs underneath a Portal pyramid or to be possessed by a Hazared, then maybe they are just that – stories.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 1, WITS 1, EMPATHY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 3

**MIND POINTS:** 3

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Mystic Powers 3

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** -

- **LURE:** At the cost of 1 DP, the djanna can test **MYSTIC POWERS** in an opposed roll against the Wits of a victim, to try to make the victim wander off into the jungle. The effect is active as long as the djanna are nearby. The victim knows that something is wrong but is unable to do anything about it.

### DJINN

Ordinary djinn usually travel the Horizon in human form. They lead normal human lives, but tend to become wise and mighty in whatever they choose to do. They can change form whenever they want, from human to animal or to a little whirlwind. When the djinn is in physical form, it takes damage normally, but can only be harmed by mystical powers, fire and holy objects when in its true form.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 5**

**HIT POINTS:** 9

**MIND POINTS:** 8

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Mystic Powers 5, other skills depend on the chosen concept

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** -

- **MORPHOSIS:** The djinn can change its form at the cost of 1 DP. The change takes one turn. The physical aspects of the change differs from djinn to djinn.
- **POSSESS:** The djinn can possess people. This requires 1 DP and a successful **MYSTIC POWERS** opposed roll against the Wits of the victim.
- **TRUE FORM:** When a djinn is subjected to blessed talismans, sand from an abba or holy relics, it reverts to its true form, usually as invisible or in the form of a whirlwind. Someone with **CULTURE** will know this.

### EFRITE

The most powerful of the djinn are the efrites. They prefer quiet lives to the bustle and commotion of human settlements, living in caves, ruins, abandoned spaceships or space stations and other places where the darkness is close. Like ordinary djinn, they can take whatever form they like, but can use their mystical powers to protect themselves against revealing their true nature. They can also possess dead things, such as corpses, body parts, computer systems, ships intelligences and drones. They often choose grandiose and imposing physical forms, such as the efrite Arghan who has hooves instead of feet, eagle wings and tusks instead of teeth. The stories about the smiling efrite mostly describe it as a sweet, pot-bellied elderly man or woman giving you a friendly smile.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 6, AGILITY 6, WITS 4, EMPATHY 6**

**HIT POINTS:** 12

**MIND POINTS:** 14

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Mystic Powers 5, other skills depend on the chosen concept

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** -

- **MYSTIC AKBAR:** The efrite can use all known mystic powers as well as create new ones. All powers require Darkness Points to be activated.

## SARCOFAGOI

-1

In the jungles of Kua or in the darkness of space – the sarcofagoi will strike when you least expect it. They are completely ethereal, only taking physical form when they feed on the cadavers of their victims. This is the only time when they are vulnerable to physical damage. In the flesh, they look like black shadows with silhouettes that are part vulture, part human and part reptile, not unlike a byara. They never kill anyone themselves, but use their powers to drive their victims crazy by sowing discord, hate and madness.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 2, WITS 1, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 7

**MIND POINTS:** 3

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Force 3, Mystic Powers 4, Melee Combat 3

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Claws (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3)

- **SOW DISCORD:** At the cost of 1 DP, the sarcofagoi can make its victim believe that someone is slandering them behind their back. At the cost of 2 DP, the victim becomes agitated and may start an unprovoked fight. Spend 3 DP and the victim will attack someone in her vicinity without reason. The sarcofagoi must escalate the level of suspicion step by step. To make someone attack their friends right away would cost 6 DP. In addition to spending DP, the sarcofagoi must win an opposed roll for **MYSTIC POWERS** against the Wits of the victim to achieve the required effect.

## BOKOR

-1

Slums and poor neighborhoods where disease and death are a part of everyday life are places where the darkness can assert itself. The same goes for battlefields and mass graves. The darkness will manifest itself as undead life in a cadaver. The purpose of the reanimated cadavers – actually that of the bokor's – is to multiply by killing other humans, who in turn will wake up as bokor. During the riots and fighting in the Conglomerate, many preachers claimed to have seen the dead rise again as bokor. The Hegemony responded and said that this was only propaganda spread by Yjala, the Slum Queen.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 7

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 8

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 2

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** Bite (Weapon Damage 1, CRIT 3)

- **BOKOR POISON:** After a bokor's bite attack has drawn blood, it can, at the cost of 1 DP, make the victim of the bite fall into a deep coma and slowly fade away, after which the person will rise from the dead as bokor. **MEDICURGY** and a trauma lab can stop this process, as can **MYSTIC POWERS** or holy talismans.

## HAZARED

-1

According to legend, Hazared Zakar was a preacher and philosopher in the Circle of Seekers on Mira. He started to investigate the mysterious events he witnessed and experienced and collected all his knowledge in a book, Azif's Chronicles. He was so enchanted by his creation that he began to study the darker aspects of Third Horizon mysticism. Over time, the unholy pursuit cost him his soul, and now, he wanders the Horizon as a lonely madman.

Hazared appears in many places, and some scholars believe that the story about Hazared is just a myth and the entity described in folklore is a form of djinn. When a Hazared meets other travelers, it joins their group to get a taste of life. During the night, the traveling companions get terrible nightmares that break them down, and eventually, the Hazared tries to possess their bodies. When it is in possession of a body, it retains access to all of the Hazared's power, but its mind is twisted in return, becoming aggressive, vindictive and violent. Many innocent travelers have been accused of being Hazared and have paid with their lives for this reason. Being able to prove that someone is really Hazared is notoriously difficult though some djinnhunters use ancient rituals for this purpose.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 5, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 5**

**HIT POINTS:** 8

**MIND POINTS:** 9

**MOVEMENT RATE:** 10

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 2

**ARMOR:** -

**WEAPONS:** -

- **NIGHTMARES:** A Hazared can plague someone sleeping nearby with horrific nightmares at the cost of 1 DP. The nightmares make the dreamer unable to recover damage or stress during the night, and the person suffers a -1 to all skills per sleepless night.
- **POSSESS:** The hazared can possess people. This requires 1 DP and a successful **MYSTIC POWERS** opposed roll against the Wits of the victim.

# DISEASES AND MIND MEMES

Monsters and spirits are not the only thing haunting the Horizon. Contagious diseases and mind memes fester in colonies, on space stations, and in cities. Both diseases and mind memes work like poison (Chapter 6). The difference between the two is that diseases affect the body, while the mind memes attack the mind of the PC. The GM can introduce a disease or mind meme at any time (if the situation allows it) at the cost of 1 DP.

## MANIA

+1

There are many forms of mania. They can hit suddenly and unexpectedly: after long voyages through the big black and portal jumps, or after seeing maimed bodies or the murder of one's friends and loved ones. Below are a few different manias:

**MANIAS**

| D6 | RESULT |
|---|---|
| 1 | **PHOBIA.** The PC becomes terrified and runs away from the source of the fear. |
| 2 | **COMPULSION.** The PC compulsively performs a specific action in certain situations. |
| 3 | **MELANCHOLY.** The PC feels that there is no point to existence, becoming fearless as she has nothing to lose by dying. |
| 4 | **SPIRITUAL RUPTURE.** The PC's soul is torn, and she can hear voices and spirits whispering and hissing, telling her what to do. |
| 5 | **WAKING SLEEP.** The PC sits apathetic, just staring at the wall. She does nothing and stops eating. |
| 6 | **MURDEROUS RAGE.** The PC becomes raving mad and tries to kill everyone around her, but she retains the ability to act rationally in pursuit of her murderous goals. |

## TACHARUK'S LESIONS

-2

Tacharuk was a renowned medicurg and Samaritan who traveled the Horizon tending to the sick and the needy. On one of Uharu's forest moons, Tacharuk himself was stricken with a mysterious illness that started as black, bleeding lesions on the skin and ended with him bleeding from every orifice. A person who comes in contact with the disease must pass a **FORCE** test or become infected. The first lesions show up a few days after the exposure, after which the diseased will suffer 1 point of damage per day until she becomes broken and dies. Only **MEDICURGY** with access to the best trauma labs can stop the process.

## HYPER SICKNESS

+2

People who are exposed to the portal fields for too long or without being in stasis will suffer hyper sickness, or "bad stasis" as it is also called. The condition is permanent and comes in many forms, from madness to having one's mind or limbs twisted by the darkness. The latter can at least be remedied with prostheses. A person traveling through a portal field without stasis rolls D6, a result of 1-2 indicating he has been affected of hyper sickness.

## OASIS DISEASE

-1

A dangerous meme that often strikes in dry environments and deserts is the mind meme called the oasis disease. People who contract the meme will try to keep alleviate their thirst away by drinking water wherever they can find it. They cannot stop drinking. After a few days, their brains swell up and they die unless they are forcefully kept from drinking. Medicurgs alone cannot treat the patient as it takes proxy technology to combat the meme. Exorcisms have supposedly worked in some cases.

## THE DARS' CURSE

-2

On Dabaran and in the upper classes on Coriolis, an affliction called the Dars' Curse is beginning to spread. The effect of the meme is that its victim becomes extremely haughty and arrogant. The victim gets a -2 to **MANIPULATION**. The meme is curable, but the victim is generally not interested in being cured. The origins of the curse are debated, though some scholars believe that it mainly affects people that have visited the Wound and looked down into its vast emptiness.





# CHAPTER 15
# CAMPAIGN

*We live in an era of change. The Horizon is in danger – the Icons know it and we can hear their whispers. The mystic's disease is spreading, no one knows what the Emissaries really want and the Order is on the warpath. Who can we turn to when even the Council does nothing?*

**THE HORIZON IS BURNING** – Zhada Melara

The Third Horizon is a place full of intrigue and adventure – it is your job as the GM to bring all this to the players. This chapter will give you tips and tools to help you create the best game possible. It also describes the principles of the game, tips on how to create NPCs, and advice about how to use the Dark between the Stars. You will also find a mini scenario and two scenario locations, ready to be used right away.

**THIS CHAPTER IS** only for the eyes of the GM (especially The Statuette of Zhar and Terenganu Valley). If you are a player and keep reading, you will spoil the fun for yourself and your group.

# YOUR JOB AS THE GM

As the GM, you bring the Horizon to life. You are the PCs' friends and enemies. You are the meteorite that soars through space and the storm that howls through the jungle. You are the beings in the shadows, the mystical artifacts the PCs find, and much, much more. It is a tough and demanding job to animate the world of Coriolis, but also both a fun and creative job. There are a few elements in Coriolis that make it a unique game. These are briefly presented below.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GAME

The principles of the game are aids for you as GM to create the right setting and mood. They can also help you handle situations that arise during the course of the game. Learn them by heart and use them in the game.

### ⚙ CULTURE IS EVERYTHING

The world of Coriolis is full of different cultures that influence the Horizon, from the proud Firstcome cultures that celebrate mysticism, religion and tradition to the modern pioneers that arrived with the Zenith. Infuse the game world with inspiration from the Middle East and the mysterious fairytale ambiance of the Arabian Nights.

### ⚙ THE MISSIONS FUEL THE STORY

To survive in the Horizon, the PCs must go on missions to earn birr, status or spaceship parts. Let the group's focus and goals drive the game. Give them missions that mean something, that change them and that maybe even change the whole Horizon in the end.

### ⚙ THEIR SPACESHIP IS THEIR HEART

The group's spaceship will be their home, their means of transportation and their most important asset. Let the spaceship become an extra character in the group, with its own life, quirks and history. The spaceship is the group's most essential possession – use it to create story arcs and challenges.

### ⚙ THE FACTIONS RULE THE HORIZON

The mighty factions dominate most of the Horizon and are constantly competing with each other, always trying to extend their influence at the expense of someone else's. Whether they want to or not, the PCs will sooner or later be sucked into the scheming and plotting – either as willing participants or manipulated pawns.

### ⚙ SPACE IS FULL OF MYSTERIES

The game world of Coriolis is full of unsolved mysteries, ancient secrets and strange riddles. Let the PCs explore the secrets of the Third Horizon during their travels. Let them find Portal Builder ruins, hear rumors about the fearsome powers of the Emissaries, and discover strange remains of Firstcome civilizations long lost in the sands of time.

### ⚙ THE SUPERNATURAL IS REAL

To the people of the Third Horizon, the supernatural is real – djinn, the darkbound, and unexplainable phenomena really exist. Where it all comes from is not so clear, however. Icon believers say that it comes from the Dark between the Stars, while others blame technology from ancient civilizations. Use the supernatural effectively but not too often; let it be

something special and frightening. Those who don't worship the Icons in the Third Horizon will stick out. Make sure that this is obvious to the players; have NPCs around them pray, receive blessings and make the sign against the Dark between the Stars. Use your Darkness Points for dramatic effect to add suspense to the game.

## SCENES – BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

A handy GM tool is to handle the story as a series of scenes. This could help you make your storytelling more effective. The players could also take the lead and initiate scenes in the game. So, what is a scene? A scene is the part of the game where the important things happen, where the PCs interact with NPCs and the game world. A scene will usually be between a few minutes and half an hour of game time. Instead of playing what happens every single minute of a day or during long voyages, concentrate on the important events. Scenes should always have a purpose, such as:

- to drive the story forward
- to show conflict
- to introduce or explore an NPC
- to create suspense or atmosphere
- to give the players some important piece of information
- to expand on one of the principles of the game

When creating a scene, it is important to think about defining where it start and end. If a scene starts too early it can become boring before you get to the good part, and the same goes for not ending the scene after the important events are over. Create scenes about individual events or encounters, not about places.

## TIME IN THE GAME

Time in the game is measured in two ways – game time and story time. Game time is the different time divisions relevant to the session and to the real world.

### GAME TIME

- **Turn:** A turn is the time it takes for all the PCs to act and defend themselves in a conflict. A turn is usually 10-20 seconds measured in story time.
- **Scene:** The time it takes to resolve a conflict or end an event for some other reason. Usually from a minute or two to half an hour.
- **Session:** The time you set aside to play the game at a given time, usually two to four hours. At the end of each session, the PCs are awarded XP.
- **Scenario:** An adventure spanning several sessions, ending or resolving a major problem.
- **Campaign:** Two to four scenarios that together form a story arc. When a campaign ends, it should leave a noticeable mark on the Third Horizon.

### STORY TIME

The time that passes in the game world is called story time. This is usually not something you need to keep track of, but sometimes it could be worth mentioning that it took the group an hour to get from the Neoptra spaceport to the Net, or that a conflict that took fifteen minutes of game time was actually just a minute or two of story time. You can use story time in the game to make something more dramatic:

- **Against the clock:** Putting the PCs under time pressure can add to the suspense. This could involve traps that close in a few minutes time or a bomb that will explode in half an hour. You can, for example, count all skill tests during a certain part of the scenario to determine how much time has passed, and maybe guide their choice of skills.
- **Story time and levels of success or failure:** Let something take more or less time to complete depending on how well the PCs did on their skill tests. This can be combined with time pressure for extra drama. As a general rule, a critical success should cut the time it takes to do something in half, and even more sixes can shorten the time further.
- **The length of an action:** You can let a single action (one skill test) take up a lot of story time to zoom out of the story if it suits the situation. For example, one **MANIPULATION** roll could be several months of negotiations during a summit or conference between factions or corporations, and one **OBSERVATION** test can be a thirty-hour stake-out of a Martyr commando or a Syndicate warehouse. This can be a way of making longer cuts in a scenario without getting stuck in the details.
- **Zooming in and out:** The time it takes to perform a certain action can vary. Use this to change the tempo of the story, to introduce an unexpected event or to start a new scene.

## SCENARIOS IN CORIOLIS

Coriolis is a game designed for epic campaigns where you see the Horizon change by your actions, but you can of course also play smaller, more focused campaigns, concentrating



on the concept or goal of the group. Maybe it all takes place on a cut-off colony on a remote moon or in a surrounded squad of drone operators on Uharu-13. Regardless of how you intend to play, there are many different ways to create a good story in Coriolis. Below are the three main formats of the game:

- **Mini scenarios** describe one event, with a background, starting point, a few short episodes, and some suggestions for epilogues and continuation. These are suitable for one or two sessions. Example: The Statuette of Zhar Baghra on page 347.
- **Scenario locations** describe a place – its current situation and the NPCs, technology and artifacts it contains. Short suggestions for events are included, but the sector is otherwise open and not tied to a specific story. Example: Terenganu Valley on page 351 and Wahib's cantina on page 357.
- **Full-length adventures** are stories in three acts, with a few possible starting points and key scenes, locations and NPCs as well as suggestions for the aftermath. Only full-length adventures contain fully described scenes.

## HOW TO MANAGE DIFFICULTY LEVELS

When the dice come out, it is good to know how to determine a relevant difficulty level. The Skills chapter describes the difficulty levels and the levels of success. It is important to remember that the difficulty of something should reflect the drama of the situation and not necessarily the ”realism” of it – it should be harder to perform something dramatically important than something less so. It is better to use the higher levels of difficulty for important rolls rather than to have the same difficulty all the time, and instead give the players negative modifiers when things heat up. This will have the psychological effect of making the players feel challenged rather than limited or discouraged. The last important piece of advice about difficulty levels is that you as the GM should always be able to justify the difficulty. It should not be relatively difficult for the PC depending on her skill level; there has to be a logic to the roll that fits with the story.

### LOW DIFFICULTY

There are several reasons for low difficulty levels, such as to let the PCs excel at something. Things that are in the way of the drama should have low difficulty levels so as not to slow the story down.

### ⚙ HIGH DIFFICULTY

High difficulty levels should be used if the players have generated a large DP pool, if they are at the end of an adventure or if their enemies are well prepared – in situations such as these, you can raise the difficulty for all actions.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

As the GM, you command ion storms, artifact creatures and djinn, but your non-player characters are your most important tools. When you want to create tension or drama in the game, an effective way could be to use the NPCs the PCs hate, want to protect, or have some other relationship with.

## CREATING NPCS

Start by deciding which sub-concept your NPC should have. An NPC could have a concept as well, but doesn't have to.

**ATTRIBUTES:** Table 15.1 lists typical attribute scores for NPCs. If the NPC doesn't have a concept, you could just give her a 3 in all the attributes. The listed scores are just examples – you can create NPCs with higher or lower scores if you want to, even higher than the PCs get to start with, but don't give an NPC higher than a 5 in an attribute.

**REPUTATION:** Table 15.1 lists Reputation scores. You can use the table for inspiration. The scores are set for stationary

### WHEN TO ROLL DICE

Only roll dice when the outcome of the roll brings something interesting to the story, regardless of whether the roll fails or succeeds. This is quite obvious with tests that succeed – they drive the story forward – but try to make sure all failures become interesting and not just roadblocks in the story. They must lead the way to something new and exciting. If a failed roll has no interesting effects, you might as well not roll the dice at all.

### LET THEM LIVE

**If you can, try to keep your NPCs from dying too soon. An NPC who survives to return later is more fun than a dead one. You should also avoid letting the PCs get to an important enemy too easily. Put some henchmen in their way first, and if the PCs still manages to kill the enemy or some other important NPC – let them deal with the consequences!**

TABLE 15.1 TYPICAL NPCS

| NPC | STRENGTH | AGILITY | WITS | EMPATHY | REPUTATION | SKILLS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agent | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | Manipulation 3, Observation 2, Ranged Combat 1 |
| Data Spider | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | Data Djinn 3, Manipulation 2, Culture 1 |
| Negotiator | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | Manipulation 3, Culture 2, Command 1 |
| Fugitive | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | Mystic Powers 3, Infiltration 2, Melee Combat 1 |
| Scientist | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | Science 3, Technology 2, Observation 1 |
| Ship Worker | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | Force 3, Dexterity 2, Melee Combat 1 |
| Artist | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | Manipulation 3, Dexterity 2, Culture 1 |
| Soldier | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | Ranged combat 3, Melee Combat 2, Command 1 |
| Pilot | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | Pilot 3, Data Djinn 2, Technology 1 |
| Preacher | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | Manipulation 3, Culture 2, Survival 1 |
| Trailblazer | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | Survival 3, Observation 2, Dexterity 1 |

NPCs – if your NPC is a plebeian, lower the score by 2, and if she is privileged, raise it by 2.

**SKILLS:** Typical skill levels for the different concepts are listed in table 15.1. You can change the scores if you want to. An NPC with a specific concept must have a level of at least 1 in all her concept skills.

**TALENTS:** NPCs are usually without talents, but you can give a talent to an especially capable NPC if you wish.

**NAME, CHARACTERISTICS AND GOAL:** Apart from the stats and scores, there are three things you need to know about every NPC:

- **Name.** What is her name?
- **Characteristics.** How does she look, how does she act, does she have any distinguishing quirks?
- **Goal.** What are her goals?

Future scenarios and products will include lists of many different NPCs.

### MANAGING NPCS

NPCs use the same rules as PCs. They roll dice to accomplish difficult tasks, they need medical care if they become broken and they risk permanent injuries if they are critically injured. You can however disregard the rules aspects of your NPCs as long as it won't directly affect a PC. Don't keep track of resources or gear for the NPCs – that way, you retain the freedom to decide when they run out of something. Don't roll dice for the actions of NPCs unless they attack or interact with a PC.

**Groups of NPCs**: When dealing with multiple NPCs, you can have them perform actions as a group instead of individually.

### REWARDS AND EXPERIENCE

The PCs and the Third Horizon are constantly changing. There are several ways the PCs can evolve and it is the GM's job to make sure the game offers the players drives and rewards. Suitable rewards could be:

- Talents
- Cybernetics and bionics
- Artifacts
- Gear
- Spaceship improvements

When it comes to talents (both group and regular ones), these can also be purchased using XP. The same goes for cybernetics and bionics, but patrons and employers could also provide the group with these, as well as with gear, modules or features. Artifacts are something the PCs must find themselves during their adventures, however. Future products will include suggested rewards.

# THE DARK BETWEEN THE STARS IN THE GAME

Almost everybody in the Horizon believes in the Icons and the protection they offer against the Dark between the Stars. The exact nature of the darkness is something the preachers and prophets disagree on – some describe it as a dark, corrupting force, the root of all evil, while others, such as the Church of the Icons, believe that the darkness is a mirror image of the shadows and secrets of the human soul. The only thing that is certain is that the emptiness of space seems to be the place where the human psyche is most at risk.

The endless void, emptiness and loneliness affect the minds of all spacefarers. The darkness exists not only in space, but also in terrifying events, madness and mental trauma. If you have gazed into the darkness, you will never be the same. Regardless of the specific circumstances, mental strain from space travel or traumatizing events generates Darkness Points. The GM receives DP whenever one of the below events happens:

- The PCs perform a portal jump without being in stasis: 3 DP.
- A PC suffers bad stasis after a portal jump: 1 DP.
- A PC prays to the Icons for a reroll: 1 DP.
- A PC activates a mystic power: a varying amount of DP.
- The PCs travel far out into the Big Black: 1-3 DP.

- The PCs visit places or experiences events that are linked to the Dark between the Stars: a varying amount of DP.

### SPACE TRAVEL AND DARKNESS POINTS

When the PCs leave the safety and comfort of Coriolis or other civilized planets to go traveling in the depths of space, they are exposed to the Dark between the Stars. In well-known areas with much traffic, the Dark is weak, but gets stronger the further out into uncharted space you get. DP are generated at regular intervals during space travel.

Use the following categories:

1. **Well-trafficked routes.** These routes run between important planets and systems such as Kua, Algol, Dabaran, Mira, Sadaal and Zalos. 1 DP per week of travel (for the entire PC group).
2. **Lonely routes.** These routes run between smaller stations within a system or to distant systems such as Menkar and Eanu. 2 DP per week of travel.
3. **Uncharted space.** Space farther than 5 ADs from a known route. 3 DP per week of travel.

### TRAUMATIZING EVENTS

If the PCs are subjected to something very scary, unnatural or degrading, the Darkness grows stronger. The same applies if the PCs perform an evil or immoral deed.

## HOW TO USE DARKNESS POINTS

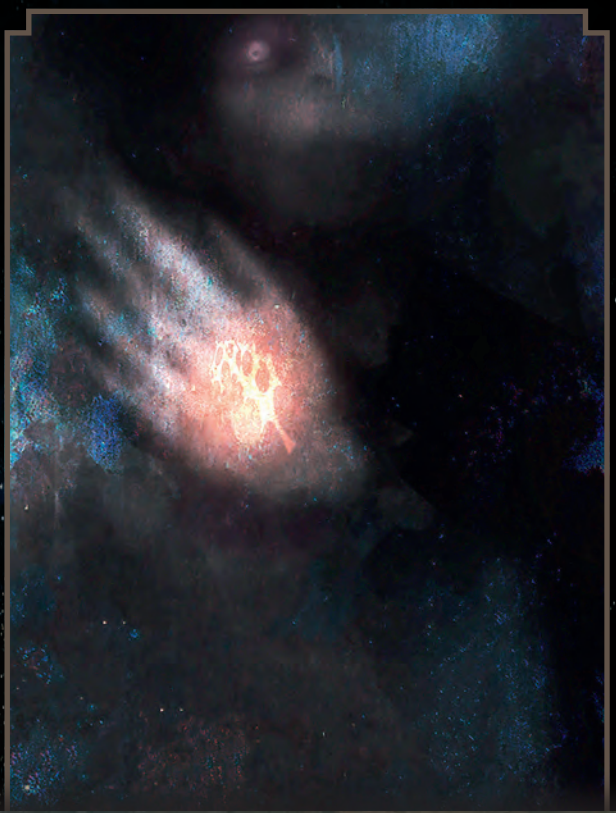
The Skills chapter describes how prayer generates DP for the GM that he can use to add more suspense to the story. As the GM you should make sure to spend your DP, not just pool them. The DP represent that every positive force has a negative counterforce. The different ways you can spend your DP require a varying number of points and are described below:

#### USING DARKNESS POINTS

- **REROLL.** Just like the PCs can pray to the Icons to get a reroll, the GM can reroll a skill test for an NPC. Costs 1 DP.
- **TAKE THE INITIATIVE.** An NPC breaks the turn order in combat and acts before her turn. The GM decides when. Costs 1-3 DP.
- **EMPTY CLIP.** A PC attacking with **RANGED COMBAT** runs out of ammo. The attack is not affected but the weapon needs reloading. Costs 1 DP.

#### TERRIFYING OR SHAMEFUL EXPERIENCES

- **Witness an unnatural event: 1-3 DP**
- **Suffer torture: 2 DP**
- **Torture someone: 3 DP**
- **Kill someone (other than enemies in a fight): 3 DP**



- **WEAPON JAM.** A PC's firearm jams as it fires. The attack is cancelled and a **TECHNOLOGY** roll (a slow action) is required to fix the weapon. Costs 3 DP.
- **BROKEN SYSTEM.** A system onboard stops working. It could be anything from a weapon system to life support. A **TECHNOLOGY** or **DATA DJINN** roll is required to repair it. Costs 3 DP, or 1 DP if the system in question was poorly tended to.
- **SHIP PROBLEM.** The ship's problem is activated. Details are specified in the list of problems. Costs 2 DP.
- **OVERLOAD**. A system is overloaded, either from neglected upkeep or a temporary malfunction. The system stops working for three turns (see Chapter 7). Costs 1 DP.
- **REACTION.** NPCs cannot perform reactions in combat (page 84) unless the GM spends 1 DP.
- **LOST POSSESSION.** A PC has dropped an important possession. The GM decides which. Costs 3 DP.
- **REINFORCEMENTS.** The enemy receives unexpected backup. The GM decides the details. Costs 1-3 DP, depending on the reinforcements.
- **INNOCENT IN DANGER.** An innocent bystander is suddenly caught in the line of fire and needs help. Will the PCs intervene? Costs 2 DP.
- **PERSONAL PROBLEM.** A PC's personal problem (page 26) affects her in a manner the GM chooses. Costs 1 DP.
- **NATURE'S WRATH.** Something dangerous in the environment around the PCs suddenly affects them. It could be collapsing beams or a landslide. Costs 1-3 DP depending on the level of danger.
- **A DARK MIND.** A PC is suddenly stricken with a temporary dark mania. More details in Chapter 14. Costs 1-3 DP.
- **THE POWER OF THE DARKNESS.** Certain talents or abilities can be activated in NPCs or creatures using DP. More details in Chapter 14. The DP cost varies.
- **RELOADING.** Normally, NPCs cannot reload their weapons, for example after automatic fire. To do it, the GM must spend 1 DP.

### NATURE'S WRATH

Nature's Wrath means that the environment suddenly works against the PCs. It could be smoke, strong winds, mud, falling rocks or something else. Sometimes, nature will affect the PCs negatively without the Darkness having anything to do with it, such as difficult terrain or storms. The nature's wrath rules below only apply when the GM spends DP to challenge the PCs. There are three levels of nature's wrath. The effect generally lasts for a limited time, affecting one or more PCs that perform similar actions.

### TAKE THE INITIATIVE

An NPC can take the initiative in a fight by spending DP. The DP cost varies depending on whether the NPC is going to act before everyone else or just before a certain PC. Normally, the cost is 1 or 2 DP depending on the strength of the NPC, plus 1 extra DP if the NPC wants to act first in the turn.

**TABLE 15.2 NATURE'S WRATH**

| DP COST | EFFECT |
|---|---|
| 1 | The difficulty is raised by 1 for one or more skills. For example, sudden smoke from a machine, flickering lights, a collapsing wall etc. |
| 2 | The difficulty is raised by 2 for one or more skills. For example, heavy snow during a storm, a deep pool of mud in the jungle, falling trees etc. |
| 3 | The difficulty is raised by 3 for one skill, and failure means damage, stress or some other negative effect lasting for a few turns. |

**GETTING STARTED**

On the next page you will find a mini scenario that you can start playing immediately to get a first taste of the Third Horizon. After that follows two scenario locations – a jungle valley on Kua and a cantina on Coriolis – that you can use for your own adventures.

# THE STATUETTE OF ZHAR

Zhar Baghra was a famous portal researcher who recently vanished under mysterious circumstances on Kua. The sole survivor of Baghra's expedition has just returned to Coriolis in possession of a curious statuette, and gone into hiding. The antiques dealer-turned-Syndicate-middle-man Merez Alcan has heard of the valuable artifact and needs help finding it.

**THE STATUETTE OF** Zhar Baghra is a mini scenario that is designed as an introduction to Coriolis – The Third Horizon. The scenario will give you a first taste of the mighty Coriolis space station with a possible aftermath and more adventures waiting in the Terenganu Valley scenario location.

## BACKGROUND

The portal researcher Zhar Baghra was an eccentric scientist who recently put together an expedition to the jungles of Kua to set up an excavation in Terenganu Valley. Something went wrong, and no one has heard from Baghra or the expedition in the last segment. The expedition met their gruesome fate in the deep caverns underneath the Terenganu plateau. Ancient Portal Builder artifacts unleashed their lethal powers, and the only survivor was the young archaeologist Lavim Tamm who fled the caves and hid in the safety of the dark jungle, bringing a statuette of alien design with him. The antiques dealer Merez Alcan has acquired forbidden high-tech, faction tech and illegal artifacts for the Syndicate for a long time, which in turn sells them at staggering prices. Merez is growing old and has begun thinking about retirement. Through his spies in Archaeology Alley, Merez has been informed about the return of Lavim Tamm from Kua and the statuette he is carrying. Merez cannot use his regular contacts for the job, so he hires external help – the PCs – to track down Lavim and the statuette. Unbeknownst to Merez, someone else is also looking for the statuette – a Draconite, seeking the artifact for the faction's mystical rituals.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE SCENARIO

The PCs are somewhere onboard Coriolis when they are contacted by Merez Alcan. They could be in a cantina (perhaps Wahib's, the scenario location described below), in the loading bays below the spaceport, on one of the plazas or in a bar in the Mulukhad. The PCs have been recommended to Merez by his own contacts and not by their patron. He is very straightforward and asks if they would be willing to help him locate an object that is somewhere in the station. If the PCs are interested, he will describe the artifact as a Firstcome idol of the Dancer and says that he is interested in buying it from its current owner, the archaeologist Lavim Tamm.

### MEREZ ALCAN

Merez is a middle-aged man with short, grey hair, bags under his eyes and a djellaba with black embroidery. He is sporting a red fez and a short cane without a handle. He appears to be wearing a monocle, but it is actually a cybernetic eye with a microscope function.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Leans on cane, clicks tounge, whirling cybernetic eye.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 5

**MIND POINTS:** 8

**REPUTATION:** 5

**DARKNESS POINTS**

**The GM gets 4 DP at the beginning of the scenario.**



**Salindre**

**SKILLS:** Manipulation 4, Culture 3, Melee combat 3, Infiltration 4

**WEAPONS:** Sharp cane (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2)

Merez offers the PCs compensation for their services, either in birr, gear or firearms. This is what he knows and can tell the PCs:

- The statuette is an idol of one of the Dancer's incarnations, the Shadow Monkey. It is hideous, but very valuable. Merez can describe it in detail so the PCs will recognize it.
- The archaeologist Lavim Tamm has disappeared, but was usually seen hanging around the Spice Plaza bazaar.
- Lavim has a weakness for the Miran fire kohôl served at the White Tugur bar.

## THE SPICE PLAZA BAZAAR

The Spice Plaza bazaar is easy to find (page 251). Commerce is hectic here, and if the PCs ask around about Lavim, they won't get many answers. If they mention Miran fire kohôl however, the spice vendors will smile roguishly and direct them towards the kohôl trader Abzir or the White Tugur bar. Abzir will recognize Lavim from the PCs description but can only tell them that he hasn't been around for a while. The White Tugur's matriarch Jasina (Empathy 3, Manipulation 3) is reluctant to share any information at first, but could be persuaded. As the PCs are talking to Jasina, they might spot Lavim's friend Jinna (Agility 2, Infiltration 2, Dexterity 3) sneaking about the bazaar. Jinna has heard the PCs ask around about Lavim, and if she is discovered, she tries to flee through the crowds. The PCs can chase after her through the narrow alleys of the Promenade, and the GM could spend 1-3 DP to make the chase challenging for them (page 346). If they catch her, she can be **MANIPULATED** to share the following:

- Lavim is hiding in an antiques shop in Archaeology Alley called Kaffrah's Artifacts.
- Lavim thinks he is being followed by someone (the Draconite Salindre).
- Lavim didn't bring any statuette back as far as Jinna knows.

If the PCs lose Jinna during the chase, they can get more information from Abzir or Jasina. Both can tell them that Lavim often visits Kaffrah's Artifacts.

## THE ANTIQUES SHOP

Archaeology Alley near the Spring Plaza is full of antique shops, curiosities and bookstores (page 253). It is almost always packed with people regardless of the hour. The only difference between the watches is that the already dusky alley becomes even shadier in the night – in every sense of the word. Finding Kaffrah's Artifacts is easy if the PCs ask around, although most people will try to refer them to better establishments rather than waste their time with that quack Kaffrah.

In a narrow alley cluttered with clothes lines and the remains of a collapsed balcony, a weak, flickering sign will direct visitors down some stairs to Kaffrah's Artifacts. When the PCs enter, the wrinkled, black-haired Kaffrah (Empathy 3, Manipulation 3) will greet them courteously, almost invisible under layers and layers of embroidered shawls. She won't talk about Lavim at first, but after some persuasion and perhaps some birr (+1 to **MANIPULATION**), she can tell the PCs this:

- Lavim came by the shop a few days ago carrying something small wrapped in cloth.
- He didn't want to tell her what it was and got angry when she asked. Then he left.
- Since then she hasn't seen him.
- She can direct the PCs to the cheap boarding house at the top of the Promenade where he is staying (if they tip her well).

If the PCs describe the statuette to Kaffrah she gets excited and if they haven't been rude, she can tell them that it sounds a lot like the fabled statuette of Zhar Baghra. With this information the PCs should be able to figure out the background (page 347) by testing **CULTURE** at -1.

When they leave Kaffrah's, they can spot the Draconite Salindre following them if they are vigilant. If she is discovered by the PCs, she quickly escapes by climbing the walls of the alley and disappears up on the roof, wrapped in her chameleon suit.

### SALINDRE

Salindre is a novice in the Draconite order and has been tasked with acquiring the artifact to advance in the hierarchy of the faction. Being a novice, she is calm and careful. She doesn't have access to the Draconites' arsenal yet and plans her moves accordingly. She dresses in a tight kameez under a black, hooded caftan.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Smart, keeps a low profile, trusts no one.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 4, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 7

**MIND POINTS:** 8

**REPUTATION:** 4

**SKILLS:** Manipulation 3, Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 4, Ranged Combat 4, Infiltration 4, Observation 3

**TALENTS:** Point Blank

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** Dura knife (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1), accelerator pistol (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1, Long Range)

**GEAR:** Chameleon suit (the caftan)

## "THE QUIET EUNUCH" BOARDING HOUSE

At the very of top of the Promenade, just before the ventilation shafts and power lines take over, the PCs will find the flea-ridden boarding house "The Quiet Eunuch", owned and run by the eccentric Legionary veteran Silca Burros. Silca is anything but quiet and will show the PCs to Lavim's coffin-like module right away. Inside they find Lavim, drunk.

If the PCs **MANIPULATE** Lavim, he can tell them this:

- He is being followed. He wonders if it is by the PCs?
- He doesn't have the statuette, he hid it in a crack in one of the bridges across the Promenade.
- The statuette is just one of many treasures left in the jungle.
- He does have the coordinates to the excavation. They are on a tag that he hid with the statuette.
- He can show them to the bridge.

### OTHER WAYS TO THE QUIET EUNUCH

If the PCs aggravate Kaffrah or won't give her any birr, there are other ways to find Lavim's hideout at the boarding house.

- They can get the information from Jinna at the Spice Plaza.
- They can catch Salindre and persuade her to help them. In this case she knows where Lavim is but hasn't approached him yet.

### LAVIM TAMM

The reserved archaeology student Lavim is hiding at the Eunuch, having turned to the fire kohôl to forget the expedition's tragic end and the horrible deaths of his friends. He is still wearing his bloodstained field uniform. He looks worn down and sickly, having shaved his head since his hair started falling out as a result of the statuette's powers.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Nervous, afraid, drinker.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 4**

**HIT POINTS:** 5

**MIND POINTS:** 8

**REPUTATION:** 3

**SKILLS:** Culture 3, Manipulation 2, Infiltration 2

### SYNDICATE GANG MEMBER

Tattooed, garishly dressed and armed with small but deadly weapons, the gang members are determined and unwavering. They will attempt to push the PCs over the edge, but will shoot them if this doesn't work. They will avoid a firefight if they can as they don't need the inevitable Guard attention it would bring.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Spitting and shouting, won't give up easily.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 6

**MIND POINTS:** 4

**REPUTATION:** 2

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 2, Ranged Combat 2, Infiltration 2

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** Dura knife (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1), Vulcan pistol (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2, Short Range)

## THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE PROMENADE

If the PCs contact Merez before going to get the tag on the bridge, he will set up a meeting with them there. If they haven't contacted him, he will be there anyway, as he has had some Syndicate gang members tail them. Regardless of which, he will want the statuette and the coordinates immediately when he realizes that there are more treasures on Kua. He will then make a tag transfer of the payment to the PCs and back away. He could be persuaded to pay first and then get his prize. When he has the statuette and the tag, he orders the Syndicate thugs to attack the PCs. The PCs could get help from Salindre in the fight if things look bad, as she has followed them to the bridge. As GM you can guarantee Merez's escape by spending 2 DP if you wish.

The bridge is built for transports and maintenance work on the shafts and lines between the blocks of the Ring. It has a low railing made from braided tubes and cables, and it is four meters wide by about twenty meters long. The dark drop below is shot through with cables and lines looking almost like a spider's web. Falling from the bridge most likely means getting tangled up in the cables or landing on one of the balconies below.

## EPILOGUE

The showdown at the bridge could end several ways: with Merez escaping or disappearing, but with the PCs still having the statuette (page 356) and coordinates. Or maybe the PCs manage to defeat the Syndicate thugs and Merez and hold onto the statuette. A possibility is that Merez succesfully escapes with the statuette and the PCs are only left with the coordinates.Will they share the coordinates or the statuette with Salindre? The Draconite could accept a tactical alliance with the PCs and pay them to help her beat Merez to the dig site on Kua. Will Merez try to stop them before they get off the station? Will he tell the Syndicate about his find, now that he must put together an expedition to the jungles? There are many ways the story could continue, both on Coriolis and in the neverending jungles of Kua, and it is your job as the GM to explore it with the group. If they follow the coordinates, they will end up in Terenganu Valley on the Kuan equator. Where further adventures awaits. A possible way for the story to continue can be found on the next page. Use this as an inspiration or make up your own scenario.

# TERENGANU VALLEY

This scenario location is a typical example of how the Kuan jungles look, and how you as the GM can use ingredients like heat, damp, mosquitoes, native tribes, old ruins and much more. You can use the sector as a follow-up to the Zhar Baghra mini scenario or independently.

**THE PCS CAN** end up in the valley for many different reasons. Perhaps they are here to look for the statuette of Zhar Baghra, or maybe they are here to excavate the tower ruins. They could be here bringing supplies to the archaeologists, or as hired guns for them or the loggers. They could also have been hired by the Legion to locate the crash site of their downed fighter prototype.

## OVERVIEW

Terenganu Valley is located deep in the jungles along the little river and lake that share its name. The water has cut through the sandstone of the plateau and is now running in a deep ravine. The days here have a predictable weather pattern – pounding sun in the morning, usually replaced by pouring rain in the afternoon. The surrounding jungle is full of life and sounds, and the nearby Sogoi tribe Gurghan have plenty of game. The proximity to a Legion training field makes for a lot of sensor and com jamming bleeding into the valley. Communicators work only sporadically.

### THE SOGOI VILLAGE

The village is located in a clearing and consists of a few domed huts covered in leaves, lichen and twigs. The tribe has some forty members, including children, and is led by the Icon shaman Ixra and the matriarch Yusu-ghan. A Zenithian prophet, Huraman Kahl, has been living here as a guest of the tribe for a while. The Sogoi hunt primarily east of the river, and sometimes on the lake itself using primitive canoes. They avoid Excavation Site 9 as they believe that djinn and djanna live there (Chapter 14).

### EXCAVATION SITE 9

Archaeology professor Ihana dol-Pranha from the Foundation controls the dig site aided by the three assistants Fara, Kemal, and Yousin. They are assisted by the scout Gathor and a digging drone nicknamed Sysfos. The ruin field is a row of low house foundations covered in tarps against the afternoon rains. The expedition has not been resupplied in a while and is waiting for a transport that is running late.

### THE TOWER RUINS

Three frail tower ruins rise like prehistoric teeth from the jungle. The area is full of blood-sucking mosquitoes, sinkholes and jungle monsters, both according to the Sogoi and Gathor the scout, which makes everyone leave the towers alone. A private expedition tried to investigate the towers in the past, but went missing according to the Sogoi.

### THE PLATEAU

A grey plateau rises above the green jungle below. It is made of a different kind of rock than the surrounding sandstone. If it wasn't for its steep sides, it would be a perfect landing site for small freighters. The Sogoi claim that evil djinn live in the caves underneath the plateau.

### THE WATERFALL

Just next to the waterfall, you will find the only level, open area large enough to set down a spaceship on, unless you want to land on the dig site or the Sogoi village, with all the consequences that would bring.

### THE MARSH

Lake Terenganu goes on to become a marsh, home to water buffalo, seabirds and crocodiles. Deep in the marsh lies an almost intact, unsalvaged Legion fighter.

# TERENGANU VALLEY

### THE TOWER RUINS



Three frail tower ruins rise like prehistoric teeth from the jungle.

### THE LOGGING STATION



The station has a small wooden quay as well as Mustar's pride and joy – the river barge Eufrynde. The station is home to a harsh crew of loggers.



**EXCAVATION SITE 9**



The ruin field is a row of low house foundations covered in tarps against the afternoon rains.

**THE SOGOI VILLAGE**



The village is located in a clearing and consists of a few domed huts covered in leaves, lichen and twigs.

### THE LOGGING STATION

Logging station Terenganu is run by the prospector Mustar Kollah and a crew of about twenty tough and taciturn loggers. They cut hardwood in the valley below the plateau and drive it down the river to a larger port farther down. There is a small wooden quay at the logging station as well as Mustar's pride and joy – the river barge Eufrynde.

## THE SITUATION

The three groups in the valley – the archaeologists, the Sogoi, and the loggers – are heading quickly towards a clash. As of late, the loggers have begun felling trees up on the plateau in an area where the Sogoi's ancestral spirits rest. The Sogoi are traditionally very careful, and have tried to make the prophet Huraman stop Mustar from working on the plateau, but this has so far yielded no results. When a child in the Sogoi village recently came down with blood fever, many of the villagers – led by the young and proud Kubu-ghan – believed that this was a sign that the spirits are angry – probably provoked both by the archaeologists' digging and the logging on the plateau.

## PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY

The most prominent inhabitants of the valley are the Sogoi leaders, professor dol-Pranha and the prospector Herrah, Mustar's right hand.

### IXRA, SOGOI SHAMAN

The old shaman has guided the village through many hardships. Ixra is scarred and her face is full of wrinkles that almost cover her eyes. Her white hair is collected in three, thick braids. She wanders the valley dressed in a colorful shawl, communing with the spirits. She is deeply concerned with how the Zenithians are cutting down the trees and opening deep wounds in the ground that release confused ancestral djinn into the forest. The way forward is through dialogue and understanding, and she hopes to negotiate with the Zenithians to make them leave the valley.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Smacks mouth, rocking gait, sharp eyes.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 2, WITS 4, EMPATHY 5**

**HIT POINTS:** 3

**MIND POINTS:** 9

**REPUTATION:** 5

**SKILLS:** Mystic Powers 4, Infiltration 2

**TALENTS:** Two mystic powers

### KUBU-GHAN, SOGOI WARRIOR

Ixra's opposite is the proud warrior Kubu-ghan, who has considerable support among the villagers. Kubu shows off big scars across his torso – souvenirs from an Azaëlean attack. He has spent much time recently spying on the dig site and the logging station together with two other warriors, Dhana and Xifro. He has spoken to Gathor, the expedition scout, who has impressed him greatly with his long Nestera rifle. Kubu would prefer to run the Zenithians out of the valley, but understands that sabotage is a better method than open aggression.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Whispering voice, gestures while he speaks, often chewing oil root that has turned his teeth black.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 6

**MIND POINTS:** 6

**REPUTATION:** 3

**SKILLS:** Melee combat 3, Dexterity 2, Ranged combat 2, Infiltration 4, Mystic Powers 2

**TALENTS:** Two defensive mystic powers

**WEAPONS:** Spear (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2), bow (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 3, Long Range).

### PROFESSOR IHANA DOL-PRAHNA, ARCHAEOLOGIST

The professor is very excited. Over the last couple of weeks, the expedition has uncovered a new layer underneath the upper ruins, which confirms her theory that the upper ruins were constructed upon even older ones – Portal Builder-old. She has read Doctor Baghra's theories about the valley, and knows about the earlier expedition, but is unaware of the fact that Baghra's team visited

both the tower ruins and the caves below the plateau. She is becoming increasingly worried about their dwindling supply of food, spare parts and just about everything else.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Scratches chin, usually smirking, bites her lip when she becomes worried.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 5

**MIND POINTS:** 7

**REPUTATION:** 4

**SKILLS:** Manipulation 2, Culture 5, Technology 2, Science 3

**GEAR:** Library database (Ruins +3), Sysfos the drone

### GATHOR, SCOUT

The middle-aged, heavily tattooed scout Gathor has taken the job as pathfinder and guard to the expedition to lie low after an incident in Covenant City. He is calm and collected but has started to notice the Sogoi sneaking around the perimeter of the dig site and has spoken to them. He is firm in his belief that Sogoi and other tribes have no chance of survival unless they adapt to Zenithian culture and technology. Gathor has unexpectedly become romantically involved with Professor dol-Prahna's assistant, something that makes him more protective than he otherwise would have been.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Apprehensive, squints against the sun, hunched posture.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 4, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 8

**MIND POINTS:** 6

**REPUTATION:** 2

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 3, Ranged Combat 4, Infiltration 2

**ARMOR:** 1

**WEAPONS:** Dura knife (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1), accelerator rifle Nestera Parox (Weapon Damage 4, CRIT 1, Extreme Range)

### HERRAH, PROSPECTOR

Herrah is Mustar's adviser and trusted lieutenant. She runs the station and keeps the surroundings safe. She is dressed in practical Legion fatigue pants, keeps her hair trimmed short and wears tank tops that won't get caught in branches and thorns when she is working. She will take care of Mustar's problems as long as it doesn't involve excessive use of violence.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Never without a tabak cigarette in the corner of her mouth, crooked smile, keeps one hand on her weapon at all times.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 6

**MIND POINTS:** 6

**REPUTATION:** 4

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 4, Dexterity 3, Ranged Combat 2, Manipulation 1

**ARMOR:** 1

**WEAPONS:** Dura axe (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 1), grape carbine (Weapon damage 2, CRIT 2, Short Range)

## TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFACTS

There is not much in the way of special technology in the valley except for Sysfos the drone, a broken grav bike in a shed by the logging station and the loggers' arsenal, five Vulcan carbines and one flamethrower. Valuable objects of art can be found in the ruin field. The statuette of Zhar Baghra (if not found in the previous scenario) is hidden in a cave underneath the plateau (see below).

## EVENTS

Many things can happen in the valley, possibly leading to clashes between the natives of the valley and the newcomers. Below are a few examples for you to expand upon.

### BEAST RAIDS

A jungle monster is plaguing the valley. Its territory overlaps

with one of the three settlements. People living there could fall prey to the beast, leading to maiming, disappearances or even deaths. The blame could fall on one of the other settlements. What will the consequences be?

### THE SOGOI STRIKE BACK

Enough is enough! The Sogoi are furious that the excavation has awoken the djanna of the woods. Ixra has had a vision telling her that the expedition must be stopped. Has the professor just unearthed something? Or have the PCs found the statuette? This will cause problems for Kubu-ghan who wishes to maintain his friendship with Gathor in order to get to his accelerator rifle.

### THE ARRIVAL OF SASORA

Parts of the Sasora brigade arrive from the north, led by the mercenary Yvera. She is a paragon of the people, at least in her own opinion. Her company has been reduced to about ten soldiers, now retreating from the Legion to regroup. They have wounded members who need medical aid and are short on resources. They will use force to get what they want if they have to – the liberation of the people will be stopped by nothing.

### THE STATUETTE OF ZHAR BAGHRA

The Zhar Baghra mini scenario leaves the PCs with coordinates to Terenganu Valley, or to the plateau west of the lake to be precise. An investigation of the area around the plateau reveals a vast network of caverns underneath the valley. Deep in the darkness rests the remains of Doctor Baghra's expedition, a sentinel (page 331) and some Portal Builder remains.

### ASTÛRBAN'S ARCHAEO TROOP

Either the discovery of the statuette or the excavation of the Portal Builder ruins has generated a signal intercepted by the xeno-archaeologists of the Astûrban. Such a find cannot be left to the Foundation, or even worse, the Consortium. The special archaeo troop under Corporal Nastia din Hrama is deployed to the scene in an advanced armored gravcraft to secure the dig site and the artifacts, and to capture the archaeologists.

#### CORPORAL NASTIA DIN HRAMA

Nastia is a very dedicated warrior. She is indoctrinated into the view that it is of the utmost importance that the Zenithian Hegemony obtains as many artifacts as possible. When she is on a mission, she does whatever it takes to secure the artifact or ruin, with the least possible damage to the objectives – a courtesy not always extended to foreign archaeologists or prospectors.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Tall, icy stare, dominant.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 2, EMPATHY 2**

**HIT POINTS:** 6

**MIND POINTS:** 4

**REPUTATION:** 5

**SKILLS:** Ranged Combat 2, Manipulation 1, Command 3

**ARMOR:** 4

**WEAPONS:** Stun gun (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT stun, Short Range), accelerator carbine (Weapon Damage 3, CRIT 1, Long Range)

#### ASTÛRBAN TROOPER

Use the Soldier stats on page 343 for the Astûrban troopers. They are armed with stun guns and accelerator carbines. They have armor 4.

#### ZHAR BAGHRA'S ARTIFACT

The statuette Zhar Baghra found depicts a humanoid creature. It is jet black and looks enamelled. It is damp to the touch. Whether the subject matter is a Portal Builder or not is hard to know. It is slowly remolding itself, changing position over the course of a few weeks.

- **EFFECT:** The artifact can read the mind of its user and store memories. They can be re-experienced at a later time as images and words. Other people touching that artifact can also get vague sensations of the memories. Unfortunately, long-term use of the statuette leads to the mind or soul of the user being absorbed by the artifact (opposed test with Empathy versus **MYSTIC POWERS** 4), leaving only an empty shell or cadaver behind – or something even worse. This is what happened to Doctor Baghra.
- **DARKNESS POINTS:** Storing a memory in the artifact generates 2 DP.
- **KNOWLEDGE REQUISITE:** To understand the statuette, the user must pass either a **MYSTIC POWERS** or a **CULTURE** test.

# WAHIB'S CANTINA

Wahib's is a classic cantina in the Terrim blocks just off the Promenade on Coriolis. You can of course locate it somewhere else in the Horizon if it fits better with your story. The cantina is a busy watering hole and as such is a good place to meet new contacts or to start scenarios.

## OVERVIEW

Wahib's cantina is located on the ground floor of a residential building, with its front towards the Promenade. On each side of the cantina, there are small shops – Rashina's Pets and Ibir's pawnshop for example. Ibir and Wahib, who owns the cantina, are good friends, sharing many customers. Wahib's is usually a noisy place, full of people and the smell of cooking. After midnight, the smell from the kitchen is replaced by arrash smoke and soft music as the last of the guests are leaving.

### ENTERING FROM THE PROMENADE

The front door is always open, and only a beaded curtain separates the guests from the rush of the Promenade. A sliding door can be shut during the few hours when the cantina closes for the night. There are oblong stained glass windows with geometrical patterns on each side of the door.

### ANTEROOM

An open, circular room, with low tables and sitting cushions. The mosaic on the floor is worn smooth from years of guests coming and going. Bio sculpted plants give the room a cozy atmosphere. This room seats people who just pop in from the Promenade for a quick cup of kawah or wine, or a relaxing hookah. People who are new to Wahib's often end up here.

### MAIN ROOM

Like the anteroom, this room is also full of tables and cushions. A defective modulate is running in a corner whenever the cantina is open, usually showing the Bulletin flow. As it is an older model, the projection is jittery and the sound is out of sync.

### BOOTH

A circular room with small booths containing patterned cushion and low tables. Large plants climb a pedestal in the middle of the room. The booths are often full of hookah smoke, deckhands, stevedores and pilots, at least before a shift change in the port or out on the Net.

### BAR

A bar with high chairs takes up most of the room. The owner himself can usually be found behind the bar. The bony old Wahib is always working when the cantina is open. From a hook in the ceiling hangs a cage with his biosculpted parrot Nene. Wahib has trained his animal friend to spy on the guests.

### WAHIB'S CHAMBERS

The owner's sleeping quarters, offices and surveillance central. The room contains a bed and a table with a terminal that controls the surveillance systems, which are always active. During nighttime, the terminal activates an alarm that alerts the Coriolis Guard if triggered.

### KITCHEN

A stove, a freezer and an oven share this small room with Barah, the chef. The kitchen offers a small selection of simple dishes.

### STOREROOM

A small storeroom for kawah, tea, kohôl, wine, tabak and some basic ingredients for the kitchen.

**BULLETIN NEWS**

**The modulate at Wahib's is a good way for the GM to introduce metaplot information into the game. If the PCs are not paying attention, maybe some other guests are, asking Wahib to turn the volume up. You can find a list of popular Bulletin shows on page 260.**

### BACK DOOR TO A NARROW ALLEY

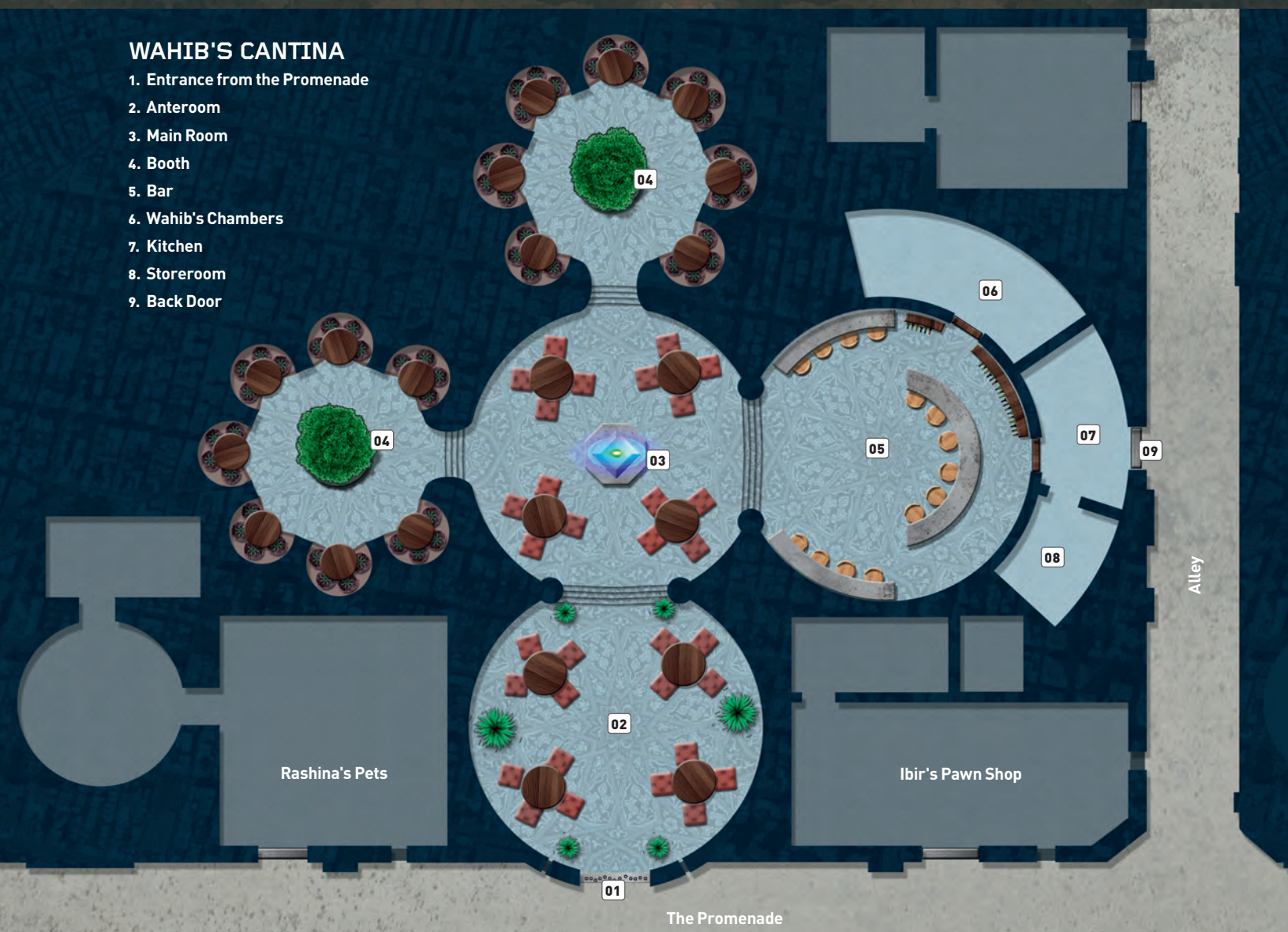
A sliding door connects the cantina with a narrow alley. The people living in the residential modules above usually hang their laundry out to dry here, which makes for a cold and wet passage.

## THE SITUATION

Wahib's cantina attracts ship's crews and fortune seekers, as well as ordinary spaceport workers. Many people quickly become regulars here. Wahib's memory is crystal clear when

## WAHIB'S CANTINA

1. Entrance from the Promenade
2. Anteroom
3. Main Room
4. Booth
5. Bar
6. Wahib's Chambers
7. Kitchen
8. Storeroom
9. Back Door



it comes to people's orders, but he is terrible at remembering names and faces. This selective memory is especially potent when the Guard come around asking about his customers, a trait that makes the cantina a place often used by criminals and other shady people as neutral ground for negotiations, usually during the early hours of the morning when the place is closed. For this reason, the cantina is often visited by plainclothes Guards.

The cantina opens in the afternoon, immediately starting to fill up with thirsty customers. The free trader crews show up during the evening, with the regulars dropping in a little after that for a late dinner. The mood rises as the kohôl starts to flow and the hookahs are lit. People start to leave come nightfall, and when the night watch begins, most stevedores have gone. The last stragglers leave just before dawn. The cantina is cleaned and prepared for the coming day in the early hours of the morning.

## PEOPLE AT WAHIB'S

Wahib's is a place that attracts many different people. The GM can use the cantina for meetings with the group's patron – or maybe their nemesis? The waiters here are Wahib's three grandchildren, Iri, Habib and Ala. The trio have no problems picking the pockets of the guests or switching their tags for empty ones (Agility 2, DEXTERITY 1). Accusations of theft against the little rascals are waved away as playful pranks, and the regulars have a love-hate relationship with the three.



### WAHIB, CANTINA OWNER

Wahib is a bony old man with his best years behind him. Rumor have it that he served at the court of a long since dead Dabaran prince in his youth. Wahib speaks very little, but smiles and nods a lot.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Sweaty, slurs when he gets angry, humming laughter.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 2 AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 4

**MIND POINTS:** 5

**REPUTATION:** 5

**SKILLS:** Manipulation 3

### ARKIAL LIMA, HIGH ROLLER

The compulsory gambler Arkial can usually be found at Wahib's when she is not in the gambling dens or at the bookmakers. She is usually watching the modulate and requests frequent channel changes between different Bulletin sports shows. Somehow, she is never broke, despite having several loan sharks on her tail.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Pale, twirls hair, shifty eyes.

**ATTRIBUTES:**
**STRENGTH 1, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3**

**HIT POINTS:** 4

**MIND POINTS:** 5

**REPUTATION:** 3

**SKILLS:** Melee Combat 3, Dexterity 2, Ranged Combat 2, Infiltration 4

**WEAPONS:** Vulcan cricket (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2, Close Range)

**GEAR:** Chance cube, deck of holo cards, talisman (the Gambler)

### RAMAL AND FORBO, FACTIONARIES

Ramal and Forbo are well-known Free League factionaries, but certainly don't look the part. Both men have remained true to their

stevedore backgrounds, both in manners and appearance. Ramal is thin and intense while Forbo is fat and pensive. Ramal agitates himself with kohôl only to fall asleep next to Forbo, who is already long gone, mumbling through the haze of his proxy addiction.

**CHARACTERISTICS (RAMAL):** Skinny, intense, wild eyes.
**CHARACTERISTICS (FORBO):** Slow thinker, vacant stare, detached.

| |
|---|
| **ATTRIBUTES:** **STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 2, EMPATHY 3** |
| **HIT POINTS:** 4 |
| **MIND POINTS:** 5 |
| **REPUTATION:** 7 |
| **SKILLS:** Melee combat 2, Ranged Combat 1, Force 2, Manipulation 2 |
| **WEAPONS:** **Ramal:** Power sledge (Weapon Damage 4, CRIT 3), **Forbo:** Vulcan cricket (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 2, Close Range) |
| **GEAR:** Talisman (the Deckhand), personal communicator, proxy technology, 12 proxy trips |

### NIGIEL FO, COURTESAN

Nigiel Fo is of average height, but slim and muscular, a wonder of all grace and bows. He spends most days at Wahib's together with his dozen-or-so-strong miniature court, a select group where beauty, wit and education are valued highly. The contrast between Nigiel's group and the rest of the clientele is striking. To an outsider, the courtesan's presence is odd, but is explained by his interest in antiquities and artifacts.

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Bows a lot, colorful clothing, flirty.

| |
|---|
| **ATTRIBUTES:** **STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 3, WITS 3, EMPATHY 5** |
| **HIT POINTS:** 5 |
| **MIND POINTS:** 8 |
| **REPUTATION:** 7 |
| **SKILLS:** Melee Combat 2, Dexterity 2, Culture 3, Manipulation 3 |
| **WEAPONS:** Hand fan (Weapon Damage 2, CRIT 1) |
| **GEAR:** Prayer tower, lacquered arrash box |

## EVENTS

Below are a few suggested events to use or take inspiration from.

### ARKIAL'S SECRET

The high roller Arkial Lima is on the run from an enforcer, as usual. She has a deal lined up, but needs one more day to close it. She can offer the PCs a secret in return for protecting her until she can pay her loan back. At a holo game a few days ago, she heard an intoxicated merchant talk about a colony in the asteroid belt that would soon run out of spare parts because of an act of sabotage. The merchant went on to talk about a sale of spare parts in another part of the system – maybe in the Monolith, in the Free League auctions on Coriolis or somewhere else. It is up to the PCs how they want to use this information.

### EARLY RETIREMENT

Council member Jesibel Niales of the Free League has come to realize that the faction's ties to the Syndicate are becoming too much of a liability. The problem can of course be traced back to Ramal and Forbo. Jesibel cannot act against the duo directly, but could hire external help such as the PCs. She needs real proof, holographic evidence showing that Ramal and Forbo are doing the Syndicate's bidding. Could the PCs be persuaded to help her? If they accept, their mission will be to befriend the duo, follow them around, and investigate who they are meeting with and where. Breaking into their living modules, storage units or ships might also be necessary. The payment could be a Free League membership (higher reputation) and good tips on upcoming cargo auctions.

### A HIGH-STAKES AUCTION

The PCs come into possession of a strange artifact, possibly even an animated object from before the Portal Wars. Nigiel Fo could act as an agent to help them find a buyer. The prospective buyer needs a little more time to come up with the money however, and the night before the sale, thieves try to burgle the PCs and steal the artifact. If they fail, a group of mercenaries attempt to take the object by force. A shady cult called the Beholders of Truth, connected to Portal Builder worship, are out to claim the artifact for themselves as they regard it as a holy item. Several cultists are high-ranking socialites on the station, which could complicate matters further.

### THE MENU AT WAHIB'S

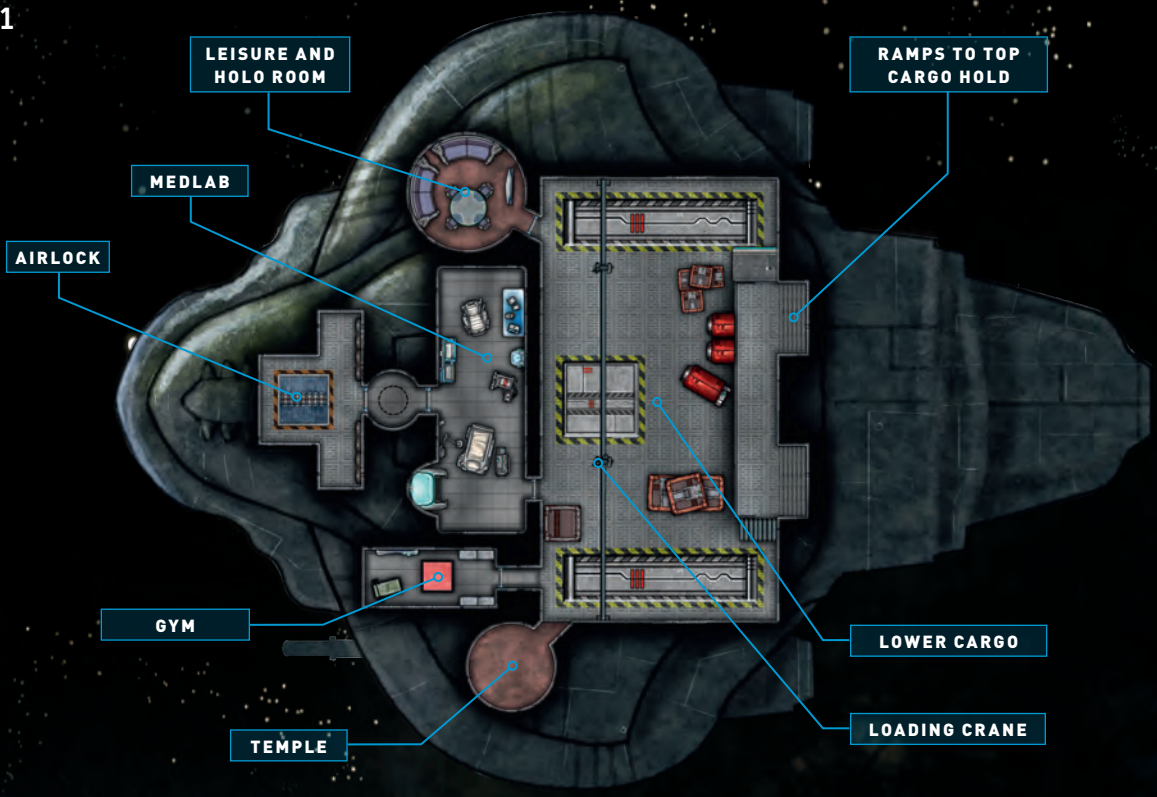
**Wahib's is not known for its gastronomic edge – on the contrary. The menu is a range of safe bets, classic dishes from all over the Horizon. Use Table 6.2 in the Rulebook for inspiration.**

### THE FACTIONARIES AND THE LEAGUE

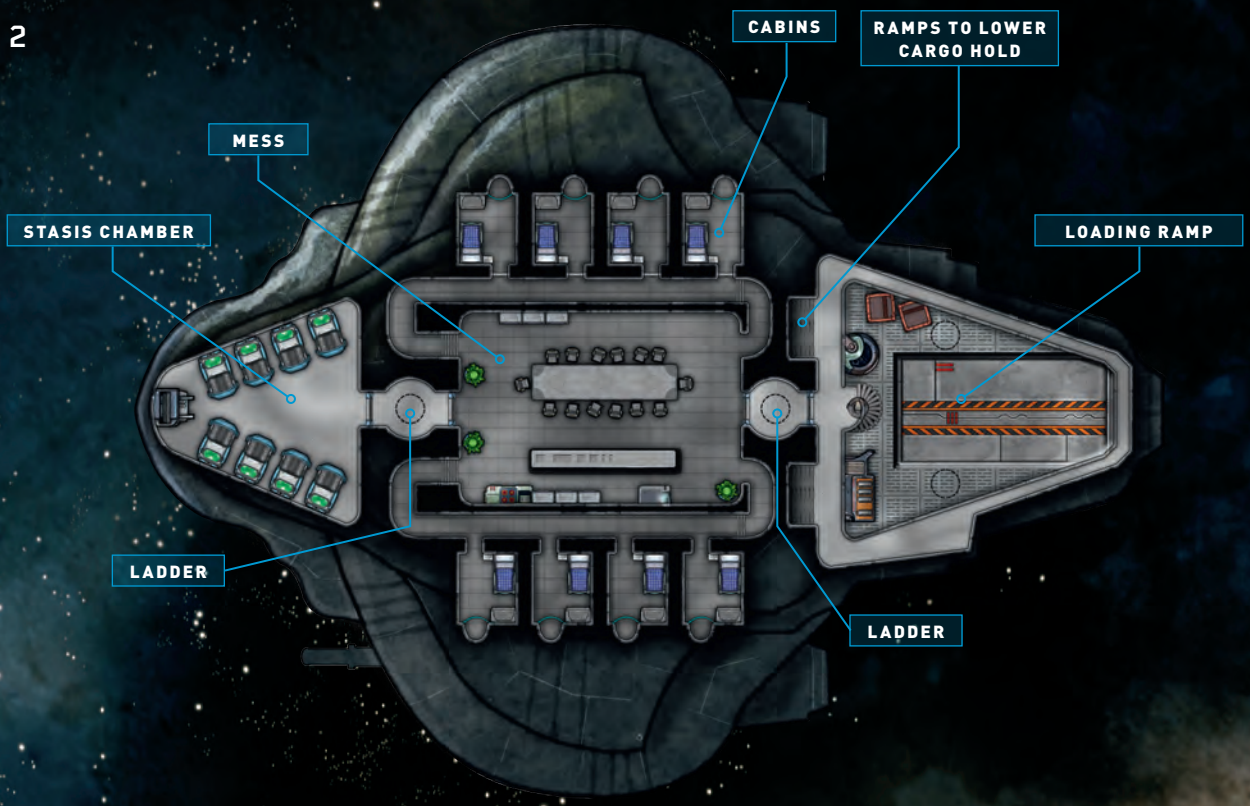
Ramal and Forbo are heavy names in the Free League hierarchy, if not at the very top. This doesn't stop them from publicly criticizing Jesibel Niales however, but they behave well if she is present in person. They need her, and she obviously needs them. The rumors about the Free League having dealings with the Syndicate name Ramal and Forbo as the link between the two factions.



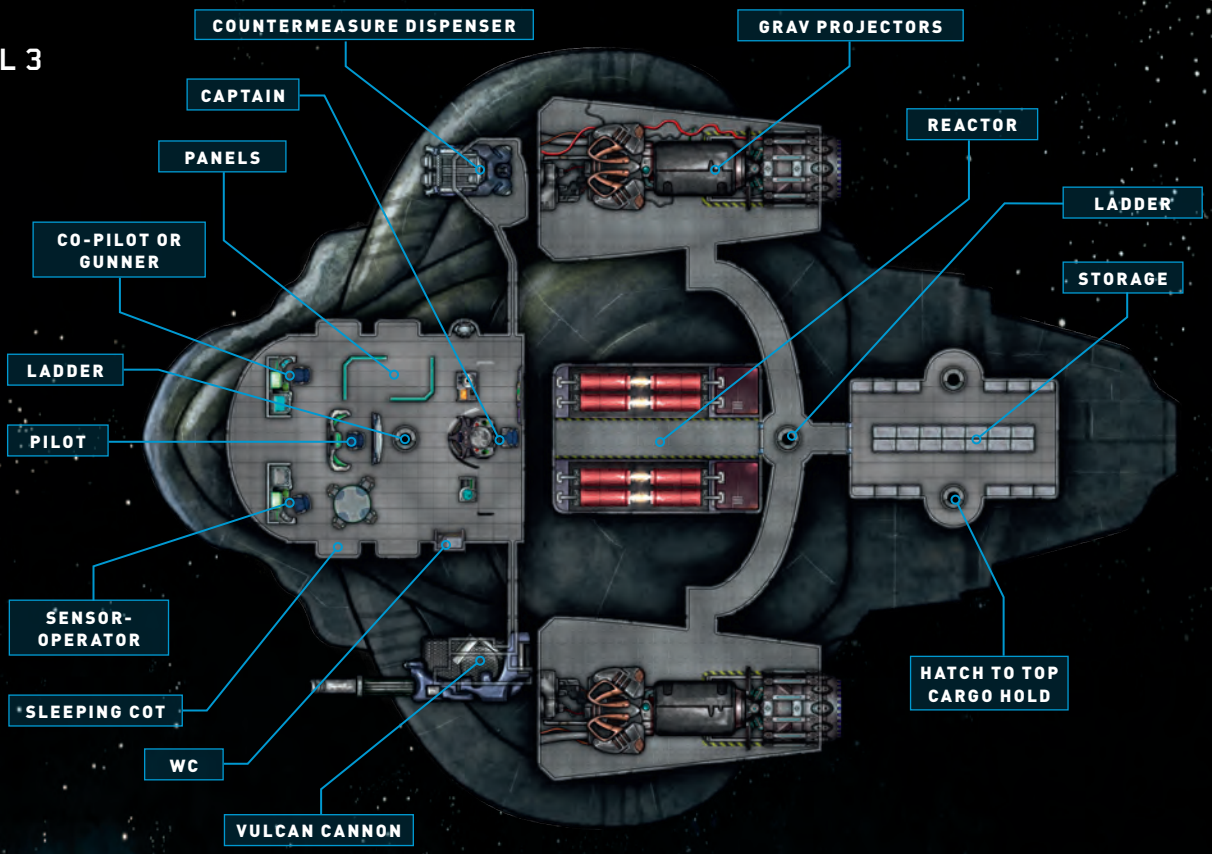
## LEVEL 1



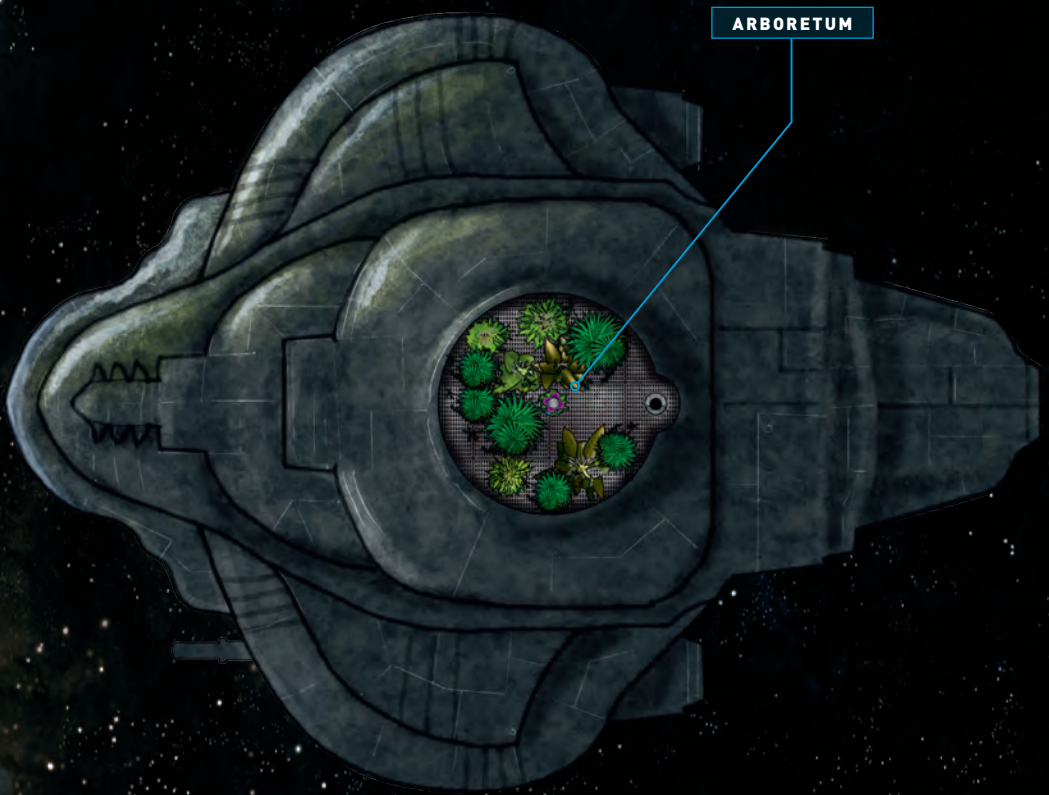

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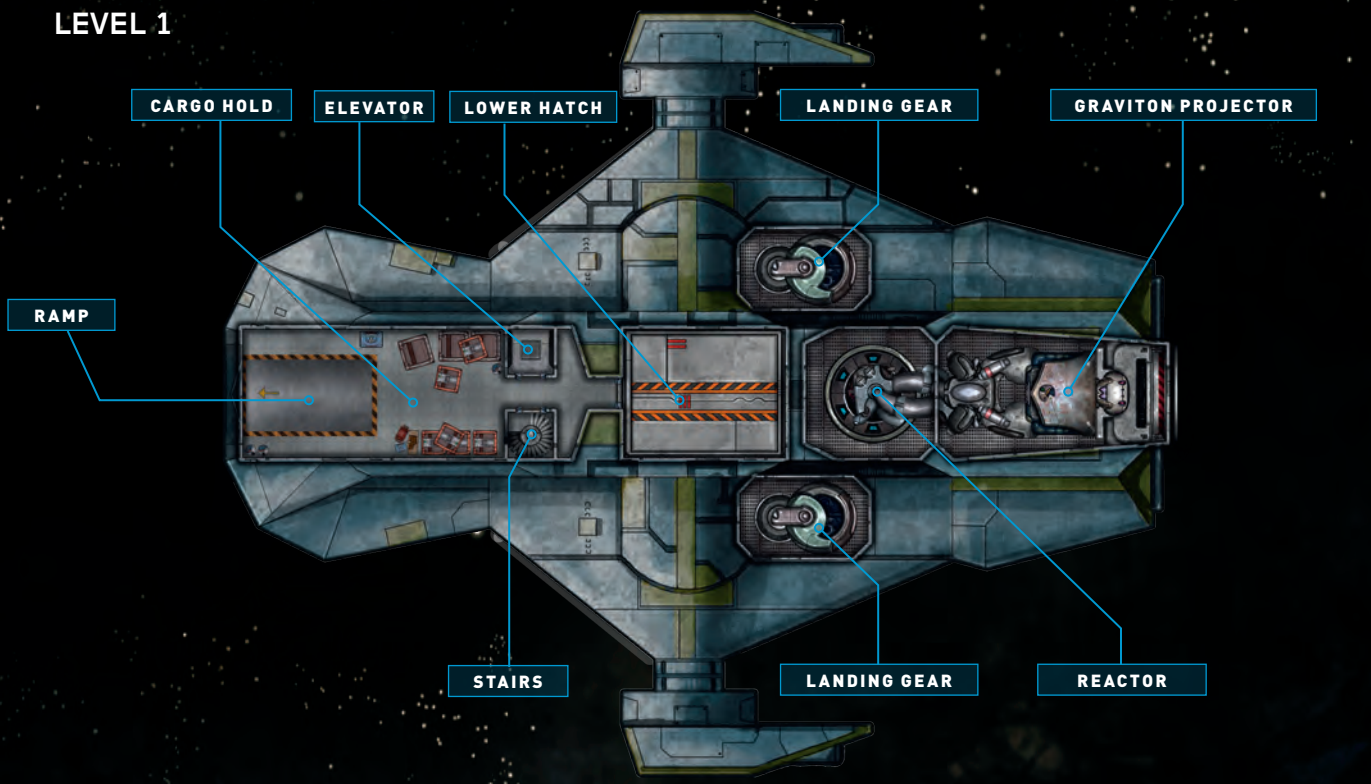
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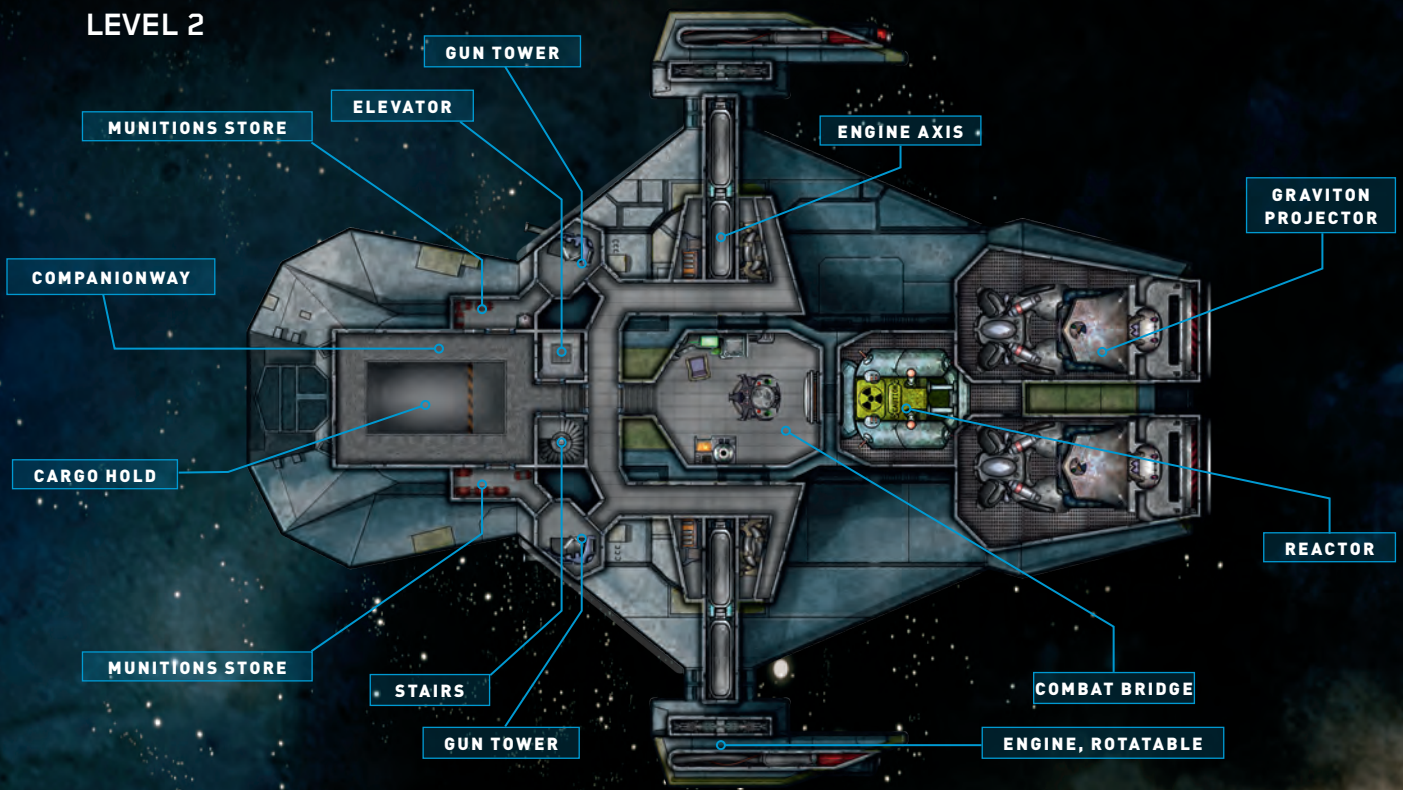

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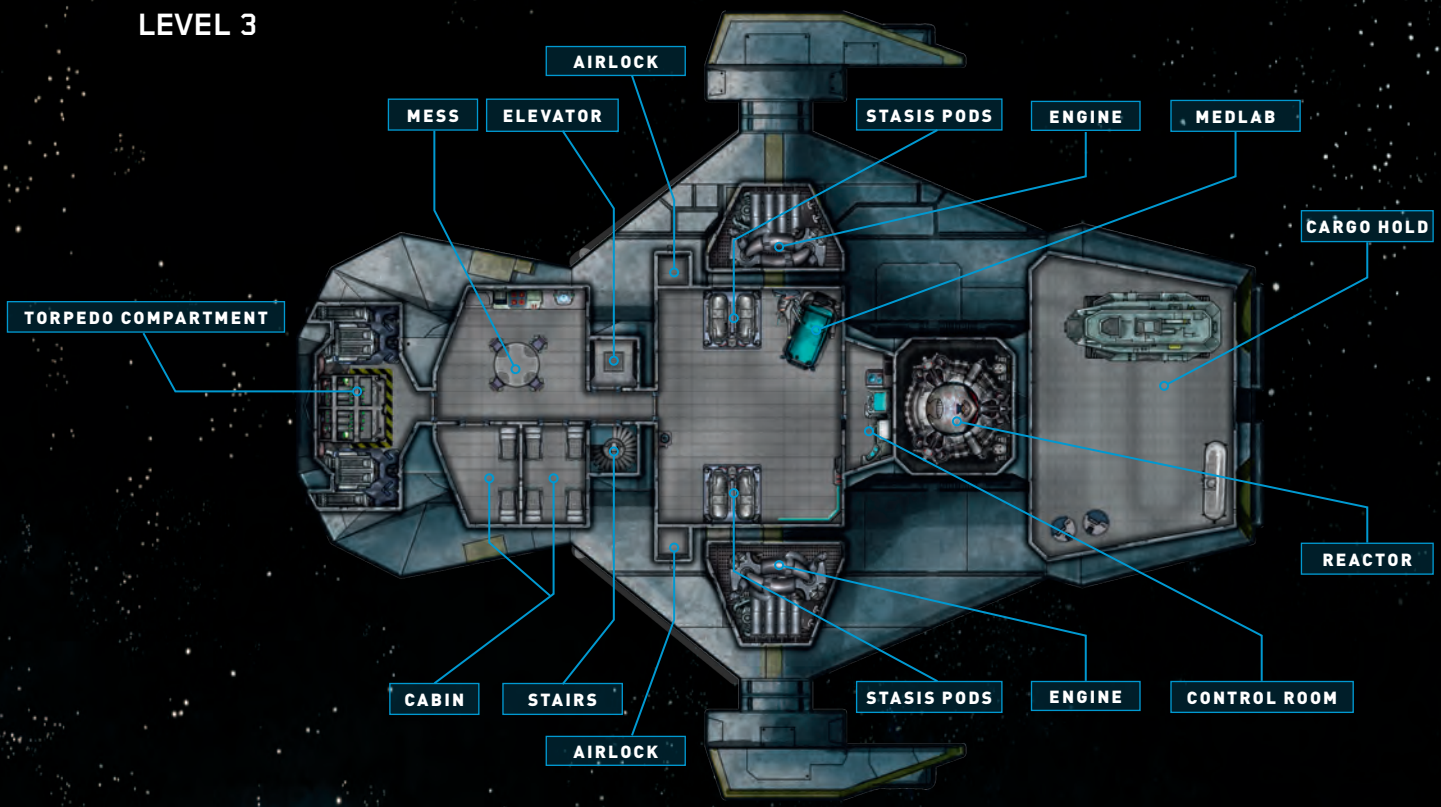
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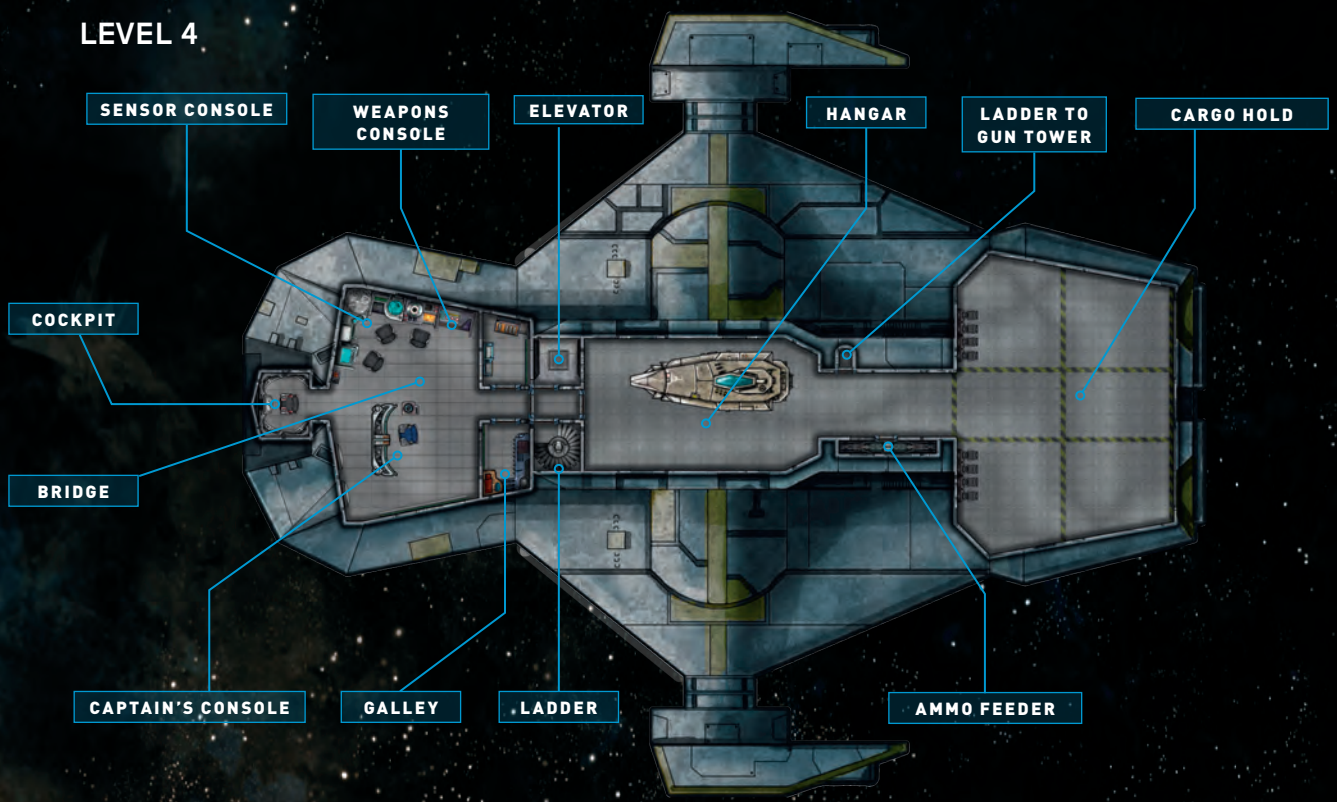

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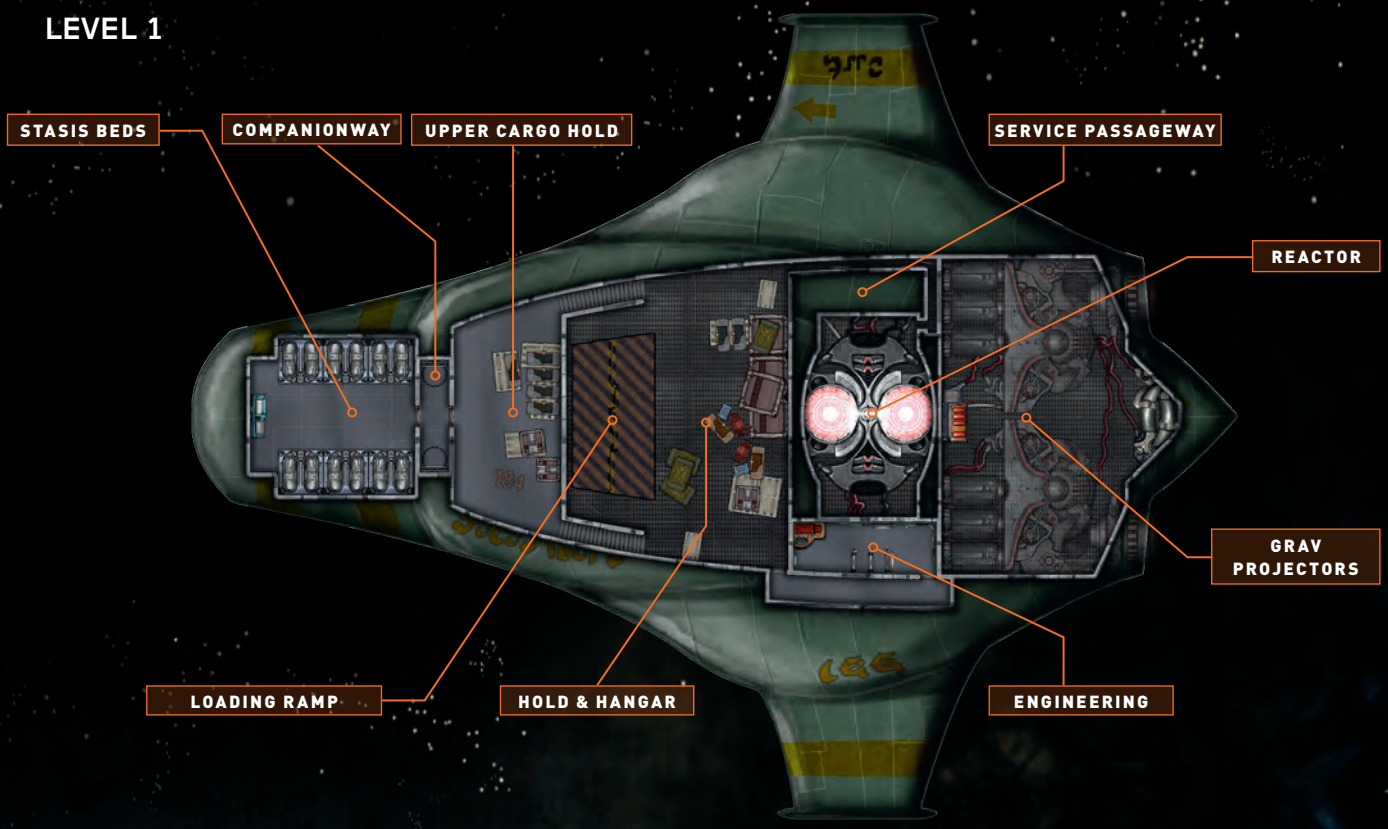
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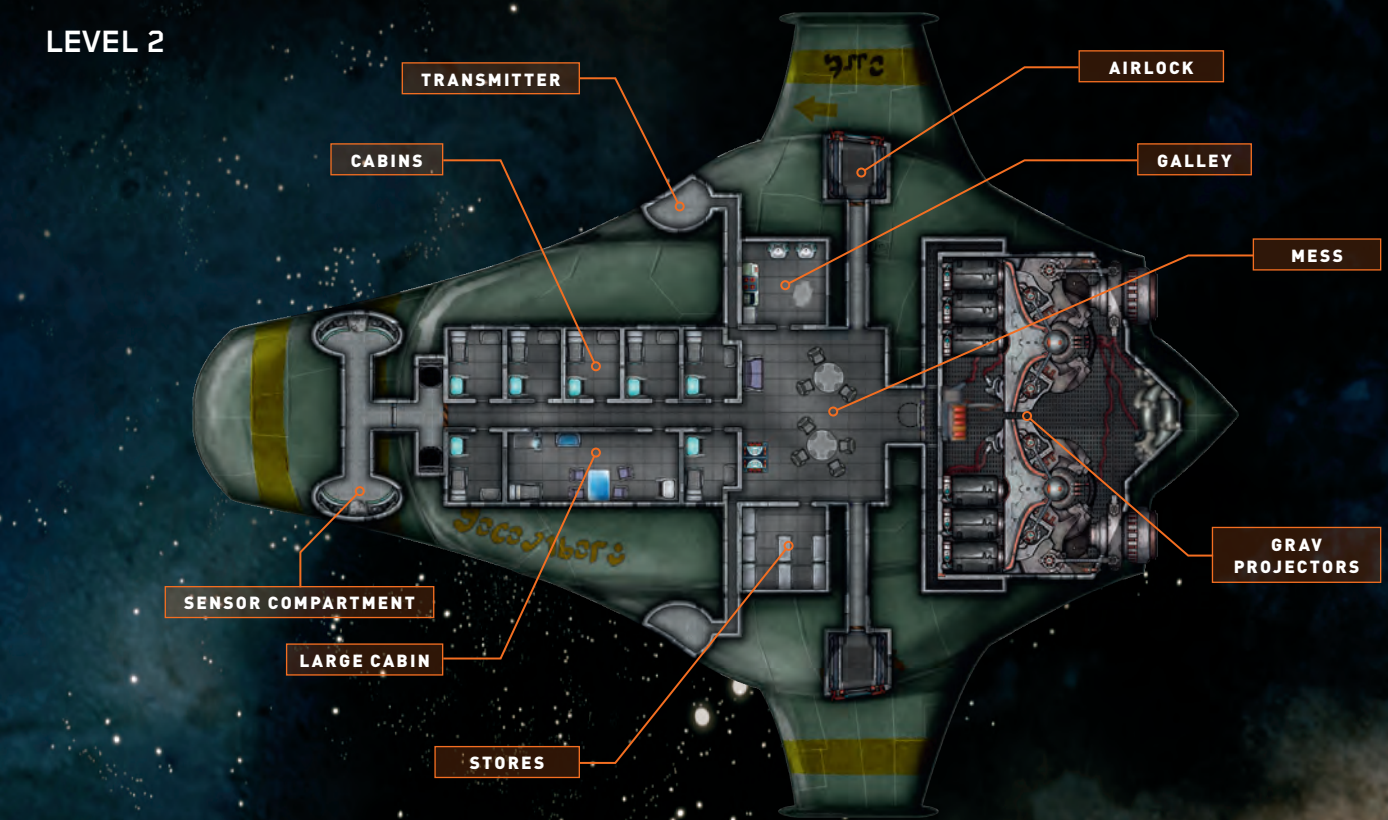

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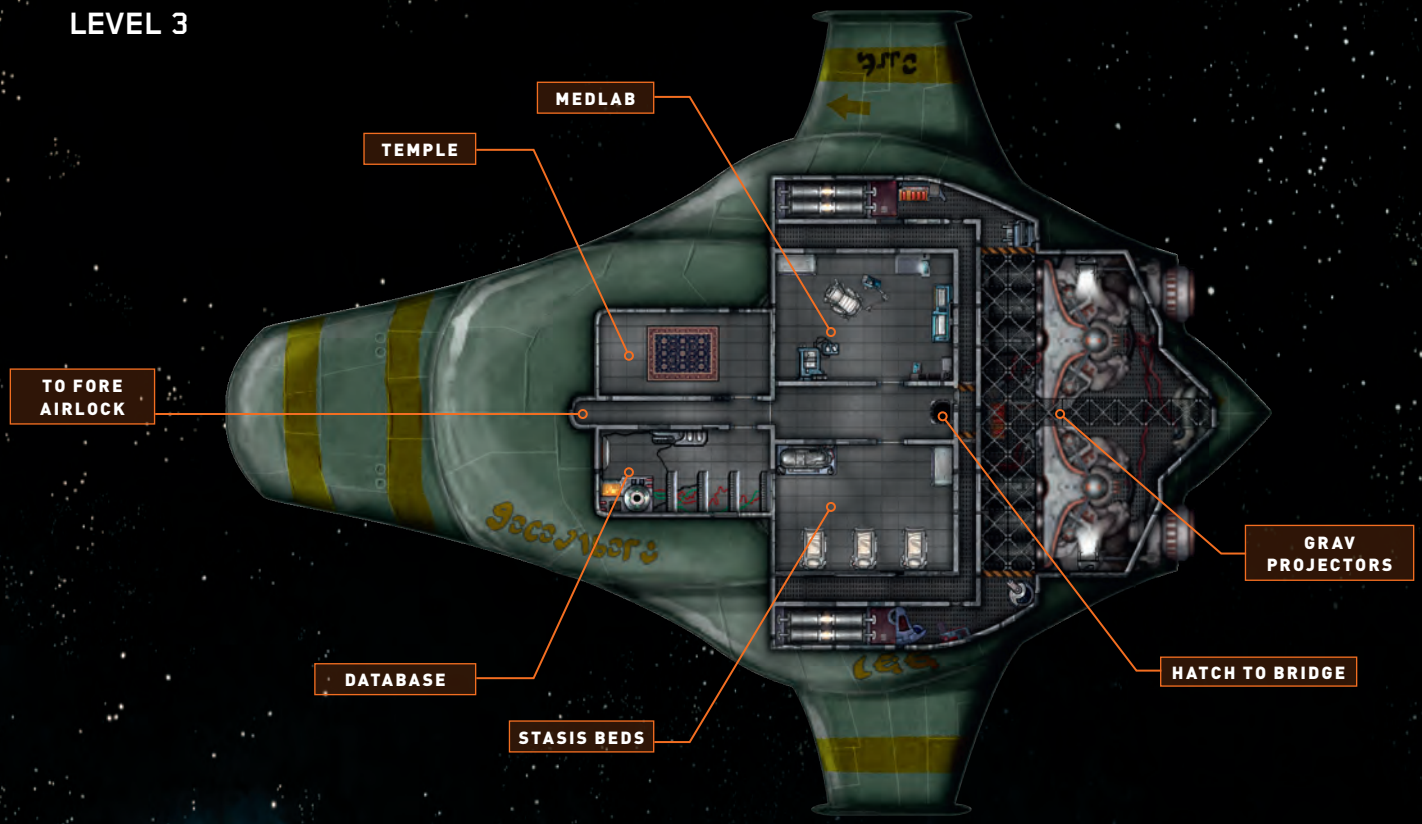
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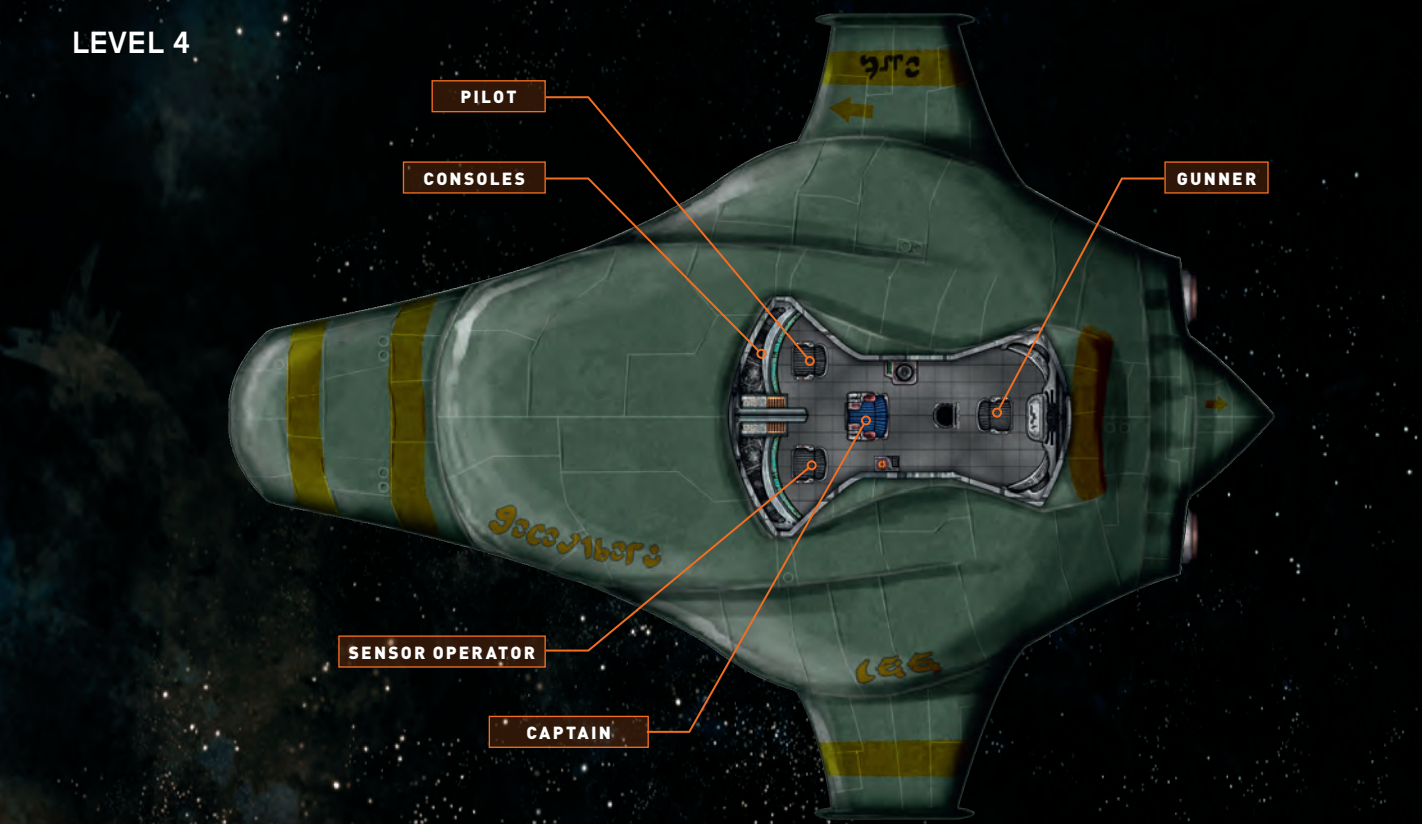

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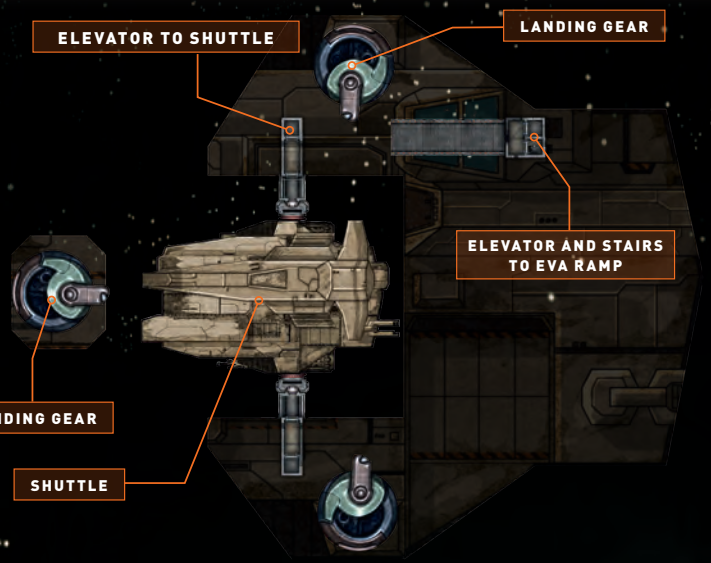
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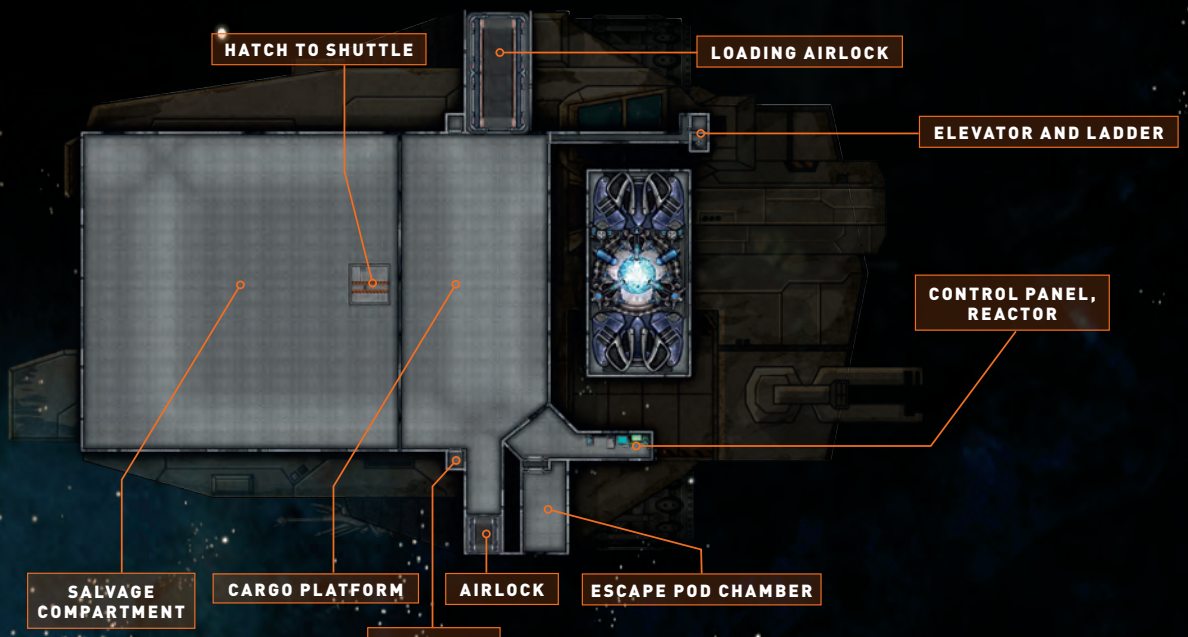

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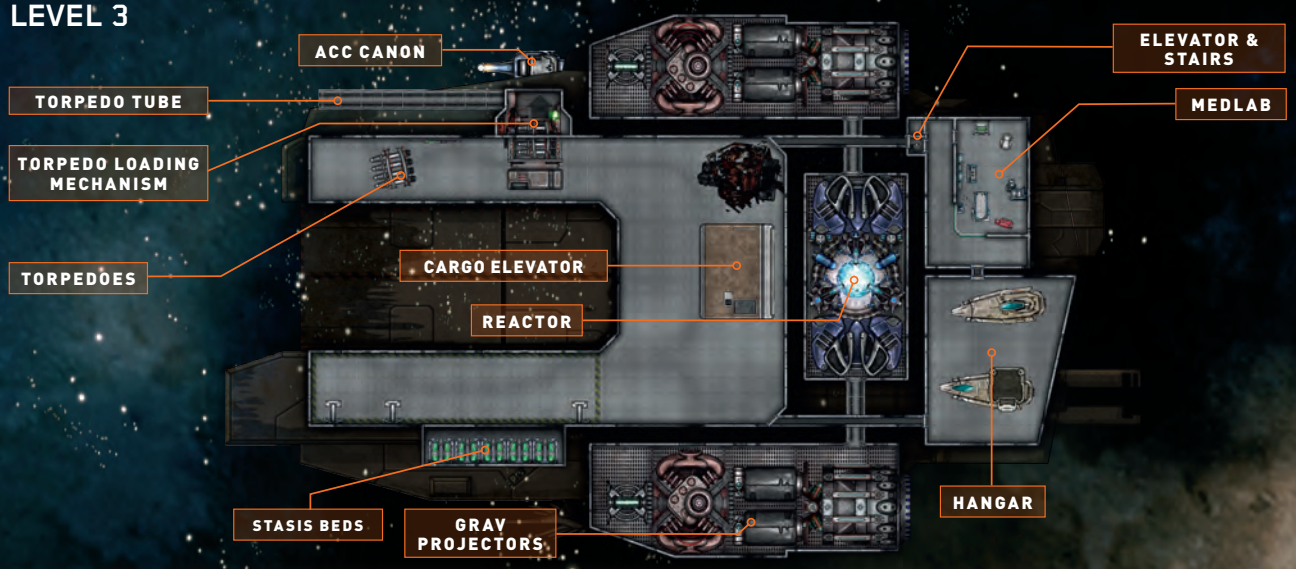
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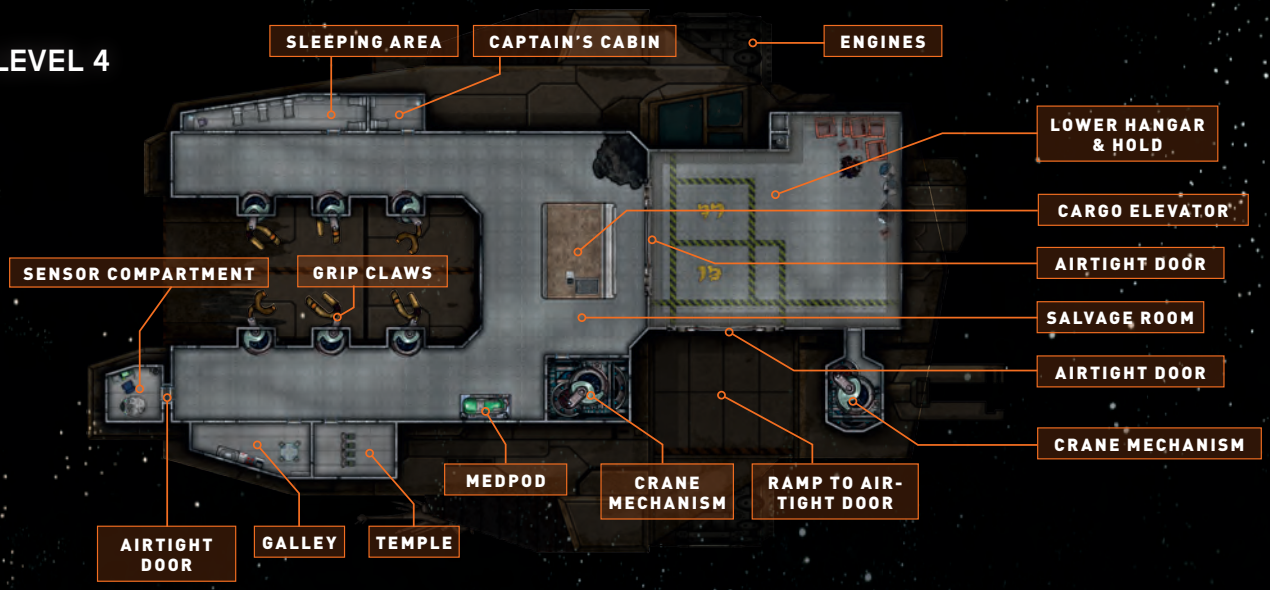

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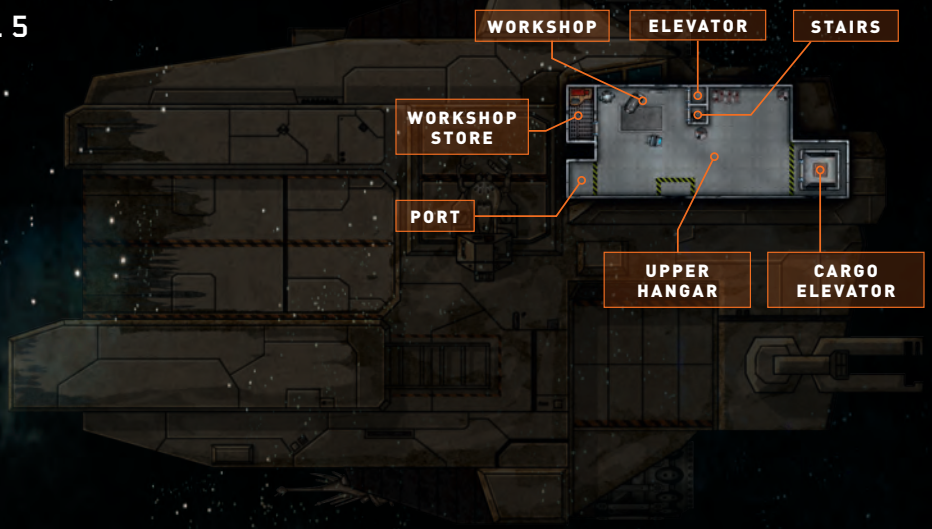

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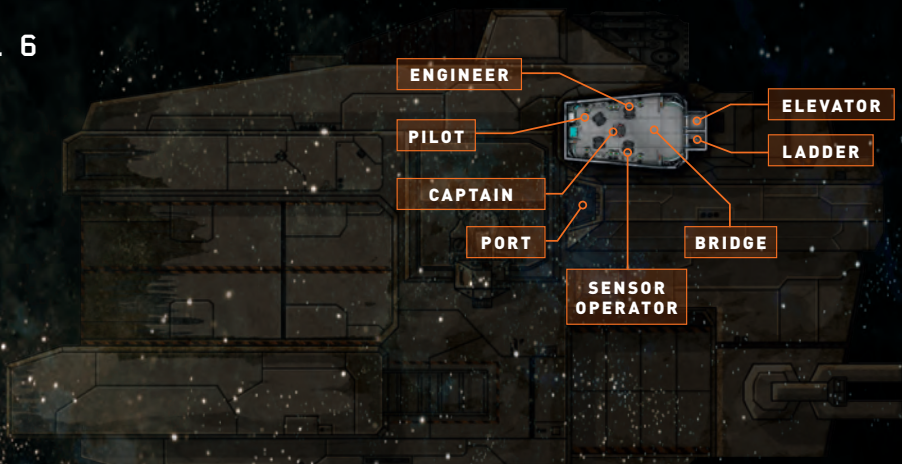
## LEVEL 4




## LEVEL 5




## LEVEL 6

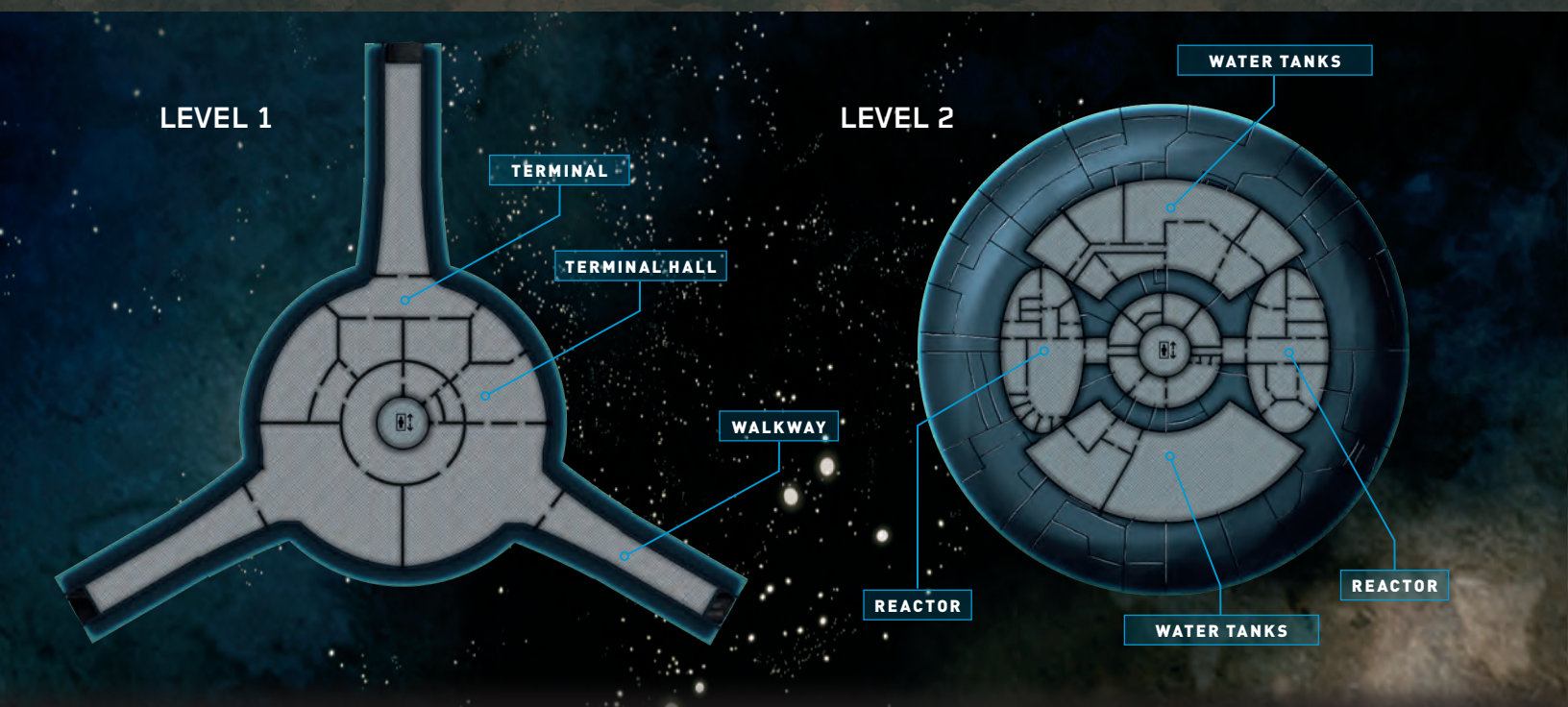


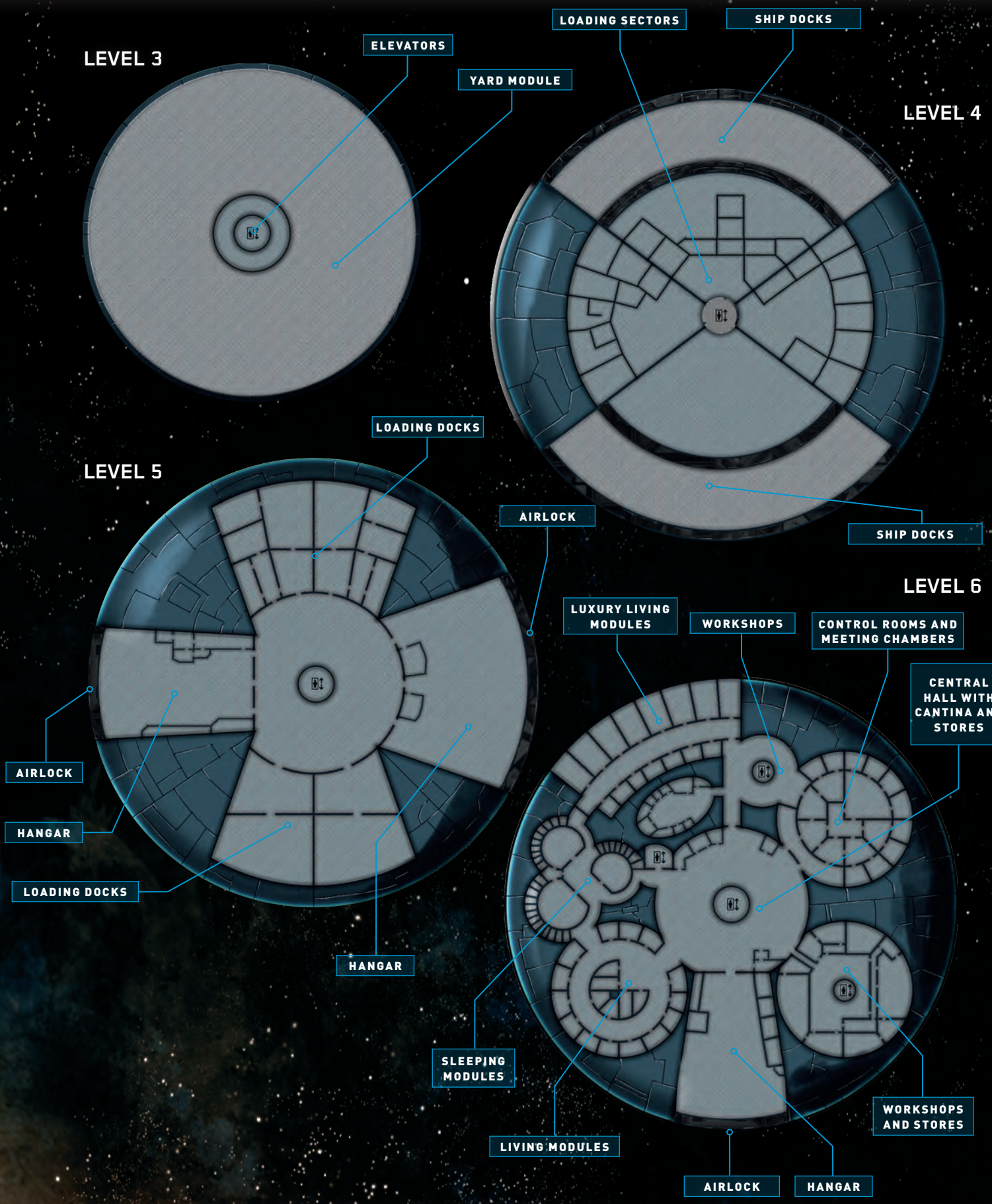
# SPACE STATION, AZANDRA

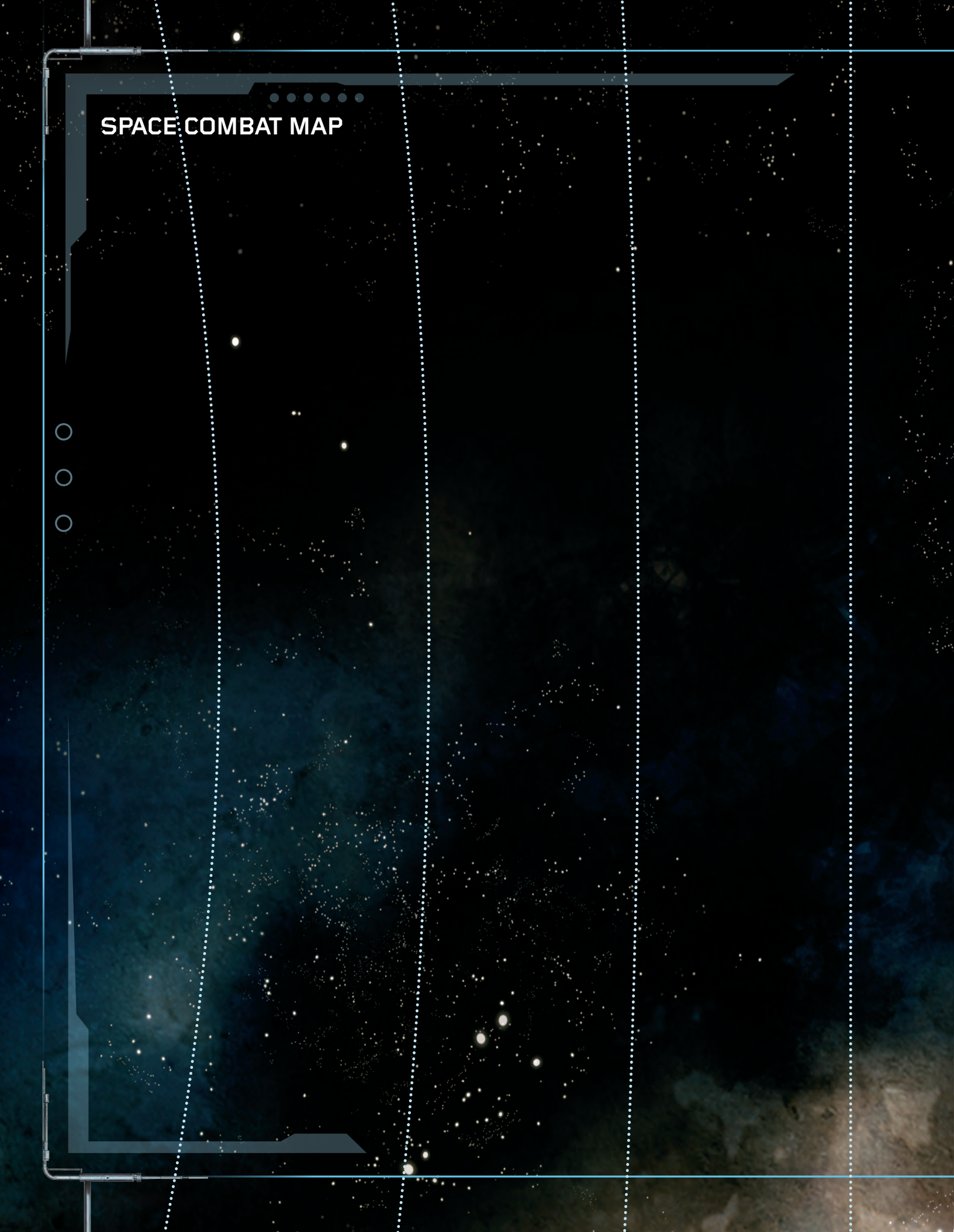
**FACTS:**

- **SHIPYARD:** Harga
- **CONSTRUCTION:** CC 26
- **CREW:** 88
- **INHABITANTS:** 800
- **WIDTH:** 154 m
- **HEIGHT: 340 M**

*Although no longer built, the Azandra class space station is a common sight in the Third Horizon. With its spacious layout and large docking modules, the Azandra is still a capable design, even though it was conceived in the twenties.*




LEVEL 3
ELEVATORS
YARD MODULE
LOADING SECTORS
SHIP DOCKS
LEVEL 4
SHIP DOCKS
LOADING DOCKS
LEVEL 5
AIRLOCK
AIRLOCK
HANGAR
LOADING DOCKS
HANGAR
LEVEL 6
LUXURY LIVING MODULES
WORKSHOPS
CONTROL ROOMS AND MEETING CHAMBERS
CENTRAL HALL WITH CANTINA AND STORES
SLEEPING MODULES
LIVING MODULES
AIRLOCK
HANGAR
WORKSHOPS AND STORES


SPACE COMBAT MAP



CHARACTER SHEET

# CORIOLIS

## ATTRIBUTES

- STRENGTH
- AGILITY
- WITS
- EMPATHY

## TRAUMA

- HIT POINTS (STRENGTH + AGILITY)
- CRITICAL INJURIES:
- MIND POINTS (WITS + EMPATHY)

## RADIATION

## EXPERIENCE

| | |
|---|---|
| NAME: | BACKGROUND: |
| CONCEPT: | ICON: |
| GROUP CONCEPT: | REPUTATION: |
| PERSONAL PROBLEM: | |

## APPEARANCE

- FACE:
- CLOTHING:

## RELATIONSHIPS

| | BUDDY |
|---|---|
| PC 1: | |
| PC 2: | |
| PC 3: | |
| PC 4: | |

## TALENTS

## SKILLS

| | GENERAL | | ADVANCED |
|---|---|---|---|
| DEXTERITY (AGILITY) | | COMMAND (EMPATHY) | |
| FORCE (STRENGTH) | | CULTURE (EMPATHY) | |
| INFILTRATION (AGILITY) | | DATA DJINN (WITS) | |
| MANIPULATION (EMPATHY) | | MEDICURGY (WITS) | |
| MELEE COMBAT (STRENGTH) | | MYSTIC POWERS (EMPATHY) | |
| OBSERVATION (WITS) | | PILOT (AGILITY) | |
| RANGED COMBAT (AGILITY) | | SCIENCE (WITS) | |
| SURVIVAL (WITS) | | TECHNOLOGY (WITS) | |

## GEAR

| | BONUS |
|---|---|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |

## WEAPONS

| | BONUS | INIT | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | COMMENTS | RELOADS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

## ARMOR

| | RATING | COMMENT |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

SPACESHIP SHEET

# CORIOLIS

| NAME: | |
|---|---|
| CLASS & TYPE: | SHIPYARD: |
| PROBLEM: | DEBT: |

## DATA

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MANEUVERABILITY | | SIGNATURE | |
| SPEED | | ARMOR | |

## MODULES

| | DISABLED |
|---|---|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |
| 11 | |
| 12 | |
| MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MODULES | |

## ENERGY POINTS

## HULL POINTS

CRITICAL DAMAGE:

## FEATURES

| | BONUS |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



CAPTAIN — SKILL LEVEL



PILOT — SKILL LEVEL



SENSOR OPERATOR — SKILL LEVEL



GUNNER — SKILL LEVEL



ENGINEER — SKILL LEVEL

## WEAPONS

| | BONUS | DAMAGE | CRIT | RANGE | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

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# CORIOLIS STATION

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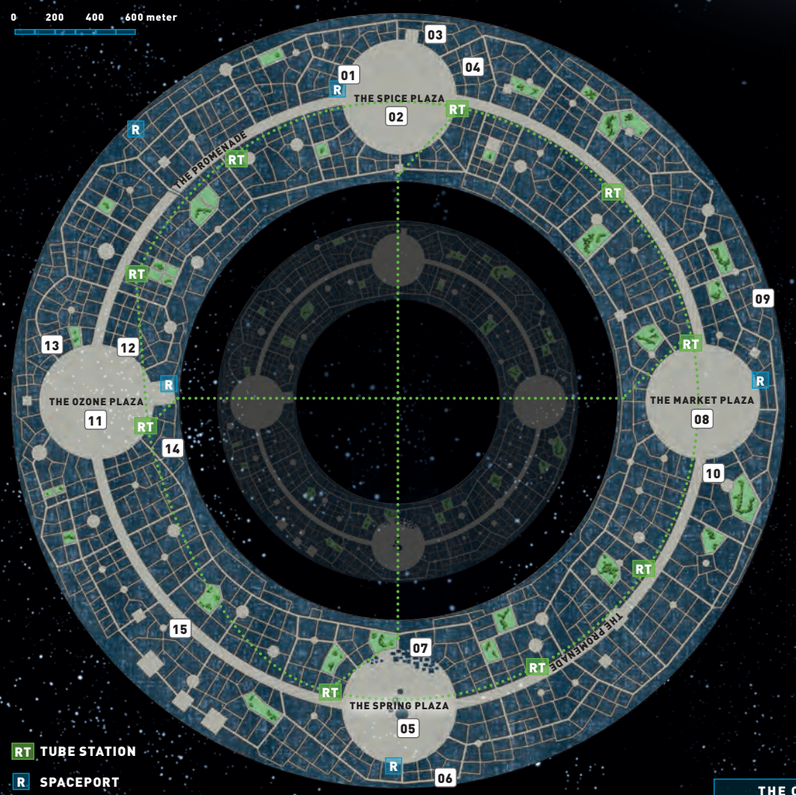
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11. THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT
12. GARBAL'S CURIOSITIES
13. THE GARDEN OF SEEKERS
14. THE SAMARITAN SANATORIUM






*"I'm getting a signal." Dalil's voice crackled over the com. "We're close." The navigator gazed into the darkness ahead, his face ghostly pale in the cold glow from the tabula in his hands.*

*Radwa nodded silently for her comrades to advance, approaching the strange ruins in the moonscape. The only sounds they could hear were their own breathing through the air filters and the soft crunch under their boots. The floodlights from the freighter Narzalus behind them cast long shadows of the trio.*

*"Something is wrong, boss." The sharp voice of Jhara broke the silence. Her vulcan rifle hummed as the tall woman from Sadaal activated her weapon. Without turning, Radwa raised her hand to still her friend.*

*"Easy, Jha," she whispered over the com.*

*The explorers shone their suit-mounted flashlights over the ruins. Alien signs were carved into the smooth dark surfaces. In the light, they seemed to be glowing.*

*Something slowly unraveled before them. A darkness rose from the surface of the dead moon, reaching towards the starry sky above them.*

*"Mercy of the Icons!" Radwa gasped, and felt a chill spread throughout her body.*

**Coriolis – The Third Horizon is a science fiction role-playing game from the makers of critically acclaimed Mutant: Year Zero (six-time nominee and winner of a Silver ENnie for Best Rules 2015). Features:**

- Create your unique player character – including skills, talents, gear, and relationships – in mere minutes.
- Fight fast and furious battles, praying to the Icons to overcome your enemies.
- Build and crew your own spaceship, to explore the many star systems of the Third Horizon.
- Experience thrilling spaceship duels, using a game system that puts all player characters at the heart of the action.
- Take part in the intrigue between powerful factions on the majestic space station Coriolis.
- Uncover the mysteries of the Third Horizon, a rich tapestry of cultures that have settled the stars.

*"The game's authors describe it as 'Arabian Nights in space' and it fulfills that brief marvelously. Style 5/5, Substance 5/5."*

RPG.NET REVIEW



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freeleaguepublishing.com
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ISBN 978-1-910132-72-2

MUH050559