



# RED STAR



**Ryan Macklin**

A supplement for **Bulldogs! Fate Core Edition**



# RED STAR





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UNION OF THE SALDRALLA

OFFICE OF SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE  
UNUSUAL CRISES MITIGATION GROUP

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**Communiqué from the General's Office**TOP SECRET  
EYES ONLY

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To: New Black Guard officers

We are what stands between the citizens of the Union and its greatest threat. While others in the military chase pirates or speculate on another war with the Devalkamanchan Republic, the Black Guard knows the truth: powerful terrorists live within our borders.

Of course, I speak of the Hayerschan threat, and the Crimson Flare terrorist group in specific. While the public has been kept in the dark on this threat, thanks to our directives with the media and communication corporations, it is very real. Six days ago, the Crimson Flare attacked Terminus Station, one of our deep space genetic laboratories researching their condition.

Security cameras caught four Crimson Flare agents boarding the lab, having snuck on board a supply transport scheduled to dock with the station. They stormed inside, electrocuting the guards with their freakish lightning projection abilities. Then they tortured the scientists, collected the data, and freed the two research subjects contained within before destroying all the equipment and half of the station.

They could have destroyed those cameras. No, they wanted us to see what they did. Making them a military asset was an ill-conceived disaster. Instead of indoctrinating them, we gave them the training and experience to become effective insurgents. Crimson Flare sleeper cells are seeded throughout our worlds, waiting to strike. And due to the nature of their genetic makeup, it is nearly impossible for us to infiltrate them.

We cannot afford another disaster, another good life lost. The politicians in the Great Assembly need not know of our methods, just our results. The Black Guard cannot afford to be weak and squeamish when the enemy looks like us, talks like us, and can kill us with a thought.

We cannot be weak with an enemy who seeks to break the Union, to bring it crashing down.

You were each handpicked because you were the best of the best, because of the bravery you have shown in the line of duty, and because you believe as I do—that our families will not be truly safe until this threat is eliminated.

The Black Guard will be triumphant. We have no other choice but to be.

General Tzimdine



## *The Union's Injustice*

*I just want to live in peace.*

*Nine years ago, I was on that damned mining colony on Hayersch's moon. After the flare, I woke up and could... sense everyone around me. We all became something more, something greater. I could run and leap far beyond what a normal Dolom could, which is how I got away when the military started rounding us up.*

*Of course, I was caught. In the early days, some of us worked with the military. They hoped to show that we all were trustworthy and that despite the new urges we gained along with our powers, we were decent citizens. That became harder to prove when they found out about the dreams we all had.*

*That experiment didn't last long. Maybe a little over a year, from what I've heard.*

*The Black Guard let me go, to live my life out on this crappy planet. Guess I wasn't worth capturing for some genetic experiment. Anyway, I follow their rules, check in, keep to myself for the most part. If I tell anyone the truth about what I am, they'll know and they'll come for my family, my friends. There is no hiding from the Union's eyes, electronic and organic.*

*Some of us wonder why they let us live. And some naively believe it's because genocide—yes, we're a people, it would be genocide—is too much for the "all-inclusive" Union. I think it's because we're bait. The Crimson Flare only reveals itself to other Hayerschans. So they wait until a Flare tries to recruit us.*

*Once, I travelled around as a doctor on various ships. Now my travel is so restricted I can't leave this city without getting the Black Guard's approval. I can contact loved ones off-world, but every message I send is scrutinized.*

*I've been a prisoner on this world for three years now, though no one around me knows it. They're all blissfully unaware of the dark side of the Union. And I'm starting to hate them all.*

*Late Union*

**RISE UP, BLESSED OF THE RED STAR!**

Though we did not know this when we set foot on what the vile Union called Hayersch's moon, we were chosen for greatness. I know you feel the same call I do, the desires of the planet Herself. And She wishes Her children to be free!

**IF YOU DENY THIS, THINK:**

Why would we always know where the Red Star is? (She does not wish to be profaned against with their name for Her.) Why would we all share Her desire to be free, and to show the galaxy the power we've been blessed with? Why would we be able to sense each other? It is Her will.

**MANY OF YOU ARE MARKED**

Marked by the Black Guard, just as one would mark cattle. You live where they let you live, do what they let you do, and exist only to serve their needs—to catch those who would strike against them for the basic right of liberty. Do not think you're safe! The moment they need another test subject, they know where you are.

**YES, TEST SUBJECTS!**

They poke and prod at us, drawing blood and carving brain to discover how we have come to be who we are. They struggle to find a way to stop us—and until the Union is taught a lesson, it will continue to treat our kind as meat, not as people.

**MANY OF YOU FEAR**

I know many of you fear for those close to you. Should you take up arms, they are forfeit. Know that we understand, for each of us loves someone, and the Crimson Flare will bring them to safety. It may not be the life they knew, but we take care of our own. Their lives will not be the sword the Guard holds over your head any longer.

**JOIN THE CRIMSON FLARE**

We have given the Union a bloody nose, and the Red Star is ever pleased, but there can be no freedom, peace, or prosperity until the task is done. And for that, we need every one of the Blessed to join us. Join the Crimson Flare.

**AN ANGRY WOLF**

SENSOR CORDON

INTERDICTION FLEET

TERRACT



SUBJECT TWELVE

Recovered: Terminus Deep Space Research Station  
Profile: Arsubaran male, 27 years old. Former Red Flare member. Acquired four days ago. Currently in medically-induced coma.

Field-observed Abilities:

Subject possesses strong electro-psychic abilities, including hyperactive spatial sense, enhanced reflexes, and the "red lightning" projection unique to their physiology.

Observations in Lab:

As normal, subject acquisition was difficult, requiring the use of Black Guard operatives and baton assets. Subject's legs were wounded in the operation, and he was injected with a heavy sedative upon capture.

We removed flesh from the subject's legs and placed it in a tank filled with a nutrient fluid. Flesh pulsed when the tank was subjected to significant electrical stimulation. While this is nothing new, as we know that many afflicted can be prolonged through electrical stimulation, it allows us test tissue to work with.

After touching the tissue with an anti-Hayerschan baton, it was neutralized within moments. Our scanners confirmed our hypothesis, that once contact is made, the baton emits an as-yet unknown form of radiation that decays within microseconds. Contact with unafflicted flesh does not produce this radiation, nor does the radiation affect normal beings. It would seem that this effect is independent of the light they produce when gripped.

The anti-Hayerschan radiation is strikingly similar to that produced by their electrical blasts, which may explain [REDACTED]

We have begun studying this phenomenon, but as there is no clear way at this time to disassemble these artifacts, we can only guess. A team at Goldway is working on that, though from their reports, they have had no success in breaching a baton's polymetal casing.

The radiation decays far too quickly to be manufactured as beam weapon, though if we can replicate the technology, and the power sources required can be made small enough, ballistic weaponry is possible. However, we do not know if these batons require this size (or even this shape) to function.

While the military may see this as a small discovery, I believe that with another month of testing, we will achieve a major breakthrough—possibly even one that allows us to disable the Hayerschan DNA markers without harming the subject. For that, we will require additional test subjects.

Personal Note:

I recognize the military's interest in creating the fastest solution possible, which likely involves weaponizing this radiation rather than researching a cure. I will state again for the record my firm belief that a weapon will only result in them become even more aggressive before a military victory would be achieved. I have already lost a son-in-law due to such actions; let us not lose any more.

*Alex Karn-Bishop*  
Dr. Karn-Bishop

# THE RED THREAT

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

There is a secret conflict within the Union of the Saldralla between a rogue group of unusual psychics and a covert military force tasked with eliminating them. This is a bitter war, with many people lost on both sides and each side believing with reason that they have the moral high ground.

On one side are the **Hayerschans**, a new form of psychic that's more physical than mental. They are a fluke of nature, and their strange abilities—including projecting lightning!—comes with a price of behavioral alteration. Once a covert military unit, they've rebelled and work against the Union. They are a secret the Union continues to hide from the public.

On the other side is the Union's secret weapon, the **Black Guard**. The former handlers for the secret Hayerschan unit, they're now the rogue psychics' hunters and jailers. They fight against insurgents, keep those they deem too dangerous locked away and others allowed to live among people under close watch.

Both sides have done horrific things and have grievances against the other, legitimate and trumped up. It's a messy secret war, one that could turn very ugly if the galaxy found out about what Hayerschans can do.

### A NOTE ON TONE

This supplement for *Bulldogs!* takes a different tone than the core game. If you like your sci-fi to be gritty, like *Battlestar Galactica*, the darker side of *Star Wars*, or *Mass Effect*, then this is for you.

You can still get plenty pulpy, since this is still *Bulldogs!* You can get really deep with themes of isolation, corrupting power, cults, genocide, terrorism, and war. Or you can go back and forth, mixing the two extremes together.

For those who aren't so interested in all this, don't worry. There's also psychically projected lightning for you.

SENSOR CORDON

INTERDICTION FLEET

TERACT

# PEOPLE AND PLACES OF NOTE

This section details the significant players and sites in the Hayerschan conflict.

## HAYERSCHANS

Hayerschans are strange, rare psychics that came from a mining outpost of the moon orbiting the gas giant Hayersch (page 7), deep in Saldrallan space. The surface of the planet flared, and shortly afterward many of the inhabitants started displaying strange behavior... and strange abilities (see Species Augmentation, page 14).

The inhabitants became much more passionate, and sometimes rapidly prone to violence. Each of them constantly seeks to show that they are the top of the pecking order, dominating those under them. And they are hedonists, frequently engaging in fine food & drink, drugs, and sex.

Their abilities are known to those scientists with sufficient security clearance as electro-psionics. Hayerschans call it the “Red Power.” This gives them mental power over electrical fields, within and outside of their bodies. Not all of them have the same powers, but there are some common ones, including the ability to use the body’s electricity to alter its mass for a brief moment, letting them run and jump faster. Some have a sense of others around them and use that in combat. And the most dangerous of them can concentrate and project lightning from their very hands.

It seems that these powers are fueled by their behavior.

All of them can silently communicate with each other and, if the rumors are to be believed, with the planet itself. Many worship Hayersch, not as a god, but as a force of nature, a spirit guiding them. These self-proclaimed Devotees to Hayersch are among the most dangerous terrorists in the Union, for they claim that the planet wishes to punish Saldralla for crimes against “its children.”

While scientists have isolated the genetic markers and created a serum that can give someone else those powers, most test subjects unfortunately die after the inoculation, and those who survive have the same aggression and reverence toward the planet that the initial Hayerschan do.



THE VAST  
HULL ZONE  
HAZARDOUS

KARATON  
BOUNTY: 50000

Which makes the fact that the serum formula was stolen very, very problematic.

Even though the planet has not flared since, the moon and the space surrounding the planet have been quarantined.

## HAYERSCH (A.K.A. THE RED STAR)

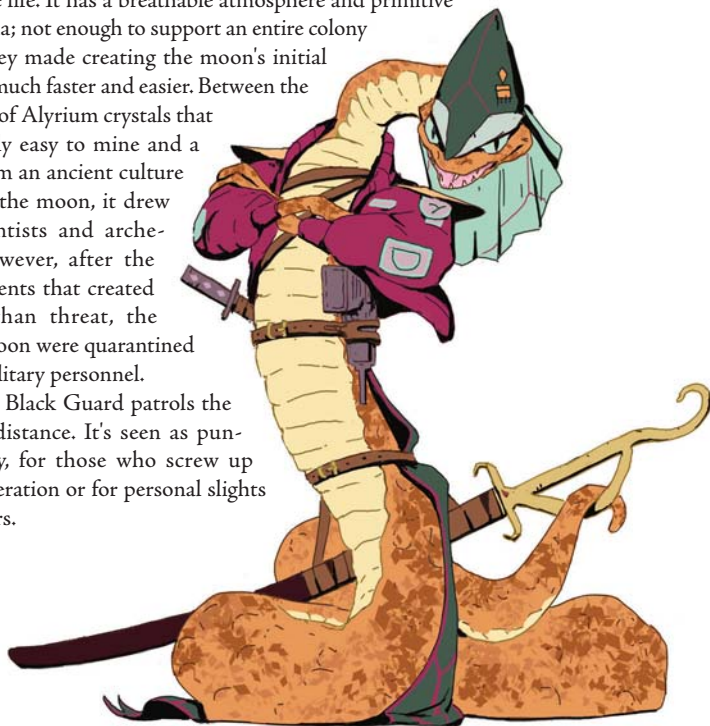
Hayersch is a red gas giant in the Ssahishk System, deep inside Saldrallan territory—a system that until a decade ago remained undiscovered thanks to the planet's effects on all long-range communications and probes. It was discovered on accident, by a Class D ship way off course thanks to a damaged navcomp. The captain of that ship, Saassk Hayersch, claimed a bounty on the newly discovered system and used the money to open a bar in the Malax Free Republic just across the border in the Frontier Zone. As far as the Union brass goes, she's the only happy ending in this story.

(It may be worth noting that she lobbied to get the entire system named after her. The Union instead named the gas giant after her, as a bit of a joke about her temper and uselessness.)

According to the Union's records, the planet Hayersch doesn't exist. The entire system it's in is flagged as dangerous for all travel, off-limits to non-military vessels. There is truth in that danger: due to Hayersch's constant electrical storms, much of the system cannot establish constant interplanetary or interstellar communication. Burst transmission yields some success, but the only way to be sure is to send a vessel or drone out into deeper space to broadcast and receive (having to travel back physically to deliver any outside messages). Of course, that's not why the system is flagged as such. The planet is the source of the Hayerschan mutation, and its moon holds strange mysteries.

Because of the planet's unusual heat and radiation signature, its largest moon can support some life. It has a breathable atmosphere and primitive flora and fauna; not enough to support an entire colony alone, but they made creating the moon's initial installations much faster and easier. Between the rich deposits of Alyrium crystals that were relatively easy to mine and a few ruins from an ancient culture scattered on the moon, it drew curious scientists and archeologists. However, after the various incidents that created the Hayerschan threat, the planet and moon were quarantined from even military personnel.

Today, the Black Guard patrols the system at a distance. It's seen as punishment duty, for those who screw up during an operation or for personal slights against officers.



AT HAZARD  
CLASS A WEAPON  
REPUTE REC

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MARA'S WORD

## RED FLARES

Project Stormflare is one the Union military's most embarrassing blunders, with the only saving grace being that it's a top-secret blunder. This project, commissioned by the now-forcibly retired General Sol-Chaplin, was to put Hayerschans to work as a covert force. Given that their abilities were known to only a few, and that several of those showing advanced talents were former military, this made a certain sort of sense.

This new unit nicknamed themselves "the Red Flares." Their training was unorthodox—Union drill instructors provided a combination of basic training and guerrilla tactics, and the Hayerschans developed ways of training and strengthening their own abilities. The unit consisted of a few non-Hayerschan officers overseeing roughly 40 Hayerschan non-commissioned officers and privates. After a few months, they were deployed to remote worlds with the Union, ones with strategic value (often mineral resources of some sort), which were defended by hostile native lifeforms. These early missions were successful, in no small part to the senior Hayerschan officers, Sergeant Della Shrimp and Specialist Prawl Mrrr. They were able to dance between the needs of their strange brethren and understanding the aims and methods of military life.

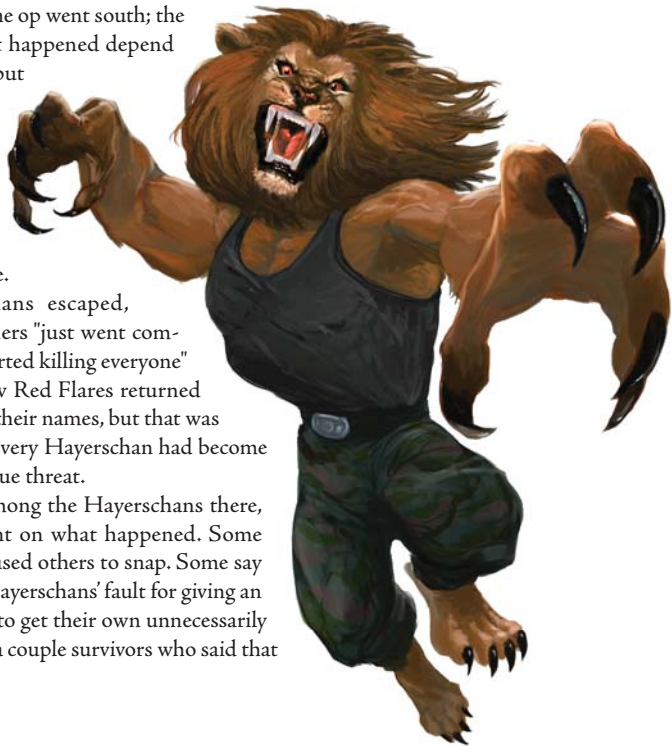
Even so, tensions grew over the next few months of missions. The more powerful Hayerschans discovered that they had more strength when they dominated others, so for the most part Shrimp and Mrrr were able to keep everyone under them in line. At the same time, there was pressure to deploy the Red Flares as assets against the cold war with the Templari. The brass believed that long-distance deployment would provide a means of control (as only they could bring the soldiers back home to their families) and damage control, should the project turn explosive.

That's where the aforementioned blunder starts to happen. Enter Operation Pylon Surge, the first mission outside of the Union. The unit was to strike against a covert forward military base the Templari held within

the Frontier Zone. The op went south; the specifics on how that happened depend on who you talk to, but the end result is the same: almost every non-Hayerschan officer was killed, as were Shrimp and Mrrr. The bodies were not recoverable.

Two non-Hayerschans escaped, claiming that the others "just went completely insane and started killing everyone" (to quote one). A few Red Flares returned to command to clear their names, but that was for naught; by then, every Hayerschan had become branded as a high-value threat.

Curiously, even among the Hayerschans there, there is no agreement on what happened. Some say that the stress caused others to snap. Some say that it was the non-Hayerschans' fault for giving an order that was going to get their own unnecessarily killed. And there are a couple survivors who said that



it was destined to happen, because "the Star decreed it so." But in a way, that doesn't matter much now; the Union showed what it would do upon simple suspicion of the entire team being compromised, and there was no going back—whether they could be salvaged or not, as a unit or as individuals.

Many of those who escaped became operatives in the Crimson Flare terrorist group.

## THE BLACK GUARD

The Black Guard (technically known as the Saldrallan Unusual Crises Mitigation Group) is the Union's answer to the Crimson Flare. Commanded by General Tzimdine with Red Flare survivors serving as the senior staff, this small covert unit is trained in what they call "exotic counter-terrorism." There is a Saldrallan adage: the best-kept secret is the one you show on your tongue. With that in mind, the entirety military is aware of the Black Guard as an elite unit, though not its true nature.

There are 40 members of the Guard at any one time, with a wait list for others who want to become Black Guards. When a candidate is deemed worthy and acceptable as a security risk, he is brought in to train against unusual conditions, face situations he hadn't before encountered, and psychologically prepared for the discovery of Hayerschans (both as a concept and violently on the field).

Around 30% of the Guardsmen are psychics, due to the fact that many more-powerful Hayerschans display a greater sensitivity to psychic powers.

While its primary mission is the containment of the Hayerschan threat, many Black Guard missions have nothing to do with that. They assist in difficult operations where their unusual expertise in combat and psychic warfare are of use. This keeps the Guardsmen on their toes in Tzimdine's eyes, as that's akin to live-fire training and work as effectively as any recruitment film to those who witness their tactics and successes.

Technically, the colloquial term "Black Guard" only refers to those who serve on the front lines or their direct officers. Those who work in signal intelligence, research, case workers to free Hayerschans (page 6), and other support roles are not considered Black Guardsmen, but they are under the umbrella of Unusual Crises Mitigation and treated with the same respect within the military.

## GENERAL TZIMDINE

General Tzimdine is strange for a Hacragorkan. The general appears even-tempered for his kind, but other Hacragorkans see through that. Younger Hacragorkans would call him a "warmaster"—someone who has grown bored with individual battles and single combat, instead turning to broader scales of struggle to sate his urges. That means political maneuvering as much as it means war, making him a ruthless general.

Tzimdine took command of the Black Guard after the former one was assassinated. Several months ago, an operation to capture a Crimson Flare cell resulted in the Hayerschans interrogating the Guard operatives. They revealed enough intel for the Flares to strike at a Guard outpost while the former commander was touring it. Tzimdine saw this opportunity to command a group against a formidable foe as just the challenge he prayed for.

AT HAZARD  
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MARA'S WORD

## GENERAL TZIMDINE

SPECIES: Hacragorkan

REFRESH: 5

### Aspects

**BATTLE-SCARRED; FORGED BY STRUGGLE; HACRAGORKAN WARMASTER; RUTHLESS COMMANDER; THRILLED BY A CHALLENGE**

### Skills

**SUPERB (+5):** Fight

**GREAT (+4):** Provoke, Command

**GOOD (+3):** Resolve, Survival, Athletics

**FAIR (+2):** Physique, Shoot, Stealth, Contacts

**AVERAGE (+1):** Pilot, Systems, Empathy, Haggle, Larceny

### Stunts & Species Abilities

**QUICK HEALER:** recover consequences as if they were one level lower, once per conflict clear a mild physical consequence as an action for a round (page 31 of *Bulldogs!*).

**DANGEROUS BEARING:** gain +2 when attacking with Provoke for intimidation (page 32 of *Bulldogs!*).

**PUGNACIOUS:** gain +2 to create advantages with Provoke when trying to start a fight (page 32 of *Bulldogs!*).

**BRAWLER:** gain +2 to defend with Fight when outnumbered (page 139 of *Bulldogs!*).

**NOW YOU'VE MADE ME MAD:** once per scene, spend a fate point to turn shifts taken in an attack to a bonus to an attack against the person who delivered the stress (page 141 of *Bulldogs!*).

### Conditions

Winded

Angry

Stunned

Broken

### Consequences

Mild:

Moderate:

Severe:

### Gear

**BLACK BATON:** Light Weapon, Powerful Against Red Psychics (see page 22), Defense Against Red Lightning (see page 22), Light and Heat (see page 22),  **HAYERSCHAN COUNTER-MEASURE.**

**BLAST PISTOL:** Light Weapon,  **STANDARD**

**SALDRALLAN ISSUE.**

**POWER SCREEN:** Heavy Shield.

Stress

**ARMOR-LINED UNIFORM:** Light

Armor,  **INDETECTABLE.**

Mild:



PS  
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## BLACK GUARD

### Aspects

EXOTIC COUNTER-TERRORISM EXPERT; ELITE TROOPER

### Skills

GOOD (+3): Fight or Psychic

FAIR (+2): Survival

AVERAGE (+1): Resolve, Athletics

### Conditions

Winded

Angry

Stunned

### Gear

**BLACK BATON:** Light Weapon, Powerful Against Red Psychics (see page 22), Defense Against Red Lightning (see page 22), Light and Heat (see page 22),  **HAYERSCHAN COUNTER-MEASURE.**

**DEFENSE SCREEN:** Light Shield.

Stress

**BLACK WATCH TACTICAL VEST:** Medium Armor,  **FUNCTIONAL AND INTIMIDATING.**

Mild:

Moderate:

## THE CRIMSON FLARE

The Crimson Flare is the name the Hayerschans go by when harassing civilian and military targets or otherwise performing rogue operations.

Their first mission took place before they gave themselves any sort of name. Shortly after the botched mission, many of them returned to Saldrallan space thanks to hitching rides on various ships. The Hayerschans located their families and compatriots—some held in camps for their safety, some in maximum security military prisons, and a few being experimented on in far-off secret medical facilities.

Most of those operations were successful, though they only gathered a third of those the Union held. Still, as they grew in number, the Hayerschans pieced together what the Saldrallans were doing: telling families that the Red Flares died in service, shipping those families away under the guise of government support for widowed families, and taking Hayerschans who showed significant power to be experimented upon.

This would not stand. The Hayerschans took the training the Union gave them and turned it into an asset to use against their former masters.

The first recorded use of “Crimson Flare” as a name came from an early hijacked entertainment feed. A still drawing of an angry, red wolf came on screen, accompanied by an audio message: “We are the Crimson Flare, and we...” Technicians cut off the message before it could go further, but that was enough to give a name to their cause.

(Unfortunately, the Union has been able to co-opt this. See “Media” sidebar, page 13.)

The Crimson Flare is a cell-based terrorist organization, one that is very difficult to infiltrate. The Hayerschans ability to sense one another means that the Union cannot just place some spy in their midst. Similarly, due to their ability to mark physical packages, they can securely pass new codebooks to one another without actually meeting in any way

AT HAZARD  
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MARA'S WORD



that cameras can record. (That said, the Saldrellans continue their experiments to graft these abilities safely to others without any mental side effects.)

The Crimson Flare's goals are to free imprisoned Hayerschans, make the public aware of them, and provide a path to them living in a world where they don't have to watch over their shoulders constantly. As a cell-based organization, they have diverse and sometimes uncoordinated ideas of achieving those goals. Some cells are focused on the long-term mission, and others are filled with those who are consumed by revenge. Most common, though, are those who feel a mixture of the two, and sometimes have to choose between a greater gain for their kind and an opportunity to do a greater harm to others, especially the Black Guard.

What is not well known is much of the Crimson Flare works to covertly aid those Hayerschans living among others, protecting them and helping them become prominent and respected members of their local society... often without those Hayerschans knowing of the Crimson Flare's involvement.

## CRIMSON FLARE OPERATIVE

### Aspects

**FIGHT THE POWER; WE ARE THE CRIMSON FLARE**

### Skills

GOOD (+3): Fight

FAIR (+2): Red Lightning

AVERAGE (+1): Physique, Athletics

### Conditions

Winded

Angry

Stunned

### Gear

KNIFE: Light Weapon,  **EASILY HIDDEN.**

DEFENSE SCREEN: Light Shield.

Stress

LIGHT BALLISTIC CLOTHING: Light Armor,  **JUST A REGULAR OUTFIT.**

Mild:

### ANGRY WOLF

The voice of the Crimson Flare calls itself "an Angry Wolf," with a drawing of a vicious wolf staring at the viewer, stylized somewhat like a sports mascot. No Hayerschans captured know who Angry Wolf is exactly, and Union intelligence suggests that it's not a single person—voice and signal analysis never shows a consistency in that regard.

Angry Wolf is how Crimson Flare messages are signed, whether to the public or to other cells. Due to Hayerschan abilities, they're generally able to tell a real message from a spoofed one. When they encounter spies who plant false Angry Wolf messages, they take effort to make the resulting carnage look like a wolf attack.



In a strange way, this Angry Wolf also acts like the head of a cult, worshipping Hayersch as “the Red Star” and referring to it in the feminine. That the voice of the Crimson Flare takes this conflict to a religious space puts fear in Tzimdine.

## FREE HAYERSCHANS

Around 30% of known Hayerschans live in a quasi-free state on various worlds. On paper, this is an experiment to see if their kind can live peacefully among others, one that each Hayerschan participating has explicitly agreed to.

These “free” Hayerschans are visited weekly by a Black Guard case worker, who politely check in to see how they’re coping with living out in the world, especially since they’re prone to push others around. They are not allowed to display their talents in public view, and those rare moments when that happens result in immediate imprisonment as well as the media whitewashing the event as hype for Zoom Force Seven (see box). Travel is restricted, and they’re explicitly told that their communications will be monitored “for the time being.”

Some in the Crimson Flare suspect the real point of this experiment is to lure their agents into contacting these free Hayerschans in order to gain their support. That some agents have been captured due to that lends credence to this notion. Still, that doesn’t stop them from aiding these Hayerschans who live out in the open. At some point, their kind will be publicly known, so it’s in the Crimson Flare’s best interest to make sure free Hayerschans are in positions of respect and power in their communities.

## ZOOM FORCE SEVEN

The Union is very effective at using media to wage a propaganda war, whether it’s against known foes or secret ones. For the last several months, a popular cartoon, Zoom Force Seven, has displayed heroic characters with weapons that give off a blue light when gripped, just as Black Batons do. The show also features villainous characters with powers similar to Hayerschans, especially the Red Lightning projection. They’ve even co-opted the Angry Wolf broadcasts, claiming those to be viral marketing.

This works on multiple levels. While the impulses of those afflicted with Red Power already make them undesirable to the general populace, this is meant to make them turn a blind eye against anything the Union must do if it becomes public knowledge. It works to indoctrinate future generations of Black Guard, should this need to continue any longer. And if this becomes public and the Union is able to mass-produce Black Batons, they can claim inspiration from media, rather than the other way around.

Saldrellans are masters at playing a very long game, and the media is just one piece in that game.

AT HAZARD  
CLASS A WEAPON  
REPUTE RED

23

MARA'S WORD

# SPECIES AUGMENTATION: HAYERSCHAN

## WHAT'S A SPECIES AUGMENTATION?

A special augmentation template adds to the species you choose at character creation. Through radiation, genetic mutation, cybernetic alternation, etc., your character takes on new characteristics shared by others with the same condition.

You'll have a new set of aspects to take. You must take at least one of these as a character background aspect. These don't replace your two heritage aspects; you're still that species, just... a little more.

You'll also have a new set of species abilities. You must take these in addition to those from your original species. If that causes you to take too many abilities and you're down to zero or less refresh, then that's not a viable player character.

## HAYERSCHAN AUGMENTATION

Nearly any biological race can become a Hayerschan, either from the flare, being the child of a Hayerschan, or from the serum.

### ARSUBARANS

Nearly a third of Hayerschans are Arsubaran. During the Red Blade military experiment, they were the ultimate stealth combatants, able to sneak in, get past security with the right forged papers, and wreak havoc in sensitive places. They have held onto this training since the uprising, and that scares the Union.

### DOLOMÉ

Aside from electro-psionics, Dolom Hayerschans are typical of their people. While the impulse from their condition makes them want to dominate others, their brain chemistry keeps them sane and even, still treating others as equals. That clear-headedness is useful on the battlefield, where they lean toward positions of command.

### HACRAGORKANS

While Hacragorkan Hayerschans would, on the surface, seem like the ultimate warriors, their already high aggression is elevated to the point where most simply attack anyone on sight, friend or foe. If there are two such Hacragorkans in the same room, there will be one (or none) in five minutes. Those that keep their sanity make vicious warlords, but there's little in the way of organization beyond controlling a couple dozen people.

### KEN REEG

Ken Reeg Hayerschans are some of the galaxy's most formidable mercenary leaders. No Ken Reeg were on Hayersch at the time of the Flare; they've all bought the serum on the black market, as a desperate entrepreneurial investment. And many have discovered that domination at the negotiating table is as rewarding as physical domination.

### RYJYLLIANS

With their life-long training, normal Ryjyllians make for fierce warriors. As Hayerschans, they are the most fearsome soldiers the Union has ever seen. But unlike others, augmented Ryjyllians don't usually adhere to their warrior codes even among their own kind. This ruthlessness has led the Union to label all of them as too dangerous to live. Mere rumor of them is enough to send an elite squad hunting, which they in turn treat as sport.

## SALDRALLANS

Saldrallan Hayerschans are hyperactive compared to their genetically-natural brethren. The electrical body control allows them to generate some body heat, making them like kids on a permanent sugar high.

## TEMPLARI

There have been no reported Templar Hayerschans, though Saldrallan intelligence knows the serum has been sold to the Devalkamanchan Republic. Hypothetically, Templar genetics would be very receptive to the treatment, and they would be powerful. But that would make them dangerous to the theocracy.

## TETSUASHANS

Tetsuashan Hayerschans are uncharacteristic for their race, as their power demands they dominate those around them, meaning they don't slide into the background. Being asexual means they have fewer means of being hedonistic, and since they don't excel at combat, Tetsuashan Hayerschans are weaker than other augmented races.

## URSEMINITES

This is little difference between the personality of a normal Urseminite and an Urseminite Hayerschan. Their natural violent and hedonistic inclination means they have no problem generating power, which makes them very, very dangerous.

## TYPICAL HAYERSCHAN ASPECTS

### MARKED BY THE UNION

**INVOKE:** those who know what the mark means know to fear you, "You know what this mark means? Think you can take me?"

**COMPEL:** your basic rights, especially travel and communication, are restricted, "The moment we get to spaceport, they'll be hunting me."

### BOTTLED EMOTIONS

**INVOKE:** you're a master of keeping your feelings to yourself, "Trust me, there's nothing you can do to piss me off."

**COMPEL:** your distant nature alienates others, "I don't understand him. He creeps me out."

### TEMPEST OF PASSION

**INVOKE:** your emotions are weapons to you, "My rage powers me! Taste it in the form of lightning!"

**COMPEL:** they're double-edged weapons, able to control you, "Your insult will not go unpunished! I will destroy this entire station!"

### DEVOTED TO THE RED STAR

**INVOKE:** you have a network of other devoted, many of whom are accomplished soldiers and spies, "One of my kind was here a few months back. She should know the security codes."

**COMPEL:** the Red Star whispers to you in your dreams, "I need to plant this bomb in that building, or She will be angry with me."



## HAYERSCHAN ABILITIES (TOTAL -1 TO -8)

Most of the Hayerschan powers are optional, allowing for various forms of Red Power. Optional abilities may be taken after character creation if the character goes to the planet Hayersch and communes there for at least two days, bathing in the planet's constant storms.

### RED POWER [0]

You have the ability to gain and use Red Power. When you get fate points due to refresh, you may choose any number of them to be Red Power points. You also always know which way the planet Hayersch is.

### NO PSYCHIC SKILL [+1]

You may not take the Psychic skill or perform any of its feats.

### LIGHTNING IMMUNITY [-1]

You are immune to any adverse effects that come from being hit by lightning or electricity. This immunity extends to things you're wearing and small things you're holding (but not to living beings you're touching, no matter how small). Tasers and other electrical devices meant to stun or kill likewise have no effect.

### RED SENSE [-1]

By concentrating for a moment, you can sense where other Hayerschans are within 100 meters. You can also communicate with each other, though only through primitive statements: only nouns, verbs, colors, and direction. No numbers or sophisticated parts of speech. The thoughts are monotone, so they never sound like questions or exclamations.

With a few moments of intense handling, you can also mark a small object with that same sense, allowing other Hayerschans the power to sense and find it. There's no telling what the object is, but they clearly do not appear to the sense as a person. This effect lasts for an hour or so.

### RED LIGHTNING [-2] (OPTIONAL)

You may conduct Red Lightning (page 20) with your mind. You gain the Red Lightning skill, which caps at Fair (+2).

### ENHANCED LIGHTNING CONTROL [-1] (OPTIONAL)

With time and practice, you've been able to enhance your Red Lightning ability. Increase your skill cap on Red Lightning by 2. You may take this twice. This stunt doesn't raise the skill, just how high you can have it.

### RED SPEED [-1] (OPTIONAL)

You may increase your speed, allowing you to use your Red Power to boost Athletics and, for the purposes of initiative, Survival. During any scene where you use this stunt, you can also jump roughly three times higher and farther than a normal person.

### PRECOGNITIVE FIGHTING [-1] (OPTIONAL)

Thanks to the electricity in your body boosting your reflexes and the electrical field sense you've been able to cultivate, you may use your Red Power to boost your Fight skill.

### ENERGY RESISTANCE [-1] (OPTIONAL)

You can, with effort, push your electrical resistance to other energy. Spend a Red Power point, and for a few minutes—one scene or a long firefight—you gain two boxes of stress, but only usable against energy-based attacks. This stacks with a shield worn.

You may spend an additional Red Power point to gain an additional two boxes of stress, either when you activate this power or while it's still active. You cannot gain more than four stress total during a single scene.

When active, your skin and clothing faintly glow red.

#### PSYCHIC SUSCEPTIBILITY [+1] (OPTIONAL)

Some powerful Red Power users are particularly susceptible to the Psychic skill. Psychics have +2 on rolls to use their powers directly against you.

#### ELECTRICAL HEALING [-1] (OPTIONAL)

Prolonged exposure to severe electricity can cause some Hayerschans to heal at a faster rate. When in such an environment, a character with Red Power may spend two Red Power points to downgrade a severe consequence to a moderate one, or a moderate consequence to a mild one. Consequences must be physical in nature. It takes one hour to downgrade a moderate consequence and several hours to downgrade a severe one. Extreme consequences cannot be healed in this manner.

# RED POWER POINTS

Red Powers are fueled by Red Power points. Red Power points are worth +3 or a reroll for any roll involving Red Power. They may not be for any other purpose, including refusing a compel related to your Red Power. These points spent are not considered invoking an aspect; they're just spent.

You may still use regular fate points on Red Powers, but only if invoking an aspect (as normal for fate point use).

Some powers require spending a Red Power point to activate. That point doesn't also give a +3 or reroll to that power. However, these powers only require the spend once per scene, regardless of how often they're used in that scene.

## EARNING RED POWER POINTS

Red Power Points are earned in two ways: when one of your Red Power aspects is compelled, or when you do specific acts. The player may decide whether the compel is worth a fate point or a Red Power point. The acts will grant you one Red Power Point once per scene, unless otherwise stated.

If you're using a Red Power to perform said act, you may immediately spend that RPP on the act.

- **DOMINANCE:** The Red Power wants to show dominance. Anyone who challenges your inherent authority in all manners must be punished. When you show them (or use their suffering to show others) that you are the dominant figure, earn a Red Power point. This doesn't earn Red Power Points when dominating other Red Power wielders.
- **INSURRECTION:** When you perform an act that attacks the Union, through outright war, sabotage, or terrorism, earn a Red Power point. It must be directed at the Union; taking on a random guard isn't enough.
- **LIGHTNING BATHING:** When you subject yourself to raw elements of lightning or electricity with enough power that would cripple or kill a normal being, you earn a Red Power point.
- **HEDONISM:** When you spend a couple of hours or more engaging solely in sensual ecstasy (gorging on fine food, taking recreational drugs, having sex, etc.), earn a Red Power point. This works once a day. You may, of course, have this scene "off camera." If a compel causes you do one of these, you may either take a fate point or a Red Power point, but not both.

## TAPPING INTO MORE POWER

With all of the threats surrounding your people, sometimes you need to use more Red Power than you have generated. Once per roll, gain and immediately use a Red Power point.

Each point you take this way adds one to a debt between you and the power within, putting stress on the more primitive parts of your mind. Later, the GM can compel you to do one of the charging acts, as if that part of your brain is pushing against your conscious self. Accepting the compel clears one from the debt rather than giving you a fate point or Red Power Point.

You may refuse this compel with a fate point, in which case you resist, but the debt does not decrease. The GM can't push that particular issue again right now, but expect another one to be headed your way.

Doing the charging acts above on your own accord will not clear the debt.



## RED POWER

PS 2005

BE DARK  
TO LIGHTEN  
THE WORLD



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SH SYSTEM



# NEW RULES: RED LIGHTNING

Red Lightning is lightning spontaneously created from the wielder's hand and directed at a single target they can directly see. The wielder's hand must be completely naked—free of gloves, rings, anything.

You must spend one Red Power point to use this ability during combat, but (as with other Red Powers) once you do, you may use it any number of times during that combat or scene. When you project the lightning, your hand glows red for a brief moment. Then the lightning, which is bright red, bursts from your hands and strikes out at your target.

Red Lightning is difficult to control. Once unleashed, it will strike *something*. The difficulty of controlling the lightning is based on how much power you want to channel. Unlike other attacks in **Bulldogs!**, the amount of stress done is fixed, rather than based on the degree of success.

For the basic attack, roll your Red Power versus a difficulty of Fair (+2). If successful, this is a 1-stress attack, with the only armor that applies being that which is non-conductive and completely sealing the target from the attacker (such as an all-encompassing personal shield). You may target someone or something up to one zone away.

Should you fail the roll, the lightning is still generated, but it will affect something else because you're unable to control it. You can, at the last moment, arc the lightning back into you, taking all the damage yourself, with no armor being applied to the stress. Doing so will keep the lightning from being out of control and hitting something else.

The target does not get a defense roll against the lightning, unless they have some ability or aspect that justifies their reacting to an effect that's homing in on their bioelectrical signature. In that case, Athletics or another appropriate skill can be used, but it must be the result of the Hayerschan's control roll. (Note: a Black Guardsman may always do this, as they're trained against such attacks.)

Red Lightning you project does not affect other Hayerschans.

- **INCREASING POWER:** You can increase the stress done by 2, which also increases the difficulty to control it by 2.
- **FAR DISTANCE:** For each zone past one, increase the difficulty to control the roll by 1.
- **MULTIPLE TARGETS:** You may target multiple foes in a single zone, increasing the difficulty by 2 for each target. They each will take the same amount of stress, as if you were only targeting one foe. Failure to control this roll means that each lightning blast is a separate uncontrolled effect.
- **MARKED LIGHTNING:** Once you've successfully attacked someone in this combat with Red Lightning, you may freely use the exact same attack against that target without rerolling or spending any more fate points or Red Power points. As long as you do not use your Red Lightning against another target or want to change how powerful your attack is, treat your control roll as the same as the last time you rolled against that target. Once struck, the lightning is able to home in on a target effortlessly (though this fades after a few minutes). If your last attack was split it into multiple targets and some escaped, you may press the lightning only on those who haven't.



## RED LIGHTNING

Collis is facing down a Black Guardsman charging at her. She unleashes Red Lightning at her attacker. Her Red Lightning skill is at Fair (+2), and she has three Red Power points to spend. One must be spent just to use the power, but the other two may be spent after the roll to alter the result.

Because Guardsmen are known for having a high tolerance for pain (i.e. a high number of stress boxes), she's going to push her power. Instead of a 1-stress attack, she's going to go for a 3-stress attack, making her difficulty Great (+4).

She concentrates for a moment, balling up her rage in her mind as she eyes her foe. Her arm arcs around as if she's throwing the bolt, her hand glows red, and the lightning projects from her fingertips. Manda, her player, rolls  $\omin�\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$ , for a 0. Adding her Fair skill, that only brings her to +2. No problem, though, as she spends one Red Power point to increase it to +5, and just to make sure the Guardsman is surely caught by the lightning, the other Red Power point is spent to make it a +8.

The Guardsman rolls to dodge, getting a total of +4. He takes 3 stress from the lightning, which his armor cannot stop. That isn't quite enough to give him a consequence, but now that he's hit, she'll be able to press the Lightning easily.

Of course, that's why Guardsmen don't hunt Hayerschans alone...

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THRU H

# NEW GEAR

## BLACK BATON

The artifacts that General Tzimdine's Black Guard calls "Black Batons" are bludgeoning weapons that were (scientists believe) designed very long ago to police those with Hayerschan powers. They're 18 inches long, metal on the outside, filled with crystals inside that activate when someone gives a firm grip on the handle.

Once activated, the rest of the shaft glows with a blue light. Contact with the baton causes agony and physical trauma to anyone with Red Power. They also cannot handle the device without taking immediate damage. The batons also convey some form of protection against Red Powers to the wielder, though it's advised to not rely on this, as powerful electro-psychics can take effort to punch through this.

Those with Red Power cannot be tricked into grabbing a baton. They can sense the crystals when they are within a few feet.

Teams recovered 34 batons from the moon. A few are in the hands of researchers attempting to discover the nature of the crystals so they better understand how Red Power works, both in order to mass-produce the batons and to create other weapons. However, the research is slow going, because the metal casing is nearly impervious to destruction.

The rest of them are in the hands of the Black Guard. General Tzimdine carries one with him at all times. Occasionally, rumor has it that such an artifact slips away and is traded on the black market, but they are recovered...with extreme prejudice.

## GETTING A BLACK BATON

Bulldogs can't simply purchase special gear like a Black Baton. Their legality, rarity, and the danger surrounding them means a cost of Epic (+7), at least. Instead, you need an aspect to reflect having this object. It can either be an aspect about being in the Black Guard or one about having crossed the Black Guard and being hunted by them for having this weapon.

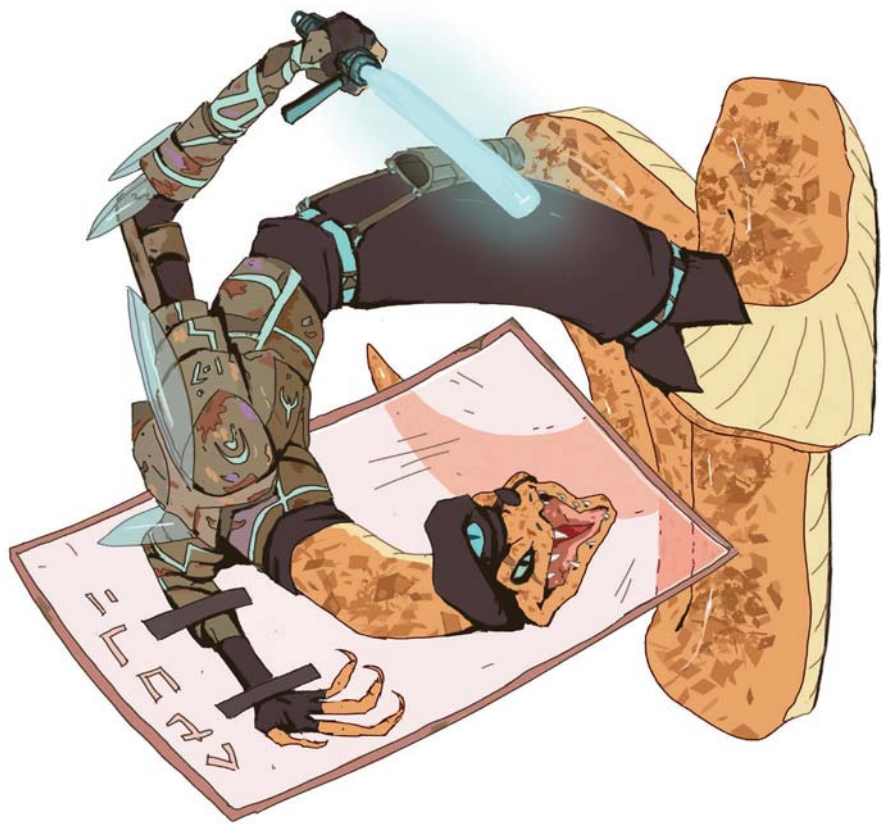
## MECHANICS

Not counting its anti-Red Power properties, a Black Baton is just a heavy, metal stick that is great at distributing violence. Treat it as a light weapon.

Black Batons also have the following abilities:

- ✦ **POWERFUL AGAINST RED PSYCHICS:** If an attack with this weapon hits someone with Red Power points, regardless of the target's armor, it does not do stress damage. It instead immediately gives the target a consequence (unless the target wishes instead to be Taken Out). If there are no consequences left, then the target must be Taken Out.
- ✦ **DEFENSE AGAINST RED LIGHTNING:** Simply having a Black Baton on you gives you four additional stress that can be used only against Red Lightning. You don't have to be wielding it for this effect. It's enough to have it hang off a belt loop. The lightning is drawn to the baton instead of you, though any that gets through then shoots into you. Like a shield, this stress clears at the end of combat.
- ✦ **LIGHT AND HEAT:** When gripped, the non-handle portion of a Black Baton generates around the same amount of light as a flashlight, and enough heat to slowly warm a small space. This is useful as an improvised reading device in the dark, but also means that one cannot effectively sneak while having the weapon ready in hand.

BLACK BATON



# NEW SKILL

## PSYCHIC

Some species or individuals possess mental powers beyond the norm. It boils down to the ability to influence minds, either your own or others, through means most beings don't have access to. Characters with a high Psychic skill are mentalists, telepaths, or other mental savants.

The Psychic skill is a special exception to the regular skill rules. If you don't have the Psychic skill you can't ever roll it, not even at Mediocre (+0) ability like most skills allow you to. In order to add this skill to your character sheet, you must either have a species ability or a stunt that indicates that your character has psychic powers. You must also purchase stunts that clarify and specify their specific mental abilities with the GM before play and you can't exceed these limits using the Psychic skill. See the list of stunts for the Psychic skill that allow emotion projection, telepathy, telekinesis, clairvoyance, illusion projection, or precognition. Custom stunts may be created for other mental powers that the GM deems plausible. If the Psychic skill is gained through your species, the powers will be defined within the species ability and will be uniform across the entire species.

### OVERCOME (PSYCHIC)

Psychic is used outside of conflicts when you attempt to use a paranormal mental power to conquer an obstacle beyond normal physical means. The more powerful the effect or the more outlandish the psychic ability in question, the higher the difficulty. Surface thoughts and emotions are easy to read. Hidden thoughts or plumbing the depths of another character's psyche are much more difficult. Also, mental powers decrease with range. The farther away a target is, the more difficult it is to use mental powers.

### CREATE AN ADVANTAGE (PSYCHIC)

Within a situation, a psychic often flashes of insight from her ability which can be used to create advantages. Telepathy is especially useful when you learn of an opponent's intent seconds before he acts, or see a few seconds into the future to create an aspect like **KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO DO THAT**.

### DISCOVER (PSYCHIC)

A precognitive ability can give glimpses into the future, or clairvoyance can make visible things that can't be seen by conventional means. Telepathy and emotion detection can also give insights into someone's personality or motivations.

### ATTACK (PSYCHIC)

Some psychics can mount a direct psychic blitz on a target. This is just a matter of projecting strongly enough to cause actual mental harm to the other person. Many psychics aren't powerful enough to do this, but it's a very effective attack against an area where most beings have hardly any defenses. Psychic attacks target the mind and therefore are resisted with Resolve.

### DEFEND (PSYCHIC)

When defending against Psychic attacks, you can use Psychic as a defense skill to set up mental defenses. The Psychic skill can also be used to defend against social attacks such as Rapport, Haggle, or Provoke if you have telepathic or emotion detection powers.

## PSYCHIC STUNTS

### CLOUD THE MIND

You can create illusions by directly influencing a person's mind. The easiest trick is to conceal objects or people, keeping the person from noticing something that's right in front of them. With greater skill, you can also create the illusion of objects or people that are not truly there. If you are extraordinarily powerful, you can even affect more than one person at a time.

### EMPATHIC CONNECTION

You can use your Psychic powers to detect or evoke emotions in a target. This gives you a big advantage in social situations, allowing you to read the mood of a person and nudge it in the correct direction. With more power and ability, you can even influence large crowds of people. If a target is aware of your ability, they can use Resolve to defend.

### FLASH FORWARD

You often receive brief visions of the near future, almost unbidden. You may use Psychic to discover future events. As with all premonitions, things may not turn out exactly as you expect, and your own actions may change future occurrences. You have some control over what you see, and can try to predict events at specific times and places.

### FORTRESS OF THE MIND

You're particularly good at defending your mind from psychic attack. Gain two boxes to absorb stress when someone is attacking you with psychic powers. This stunt may be taken by someone who does not possess the Psychic skill.

### MIND KNIFE

You have the ability to use your psychic powers in a direct assault on someone's mind. You may use the Psychic skill to attack. If you do not possess this stunt, you do not have the ability to use Psychic as an attack action.

### MY MIND TO YOUR MIND

You must have telepathic abilities tied to your Psychic skill to take this stunt. You may probe more deeply than surface thoughts with this stunt, allowing discover or create advantage actions based on information deep within the target's mind. This is an invasive and unpleasant action, and you must be very close to the target, touching them or within a few feet, and it requires your full concentration. The target can defend against this with Resolve.

### TELEKINETIC FORCE

You can move objects with your mind. With this stunt, you may use your Psychic skill in the same way Physique can be used. You can move items within a few feet of yourself easily, but the difficulty increases with distance and mass.

### TELEPATHIC SENSITIVITY

You can read the surface thoughts of other people, and even project your own thoughts into the minds of others. This can be used for mind-to-mind communication. Your ability to read thoughts allows you to use Psychic in social situations to discover or create advantages, and can even stand in for Rapport or Provoke when you use the knowledge gained from your mind reading. If a target is aware of your ability, they can use Resolve to defend.

# CELL CREATION

This is an alternative to Crew Creation, focusing on characters with a shared and ongoing cause, drive, or mission, rather than a shared ship and situation.

As a group, you'll decide on the Cause and Leader or Sponsor. Some of your character aspects will change, but otherwise the process is the same as in *Bulldogs!*

The Cause replaces the Ship and the Leader replaces the Captain. Make these decisions as a group, just as you would with a Ship and Captain.

## THE CAUSE

The cause unites you all. Are you a military unit, with a mission to root out Hayerschans? Are you a Crimson Flare terrorist cell? A bunch of mercenaries hired for a job? Doctors and medics giving aid to war-torn places? Archaeologists and crew hunting for strange artifacts?

The cause gets three aspects, all of which depend upon the entire campaign. They can be compelled or invoked at any point.

- ✦ **ISSUE:** Each cause is formed out of an issue. Are you fighting against wide-scale injustices? Is your cell about revenge for a past wrong? Do you have some noble plan that will make the worlds better places... but it's rather risky? Maybe you're just trying to escape a hard life, one that seeks to keep you down. Choose an aspect that describes the issue you're all struggling against.
- ✦ **MAJOR PROBLEM:** If this were easy, there would be no interesting story to tell. Is there a secret group hunting you down? Are you fighting against a world that hates your kind? Are you publicly branded as terrorists or extremists? Do you not have the resources to pull off what you desire? Choose an aspect that describes the major problem you have when the game begins.
- ✦ **THORN IN YOUR SIDE:** There's always something that makes pursuing a cause far harder than it should be, even beyond the major problem. Is there a group like yours working at cross-purposes? Or a group that wants the same thing, but is going about it in a way that makes you look reprehensible by association?

## THE LEADER

The leader isn't much different from the captain in *Crew Creation* of *Bulldogs!*. Focus on the sort of person who is leading this cell or group from the cause's perspective rather than the sort of person who would be in Class D.

As normal, the leader is assumed to be a non-player character, but if you're planning on a game with a PC leader, think about who that leader takes orders or gets supplies from. We'll call that person or group "the sponsor," and use a different setup:

## THE SPONSOR

Use this instead of the leader for your aspects, if the leader of this cell is one of the PCs. Causes need three things: information, supplies, and directives. Without that, your group will be blind, hungry, and aimless. The person or group with these things is tied to you – they need something done that you also seek, and you need the means to do it.

- **CONCEPT:** Who is your sponsor? Are they a rich philanthropist or investor? A government or military? A passionate but poor person who knows rare intelligence? A cell like yours, but higher up in the chain? When deciding this, you're outlining the sort of things your group can get with ease and what's more difficult.
- **FRICTION:** Just because you both want the same thing doesn't mean you have a perfect arrangement. Are you being pushed to be more extreme with your methods? Do you have different goals for this cause, like the classic struggle between peaceful scientists and the military? Or maybe you don't have any friction... right now. You might take the aspect **WE HAVEN'T BEEN SCREWED BY THE SPONSOR YET** until that is proven horribly wrong.
- **FACE:** Who's your point of contact? (If your concept is a single person rather than an organization, this might be obvious...if that person is entirely truthful with you.) What's the person like? How reliable or trustworthy is this face? This will hook into your character through his Captain aspect.

## EVOLVING CAUSES & MOVING ON

As you play, you'll come to a point where you've effectively solved your major problem or thorn in your side. When you do, it's time to cross that aspect off. The GM might reveal a new problem or thorn aspect, but she doesn't need to right away.

Sometimes a Cause is done, either because you've fulfilled some grand mission, or because it's lost and your characters move on. When that happens, shelve those aspects, and either create a new Cause and Leader, starting playing with a Ship and Captain, or play it by ear and make some high-level aspects that feel right for your game.

And just because you shelve aspects doesn't mean they can't come out again, to haunt the PCs for their past failures and successes.

## CHANGES TO CHARACTER ASPECTS

Your heritage and character background aspects don't change. Instead of aspects from your current berth, you'll pick aspects based on your cell or group. Use one of the following setups, or look at Other Campaign Setups (see page 194 of *Bulldogs!*), particularly the mercenary or espionage setups.

### UNDERGROUND GROUP

Not everyone is happy with how their nation's run, and some people take this to the point of rebellion and insurgency. They form into secret groups of people who struggle to fight against a vast foe with untold resources, all while trying to stay uncaught. These are, by their nature, small groups with agendas and secret patrons, providing direction,



information, and sometimes resources. They may be part of a larger organization, but compartmentalized enough to keep one cell's capture from destroying the entire movement. Playing a campaign around being an underground cell means that everyone should be a part of that cell, and know what sort of agenda the cell has.

- **RECRUITMENT:** How did you become indoctrinated into the group? What made you decide to dedicate yourself to insurgency? Are you looking to settle a personal grudge? Is there a grand cause that you firmly believe in?
- **ROLE:** Some groups are focused on one sort of action, and others are generalists. What is your job within the cell? Do you dispense violence? Do you primarily handle manipulating people? Hack systems? Handle acquiring or building equipment? Why does the cell need you?
- **TEAMMATES:** Same as Teammates in Espionage campaign setup (see page 196 of *Bulldogs!*).
- **LEADER:** Same as Captain in Espionage campaign setup, though with a focus on insurgency.

Underground groups can work for mission-based games and for tense, longform games. Use the gritty rules and advice elsewhere in this book if you're running either sort of game. Some are mobile, hopping from one location to another to deal with some operation. Others are implanted in an area, living around others while secretly working toward their cause while constantly interacting with people who could discover your true purpose.

## MILITARY SQUAD

Unlike mercenary groups, professional military squads are dedicated to serving a government. Both the Saldrellans and Devalkamanchans have sizable armies, navies, and police forces. Squads are one of the basic military units, with a handful of soldiers, and they make up larger units: platoons, companies, battalions, etc. Some military squads are overt, part of a known force with a broad mission. Others are secret, close to the Espionage campaign setup (see page 196 of *Bulldogs!*). To play a military campaign, the entire group should be part of the same squad, and go on missions depending on the sort of squad they're a part of.

- **JOIN UP:** How did you end up in the military,



and how in this squad? Is this what you envisioned when you joined up? Are you in the service because of patriotism? To get benefits for military service? Because you want to satisfy violent urges?

- ✦ **MOS:** What's your role in the unit (as known as an MOS, military occupational specialty)? Everyone's probably a soldier who can fight, but each one still has a different expertise. Are you the unit's sniper? Psychic? Mechanic? Stealthy operative?
- ✦ **SQUADMATES:** The same questions as the usual shipmates option from Class D. Who else is in the unit? Remember, you were all assigned here (possibly by choice, possibly not), so you don't have a lot of control over the unit. Still, it's a military, so there's chain of command and enforcement to deal with. Who is in charge of whom? Who's the lowest rank?
- ✦ **LEADER:** What sort of officer is in charge of this group? Use the same questions as a Class D game.

Military campaigns are the archetypal mission-based games. Some are as sole strike teams or covert operations, where there may also be intrigue or investigation (close to how an espionage campaign would work). Others are crucial parts of larger, direct missions—a strict focus on deadly action.

## CAMPAIGN IDEAS & ADVENTURE HOOKS

Incorporating the Hayerschan conflict into your *Bulldogs!* game depends a lot on what side you (or the PCs) will see as the “right” side, if any.

For a Crimson Flare campaign, you can start with a mission to break their fellows out of military research prisons, and slowly lead into more aggressive missions like terrorizing military targets. See how far they'll go before they question if they've gone too far.

For a Black Guardsmen campaign, you can start with an assault on a Crimson Flare group or defend an outpost from such an attack. You can stretch this out by having non-Hayerschan missions (which could always turn out to be Hayerschan-involved after all).

Getting a Class D crew mixed up in this mess can be a lot of fun as well! Maybe one of the crew is secretly Hayerschan, which means he's forever a wanted man. Or they take a job from Crimson Flare, happen to help out a free Hayerschan who just wants to see his son on another planet by transporting him under-the-radar, and so on.

On the other side, they could stumble upon a severely wounded Black Guardsman in the Frontier Zone, and certainly the reward for returning him to Saldrallan space would be worth quite a reward, yeah? Along the way, dealing with Crimson Flares looking to finish the job before he can report back would put the PCs with a disposition against these “horrifying lightning-projecting psychos.”

# RUNNING A GRITTY BULLDOGS! GAME

*Bulldogs!* is by nature a pulpy romp—that's natural, since that's how Fate Core plays. That doesn't mean it's all laughs, but it's well set up to be about action, adventure, and not worrying too hard about consequences. If you're looking to change that up (as this supplement is doing), then you'll need to do a few things.

## IS EVERYONE INTERESTED IN GRIT?

This is a very important question to ask everyone at the table. Because Fate Core lends itself to high adventure, being gritty is entirely on the GM and players to keep in mind. That's not much of a problem if that's what everyone wants, but if some of the people at the table don't want or don't care about that, they'll likely spoil the mood—accidentally if not intentionally.

So make sure everyone wants to play in something gritty. If some people aren't sure, suggest it as a temporary thing, like a story arc that'll take one or three sessions to complete. Pulp stories are filled with moments of these, where the authors break the adventure tone to showcase something harsh, then go back to the lighter tone when that's done.

## MAKING PCS THAT CARE ABOUT SOMETHING

The trick to making PCs that function in a gritty world is making sure they have genuine feelings. (That includes you, Urseminites!) They need to care about something, fear something, and get angry at something. They need buttons to push. These don't need to be high, noble virtues, but they need to exist.

### ONE REDEEMING FEATURE

What's the one thing that makes you feel like you're not a horrible person? Everyone is the hero of her or her personal story. What do you care about? What's the thing you do or don't do that helps you see yourself as a good person?

You could be a hardened killer, but see yourself as good because you donate half of each job to the orphanage that raised you. Or you have a code of conduct that means you help mothers in need. It doesn't have to be that stark a contrast; a hard-ass captain who tries to make up for that to her crew by giving them extra shore leave or letting them beat her at poker is just as valid.

It's important to note that you don't have to be *good* or *talented* at this noble impulse, just that you try.

If you don't have one of these, you're pretty much playing a sociopath, someone who doesn't need self-reinforcement to feel good about yourself. Such PCs don't have a place in this sort of story.

### ONE REAL FEAR

What scares you? Real people have fear, something that haunts them—maybe just from time to time, maybe constantly. It can be primal, a fear of your identity being violated, your past coming back to get you, and so on. No matter what you go with, this should be a deeply personal element to your character.

Primal fears can be the least interesting, if you're not careful. If your biggest fear is "spiders," that's not juicy by itself. Work a bit to come up with what happened in your past to make this fear so ingrained in your mind. One direction is to explore a character with

PTSD who is scared of loud noises, though in general talk with the group and be aware of real-world mental health issues when you do something like this.

Fears around your identity being violated falls under the idea of “a fate worse than death.” Hacragorkans may not blink twice at the threat of death, but what about the fear of losing a limb and having to live a non-warrior’s life? That’s a threat to your very identity, though it’s not the sort of thing that people think about until they see this threat as real—either a close call that jeopardized your sense of identity or watching someone else go through this and lose theirs.

The past coming back to haunt you is another great place where people fear. This is the playground for characters who’ve broke a major law once—murder, embezzlement (you tell me the Ken Reeg don’t see this as a major crime), etc.—and have been running ever since. This is a significant theme for the Hayerschans, and many of them didn’t do anything, suffering for what others did in the past.

Be careful of turning this into something comic. Saying “I’m afraid of space travel” is going to get old fast in a story that’s about space travel.

## ONE HOT BUTTON

What makes you furious? What will push you to the point of irrationality, to danger, to sacrificing something important right now in order to quench the primal need for vengeance?

## MAKING THESE ASPECTS

You can incorporate these ideas into your aspects as you’re making your character, if you want them to be a core part of your play experience. They’ll become fate point generators, and you can expect to encounter them fairly often in your game (if the GM is paying attention).

But just because you can do that doesn’t mean you have to. Maybe one, two, or all three questions are just color for your character—that doesn’t mean they aren’t important, but they aren’t things you want to flag for continual compels.

## ASPECT-LESS COMPEL VARIANT

All that said, you could introduce this compel variant into your game: for each question that wasn’t turned into an aspect, the GM may *once per story arc or campaign* compel that as if it were an aspect. It may be refused as with any other compel, and if refused it still counts as the one time that questions can be compelled.

Keep in mind that it’s not an aspect, so it cannot be invoked or otherwise played with as aspects can. Just like with all rule variants, make sure this is something the table is interested in playing with.

## MAKING A MORALLY GRAY WORLD

*Bulldogs!* already starts off in a world that isn’t black and white. The characters are, by default, people who aren’t heroes. They’re just the crew of a Class D ship, not exactly paragons of virtue here. The trick is to make sure the world keeps those characters in a serious tone, rather than slipping into slapstick and hilarity.

Every prominent NPC should have the answers to the above questions, just as you’d have the PCs answer. NPCs need to also be real people (with the rare—and I mean *rare*—sociopath).

Give every major NPC or group a noble intention that they believe in very strongly, and a belief that the ends justify the means. This intention should make them come into contact with many people, some who will believe in an NPC’s cause but question if she

goes too far, some who will be vehemently against an NPC's intent and be just as extreme about it, and those who straddle various lines in between.

Ideally, the PCs will end up being all over the place, rather than all buying blindly into a single ideal and extreme stance on executing it.

It may help to take a piece of paper and write the major players on it, as different circles with arrows pointing to one another. This is known as a relationship map. For each person or group (possibly including the PCs as separate entries), write what they want in that circle. Then draw arrows to other groups, labeling each arrow with how they complicate what other groups want. Once you have that basic outline, you should have a sense of how complicated your world is, and how helping one person means watching another suffer.

## EXTRA-GRITTY RULE VARIANT

If you want your *Bulldogs!* (or other Fate-based) game to feel even grittier, remove the invocation advantage of taking a +2 to your roll, and remove the +3 benefit for Red Power points. When invocations become only good for rerolls and triggering certain stunts, the game's play will be less pulpy and harder on characters.

If that feels too harsh, only allow one +2 benefit per roll.

Either way, you can allow +2 benefits for characters if they take a stunt specifically linked to a skill, such as:

### GUNS PARAGON

You are an incredible master of guns. With this stunt, you can use invocations twice per roll for the +2 benefit. (Or an additional two times, if you can already do it once.)

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