

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

In *Dark Matter*, fantasy and science fiction live side-by-side: the universe is filled to the brim with huge starships, innumerable alien creatures and planets, and all sorts of blasters, jetpacks, and power armor. It's also populated with dragons, demons, giants, and strange alien creatures to be met and slain. Axe-wielding barbarians clad in furs can stand alongside machine-gun toting androids, facing down alien horrors on the deck of a derelict space cruiser.

In this setting, sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from technology. Magical devices have become as commonplace as torches, pitchforks, and horses once were. While most people still can't banish a demon or rain fire from the sky, they have ready access to hardlight-projecting consoles, levitating hovercars, and other wondrous devices. Magic is no longer at odds with technology; it has become technology.

THE 'VERSE

The setting's namesake is the **Dark Matter engine**, a device which allows ships to instantaneously hop across the galaxy by taking a shortcut through a minuscule demiplane called **the Void**. The featureless, uninhabitable space between worlds is called **the Black**, and while it is indeed mostly empty, it contains a few horrors spacers dare not speak of.

The galaxy is also riddled with perilous **Dead Magic Zones**, regions where magic itself has worn thin and torn, preventing any magic or magical technology, such as Dark Matter engines, from functioning. These vast swathes of space are death traps to spacers, but also contain blissfully ignorant and wholly uncontacted nonmagical worlds.

MAW STATIONS

Dotted throughout the galaxy are space stations—the **Maws**—built within massive, antediluvian skeletons from some forgotten race of space beasts. Clutched within the jaws of each is a pitch-black portal to the Void, which allows spacers to jump from one station to another. Together, the maws form a cross-galactic Dark Matter transit network that forms the 'verse's civilizations. Each maw station is a vibrant multicultural spaceport, a bastion to adventurers and spacers.

No one living knows the origin of the maw stations, but they may be tied to the ancient and enigmatic **Sepulcher Star**, which orbits the galaxy's central black hole. This star has become a holy-site for the avia-ra, a race of sun-worshipping zealots, who believe that an ancient deity of untold power, the **Old Un**, lives or slumbers within the star's heart. In deference to their religion of the Sun Above, (and to defend their claim on the star), the avia-ra have constructed a holy city, the Solar Citadel, in orbit around the star.

MAGICAL TECHNOLOGY

In *Dark Matter*, most things that would be considered high-technology are actually advanced magic items. Blasters can be considered highly-developed evocation wands, flying cars use a variant on a permanent *levitate* spell, and traveling faster than the speed of light is simply an advanced application of teleportation magic.

RULES ADDITIONS

The following new rules are important additions to those used in 5th Edition:

- **Blasters** are ammunition-less ranged weapons which use two damage dice instead of one, but don't add your ability score modifier to damage.
- Dark Matter introduces three new skills: **Dexterity (Piloting)**, used to pull off tricky maneuvers in starships, **Intelligence (Data)**, used for hacking and interacting with software, and **Intelligence (Technology)**, used to manipulate hardware.
- A new sense, **thermalsight**, allows constructs to view heat, even through fog and smoke, but it does not allow them to see through illusions.
- Characters should be considered to have a **datapad**, **comm set**, and **life suit** among their starting equipment. These pieces of technology allow them perform basic software tasks, communicate up to a mile, and survive in the vacuum of space, respectively.

SHIP COMBAT

Ship combat in *Dark Matter* works just the same as normal combat, using AC, attack rolls, and saving throws. With the following changes:

- Characters in ship combat assume **roles**, such as Captain or Gunner, which allow them to control an aspect of the ship.
- Ships use **mega hit points** and **mega damage**, each worth one hundred normal points.
- Similarly, **mega spells** and **Mega-sized** creatures exist exclusively for space combat.
- Ships use *facing* rules to determine movement and attacks. Weapons aim in a 90-degree range from the side on which they are mounted.
- To approximate momentum, ships move in a cone, extending from their front. They can rotate after moving.
- Mega spells are a category of spells intended for use in space combat, but a spellcaster can turn a normal spell into a mega one using a ship's arcane cannon.

AMOEBOID

Amoeboids are intelligent, vaguely humanoid-shaped, translucent oozes that can mimic the form of any creature they touch.

RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Intelligence, +2 Constitution, Flexible Form, Amorphous, Reform

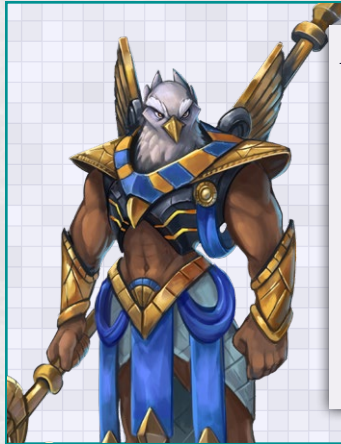
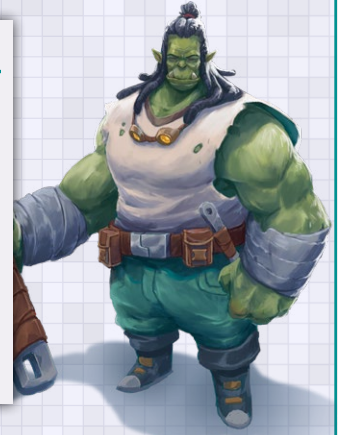


ORC

Orcs are muscular, down-to-earth humanoids with green skin and imposing builds.

RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Strength, +1 Constitution, Darkvision, Follow Through, Know-How, Powerful Build



AVIA-RA

The avia-ra are a sun-worshipping, bird-headed people, who appear to primitive cultures to spread their ancient religion.

RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Wisdom, +1 Dexterity, Darkvision, Avia-Ra Weapon Training, Doctrine, Blessings of the Sun, Sun's Chosen



SKATHÁRI

Hardy insectoids hailing from the deadliest of planets, skathári distrust technology of all kinds.

RACIAL TRAITS

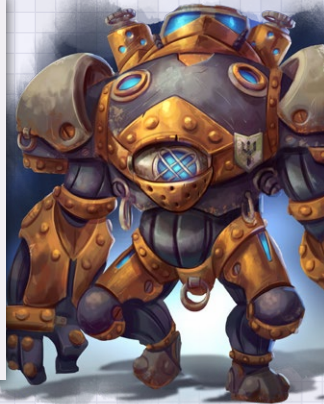
+2 Strength, +1 Constitution, Adaptive Metabolism, Gliding Wings, Powerful Build, Hooked Claws, Regenerative

NAUTILID

The hulking, fishlike nautilids wear great water-filled suits wherever they travel, as they search the galaxy for a new, ocean-filled homeworld.

RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Strength, +1 Intelligence, Amphibious, Powerful Build, Deductive, Aqua Suit

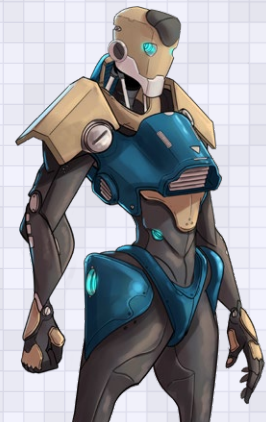


VECT

Living constructs, vect tirelessly search for the meaning behind the "Spark" of life.

RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Constitution, +1 to any score, Thermalsight, Construct Anatomy, Inflexible Mind, Embedded Armor



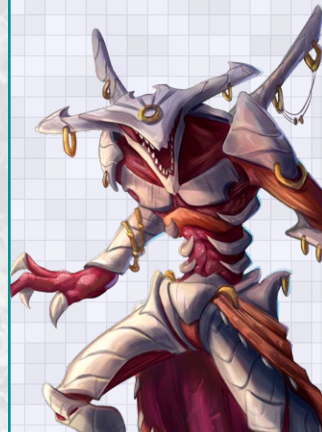
NEAR-HUMAN

Human variant

The abundant varieties of near-humans run the gamut from green-skinned, to beastlike, to utterly bizarre.

RACIAL TRAITS

+1 to two ability scores, proficiency in 1 skill, Near-Human Feat



WROTHIAN

Renegades of a fearsome race of terrible, psionic creatures, wrothians are outcasts in every corner of the 'verse.

RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, +1 Charisma, Darkvision, Neural Lock, Razor Teeth, Repletion, Telepathy