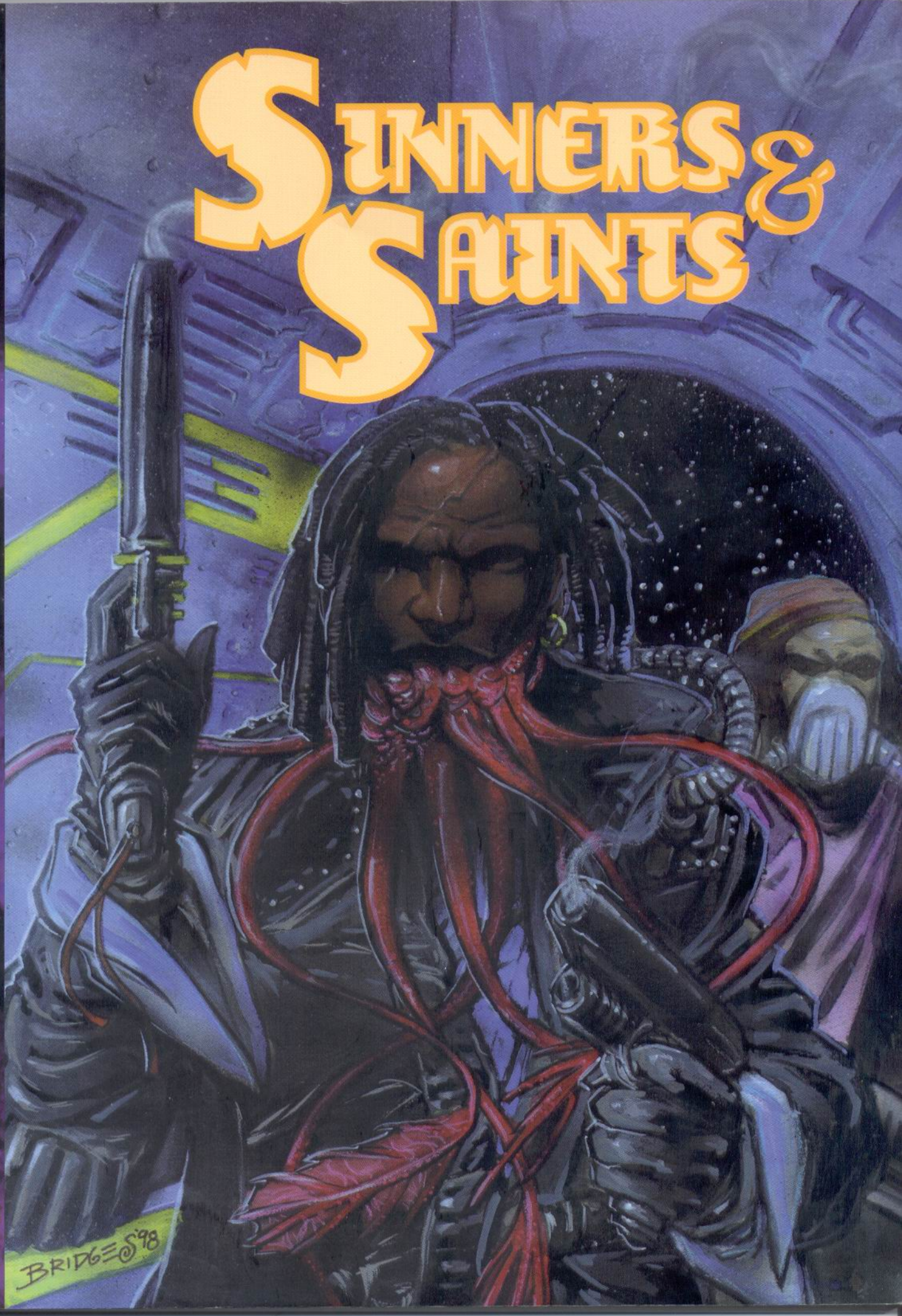


SINNERS & SAINTS



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FADING SUNS™

SINNERS & SAINTS



by
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Yea, the Pancreator's light is as all-illuminating as the sun, but legion are those who would turneth away. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor, but the way of the wicked seduceth him. Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way, and he that hateth reproof shall die. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Pancreator: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

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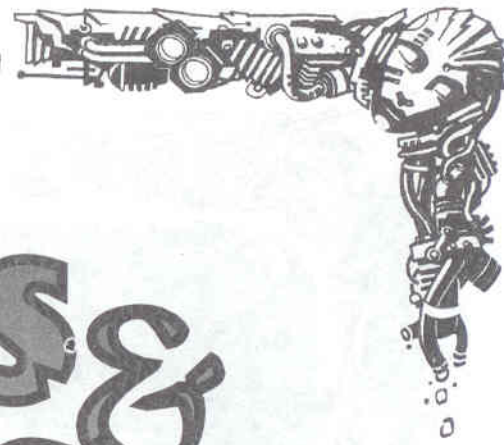
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SINNERS & SAINTS

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Introduction: Best of the Worst

All sorts of personalities fill the Known Worlds, from bold and daring adventurers to conniving villains to the most committed of priests. This book chronicles a wide variety of these people and creatures, providing gamemasters with allies and villains they can add to an epic at a moment's notice, and players with characters they can base their own on or use as they are. Each listing has background information, a character sheet and an illustration which gamemasters can use to show players what they are up against — or to put the fear of the Pancreator into them.

The character sheet is not the same one found in *Fading Suns*. It is targeted specifically for use by the gamemaster, and leaves out information players need on their sheets. Gamemasters have permission to photocopy these sheets, as well as the sample one in this chapter, for their personal use only.

Some of these people are doing their best to make the Known Worlds a better place for all beings, hoping that by their actions some lives will improve. Others care for nothing but themselves, and everyone else can go suck singularities. Of course, many fall somewhere in between these poles, and the person who helps the characters today may become their worst enemy tomorrow.

Do not feel compelled to try and include every character in this book in your epic. Players have more fun when they can get to know characters in depth, studying their actions and motivations over a number of games. Recurring villains are great fun, and the Devil Beliah might encounter characters a number of times in space before they decide to hunt him down. The same holds true for the saints in this book — Mother Rebeca might help them out of several jams before they realize she is a heretic.

On the other hand, all the characters in this book can

work well for single dramas. Consul Haswan Nara could try to run the characters out of town for their violation of guild exclusives, only to have them turn around and prove that he needs them to hunt down monsters in the sewers. They might have to recover incriminating letters held by Sir Juan Kerressa de Castile, chase him from ball to ball and palace to palace, only to find that he no longer cares about the person who wrote those letters.

Also feel free to mix and match the characters to your heart's content. Having Dame Chingmy go toe to toe with Sir Juan Kerressa de Castile can be lots of fun. Seeing the bounty hunter Emola Debt trying to hunt down Seketea Halvena, with the characters caught in the middle, can lead to innumerable dramas. Just remember that much of the drama's focus needs to stay on the characters. After all, it is as much their game as it is the gamemaster's.

Sample Dramas

The characters in this book should provide gamemasters with plenty of ideas for new dramas, but this section can jumpstart that process. What follow are drama ideas including some of the characters in this book. Only the briefest of outlines are here — gamemasters will need to do the leg work necessary to flesh them out.

The Bastard and the Barbarian: On one of his raids, the Vuldrok Sunchief Binoche heard rumors (that is, heard them after torturing some prisoners) that the new Emperor had a child out of wedlock. Further investigation has lead him to Dame Alicia Silvers, currently staying in the same dwelling, be it castle, tavern or spaceship, as the characters. He will do anything he can to capture her, including attacks, bribes and promises of all sorts.

Money for Nothing: A rumor that the Devil Beliah, the infamous pirate, is injured and hiding in town has at-



Dame Alicia Silvers

Alexius' unmarried status worries many of his supporters. They fear that should he die without heir, any chance of reuniting humanity would die with him, as scores of nobles would claim parts of his empire. The only thing his supporters fear more than this end is that a dozen self-proclaimed heirs might spring up from all corners of the empire, claiming to be the illegitimate children of the Emperor. One of these has already appeared, though so far Dame Alicia has maintained a fairly low profile.

Born on Gwynneth while the Emperor Wars were at their height, she made her appearance almost nine months after Alexius' victory at Cadavus, the battle which put him in position to become first regent and then Emperor. In that battle he caught a fleet of Decados stealth ships at rest and destroyed, damaged or captured most of them before they could escape. Alicia's mother, Baroness Suzanne Silvers, had been one of Alexius' earliest supporters and served on his flagship as commander of his marines and marauders. She defeated the Decados' last counterattack, when several of their ships managed to close with Alexius' flagship and board it. She personally captured the Decados baron who led the boarding action, and happily presented his sword to Alexius.

The victory celebration back on Gwynneth, held primarily at the Silvers estate, went on for several days, during which Alexius and his retinue stayed in the main mansion. When he left for the regent elections on Byzantium Secundus, Alicia's mother stayed behind. Her pregnancy became obvious several months later. Since most noblewomen who plan on terminating their pregnancy do so before anyone notices, her decision to give birth to the child quickly generated talk. While it is not uncommon for unwed noblewomen in most houses to have children, House Hawkwood has never condoned such activity. Despite this, Baroness Suzanne proudly carried on, and Alicia came into the Known Worlds only a few months after Alexius became regent.

Baroness Suzanne Silvers always seemed certain that her daughter had some great destiny to fulfill, and raised the girl to share this belief. Indeed, Alicia never doubted her place in the universe until her mother's death in the final battle around Byzantium Secundus. Her mother had led a small detachment down to the base on Jericho. Within an hour it blew up, Baroness Suzanne along with it. While some might expect Alicia to bear a special hatred of the Decados for that, since House Hawkwood has blamed them for the destruction, this is not the case. Instead she has begun to build up a grievance against her own house.

Since her mother's death, her own position within the Hawkwoods has become perilous. The lands of their barony went to Duke John Hawkwood, who made Alicia his ward. Despite his overt gestures of courtesy and hospitality, Alicia found herself virtually a prisoner on his lands, without servants of her own or the ability to leave. She also overheard rumors that the duke was keeping her there for some purpose of his own — one which Alicia would not care for.

When she turned 15, she realized that without land or income of her own, she had little chance of regaining the family barony or avoiding the duke's plans for her, which at the least seemed to include marrying her to his toad of a son. Instead of disheartening her, however, this realization strengthened and encouraged her, giving her the resolve to find a way out. With stolen family silverware to fund her voyage she paid for passage off Gwynneth and to the stars.

Now she travels the Known Worlds, hoping to find some place in it she can call her own. She has done her best to avoid the duke's men and allies, and generally interacts with freemen instead of nobles. What she does not realize is that Duke John is not the only one looking for her. Rumors of Alexius' bastards are spreading through the Known Worlds, and while she has just begun to suspect that she might have some connection to the Emperor, others have suspected that for years.

Quote: "Hey! You guys need a hand?"

Appearance: Dame Alicia definitely has the Hawkwood look about her. As a young gangly girl, she bore little resemblance to her voluptuous, battle-hardened mother. Now she is beginning to bloom, but those who know the upper levels of House Hawkwood sometimes start when they see her. Though still a teenager, she is becoming aware of just how awesome her destiny might be.

Entourage: While Alicia tries to travel alone, she seems to have a knack for drawing together interesting and valuable people. Her natural talent for bringing out the most helpful sides of people is a boon, and those who have gotten to know her during her travels are more than willing to provide whatever assistance she needs.

Roleplaying Notes: Dame Alicia is extremely self-sufficient for a noble despite her few years. In spite of some rather tense moments since leaving Gwynneth, she has had little problem fending for herself. She does fear that Duke John Montgomery Hawkwood might be looking for her.

Equipment: Rapier, slingshot, standard shield

Benefices and Afflictions: Standard Shield (5), Cloistered (1), Title: Dame (3), Bastard (1), Unaware (3), Heir (3)



Dame Chingmy Li Halan

Dame Chingmy came of age during the last days of the Emperor Wars, when the Li Halan were fighting primarily to regain lost territory and influence. Though the family trained her as a diplomat, she found the arts of war at least equally fascinating. And while the family preached lessons of abstinence and self denial, she found pleasure and satisfaction in the arms of nobles from other houses. Despite her occasional un-Li Halan ways, during the Emperor Wars she served the family ably as a liaison to the Hazat and then to the Decados before, at the age of 20, she joined her house's delegation to the Emperor's coronation.

The time she had spent at the courts of minor nobles had not prepared her for the splendor of the imperial court. Dignitaries and notables from around the Known Worlds attended the coronation, including the leaders of every noble house, Church sect and major guild. All strove to out do the others in one of the most elaborate games of one-upmanship ever seen. The parties spanned the globe, and Chingmy revelled in the revelry.

By the time it had ended she knew she could never return to the standard role of a Li Halan noble woman, watching over some lonely manor, spending her days supervising servants and her nights praying to the Pancreator. Instead she took to the stars, officially serving as ambassador from the Li Halan to many noble houses, but unofficially going wherever her heart took her.

This was the time when she first began to realize her natural talent for dueling. Baronet Metia Ciencia de Lasedo challenged her, allegedly because Chingmy had slighted the Hazat, but really because the baronet's lover, Bishop Avriel Curzon had expressed interest in the young Li Halan. Despite the baronet's reputation as a vicious fencer, Chingmy managed to both draw first blood and end the duel there, before relations between the houses would suffer.

Chingmy began taking every opportunity to practice, going through fencing steps during the long voyages between worlds and seeking out dueling masters wherever they might

be found. That she often falls in love (for a short time) with these masters only further fuels her quest.

Her house still feels uncomfortable about her nocturnal activities, though none can deny that she has served it faithfully. While house leaders are unwilling to give her the most prestigious missions, she somehow seems to turn any assignment into an exciting endeavor far exceeding what anyone expected. Some who have dealt with her believe that her apparent gregarious nature is only a cover for an extremely crafty diplomat, and would be surprised to discover that her outgoing personality is her real one.

Quote: "Well, let's see if you're as good with your blade as you are with your mouth."

Appearance: Chingmy can pass as a dainty court lady when she so desires, but generally prefers the tight clothes of the duelist. She ties her long black hair back in a pony tail and occasionally attaches a heavy weight to the end which she can use as a weapon.

Entourage: Chingmy, though not a rich Li Halan, has two servants, a man and a woman, who travel with her wherever she goes. The man, Sao Han, publicly acts as a laborer, carrying luggage and running errands, but really serves as her main sparring partner and has learned to fence far better than most servants. The woman, Jiang Qeng, appears to be her maid but also manages to keep track of gossip wherever Chingmy's diplomatic missions take them. Chingmy believes Jiang serves the Hidden Martyrs (see **Lords of the Known Worlds**) as well as herself.

Roleplaying Notes: Dame Chingmy is perhaps too outgoing, exuberant and honest to make a first-rate diplomat, but she has done well so far. Those problems which her quick tongue gets her into, her quicker blade often gets her out of. That she has lovers and admirers in most courts she visits certainly helps.

Equipment: Rapier, Dueling Shield

Benefices and Afflictions: Title: Dame (3), Dueling Shield (7), Retinue (5)

Sir Juan Kerressa de Castile

Sir Juan Kerressa's sudden entry into court society took everyone by surprise. The third son of a minor Hazat noble, he was expected to have a long, undistinguished career in the Hazat military. Instead he appeared at Alexius' court on the arm of Duchess Sonia Neville Hawkwood, one of the Known World's renowned beauties and leading trendsetters. Clothed in a mix of the latest Hazat, Decados and Hawkwood styles, perfumed with exotic Kurgan scents, wearing borrowed jewelry, his entrance stunned court observers.

He became the talk of the court in an instant, immediately sought out as a guest at the innumerable parties, balls and galas which make up Byzantium Secundus' social life. He unerringly sought out the most elegant and prestigious, usually attending as the guest of a prominent noblewoman — or leaving with one. His list of conquests grew with each night, and by the time the rainy season declared an end to the main parties, he had established himself as one of the nobility's most sought after guests, with his appearance giving parties an almost-official stamp of approval.

With the end of the social season on Byzantium Secundus came the start of the social whirl on other worlds. As a youth Kerressa never would have expected to find himself in demand on Holy Terra, Leagueheim and the capital planets. As an adult, however, invitations flooded in from around the Known Worlds. A week on Vera Cruz followed two on Aylon, followed in turn by a month in Severus' most magnificent palaces. Feted by leading nobles, this landless knight turned his looks, manners and charm into income-producing assets, as gifts and jewelry piled up.

While Kerressa enjoyed the accumulated wealth, his reputation soared by his refusals to accept money from other sources, most notably the various intelligence services. Almost all the services, from the Decados Jakovian Agency to the Charioteer's Killroys, sought to enlist him at one point or another, for no one doubted that Kerressa had become privy to innumerable secrets. Kerressa turned them all down, publicly enough that the story spread but quietly enough that no one

could accuse him of unseemly self-promotion. His fellow nobles found him a trustworthy friend — but not so trustworthy that he could not tell a good story.

Rumors have spread that powerful nobles use Kerressa as a high-level courier, ferrying information, items and negotiations back and forth between them. He has encountered many of the Known Worlds' leading figures and appears to get along well with all of them. Among these notables he tries to hide his more roguish side, the part of him that revels in seduction and in the signs of his successes. He now takes special delight in seducing the most powerful figures he can. Recently he set his sights on Salandra Decados, as Duchess Sonia Neville always knew he would.

Quote: "My honor rests on my discretion."

Appearance: In 20th century terms, he would be a cross between David Niven, Clark Gable and the Prince of Monaco. Handsome, debonair and sophisticated, he's got it all. Not only does he wear the leading styles — whatever he wears quickly becomes the leading style.

Entourage: Kerressa travels with one man servant who primarily takes care of the knight's clothes. He often ties himself to some other noble's entourage though, especially when he is on a mission for someone, or when that noble (or members of the entourage) is especially attractive.

Roleplaying Notes: Characters might encounter Sir Juan Kerressa in a number of ways, most of them contradictory. When dealing with his roguish side, they might be called upon to help a friend or relative who needs to recover an embarrassing gift she gave the knight. On the other hand, the characters might need to help Kerressa carry out a sensitive mission, perhaps delivering valuable heirlooms to their original owners.

Equipment: Rapier, Dueling Shield

Benefices and Afflictions: Dueling Shield (7), Good Riches (3), Title: Knight (3), Ally: Duchess Sonia Neville (11), Retinue (1)

Dame Bertha Torensen

The dream of a Third Republic infects a surprisingly large number of people, from serfs in their fields to nobles who dream of a better life for their subjects. These people rarely speak of their dreams except when with those they trust, for such fantasies in themselves are considered dangerous, verging on the heretical. Those who hope to make their dreams a reality have to be even more cautious.

Dame Bertha Torensen leads such a group of crusaders. Centered around herself, several of her householders and a scattering of like-minded merchants and freemen, they work to increase republican sentiment and decrease objections to it. Dame Bertha herself works from the highest of ideals, firmly believing that the only way for humanity to effectively deal with its many problems is to involve the largest number of people in their solutions. The only way she sees for this to happen is through democracy, involving more and more people in politics, commerce, education and the rest of human life. The fact that her house really has little to lose at this point certainly does not hurt her fervor for the cause.

Her first tutors, members of the Pedagogues guild, gave Bertha her earliest knowledge of the Second Republic, stressing its egalitarian nature, respect for knowledge and opportunity for all. At the same time her tutors were increasing her interest in the past, her family's low prestige lessened her interest in the present. House Torensen's once-promising climb had ended, its attempts to become a power broker during the Emperor Wars stymied at every turn. Bertha herself sees little opportunity to advance the house's influence — and less reason to even try. Instead she seeks to make her mark on the universe in a distinctly non-noble manner. Given the choice between teaching other nobles etiquette and trying to lead humanity toward a new utopia, utopia won.

Her first efforts were very simple and not especially dangerous. She taught some Torensen serfs to read, supported a few merchants in their disputes with nobles, and gave money to priests who held a more tolerant view of technology (in other words, those who would not automatically take a sledge hammer to a think machine). The success of these gestures relieved what anxiety she had about democracy and bolstered her growing idealism. It also gave her the impetus she needed to take her cause to the stars.

Now she travels from system to system, ostensibly as an etiquette advisor, but really looking for fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of democracy. Her studies of the past have lead her to believe that while merchants and craftsmen led past democratic movements, they would have failed without the assistance of enlightened nobles and well-meaning priests.

The first step to bringing about a Third Republic is to show these nobles and priests how a closer alliance with the guilds can improve their lives: providing more material com-

forts, giving them strong allies against their foes and encouraging peasants to work harder so they can buy more things. The second step is to discredit or silence the most vocal critics of such change, and this is where her crusade turns dangerous.

Opponents of a Third Republic are many and vocal, determined that the sin of republicanism never again stain humanity's soul. Bertha hopes to whittle away at their ranks by embarrassing them or otherwise preventing their opposition. She managed to get an especially vocal bishop on Holy Terra removed from the pulpit by threatening to reveal his past writings against Alexius (paid for by House Decados). She also manufactured evidence that Baron Shaheen Rahmen al-Malik might have worked against his own house during the Emperor Wars, thus removing one of the al-Malik's main opponents to closer ties with the League.

So far Bertha's quiet efforts have attracted little attention — she has learned to cover her tracks — but some of the right people have noticed. She has a number of friends within the Merchant League, all of whom would help her promote a new republic, and she has begun attracting non-League types who also hope for a new golden age. While not a member of the Third Era or any other pro-democracy group, she works to similar goals and may someday join one. Until then she continues her slow process of quietly promoting a new hope for humanity.

Quote: "Oh, I agree. The serfs can never be our equals. But a true noble knows better than to abuse any tool."

Appearance: This large and regal-looking woman wears her blonde hair proudly. When she wants to she can make an extremely striking figure — and she can strike hard as well.

Entourage: Dame Bertha knows better than to promote her beliefs on her own, but she is unwilling to trust just anyone. A good judge of character, she surrounds herself with people loyal to her and her cause. She has learned to slowly float ideas of equality and social advancement before those she deems worthy, hoping that they will believe any change in their attitude came from within, not from her. Anyone working with her will be more inclined toward a Third Republic than the general run of society, but will not be a fanatic for the cause.

Roleplaying Notes: Bertha has learned to work quietly and realizes that the chances of a Third Republic during her lifetime are slim to nil. She has also learned to keep her own efforts very quiet, and the characters might find themselves set up as scapegoats should her plans go awry. On the other hand, she may work with the characters to neutralize a common foe.

Equipment: Screecher, Rapier, Standard Shield
Benefices and Afflictions: Title: Dame (3), Well-Off Riches (5), Equipment (10)

Sir Asuni Cameton

House Cameton is the leading house on Byzantium Secundus, but it lacks power anywhere else. Asuni hoped to change that, setting forth from his family's homeworld to seek his fortune in the stars. Taking with him a list of old Cameton claims and deeds to land on other planets, he made his way from star to star, wheeling and dealing to try and expand his family's power throughout the Known Worlds. He had little success until he reached De Molay, where he hoped to prove that his family once owned part of a uranium mine.

The Brother Battle elders listened to his claim with interest and then offered to let him tour the mine himself. Elated that his quest might finally be getting somewhere, Asuni leapt at the chance, donned a spacesuit and set out in a small flier. When he reached the mine, however, all he found was a deep crater, the site of a meteor landing hundreds of years ago. He landed the flier in the heart of the crater and stepped out, examining what was left of House Cameton's claim on the planet, hoping against hope to find something of worth.

He dug around in the crater, stabbing the hard dirt with his rapier. When it hit something hard, he knelt down to dig. After several minutes, he found himself looking at part of a carving, and his excitement mounted. He dug with renewed vigor, tearing at the ground with all his might. As he worked, the sheer immensity of what he had found began to dawn on him. By the time he had finished he realized that this was one of the fabled Gargoyles — a relic which could by itself make his family a true power in the Known Worlds. Shaking with excitement, he removed one of his gloves to run his fingers along the artifact.

Power coursed through his body. He leapt to his feet, a scream piercing the weak De Molay atmosphere. His hands flew to his helmet, tearing it loose and throwing it to the ground. He threw himself from side to side before plunging to the earth, his scream continuing. He pounded his head against the Gargoyle until blood poured down his face and he finally, mercifully, passed out.

Night had settled over the planet by the time he awoke. Gasping for breath he crawled to the flier and hauled himself inside. It took him several more days to recover, at which point

he finally made himself look outside the window. The only tracks he saw were his own, but the Gargoyle was gone. The next day he flew back to the main Brother Battle monastery and booked passage off-world.

It was then that he began to realize that the world had changed. Things seemed clearer, sharper in many ways. People seemed more understandable, less cloaked in deception. In fact, sometimes he thought he could even hear their deepest, most secret thoughts. By the time his ship was ready to depart, Asuni knew that the Gargoyle had gifted him with psychic powers. Over the course of his voyage he refined these abilities, and came to understand the incredible value of what he had received.

Asuni has never returned to Byzantium Secundus. Instead he seeks his destiny in the stars, hoping for another encounter with a Gargoyle. He looks forward to touching one again, this time with a slightly better understanding of their nature — and perhaps a look into their purpose. He knows that the rush of power he felt was the Gargoyle talking to him, and now he wants to listen.

Quote: "One cannot understand the infinite unless one holds it in one's hand."

Appearance: Sir Asuni Cameton still has the appearance of his Bengali ancestors, but the distant gaze in his eyes concerns any of his relatives who run into him. He wears noble clothes because they are what he is used to and they make his voyage easier, not because of any desire for that prestige.

Entourage: Asuni avidly seeks out people with similar interests to his and travels with anyone who can assist him in his quest. He does not care if other people interact with his Gargoyles, just as long as he gets a chance to deal with them.

Roleplaying Notes: Asuni cares little for the trappings of noble existence, dedicating himself instead to the search for greater powers. He gladly works with anyone who can help him. Anyone who might get in his way, however, has made a mortal enemy.

Equipment: Standard Shield, Rapier

Benefices and Afflictions: Title: Knight (3), Passage Contract: Charioteers (2), Standard Shield (5)

Mother Meah

Meah's father became a hermit on Holy Terra after Meah's mother died giving birth to the girl. He took her to the distant Rocky Mountains, and there they lived far from other humans, spending their time in contemplation of the Pancreator's miracles. Meah grew up with an unshakeable dedication to the Pancreator as well as a firm belief in her father's holiness.

When she became a teenager, though, her father began having doubts about Meah's continued isolation from the rest of humanity. While he felt sure that it benefited her soul by staying far from the depraved depths to which he believed people had sunk, he also feared that without the first-hand knowledge of human evil the likes of which he had experienced while a priest on North America's west coast, she could never fully appreciate the sanctity of his more pure lifestyle.

Their tearful separation came when Meah turned 15, when he turned Meah over to his only remaining friend, Father Joshua Lilburn, who had gained prominence as a priest. Meah and Lilburn made the trip back to the west coast, stopping along the way to preach to those who sought him out, and there she became part of his Orthodox congregation. For several years she worked in his church, studied from his books and joined him on his many missions to the poor and desolate. She also stood by him when he criticized his superiors in the Church and weathered the inevitable backlash.

When Meah was 17, Lilburn made his final break with his Orthodox superiors, agreeing with and joining the growing Sanctuary Aeon community. Meah saw the necessity for a more accessible Church, one which the laity could love as well as fear. She also saw the risk inherent in Lilburn's break, for the same poor he sought to side with were the very ones whose back breaking labor allowed Church leaders to live in unparalleled luxury. Father Lilburn became one of the most prominent Holy Terra Church figures to support Sanctuary Aeon, and the Church did not approve.

It took Lilburn's congregation away from him, assigning him instead to maintaining the Church's libraries in what used to be Los Angeles. Through his trials Meah stood by him, studying for the priesthood so she could support him in his fights and stay by his side. Even without a place of worship, Lilburn continued preaching, much to the Church's consternation. As he attracted followers, various Orthodox leaders came to him with more dire warnings. After all, as laborers for the Universal Church, the serfs Lilburn preached to were closer to salvation than any others and had no use of Sanctuary doctrine. Finally the local bishop ruled that Lilburn's preaching was distracting him from his duties restocking the library's books. Meah, accepted as a priestess, took over for him while he descended to the library's depths to do penance.

The serfs listened to her and spread news of her teachings. At the same time, Lilburn found his suspension from preaching a heavy burden. He turned to the library's oldest tomes for comfort, and Meah often found him with tracts dating back to the Church's first days — and some even older. He also expanded his studies of Theurgy.

Then, on the night before Meah's 23rd birthday, her fa-

ther burst back into her life. The long years of separation from his daughter had wrought a horrifying change on him. His once robust frame had shrunk, giving him an eerily emaciated appearance. His hair, or what was left of it, grew wild, and his eyes darted madly. Filth stained his clothes, and all his possessions rested in a tattered sack. He yelled about the visions the Pancreator had visited upon him, visions of a world wracked with sin. The most recent visions all showed him the same thing — Lilburn corrupting his young daughter.

Lilburn returned that night to find Meah's father in a frenzy, tearing at his books and attacking the altar. Lilburn threw himself at his old friend to keep him from attacking Meah, and the two old men crashed to the floor. Screaming, Meah raced to separate them but was too late. Lilburn lay deathly still, his head bleeding profusely from where it hit the floor. Her father clutched his chest and whispered of the doom preparing to visit itself upon a sinful humanity. Meah raced to bandage Lilburn's wounds, but her efforts to remedy his wounds or lay on hands did nothing. Suddenly, with one last call for the Pancreator's wrath, her father pitched to the ground.

Lilburn's funeral service attracted thousands, and Church leaders used the opportunity to speak of the need to follow established doctrine. Only Meah attended the one for her father. She sat unmoving through both of them. Immediately thereafter she petitioned her superiors for permission to travel to Artemis, and it was quickly granted. Gathering her few belongings, as well as those of Lilburn and her father, she set forth — but to Pentateuch, not Artemis.

Reading the two men's journals had horrified her as much as their deaths had. Both men had begun suspecting that all souls, including their own, were horribly at risk. Both had begun experimenting with unsanctified theurgies, some actually forbidden by the Church. Finally, both wrote of their love for Meah, one as a parent and one as a man who wanted to become her lover and husband.

Meah spent a year in meditation, far from other people. When she again ventured forth, it was with a burning desire to warn humanity of its impending doom, punish those responsible, and redeem herself for failing those who had loved her — Lilburn, her father, and the Pancreator.

Quote: "You, like the rest of humanity, are doomed."

Appearance: She still bears some resemblance to the Orthodox priest she once was, but her clothes have become tattered and her eyes more distant.

Entourage: While she has no wish to found a congregation, her doomsaying has attracted a few followers.

Roleplaying Notes: Meah can come into the characters' lives as a friend or foe, but it is likely that she will someday turn against them. She now studies forbidden Theurgy, and the gamemaster can add to her rites. Her feelings of guilt still overwhelm her. She has learned the rite of Scourge, which causes skin to strip from one's body. This sixth level rite does damage equal to her victory dice on a Passion + Physick roll, ignoring armor and shields. She usually uses it on herself.

Equipment: Tattered Robes, Tomes of Forbidden Theurgy

Brother Francisco Domine

The battle against the Symbiots has inspired great heroics, bringing out the best in many humans. Humans on planets from Stigmata to Malignatius and beyond have found themselves called on to sacrifice all for their friends, neighbors and comrades. The Manifest Light, which grew out of the first theurgists to battle this unholy scourge, has done its best to keep this tradition alive. Its members rarely engage the Symbiots in direct combat, but often forget this strategy when human lives are at stake, rushing into the center of Symbiot strength to fulfill their missions. Now Brother Domine finds himself constantly surrounded by enemies, and risking his life every moment.

This Eskatonic joined the Manifest Light at the end of the Emperor Wars. Dedicated and gifted in the theurgical arts, he found the war against these most unenlightened beings the perfect platform to develop his faith and ties to the Pancreator. Early on he supported Brother Battle and Stigmata Garrison assaults against these vile creatures, calling on the Pancreator to support their attacks, heal the wounded and call down fire on the ungodly.

With the end of the Emperor Wars, Stigmata again took high priority. Veteran troops and advanced materials streamed to the planet, and trained soldiers hunted down every last trace of Symbiot infestation. Within a matter of years no sign of the Symbiots remained, and the Stigmata Garrison came as close to relaxing as it ever had. Thus the resumption of Symbiot raids last year took many by surprise.

Domine's assignments had taken him to a new farming colony on an uninhabited Stigmata island where he served as spiritual advisor for several hundred recently decommissioned Garrison troops. Despite their training and experience, the ferocity of the Symbiot raid took them by surprise. Dozens died before the farmers could organize their defenses, and dozens more found themselves isolated far from any help.

Anxious to aid his congregationers, Domine put together a rescue team to go to three of the outlying farms. They set out in their fastest vehicles, speeding overland in a desperate effort to reach their friends and neighbors. They managed to reach the first two farms without difficulty, but the third one spelled disaster. As they loaded the families into their Scroungers (see **Forbidden Lore: Technology**), the Symbiots attacked. Domine saw his comrades falling before this concerted attack and ordered away whatever vehicles could still travel. As he prepared to board the last one, he saw another flip over, sending its occupants falling at the feet of the vile horde.

Domine leapt from the bed of his truck and ran to their side, his flux sword slicing through Symbiots the whole way. With the aid of four other men, and the Prophet's Blessing, he managed to right the Scrounger. As he and the others prepared to get on board, the Symbiots fell on them, teeth, claws and unidentifiable body parts tearing at the men. Domine slashed right and left, but to no avail. The beasts swarmed over him, knocking him to the ground and sending his flux sword hurtling from his grasp. He felt a stabbing pain but, as he prepared to meet the Pancreator, he saw a burst of light flash be-

fore him. The Symbiots leapt off him and fled back to their living ship. Clambering to his feet, Domine climbed into the truck and drove back to the colony.

His wounds had healed themselves on the drive back and there was no mark left on him. He had little time to tell others of his miraculous escape in the frenzied preparations to abandon the island, and by the time they had reached Stigmata's main fortifications, he could barely believe it had happened.

Then the dreams started. As he lay in bed, he felt a pull urging him on. He felt his dead comrades urging him to leave Stigmata, to take their hopes and dreams to the rest of the Known Worlds. All humanity had to be saved, and only he had the means to do so. All people had to experience the true scope of the miracle he had undergone, and the sooner the better.

Domine applied for permission to travel to Pentateuch and, after a less-than-rigorous screening, his superiors agreed, believing him unexposed to Symbiot infection. His first spaceship took him to Shaprut, and it was during this trip that his dreams turned darker. He began seeing humanity as grossly corrupt, a danger to the worlds on which they lived and a threat to the stars themselves. He began experiencing this corruption physically, as his skin became plagued with warts, boils and worse.

By the time he reached Criticorum the dreams filled every sleeping and waking moment. He barely notices his own actions, and his primary drive is to avoid detection. He does not consciously realize that he has been infected by Symbiot spores or that they are commanding him to take them to the centers of human power, where they can lie dormant until they are ready to infect more people.

Quote: "Wh-what do you wa-want?"

Appearance: Outwardly he appears the epitome of the dedicated monk, wearing his dirty hooded robes and close-cropped hair. Under the robes, however, he is starting to break out in nasty pustules from the Symbiot spores he is carrying, and his eyes have the look of a wild animal surrounded by predators.

Entourage: Domine carries several spores to take to human worlds. They allow him to regenerate from wounds at the rate of one point of Vitality per turn, have increased all his physical stats, allow him to see in the dark, and have transformed his skin into the equivalent of 1+1d armor. Additionally, infecting another person with these spores will completely incapacitate that victim. The longer he bears their infection, the more the spores will change him.

Roleplaying Notes: Domine tries to stay to himself, but his dreams and his natural inclinations pull him toward people. He still maintains much of his human memories and drives, but the Symbiot infection is beginning to overcome this. Consider him confused and at war with himself, though the Symbiot side is beginning to win.

Equipment: Old, Dirty Robes, Flux Sword, Standard Shield, Battle-Scarred Expeditionary Med Pack

Sister Angeline Fuego

The Fuego family has a long and storied history in the Church. Though officially serfs belonging to the Bingyi barony on Icon, many of Angeline's ancestors had left the farm for the pulpit, achieving rank from novitiate to priest, with one especially illustrious great-great-great-grandmother having become a bishop in her final days. The family had high hopes for Angeline, whose intelligence, faith and devotion were unquestionable.

An uncle had her officially brought into the Church when she became a teenager, and she took to her studies like a Terran duck takes to water. While not the brightest of students, she applied herself aggressively, and her tutors found her to be one of their most promising charges. They made her a novitiate when she was 16 and sent her to Criticorum to begin her ministry.

She reached the planet just as the Emperor Wars reached their height. Warships flew back and forth from Criticorum to all other worlds, soldiers attacked and raided regularly, and refugees flooded the cities from the rural lands and other planets. Angeline found her primary duties involved helping these refugees as best she could, and the stories they told her made her hair stand on end. The atrocities being conducted during the wars surpassed anything she believed humans could do to one another. The crimes, ranging from murder to torture to genetic manipulation to horror camps and worse, outraged her.

She fervently believed that the Church had a role to play in stopping these cruelties, and her insistent demands that something be done lead her superiors to recommend, only half-jokingly, that she join the Inquisition. Angeline felt as if a light had gone on in her head. While none of her beloved ancestors had joined that august body, there was no reason she could not. She applied for permission to visit the synod and, while its fanaticism distressed her, she found it to be the Church's most effective mechanism to stop the outrages perpetrated by the nobles and merchants.

She spent a year preparing for her service as an inquisitor, and again her dedication and hard work impressed those around her. She received inquisitorial sanction and her position as a canon at the same time. Her first assignment had her aiding Father Stanley, an Avestite with a special hatred of technology. For several years she served him faithfully, trying to steer him toward the nobles whose armies wreaked havoc on the serfs of the Known Worlds. She had little success, and indeed began to worry about the excesses of her superior. Stanley's primary targets were peasants caught using mechanical plows or power tools without the sanction of their feudal lords, along with the occasional merchant who dared sell such items to the peasantry. Her requests for a different assignment went unheeded until she discovered a deacon on Pyre using anti-aging drugs. She left his secret buried in exchange for his aid in getting her her own assignments.

Since then she has traveled the Known Worlds in search of those whose crimes have caused the most suffering. She began with rogue soldiers and brigands, slowly preparing cases against low-level nobles who had set them loose on the worlds. She had several major successes, most notably the time she successfully prosecuted Baronet Biddle Cobb Decados for the Wausau massacre on Malignatius. That ended with him entering a monastery on Artemis for the rest of his life.

Despite her best efforts, however, the horrors continued. At the end of the Emperor Wars she landed on Byzantium Secundus, just in time for one of the greatest massacres of all — the destruction of the base at Jericho. The Church stifled her demands for an investigation, going so far as to threaten sending her to Pyre for the rest of her life should she continue to complain.

Embittered, Angeline returned to the stars, but with the taste of ashes in her mouth. She has reached the conclusion that the Inquisition is a farce, designed more to give the appearance of action than to solve any of humanity's problems. Her own faith has been shaken by the plight of the Pancreator's most fervent followers, the serfs of the Known Worlds, and the sanction given those who seem the least faithful — the nobles.

Her growing disillusionment has caused her to throw herself into the battle with greater and greater fervor, seeking out any who would deny the Pancreator. Instead of seeking those who cause the most damage, she has begun preparing cases against anyone she can successfully prosecute, and those priests who have worked with her fear what she is turning into.

Quote: "Why do you hesitate? Does your faith waver? Is your conscience in question? Does doubt tear at your soul?"

Appearance: A middle-aged woman of African descent, her regular exertions have kept her 5-foot-four-inch frame compact and muscular. She cuts her hair close to her scalp and has done nothing to cover up an old burn injury she suffered on one of her first assignments.

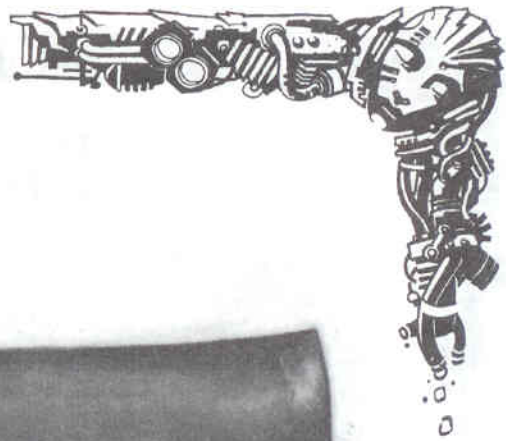
Entourage: The Church sometimes assigns her young inquisitors who need training, but she usually works alone or with people of her own choosing. She used to try to gather followers who felt as she did, but her growing disillusionment has ended such efforts.

Roleplaying Notes: As her faith wavers, her intensity increases. She sees her own faltering belief reflected in the world around her, and now seeks to burn it out. She still has the flame of idealism burning within her breast, but it has been overwhelmed by the crimes she has seen and the Church's own lack of interest in those crimes.

Equipment: Flame Retardant Studded Leather Armor, Flamegun

Benefices and Afflictions: Ordained: Canon (5), Inquisitor (2), Secret: Deacon's drugs (1), Equipment (8)





Sister Angelina Fuego Gender: Female Age: Mid 30s		Race: Human Alliance: Inquisition Rank: Canon		LEARNED SKILLS LVL Academia 1 Bureaucracy 1 Drive (Beastcraft) 1 Empathy 3 Inquiry 3 Remedy 2 Ride 2 Search 4 Social (Oratory) 4 Speak Urthish 4 Torture 3 2	
CHARACTERISTICS BODY Strength (3) 5 Dexterity (3) 7 Endurance (3) 5 Extrovert (3) 5 / 2 Passion (3) 3 / 1 Faith (3) 4 / 2 Human (3) 4 / 0		NATURAL SKILLS Charm (3) 4 Dodge (3) 5 Fight (3) 5 Impress (3) 6 Melee (3) 5 Observe (3) 6 Shoot (3) 8 Sneak (3) 4 Vigor (3) 6		LEARNED SKILLS LVL Academia 1 Bureaucracy 1 Drive (Beastcraft) 1 Empathy 3 Inquiry 3 Remedy 2 Ride 2 Search 4 Social (Oratory) 4 Speak Urthish 4 Torture 3 2	
COMMON ACTIONS Action Sense uncertainty Goal 10		BLESSINGS/CURSES +/- Trait Situation +2 Passion Righting a wrong +2 Wits Shrewd vs. fast talk -2 Passion Dealing w/ responsibilities +2 Impress Scary: Scar and duties		ARMOR Studded Leather Flame Retardant (+3d vs. fire) (2 + 3d) Hits:	
OCCULT Psi / Theurgy / Powers/Rites		COMBAT Action Urge Fist Hubris Kick Goal Grapple Charge Flamegun		SHOTS FIRED Flamegun: 10 Successes Pts 1-2 0 3-5 +1 6-8 +2 9-11 +3 12-14 +4 15-17 +5 18 +6 Critical success = x2	
VITALITY ●●●●●●●●●● Wound penalties: -10 -8 -6 -4 -2		STR bonus: Init Goal DMG RNG 5 12 2d 4 12 3 3 12 2 2 12 3 10 15 5/3 10/20		VICTORY CHART Successes Pts 1-2 0 3-5 +1 6-8 +2 9-11 +3 12-14 +4 15-17 +5 18 +6 Critical success = x2	
WYRD ●●●●●●●●●●		●●●●●●●●●●		●●●●●●●●●●	

Brother Nassau Seneca

Brother Nassau Seneca (and generations of his family before him) was born and grew up on Criticorum. Members of his family had alternated between being leading serfs and low-level freemen. Those who showed promise managed to escape the dull tedium of a serfs life for the not-quite-so-dull life of a poor freeman. Nassau, like his uncle before him, showed enough promise to join the priesthood, and took over his village's congregation when his uncle died.

He filled his village's spiritual needs as best he could. He and his neighbors lacked the wealth of much of Criticorum, living as they did in one of the few remaining rural regions of the planet. This also meant that they thought they could avoid the violence of the Emperor Wars, but it was not to be.

All forces fought over the crossroads of Criticorum at one point or another. While al-Malik control of the planet was never really threatened, it did suffer setbacks. Hazat, Decados and Li Halan raiders sought to hinder the great al-Malik war industry centered here, and their troops attacked most of the planet's industrial centers. Hawkwood and al-Malik soldiers sought out traitors all over the planet, killing anyone who might be a danger.

Nassau never has found out who targeted his village or why they sought its destruction. It could be they were sending the al-Malik a warning. They might have missed their real target. Perhaps they were trying to cut off Criticorum's food supply. Maybe they had been misinformed about a military unit's location. Or maybe they dropped that plague bomb just to kill peasants.

The first Nassau knew about the attack was when his friends and family began suffering from bloody coughs, giant pustules and intense waves of nausea. The disease spread through the village like wildfire, striking down even the strongest in horrid agony. At first Nassau saw it as a sign of the Pancreator's unhappiness with him and his friends, but

as the deaths spread, sparing no one, not even innocent children, he began to change.

The friendly, cocksure village priest disappeared under a tidal wave of blood, pain and death. By the time al-Malik and Sanctuary Aeon medical crews reached the village, there was nothing they could do. Only Nassau remained, his own scarred body and tattered faith a chilling reminder of the plague that destroyed everything he loved.

Since that time Nassau has roamed the stars, seeking a purpose for the deaths of his friends — and for his own continued life. Usually he seeks out evil, hoping to stop evil doers either by persuasion or force. Other times he quests after a higher purpose. Most of the time, however, he seeks to provide whatever comfort he can to those people who need it most.

Quote: "How can you sleep with the screams of your victims tearing through your dreams?"

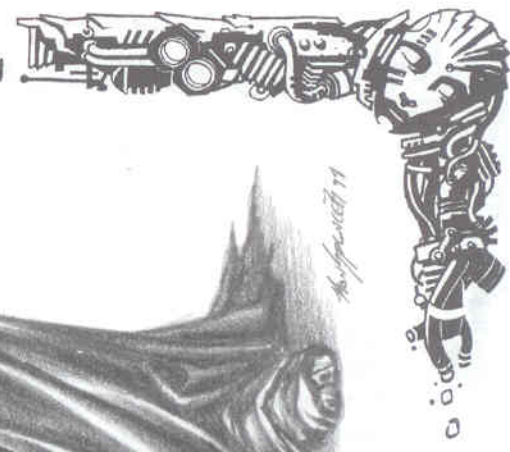
Appearance: The plague bomb which destroyed his congregation also left him scarred for life. He tries to hide his grotesque oozing sores from the world behind his robes, but his shame is clear for all to see.

Entourage: Nassau travels with anyone who cares to be with him. This has included nobles and beggars, priests and criminals. Few who have met him are unchanged by the experience, for he is a walking testament to the horrors humans perpetrate on one another.

Roleplaying Notes: Nassau's mood is part vengeance and part guilt. He has no idea why the plague spared him while striking down all his neighbors. He feels that this is something that he must make amends for, and someday he shall succeed.

Equipment: Expedition Med Pack, Old Robes

Benefices and Afflictions: Ordained: Deacon (7), Passage Contract: Orthodox (2), Expedition Med Pack (2)



Brother Nassua Seneca Race: Human Alliance: Orthodox Rank: Deacon		LEARNED SKILLS LVL Beast Lore 2 Empathy 6 Focus 3 Inquiry 4 Lore (Human Cruelty) 3 Physick 3 Read Latin 2 Read Urthish 1 Remedy 3 Ride 2 Social (Oratory) 6 Social (Leadership) 5 Speak Urthish 3 Stoic Body 2 Stoic Mind 2 Streetwise 2 Survival 2	
CHARACTERISTICS BODY MIND Strength (3) 3 Wits (3) 6 Dexterity (3) 6 Perception (3) 6 Endurance (3) 6 Tech (3) 3 SPIRIT Extrovert (3) 8 / 1 (1) Introvert Passion (3) 6 / 1 (1) Calm Faith (3) 5 / 1 (1) Ego Human (3) 3 / 0 (0) Alien		NATURAL SKILLS Charm (3) 5 Dodge (3) 6 Fight (3) 4 Impress (3) 8 Melee (3) 3 Observe (3) 6 Shoot (3) 3 Sneak (3) 5 Vigor (3) 6	
COMMON ACTIONS Action Goal Appeal to conscience 14		BLESSINGS/CURSES +/- Trait Situation -3 Charm Monstrous: Scars +2 Passion Helping others	
OCCULT Psi / Urge Theurgy / Hubris Powers/Rites Goal		COMBAT Action STR bonus: Fist Init Goal DMG RNG Kick 4 10 2d Grapple 3 10 3 Charge 2 10 2 1 10 3	
VITALITY ●●●●●●●●●● Wound penalties: -10 -8 -6 -4 -2		ARMOR (/) Hits:	
WYRD ●●●●●●●●●●		SHOTS FIRED VICTORY CHART Successes Pts 1-2 0 3-5 +1 6-8 +2 9-11 +3 12-14 +4 15-17 +5 18 +6 Critical success = x2	

Mother Rebca

While the Church and its tenets play a central role in the lives of almost everyone in the Known Worlds, Rebca's family made it THE central part. Though not priests, her parents and her eight siblings accepted the word of the Pancreator with fanatical devotion. They woke for morning prayer before the sun rose, stopped for prayer innumerable times during the day, went to church for every service and made silent prayers for almost every action they took.

Rebca was five when she first told her family about the visions. The Prophet manifested himself to her in a valley of flowers, calling for her to come to him. Her family was ecstatic over her vision, considering it an extremely blessed moment. The attention it showered upon her overwhelmed her, and she began to fear she would lose her family's adoration if she did not have more.

Thankfully the visions continued, and the family's home on Leminkainen began attracting attention. An Eskatonic priest, Father Ocella, became very taken with the young girl. He convinced her family to let him take her to Pentateuch where others could learn from her gifts.

She spent almost a decade on that world, studying with Father Ocella and other holy men and women. Her visions came less frequently, but they still came, offering her peace and guidance. The visions proved especially helpful in the study of theurgy, and her teachers found her uniquely gifted in its arts. When the time came for her to take her vows, however, she did not join the Eskatonic order. Instead she sought out the Amaltheans, and pledged herself to them.

After a year on Artemis she petitioned her superiors to let her return home to Leminkainen, and they granted her request. There she established herself as a healer, seeking to better the lives of all around her. Though the Emperor Wars made little mark on the planet, its people did not go unscathed. Barbarian raiders attacked Hawkwood and Church holdings with alarming regularity, and as usual the peasants suffered the worst of the fighting.

Rebca did what she could for the injured, but her visions

told her that they would only get worse unless someone could bring peace to this troubled planet. Packing up her few possessions, she ventured into the wilds of Leminkainen, seeking those people who swore allegiance to strange gods and barbarian kings. What she found were people remarkably like her family and friends, and a shaman of Gjarti as holy as any priest she had ever known.

Her visions returned to the intensity of her childhood, only this time Gjarti took the place of the Prophet, calling on Rebca to follow her. Rebca stayed with the barbarians for several more years, learning their ways and shielding them from Hawkwood attacks. They in turn showed her the marvels of nature which she had never seen before, and she reveled in the purity of their worship.

Now she feels ready to return to civilization. All humanity must learn of the ties between the Pancreator, the planets and their inhabitants, be they human, alien, animal or plant. There is much to be done if the stars are to be saved, for all living creatures reflect their darkening.

Quote: "The universe needs all of us to revive."

Appearance: This former Sanctuary Aeon priestess has gone completely over to Gjarti, and half-sees herself as an incarnation of the Universal Mother. As a result, she usually goes without clothes, revealing herself as the attractive 28-year-old-woman that she is.

Entourage: She currently travels alone, but is seeking others who share her desire to save the human race.

Roleplaying Notes: Rebca realizes that indiscriminate preaching will only get her killed, no matter the truth of her visions. She still has her ordination and has resumed preaching, only this time she mixes in Gjarti metaphors and symbolism in an attempt to help others see the truth. She still has her visions, and these help her decide on courses of actions, though she trusts her own instincts as much as the visions.

Benefices and Afflictions: Cloistered (1), Refuge: Gjarti Worshippers (4), Ordained: Deacon (7), Visions (3)

Pedron Guff

The Charioteers have been very good to Pedron, taking him in when he was orphaned, assigning him fulfilling work and giving him a place in the universe. He has always appreciated this and honors the guilds' role in the scheme of things. He sees no reason to upset the balance of things, and indeed believes that doing so could cause a great deal of damage.

The Privilege of Martyrs, which the Church created in recognition of the need to have some people handling technology, allows nobles, priests and guild members to use such items in the service of the Pancreator. Guff has seen the effects of unqualified people handling technological items, and they are not pretty. Children mutilated by untrained doctors, homes destroyed by improper use of tools and think machines vandalized by frustrated users are just some of the negative effects.

Guff has done his best to limit the number of such devices which fall into untrained hands. As a pilot, he keeps an eye out for anyone flying between the stars who might be transporting technology to peasants or unlicensed freemen. He enforces guild patents and exclusives with unrelenting ferocity, and has stolen or sabotaged offending shipments.

He has recently become aware of an even greater threat to the Known Worlds, one he never would have expected to reoccur. The sin of republicanism has begun sprouting in the most unlikely places, and those who promote such views also hope to spread technology to the unenlightened. To Guff, this is a severe crime, one which puts the lives of people on all worlds at risk.

Guff knows what kind of impact unrestrained technology had on the Second Republic, and believes only worse could happen in a third one. Those who hope to bring such a state about are the worst of villains, putting their own desire for profit or their misguided idealism ahead of society's good. Guff has begun an active campaign to hunt down such dangerous people and bring them to justice.

He began his mission within the League, believing it to be the main refuge of such rogues. Those people he suspects of supporting such efforts find themselves investigated, their reputations slandered, their personal lives subject to blackmail and their businesses victims of sabotage or massive competition.

Any number of actions might place to somebody under suspicion. For instance, using a major artifact like a blaster or energy shield without the proper authorization (being a noble, priest or at least a chief in the League) could put one at risk. Espousing a desire to teach peasants or dramatically improve their lives could prove someone interfering with the Pancreator's will. Even fraternizing with social inferiors as though they were equals shows democratic tendencies.

His reputation in the League, and especially in the Charioteers, is of a fair businessman and talented pilot who hews close to Church doctrine. That he has been responsible for several Engineers losing their rank and Scravers being arrested is still a secret. These guild members had actively promoted the ideals of a Third Republic, and Guff managed to stop them before they could cause real damage. Now he is on the lookout for more, and has begun watching nobles and priests as well as his brethren in the League.

Quote: "You believe that shit-stained lowlife deserves the same treatment as you or I?"

Appearance: Pedron Guff stands out in any crowd, just like a good Charioteer should. Tattooed and pierced, he revels in the attention his occupation and appearance bring him.

Entourage: Guff works with like-minded League members to keep inappropriate technology from reaching the wrong people. He has helped several guilds maintain their exclusive designs and sales areas, for he knows that unrestricted commerce would only lead to people harming themselves with items they could never hope to use correctly. He also seeks out new people on a regular basis with whom to share his philosophy and enlist in his cause.

Roleplaying Notes: Outgoing and gregarious, Guff greets everyone with a wide smile and friendly conversation. Everyone is a potential customer and possible ally. At the first sign of republicanism, however, his eyes will harden though his smile never leaves his face. He will investigate someone thoroughly before making any accusations, and will only do so if he believes they cannot be convinced to see the light.

Equipment: Standard Shield, Blaster Pistol

Benefices and Afflictions: Commission: Chief (5), Passage Contract: Charioteers (2), Equipment (12)

Janyana Avesa

As a child in the slums of Aragon, Janyana saw only one group worse off than himself — the slaves, serving the rich in the houses or in the fields. He and the other urchins found these unfortunate souls easy prey for whatever violence they cared to dish out. Seeing a slave alone and unprotected, he and his friends would swarm over their victim, beating, kicking, biting, robbing and worse. The slaves could do nothing in response. For a slave to hit a freeman, even in self-defense, could be a capital offense. The feeling of power this gave Janyana as he stood over the bleeding body of a slave, robbed of even her clothes, was the height of what life could provide.

These feelings stayed with him despite the grinding poverty of his own life and the desperate circumstances into which he had been born. By the time Janyana turned 11, he knew that lording it over slaves was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. His first approach to the Muster, however, ended up with him becoming one of those he disdained. He made the mistake of telling the Muster chief that no one knew he had come to ask for a position, and the chief immediately slapped chains on Janyana's wrists.

The trip from Aragon to Cadiz gave Janyana a different view on slavery where, as one of the youngest and most vulnerable slaves, he found himself a target for whatever depravities the other slaves cared to commit. Janyana first reacted violently against this, using what few weapons were at his disposal to fight these humiliations. As the flight continued week after week, Janyana resigned himself to these deprivations. With resignation, however, came feelings of acceptance. Once, while being held down by two captured Kurgans and being abused by third, came feelings of pleasure verging on ecstasy.

By the end of the trip, Janyana had gained allies among the other slaves and no longer had to serve as the others' victim. He found he still enjoyed positions of superiority just as much as those of helplessness. In fact, he found it a disappointment when the ship disgorged him and several other slaves on Cadiz, where they were bought by various nobles, guild members and priests. Janyana and several others found themselves in the possession of a Decados baron who put them to work first in his fields and then in his private chambers.

Perhaps it was the unwilling training Janyana had received on the slave ship that made him so appealing, but he quickly became the baron's favorite. His combination of subservience and strength infatuated the Decados, and by the time Janyana turned 15 he had assumed command of the other slaves and taken a position of honor in the baron's

household — much to the baroness' displeasure.

Slowly the baron took ill, and his sickness developed for more than a year. By the end of that time every day was an agony for the nobleman. Every night became an agony for Janyana, who found himself helpless before the baroness, who delighted in the exquisite tortures she could inflict on this upstart who would attempt to usurp her place in the baron's house. Janyana's body and mind became her playthings, and his agony her amusement.

The night the baron died, Janyana feared the worst. When the door to his filthy cell opened, he cringed back into the shadows. He never expected that the other slaves, those he had ruled over for so long, would work together to help him escape. They gave him stolen equipment and money, and Janyana escaped off planet just as the baroness became aware that he had escaped.

Wiser and more able, Janyana again approached the Muster for membership, this time with slaves in tow. The guild accepted him first as a conditional and then a full member. Since then he has gained a reputation for acquiring the most talented and willing slaves. No other member of the Muster comes close to him in this regard, and Janyana considers it his own background as a slave that enables him to pinpoint the perfect people to target for slaves. He is constantly on the lookout for skilled, willful people (like the characters!) to enslave. While they may not appreciate the loss of freedom, they almost always come to appreciate Janyana's techniques.

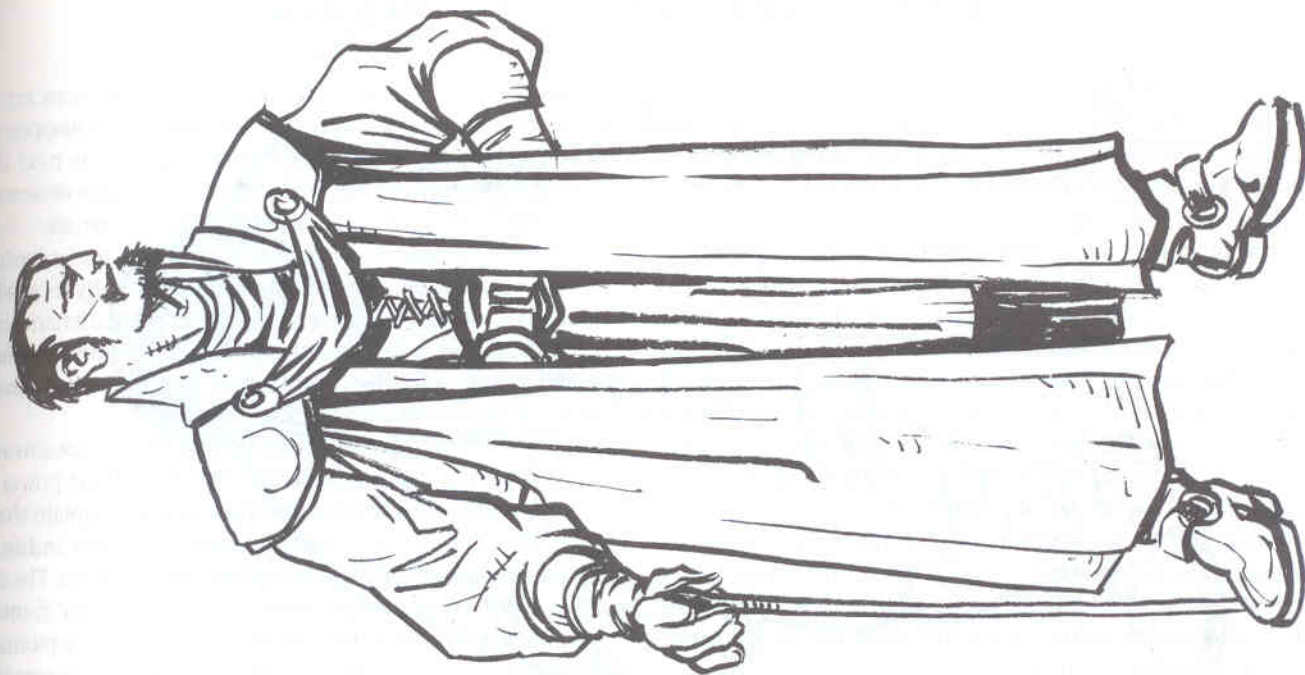
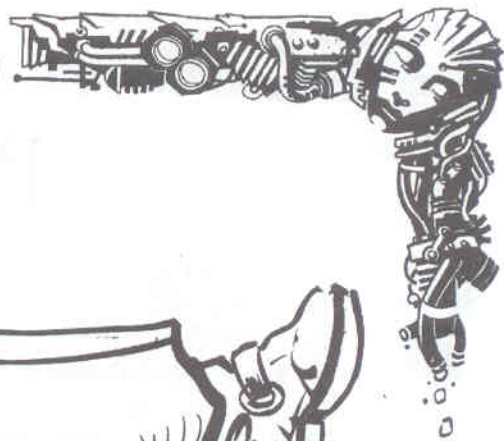
Quote: (Stroking character's cheek) "You'd be sooo much happier if someone else would make these decisions for you."

Appearance: This suave-looking young man seeks out expensive clothes and wears the gaudiest jewelry he can find in hopes of creating a dashing figure. He oils and waxes his trim mustache and goatee.

Entourage: Janyana's entourage varies constantly, as his assistants come and go on missions regularly. More noteworthy are the slaves he surrounds himself with, all of whom are very talented in various areas and would willingly die for their master. Expect these to include beautiful men and women, highly skilled technicians and more than a few deadly gladiators.

Roleplaying Notes: Janyana speaks slowly and seductively, drawing out words and syllables, being very careful in his pronunciations. He spends a great deal of time studying people and is rarely wrong when he comes to a conclusion about them.

Equipment: Stunner, energy shield, muster chains, wide variety of jewelry and flashy clothing



Janyana Avesa Gender: Male Age: Early 20s		Race: Human Alliance: Muster Rank: Manager (-1)		LEARNED SKILLS LVL Bureaucracy 3 Disguise 4 Drive (Aircraft) 1 Drive (Beastcraft) 2 Drive (Landcraft) 2 Empathy 9 Etiquette 5 Inquiry 6 Knavery 3 Lore (Slave owners) 8 Physick 5 Remedy 6 Search 4 Social (Leadership) 6 Speak Scriver Cant 2 Speak/Read Urthfish 2 Stoic Body 2 Stoic Mind 4 Streetwise 7 Survival 2 Torture 9 Xeno-Empathy 7
CHARACTERISTICS BODY Strength (3) 6 Dexterity (3) 8 Endurance (3) 7 MIND Wits (3) 8 Perception (3) 7 Tech (3) 6 SPIRIT Extrovert (3) 6 / 4 Passion (3) 5 / 5 Faith (1) 3 / 7 Human (3) 4 / 4		NATURAL SKILLS Charm (3) 10 Dodge (3) 8 Fight (3) 6 Impress (3) 9 Melee (3) 6 Observe (3) 8 Shoot (3) 7 Sneak (3) 6 Vigor (3) 7		
COMMON ACTIONS Action Goal Fast talk 16 Assess slaves 15		BLESSINGS/COURSES +/- Trait Situation +1 Charm Handsome +2 Extro Gracious: With guests +2 Wits Shrewd vs. Fast-Talk		
OCCULT Psi / Urge Theurgy / Hubris Powers/Rites Goal		COMBAT STR bonus: +1d Action Init Goal DMG RNG Fist 6 14 3d Kick 5 14 4 Grapple 4 14 3 Charge 3 14 4 Stunner 8 16 4(S) 10/20		
VITALITY ●●●●●●●●●● Wound penalties: -10 -8 -6 -4 -2		SHOTS FIRED Stunner: 15		
WYRD ●●●●●●●●●●		ARMOR Standard shield (5 / 10) Hits:		
		VICTORY CHART Successes Pts 1-2 0 3-5 +1 6-8 +2 9-11 +3 12-14 +4 15-17 +5 18 +6 Critical success = x2		

Boss Maury Sumaka

Boss Sumaka grew up knowing all the laws, both the ones made by the nobles of Aylon and those made by his more immediate (and important) overlords, the Scraver bosses of the planet. He saw these laws enforced early, with his uncle being executed by the al-Malik for running a crooked gambling operation (an al-Malik lost more money than he could pay) and his father murdered by Scravers whose territory he had encroached on during Selchakah smuggling. The Sumaka family had long held prominence among the Scravers but had never managed to claim a leadership position, and these deaths made Maury's own chances that much more tenuous.

Still, the deaths he saw caused Sumaka to swear to change his family's fortunes, and he began looking for every opportunity to gain power. He started his career small, running errands, keeping a lookout for al-Malik police, spying on opposing operations and learning how to run the guild's many operations. As time passed, Scraver leaders took note of his dedication and determination and gave him missions of greater and greater importance.

At first his opportunities seemed strong. No Scraver held a position of prominence on Aylon, and all the leaders availed themselves of Sumaka's many services. He quickly learned many of the guild's darkest secrets and rose in rank as he played the leaders against one another. Unfortunately, Sumaka could not maintain this delicate balancing act forever. The old leaders grew more and more impatient with each other, as well as with anyone who would not declare allegiance to themselves. Sumaka's prospects seemed very bright, with the Emperor Wars making goods scarce and the blackmarket rich, but stormclouds were gathering on the horizon.

Other young Scravers found the turmoil as disturbing as he, and Sumaka began forming a coterie of talented and ruthless associates from these unhappy brethren. Members of his own family took a prominent role in this new outfit, though Scravers without family connections also found it a more certain route to the top than the existing leaders' groups. The leaders noted Sumaka's growing gang, as well as his stranglehold on the blackmarket (abetted by an alliance with the Chartash Charioteer Hong), with concern. Sumaka found the leaders constantly applying pressure to pick a side, and he and his men began looking for a way out. Finally the leaders' disputes turned violent (well, more violent than usual), and Sumaka saw his chance.

It took the most delicate of diplomacy and more than a little luck, but eventually all of Aylon's leading Scraver families believed that Sumaka's gang had thrown in with them. He and his men spent hours with the various leaders plotting and scheming the demise of the others. Then, one night before each leader was sure he would finally become the one and only, the assassins struck. Across the planet Scraver lead-

ers died in their beds, victims of knives, guns, poisons, explosions and inexplicable accidents. Others simply disappeared, never to be seen in their territories again. The next day Sumaka's lieutenants entered the most valuable of Scraver operations and declared themselves the new owners.

It took Sumaka a few years to consolidate his leadership, as well as quite a few more murders, but eventually those who opposed his gangs rule grew silent. Sumaka's lieutenants and relatives assumed positions of growing importance, and then Sumaka began hearing rumblings of dissent from an unexpected source — his own family.

The disturbances began small, with various cousins and underlings squabbling over the extent of their power. A daughter who ran a sting of brothels would complain that a cousin's casino workers were intruding on her industry. Smugglers began fighting over prime landing areas. The disputes went from complaints to duels to deadly combat. Sumaka stopped them whenever he could, using diplomacy, bribes, threats and his own violence, but he has only seen this dissent grow.

Now, ten years after his own rise to power, he sees it all crumbling around him. Only his constant attention keeps his family from killing itself off, and even he cannot be everywhere at once. His children await the day he dies so that the war can begin for real, and some of them whisper of hurrying that day along. Sumaka has considered the unthinkable — retirement — but he has worked too long to get where he is now. He might try retiring if he thought he had a suitable replacement, but he believes none of his lieutenants or kin have what it takes to lead Aylon's Scravers.

Quote: "You don't like it? I don't care! There's only one way to do these things, and that's my way."

Appearance: Some of his children have joked that the reason Sumaka is so tied to Aylon is that no spaceship is large enough to take him off planet. He certainly cuts an imposing figure, weighing in at more than 400 pounds and with sunlight gleaming off his shaved head. Most of this is still muscle, and Sumaka can break lesser opponents in two all by himself.

Entourage: Boss Maury Sumaka is an entourage unto himself, but even he cannot be everywhere at once. He has several very talented bodyguards, and is almost always surrounded by family members wanting special favors. His most beloved child, one of the youngest, never comes to see him any more. Crystal Sumaka is training to become a priestess.

Roleplaying Notes: Quiet and slow, he strikes many who first meet him as stupid. This is their misfortune. Sumaka is crafty as a fox and can move as fast as a Voroxian Thracker.

Equipment: Dueling shield, nice suits, palm laser, flesh cavity, internal think machine



Consul Simon Solace

Simon's family has been part of the Muster for centuries. Each generation has built upon the success of the last, slowly developing what can only be considered the greatest slaver empire humanity has ever known. Simon learned the family business as a child, helping pick slaves, round them up and keep them in line. His playmates were the children of other slavers, and he spent much of his time with his cousin, Margaret Solace, now Dean Solace (see **Merchants of the Jumpweb**). Together they learned the family's history, how to deal with slaves, and how to handle the rest of the Muster. They also had their family's rags-to-riches success story drummed into their heads.

Though the family separated the two before they became teenagers, they supported one another during their rapid progression through the guild. Much to Simon's disgust, however, the family seemed to have chosen Margaret as its heir apparent and eventual leader. Having been raised to accumulate as much prestige within the family as possible, Simon found his relegation to second fiddle insufferable. At first he took his frustration out on his slaves, gaining a reputation for exceptional cruelty. Then a chance meeting with a new slave changed his life.

The slave, of no culture Simon's men had previously encountered, spoke a weird dialect of Urthish. While Simon was taking out his anger on her, she offered to reveal to him new jumpgate routes from Grail if he would but stop. She died shortly thereafter, but not before Simon extracted that information from her. He and his personal pilot jury rigged a jump key and flew a small ship through the gate. On the other side they discovered a small solar system with one inhabited planet — a small pastoral farming world. On his next trip Simon brought a larger ship and two dozen very tough slavers. By the end of the visit, Simon and his men had rounded up several hundred new slaves, all sold for a hefty profit back in the Known Worlds.

Each visit to the Lost World, called Swan's Way by its inhabitants and Dead Duck by Simon, has given him a greater appreciation of its people, beauty and potential value. While selling its people to mining operations, plantations and for their body parts makes him money, it is not as much as he could make from ruling the entire world. He has formed alliances with a number of villages, promising not to enslave them all if they bring him a regular supply of captives (and occasional sacrifices from their own populations). Since the world has little in the way of weapons or organized militar-

ies, Simon feels that a small army of Muster mercenaries, with the assistance of press-ganged villagers, could conquer the entire planet.

Simon practically drools with anticipation at his rapidly forming plan. Every generation of Solaces has worked to surpass the accomplishments of the ones that came before, and Simon believes he has found a way to become untoppable. With its own planet and its influence in the League, the family itself would be a match for any guild or noble house. Simon's name would go down in Solace history as the one who made it happen.

One uncertainty does bother Simon, however. He never has determined how the captive who told him about Swan's Way first arrived in the Known Worlds. The lost world has no space capabilities that he has been able to discover, and he has not uncovered any Known Worlds' references to the planet occurring later than the fall of the Second Republic. What his forces on Swan's Way have discovered, however, are ancient legends of other worlds and prophecies of their reuniting when the heavens are at their darkest. Descriptions of two of these worlds seem to bear similarities to Grange (now Pandemonium) and Iver. Simon's spies on these planets have reported rumors of a secret society on these two worlds, one which might have ties to the Imperial Eye. Exactly what its purpose might be, no one seems to know.

Quote: "I don't know how you found out about my plans, but I'm afraid you will never leave Swan's Way."

Appearance: A large, slovenly dressed man who does little to show off his extreme wealth. The only remarkable feature he seems to have is an aura of absolute cruelty.

Entourage: Simon has surrounded himself with the toughest slavers in the Known Worlds, and is beginning to form the core of an army capable of conquering Swan's Way. Do not expect to find his vicious bodyguards more than a yell away. His most trusted aid is his personal pilot, Leonardo Akaisha, a Charioteer of ample skill and no morals.

Roleplaying Notes: Simon is unbelievably wealthy, but he wants more. Every generation of Solaces has tried to top the one before it, and Simon wants to surpass them all. Everyone he meets gets sized up. Either they can help him achieve this goal, become an obstacle to it, or are of no consequence whatsoever. Most people fall into that last category and get ignored or enslaved.

Equipment: Dueling Shield, Suresnake Whip, Various Implements of Torture

Hetairae Pythia

Hetairae's earliest memories of her life on Cadiz are of her grandmother, locked away in a dark room in the family's small home. The old woman screamed constantly, pounded ferociously on the walls, and terrorized the Pythia family with threats and curses. Hetairae hated bringing her dinner, but as the youngest daughter, it often fell on her — literally. She would open the door, slide in the food and hope to be off before her grandmother noticed. All too often the food flew out after her.

By the time her grandmother died, Hetairae had pledged herself to eliminating the illnesses that had plagued the woman as well as other Pythia's through history. She began by joining the Sanctuary Aeon sect, only to find its ways slow and imperfect. A chance encounter with a Decados Oubliette mind-physick (see **Merchants of the Jumpweb**) gave her a new focus for her work, and she joined the guild with the sect's blessings.

For several years she studied the ways of the mind, learning its functions and disfunctions. Her experience with Sanctuary Aeon served her well, and her teachers saw enough promise in her to get her accepted at the Academy Interatta on Leagueheim. Here she had the opportunity to study with the greatest psychiatrists in the Known Worlds, many of whom sought her help in their varied experiments. By the time she graduated, not only had she learned most of what the Known Worlds could teach her about mental illness, but she had advanced the science of psychology as well.

She began her career in League territories, helping Chariteers deal with space psychoses, Muster slavers cope with their guilt, Gourmands handle eating disorders and Engineers learn to live with their cybernetics. By the time she decided to move her practice back to Decados territory, she had gained a reputation as one of the Known Worlds' leading Oubliette mind-physicks.

She established her office on Severus and soon had numerous nobles, priests and merchants as clients. The many chemical factories on the planet also gave her the chance to experiment with radical new treatments, and these are what first attracted Salandra Decados' attention.

Near the end of the Emperor Wars, the duchess heard of Hetaire's success with drug therapies and contacted her for help with recalcitrant prisoners. Since many POWs would have to return to their home worlds soon, Salandra wanted to ensure that they would have only the best memories of their times on Severus — times so good that when Salandra gave them a certain code, they would be willing to do whatever she told them to.

Hetaire objected to this practice so strenuously that Salandra had no choice but to lock her away. "We all knew that her family had a history of insanity," she told Hetaire's concerned clients. She promised to get the best care for the mind-physick, and made her a guest — in the lowest depths

of Salandra's dungeons, isolated from all other people except her captors. Salandra began the process of "healing" Hetaire by turning her over to her most sadistic torturers for work on her body. They in turn turned her over to criminally insane prisoners, deranged aliens and non-sentient beasts. Her days became an unending progression of violent abuse as she was passed from rapists to floggers to gibbering idiots.

Her only respites came during Salandra's visits, which brought with them food, gentle words, soothing caresses and a hefty dose of pheromones. Despite Hetaire's conscious realization of Salandra's plan to make the captor seem the captive's savior, she found her will bending. Her body could do nothing to resist the perpetual torment, and in little more than one year she submitted. Salandra found her crying in her tiny cell, naked except for her own feces, bleeding from claw and bite marks all over her body, and swearing to do anything her mistress requested.

Salandra took Hetaire to her own rooms, bathed the mind-physick herself, dressed her in delicate silks and began the slow process of reshaping her in the image she wanted. Hetaire became an invaluable addition to Salandra's entourage, capable of using logic, soft words and drugs to get whatever effect she wanted from people. Recently Salandra has been assigning her to missions on distant worlds, testing possible allies (and enemies), uncovering new drugs and wreaking havoc on unsuspecting victims.

Quote: "You are obviously troubled. My methods will relieve you of your concerns."

Appearance: Once Hetaire considered her Greek heritage a point of pride, but now it, like everything except Salandra, means nothing to her. She usually appears with her hair in complete disarray and her clothes wrinkled and worn. She cares little for her personal appearance, as attractive as it might be.

Entourage: Hetaire is a loner except when in Salandra's presence. The only other people she associates with are victims, also known as clients.

Roleplaying Notes: Hetaire was once a very talented and concerned psychologist, and that part of her still appears, but now only as a mask. Salandra has ordered Hetaire to test her new drug techniques throughout the Known Worlds, so that is Hetaire's overriding concern. Most of her drugs make their subjects extremely suggestible, and more than a few of her patients have robbed and murdered at her command. Her current fave is Lucre, which causes people's ties to others to suffer (get 3 victory points on an Endurance + Vigor roll or suffer -4 Passion when helping others), mixed with Nixop, which causes paranoia (get 2 victory points on an Endurance + Vigor roll or suffer -4 Calm when dealing with others).

Equipment: Wide variety of medical equipment, wider variety of drugs



Consul Haswan Nara

Haswan Nara knows what happens to common folk lacking in guild protection. Nobles make them serfs, a status little better than slaves. The Church turns them into mindless drones. Other guilds rip them off, put them perpetually in debt or even enslave them. He's seen it happen since he was a child, with able-bodied freemen ripped from their homes by their uncaring betters, and he's determined that it will never happen to him or his family.

At the time of his birth, the Naras were little more than low-level guildsmen, barely recognized as such by the League. Substantially smaller than other people, Haswan should have had even more trouble gaining acceptance, but this was not to be the case. When he was seven his parents apprenticed him to the Purgers, and he quickly proved his worth. His diminutive size enabled him to get into places bigger apprentices could not, and no job was too demeaning for him to handle. He found himself in parts of the sewers not seen by humans since they were built, and willingly scrubbed them spotless.

His eagerness and intelligence attracted support from higher ranking Purgers, and his drive and ambition ensured that he would make the most of this attention. He ended his apprenticeship remarkably early, being made a full member before he became a teenager. By the time he was 15 he had gained exclusive contracts for several major Purger operations, and was well on his way to major success.

This was the point when he first realized the danger freelance operatives posed. One of his biggest contracts was to purge several subterranean systems of various mutated beasts, but as he began his operations, he discovered that outsiders had already moved in to do the job before he could. This team, consisting of freemen, a priest and even a Charioteer, claimed the system had been infested by demons, and that their actions were necessary to cleanse it. The fact that they managed to also find several very valuable relics during their unauthorized purging served to make Haswan even madder. Not only did his patron withdraw the contract since the work had been done for free, but valuable salvage which should have gone to him and his team disappeared off planet in the hands of these independents.

Similar events occurred on other contracts he had, and Haswan grew sick of off-planet independents sweeping in, grabbing the plumb contracts and running off, leaving no money and less opportunity for the hard-working people of

his and the other local guilds. Haswan first took action against this trend when he was 19. A noble brought in an off-planet team of diplomats, made up of priests, nobles and Ur-Obun, to facilitate his dealings with several local tribes. Upset that the local Reeves and Promoters had been left out, Haswan snuck into the diplomats' supplies and spiked their water with various hard-to-detect depressants. The diplomatic mission broke down with the team sent away in disgrace, and only the rapid intervention of several of Haswan's League friends managed to keep the tribes from attacking the noble's fiefs.

Since that success, Haswan has become more and more aggressive in ensuring that guild work is carried out by guild members. This has also helped his own rise within the Purgers, since he has little trouble getting support from the other guilds whenever he needs it. In fact, other guild leaders on the planet have gotten used to going to Haswan whenever they have trouble with people intruding on their turf. His success has allowed his guild to raise its prices and give its followers a better livelihood, and Haswan has as much support among the League's rank and file as he does with its leaders.

Quote: "Okay, let's see your permit to kill vicious predatory beasts."

Appearance: This tough-looking dwarf of Korean descent prefers unassuming work clothes which distract people from his rank. This way he can browbeat them when they do not treat him with appropriate respect. He has the Purger's symbol proudly tattooed on his face.

Entourage: Haswan generally travels with other Purgers, and he has made it a habit to surround himself with some of the guild's biggest and toughest. Should he have to involve himself in a more diplomatic matter, however, he will bring help from the Reeves, the Promoters, the Wordwrights, the Stewards or even the Courtesans.

Roleplaying Notes: The guild has been good to Haswan, and he has been good to it in turn. He will do anything to see that his guild brothers do well, and he can count on their support. Almost everyone in his guild knows and supports him, and he does the same for them. Anyone who would intrude on them, however, had best watch out. Haswan will stop at nothing to keep them from taking money away from his people.

Equipment: Strengthened Overalls, Weighted Gloves (+1 fist damage)

Gwendolyn Trajos

Gwendolyn began life in secret vats in the darkest recesses of Criticorum, the clone of a fabled al-Malik officer. This officer's success in battle was not the only reason the house saved her genes for future use. The more important (and far less known) reason was that her ancestor was one of those much despised people known as the Changed. Of course, the al-Malik saw no reason to limit Gwendolyn's physical advantages to those possessed by her ancestor. As soon as she was born, her makers began a regimen of chemicals and drugs guaranteed to make her an even better soldier.

They mucked with her muscles, fiddled with her feet, dabbled with her dermal layers and reworked her reflexes. Even before puberty she was stronger, faster and more talented than most adults. By the time she turned 16 she was ready to become the Emperor Wars' super soldier — just in time for the wars to end. For someone born and bred purely for these wars, peace was a problem.

An additional problem manifested when the Inquisition learned about the Criticorum science center. Avestites hunted it down and blocked entrance to the facilities, demanding that the al-Malik close it and burn everyone inside. Tense negotiations between the Church and the duke who owned it led to a solution — the center would close, its scientists given light penance and its creations turned over to Brother Battle. Gwendolyn had no intention of going into exile on De Molay. With the aid of a friendly scientist, she destroyed all records of her creation and made her escape, first to Byzantium Secundus and then to Madoc. Here she sought out Manager Gillard Holmes, recommended to her by one of her instructors.

She watched his house for several days before chancing a meeting. She carefully slipped by the surprisingly elaborate defenses and made her way to his bedroom. Despite her best efforts, Holmes woke as she entered the room, a slug gun springing into his hand. She kicked it away before he could use it and had her knife at his throat before he could call for help. Then she kneeled down on the floor and begged him to sponsor her into the Slayers Guild.

The guild has been Gwendolyn's home ever since, and it is one with which she is quite happy. Not only does it keep her fed and clothed wonderfully well, but it allows her to fulfill the purpose for which she was created. She takes special delight in hunting down nobles and merchants she has been contracted to kill.

Most of her contracts come through Holmes, a retired assassin who now spends much of his time arranging hits. Holmes also took responsibility for finding her a place to live where she could be far away from prying eyes. Gwendolyn,

while still essentially human, appears extremely deformed. Her skin is tough and leathery, and penetrating it is difficult. Her feet are padded and her fingers are obscenely long. Her muscles underline her skin like thick copper wire running under a translucent rug.

Despite the fact that Holmes has always preferred Slayers who could pass unnoticed in regular society, Gwendolyn has her uses. Trained in weapons and unarmed combat, she can kill a target faster than anyone else Holmes knows. She was disarming complex security systems as a child, and there are few which give her any trouble any more. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, she is willing to do anything to kill her targets, an obsession left over from her al-Malik indoctrination.

Recently, however, she has begun to notice something missing from her life. She grew up surrounded by scientists who cared about her and other Changed like herself in a community where her type was the norm, not the exception. Since then she has been alone, with no one to understand her situation. At one point she developed an intense attraction to Holmes, but he made it clear that he had no intention of becoming involved with one of his employees. He never told her that her appearance was the main thing that upset him. Thus, despite the satisfaction she derives from her work, she is beginning to feel emptier and emptier.

Quote: "You're in the way."

Appearance: This genetic marvel still carries the marks of her former life. Her muscles are exceptionally dense, making the veins of her entire body appear as though they were tiny wires run underneath her skin. She also has extremely long fingers and padded feet.

Entourage: Gwendolyn almost always travels and works alone. Holmes is her main contact with the Slayers, and while she has met other guild assassins, for some reason they don't like associating with her once a job is done.

Roleplaying Notes: If characters meet Gwendolyn because they are her target, they can expect her to be an implacable foe, willing to do anything to kill them. While she does not want to die, she will sacrifice her life to ensure a victim's demise, but only as a last resort. Otherwise she believes in running away to fight another day. If characters meet her any other way, she will be mysterious and standoffish, unwilling to be drawn into their personal affairs. If they are also of the Changed or some way outcasts from society, however, she may well develop a strong empathy for them.

Equipment: Has access to many weapons, but prefers a sniper rifle, vibrating dagger, dueling shield, thieves keys, scrambler pad

Manager Natalie Snave

The Reeves instill a strong love for order and stability in many of their young charges, and Natalie Snave got an extra heavy dose of this conditioning. Her parents fervently believed in the need for constancy, having seen the ruin brought upon communities by nobles acting outside of such constraints. Natalie's parents served as damage evaluators, traveling the Known Worlds to determine the wealth of those who sought loans and those rarer individuals who had ensured property with the League and then claimed damages.

The Emperor Wars expanded the grief and suffering, and Natalie got to see the worst of it. From the bombed-out cities of Malignatius to the pillaged streets of Byzantium Secundus to the plague-infested homes of Yintrai on Criticorum, Natalie surveyed the damage wrought by a society out of control. The damage, however, was not the only crime. What wrenched at Natalie's heart more than the deformed survivors and mutilated dead was her own inability to prevent any of it. Her rank in the Reeves meant nothing. All the money at her control could do no good. Her only hope was to go from one crisis to another, curing what pain she could and preventing whatever depravities it was within her ability to prevent.

The end of the Emperor Wars brought with it a great relief. Surely people could not cause the sort of havoc in peacetime that they could in war. Then she saw the hordes of freshly decommissioned troops flooding back from the battlefields. Most went back to the lives they had lived before, working farms, digging in the mines or working in small shops. Others had no such intentions.

Natalie saw banditry begin on never-before-seen scales. Villages which the wars had never touched fell before the onslaught of peace, as soldiers who had never known anything but war sought whatever goods they could in the ruins. Finally Natalie found the frustration beyond bearing. She gathered those Reeves who felt as she did and swore to put a stop to this continuing chaos, using whatever weapons they had at their disposal.

The first weapon, and the one Natalie still prefers, is the Known Worlds legal system. An accomplished advocate, she began seeking out those who used their talents or positions to spread uncertainty and disorder, and attacked them in the courts. She used whichever courts she could, prosecuting mercenaries in magistrate courts and before nobles, suing corrupt police in city courts, and accusing nobles before ecclesiastical courts.

Natalie did not stop with the courts. She used her influence within the guilds to stop loans to those who would use the money to create instability. She sponsored town criers who would call attention to abusers she could not bring to court.

She produced magic lantern shows about others. In rare instances, she used her own money to hire Slayers like Gwendolyn Trajos to put an end to those she deemed the worst.

Natalie has had a number of successes in these efforts, most notably getting a number of bandits hung and rogue nobles thrown to the Inquisition. She knows that she will never stop all the wrongs being committed, so she looks for those she feels certain of being able to handle. Groups or individuals who start throwing their weight around, acting outside of the law or otherwise shaking the pillars of society quickly come to her attention.

In fact, despite her good intentions, Natalie is a likely opponent for the characters. Their actions often take them outside the law, and their opponents are often those who, despite their crimes, are responsible for keeping chaos at bay. Should a slaver lose an entire cargo to them, he may well approach Natalie with a tale of hijackers, using her to get his revenge. If the characters rough up some tavern owners while trying to get information, word will get back to her. If they start nosing around ruins without the appropriate Scraver permits she might haul their sorry butts before the local magistrate.

Once she gets on the characters' trail, she is an implacable foe. She will use every means at her disposal to stop them, taking them to court, plastering their faces all over town, bad mouthing them to every guild member and blackmailing them if she can get useful information. On the other hand, if the characters can make her into a friend (an unlikely result, considering most characters' propensity for mayhem), she can prove invaluable with money, information and influence.

Quote: "Let me get this straight. In order to stop a Symbiot threat, of which you had no proof, you burned 20 acres of land and killed three people. Guards!"

Appearance: This tall, skinny black woman wears old-style bifocals, the most conservative suits and a permanent sneer.

Entourage: Natalie has a number of apprentices and chiefs under her command, and a few of these have combat experience from the Reeve debt collectors division. She can hire anyone she feels she needs.

Roleplaying Notes: Staid and conservative, Natalie is the epitome of how some people view the Reeves. She speaks with authority and confidence, usually playing the role of an advisor unless she feels that someone is creating chaos. Against these people she can be a towering embodiment of order.

Benefices and Afflictions: Well-Traveled, Obligation: Keep Order (+3), Protection: League (3), Wealthy Riches (7), Commission: Manager (7), Retinue (5)

The Deadly Alessandro Twins

No matter how big an industry becomes, it seems as though everyone knows what everyone else is up to. In the murky world of bounty hunting, everyone keeps track of the deadly Alessandro Twins. They are perhaps the best Ashtati the Muster have.

They are the epitome of Muster conduct: professional, loyal to their employers and faithful to their contracts. While the Muster occasionally uses strong-arm tactics on its own members (such as a well-timed accident), the Alessandro Twins are treated with care. When their contract came up for renewal, for example, a guild director vaguely threatened the twins with an "accident" should they fail to renew. He befell an accident of his own, according to the official Muster report. "Sudden fatal lead poisoning" was the joke making the rounds. The twins renewed and the internal investigation was dropped.

For many years, they lived in obscurity, doing odd jobs. People remember seeing Nikki working alone for a few years, going nowhere fast. But when her sister Thala joined things started picking up. First it was a job bringing in Jelaludin al-Malik after he escaped from House Keddah. Then they took care of Barak Wick, a pirate wanted for murder. Collecting the bounty for the Kurgan warlord Hassan the Red wanted (dead) by the Hazat, got them noticed in wealthy circles. Since then, they've been working for the likes of Prince Hiram Decados and Archbishop Sigmund Druul.

It hasn't been all fun and games for the twins, however; they've managed to anger influential people among the ruling classes. Arresting Sir Utmor Hawkwood (wanted for fraud) and killing Mizuko Li Halan (wanted for heresy) are perhaps the best examples. Add to that the various cut-throats and gunslingers who want to be the ones to take down the Alessandros and you begin to understand why they live in hiding and sleep with their guns.

The business of bounty hunting can be problematic, particularly at their level. Because of their reputation and skill, the Muster charges an exorbitant fee for their services, which tends to keep the twins under-employed; there are few bounties that warrant their kind of expertise. They're bored. Nikki has been thinking about branching out into other areas, like military advisor. Thala has been looking for 'the big score' — someone cunning and deadly enough to make it a challenge. Recently, reports have placed the two on Bannockburn, meeting with Adept Faulkner of the Brother Battle garrison on Stigmata, leading some to speculate they've found prey up to their skills.

Nikki: She's adorable and thoughtful. Generally, Nikki handles the contracts and money. She's pensive, weighing the options and considering the variables. She keeps track of news and gossip (like who's doing what to whom). She believes she and her sister Thala serve an important function in the Known Worlds. If they didn't mete out justice, the Known Worlds would descend into chaos. While other bounty hunters are in it because of their borderline personalities, Nikki can't see herself doing anything else.

Thala: She's adorable and menacing (not that Nikki isn't deadly in her own right, but Thala is a bit unstable). She doesn't talk much, and when she does, it's short and to the point. Foolhardy, she's likely to charge in with both guns blazing. She doesn't justify her job the way Nikki does, and really doesn't give it much thought. Thala is an adrenaline junkie; she craves action, though not cheap thrills. While other bounty hunters are in it for the money, Thala genuinely likes her job. She's good at killing folks.

Nikki Alessandro

Quote: "I've heard that one before and I'm not impressed. Now take your hand off my knee."

Description: Tall, blonde and athletically built. She prefers to tie her hair behind her into a pony tail on top of her head. Although Nikki and Thala are twins, those who know them well claim they can tell the two apart. Nikki's figure is more curvaceous, she's a bit taller, and her face is slightly more round. She also has mole above her upper lip.

Roleplaying: She's got style. She doesn't walk into a room, she glides. When she turns on the charm, it can be deadly. Nikki uses her head, adding pieces of the puzzle together and devising strategy. She tends to be tight-lipped, rather than aloof. Play her cunning, coming up with all sorts of ingenious ways to get the drop on her targets.

Entourage: Her sister, Thala, is her only companion. When they travel, it's with their own ship, *The Toledo Blade*, piloted by Melchizidek Lau, a dishonored Charioteer pilot who has thrown his lot in with the deadly Alessandro Twins; in return for his services, he receives protection from his former Charioteer employers.

Equipment: Expedition MedPac, Muster Voice Box, Fusion Torch, Mech Tools, Muster Chains, Med Autofeed (x2), Vorox Claws ammo

Thala Alessandro

Quote: "Take your hand off my knee before I break it off and beat you with it."

Description: Tall, blonde and athletically built. She prefers her hair free, and cropped short. Although Nikki and Thala are twins, those who know them well claim they can tell the two apart. Thala is a bit more slender and an inch or two shorter, and her face is more oval. Some say there is a slight difference around the eyes.

Roleplaying: She's got attitude. It's almost impossible to distract Thala, as though she had supernatural ability to focus. She's more willing to speak her mind, rather than be the life of the party. Thala relies on her instinct and her honed senses (Perception). Play her lethal, shooting first and asking questions later.

Entourage: No one besides her sister and Melchizidek Lau.
Equipment: Demolition Rig, Muster Voice Box, Fusion Torch, Mech Tools, Muster Chains, Knife (Shocker), Blaster Shotgun, Lt Autofeed, Shock Grenade



The Toledo Blade

Class: Explorer
 Grade: Lander
 Builder: Van Goss Builders at Leagueheim
 Tech Level: 6
 Length: 30 meters
 Width: 10 meters
 Crew: 2 (pilot and engineer)
 Passengers: 6
 Cargo (Internal): 15 metric tons
 Cargo (External): None
 Speed: 20% lightspeed (5 days to jumpgate)
 Jumps: 3
 Supplies: 2 months worth for the crew and a full passenger load
 Sensors: Neutrinos 7
 Weaponry: Lt Blaster turret, Grapple Gun
 Cost: 80 Benefice/ 150,000 firebirds

Description: *The Toledo Blade* is a customized version of the explorer-class vessels used by the Muster, called Outriders. Smaller than a Lekaf, they are not meant for long-range missions but for reconnaissance. The Deadly Alessandro Twins have converted theirs into a bounty hunting vessel; one of the tight cabins serves as a prison for whomever they are transporting at the time.

History: When Nikki and Thala began talking about getting out of the business to pursue some other line of work, their worried Muster bosses promised to do whatever was necessary to keep them in the fold. Complaining about the hardships involved with shipping their bounties on non-private passage contracts, they demanded their own ship. Their bosses grumbled and hedged for a while, but it soon became clear that the only way they could keep their lucrative cut of the Twins' bounty pay was to loan them a ship. Choosing an injured scout from the Stigmata Front, they polished it up and handed it over to the Twins, allowing them to work their way into full ownership of the small vessel.

Nikki and Thala immediately contacted Melchizidek Lau, a former bounty of theirs who was on the outs with his guild, the Charioteers. What little grudge he nursed against the bounty hunters dissolved at the chance to pilot a starship again. That Nikki and Thala provided the perfect protection against any Killroy bully-boys who sought him was an extra incentive. Soon, the Deadly Alessandro Twins became even more deadly, able to pursue their prey with complete freedom.

Common Modifications: The Twins have already upgraded the sensors and weaponry; the hull will not allow many more modifications.

Noble Armada Traits

Noble Armada is Holistic Design's game of starship miniature combat in the *Fading Suns* universe. While it is compatible with *Fading Suns* (it can be used to resolve player character's own starship combats), many of the ship traits are different from those given in *Forbidden Lore: Technology*. For instance, armor is no longer a consideration (except for certain heavily-armored barbarian ships); instead, shields are more important. Few modifications to the existing rules are necessary; the **Noble Armada** rules will include details on these conversions.

Maximum Speed	16
Starting Thrust	14
Rotation Speed	6
Battle Shields	1

Armament:

1 Grapple Gun (2:*)	
Barracks — 60' forward	
1 Light Blaster (24:2)	
Turret — 360'	

Crew	2
Marines	0
Min Bridge	1
Boarding Capacities:	
Jets	2
Engine Room	4
Bridge	4
Turret	2

Damage Table

<i>Front</i>	
1-6	Bridge
7-12	Turret A
12-20	Maneuver
<i>Side</i>	
1-3	Bridge
4-8	Maneuver
9-11	Turret A
12-20	Engine Room
<i>Rear</i>	
1-4	Maneuver
5-7	Turret A
8-20	Engine Room

Note: The ship map is the same as the Hawkwood explorer included in the **Noble Armada** rules; just mark off one engine column.

Lieutenant Colonel Relov West

On the surface, the story of Lieutenant Colonel Relov West appears to be one of those self-made man stories which so encourage serfs that one day their life might be better. From such rough beginnings he has risen to command a successful band of mercenaries sometimes numbering as many as several hundred. His rise to power, however, has not been as storybook as it appears.

Born a serf on Icon, he left the planet with thousands of other peasant levies to support Flavius Li Halan's bid for power. Given a uniform and a spear, he was sent to Malignatius to help hold the planet against the encroaching Decados. Ordered to stand firm against a charge by Decados Grimsons, West threw down his spear and fled into the nearby woods as the Grimsons slaughtered his friends and neighbors.

In the woods he came upon other deserters, both Decados and Li Halan. Initially they survived on the outskirts of battles, plundering the dead in its aftermath, living on what little food or supplies they could find. Over the course of several months, he and his cohorts managed to acquire some decent equipment, including rifles, armor and even some damaged vehicles. Determined to find something better to live on than old army food, they took to raiding what few farms the war had left untouched, leaving their inhabitants dead and the buildings torched.

When it became clear that the Decados had seized control of the planet, West and his bandit friends grew concerned. Their crimes on Malignatius meant that they deserved the death sentence, and they had no way off planet. It was at this moment that West had the burst of inspiration that forever changed his fortunes. He sought out the Decados military commanders in the bars around the planet's spaceport until he found one well into his cups. West noted that while combat on the planet might not offer much more chance of advancement, capturing deserters could. He offered to turn over his comrades who had deserted from the Decados if the commander would hire him and the rest of his band to help police the area. The commander agreed and West began his career as a mercenary.

He started with suppressing revolts by the many Li Halan loyalists living on the planet. He used his knowledge of the Li Halan to seek out village leaders who, while not dangerous in themselves, might provide succor to the rebels. These leaders were either killed or forced to turn over anyone they might suspect of being rebels. West did an admirable job pacifying his area, and soon found himself given positions of greater and greater responsibility. He took over such jobs as tax and tithing collections, customs checks and a host of other opportunities for skimming money. By the time his greed attracted the attention of Decados investigators, he had made

enough money to ship himself and his loyalist mercenaries off planet, leaving his less loyal followers behind to take the blame.

He then styled himself an expert on suppressing rebels and terrorists and began seeking work with the other noble houses. The al-Malik hired him to help the Allied Clans on Kordeth (Ukar), and he found killing aliens to be just as satisfying as killing humans. When that contract ended, others opened up to fight heretics, Vuldrok sympathizers and the like. He often takes high-paying bounty hunter assignments.

Quote: "Guess we'll just have to shoot you. 'Less you can afford for me not to."

Appearance: Heavily tattooed and pierced, Lt. Col. West is in good shape, but strikes more than a few as a fop. His boyish looks detract from the fierce demeanor he tries to project.

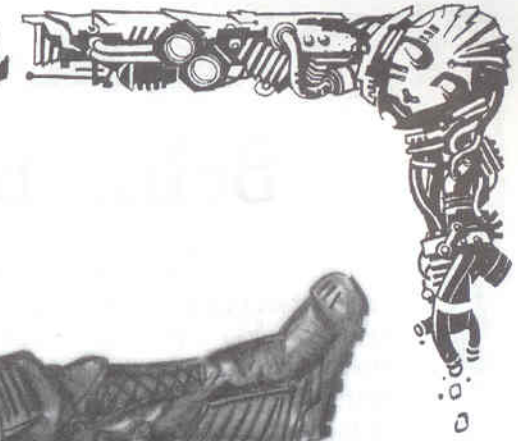
Entourage: West's inner circle of mercenaries is an unusually cruel and vicious lot. While they all have combat experience, they prefer to fight against unarmed and, preferably, bound foes. They seem to have a knack for ingratiating themselves with their superiors, and none of them would think of going against West — unless they were paid to. West knows better than to give them his full trust, and keeps an extra close eye on those he has taken as lovers.

Roleplaying Notes: West despised being a serf and took every opportunity to shirk his farm work. At first the militia looked like it would provide an easy way to do this, up until the moment he actually had to fight. He still prefers not to dirty his hands and has gone to great lengths to remove anything that would remind him of his less-than-illustrious past. He began fashioning himself after the Decados nobles he met on Malignatius, investing in elaborate tattoos and gaudy jewelry.

West can come into contact with the characters in a variety of ways. If they are rich, he might seek work from them, perhaps manufacturing incidents in their fiefs which would require his "special skills." He might be set loose against them, especially if they have committed sins of republicanism. If he takes a dislike to them for whatever reason, he is likely to send mercenary after mercenary against them. After all, he is a lieutenant colonel (even if the position is self-assigned).

Characters might also be approached by the multitudes of people who West has grievously wronged. Innocent serfs whose villages he razed, Ur-Ukar tortured for pleasure and others might hire them to enact their revenge.

Equipment: Laser pistol, standard energy shield, squawker, hidden knife with poison release, medpac. He rarely takes the field any more, but if he did so it would probably be from inside an armored command vehicle.



Lt. Col. Relov West Race: Human Alliance: Freelancer Rank:		LEARNED SKILLS LVL Bureaucracy 5 Drive Landcraft 3 Etiquette 1 Gambling 4 Inquiry 3 Knavery 9 Ride 3 Search 8 Social (Leadership) 3 Speak Icon Dialect 4 Speak Urthish 3 Streetwise 4 Survival 3 Torture 7 Warfare (Artillery) 3 Warfare (Military Tactics) 2	
CHARACTERISTICS BODY Strength (3) 7 Dexterity (3) 6 Endurance (3) 6 MIND Wits (3) 6 Perception (3) 7 Tech (3) 6 SPIRIT Extrovert (3) 5 / 1 (1) Introvert Passion (3) 3 / 2 (1) Calm Faith (1) 2 / 4 (3) Ego Human (3) 2 / 2 (0) Alien		NATURAL SKILLS Charm (3) 7 Dodge (3) 9 Fight (3) 6 Impress (3) 7 Melee (3) 6 Observe (3) 7 Shoot (3) 7 Sneak (3) 9 Vigor (3) 8	
COMMON ACTIONS Action Goal Concocting elaborate lie: 15		BLESSINGS/COURSES +/- Trait Situation +2 Per Suspicious: Rivals about -2 Passion Callous: Asked for aid -2 Calm Greedy: Money involved	
OCCULT Psi / Urge Theurgy / Hubris Powers/Rites Goal		COMBAT Action STR bonus: +1d Fist Init Goal DMG RNG Kick 6 12 3d Grapple 5 12 4 Charge 4 12 3 Disengage 3 12 4 Knife 5 14 Laser Pistol 6 12 3 Roll and Shoot 8 14 5 7 12 10/20	
VITALITY ●●●●●●●●●● Wound penalties: -10 -8 -6 -4 -2		SHOTS FIRED Laser Pistol: 15	
WYRD ●●●●●●●●●●		VICTORY CHART Successes Pts 1-2 0 3-5 +1 6-8 +2 9-11 +3 12-14 +4 15-17 +5 18 +6 Critical success = x2	
ARMOR Standard shield (5 / 10) Hits:			

Beliah Black (The Devil Beliah)

Beliah Black brags that he was born on a pirate ship and never set foot on a planet's dirt until his 13th birthday. The tavern owners and police of those planets whose earth he has trod wish he never left space. Merchants and guild members wish he had never returned to space. In either place the sight of him or his fiercely painted frigate "Devil's Revenge" are enough to stoke fear into anyone.

Beliah Black has lived most of his life on one space ship or another, wielding a gun against merchants when he was as young as five. He had established a reputation for cruelty and daring by the time he was thirteen, and captained his first pirate ship on his 15th birthday, a small, poorly armed shuttle. His manic attacks against bigger and far better equipped ships gained him an immediate reputation for daring, skill and insanity. The fact that he almost never lost one of these battles also gained him a reputation as either being fabulously lucky or in league with dark forces.

Each ship under his command has gone by the sobriquet "Devil's Revenge", and each has built on the legends of its predecessor. His career spanned much of the Emperor Wars, and he long ago lost count of the number of vessels he has raided. His reputation as a pirate has grown, and reached its current heights at the end of the Emperor Wars, when he held the planet Icon for ransom while the Li Halan fleet was engaged in battle against the al-Malik. He blockaded the planet with the help of two other pirate ships, crippled the one destroyer sent to engage him, and took off with a fortune in Li Halan gold, medicine and ammunition right before the Li Halan fleet returned to the system.

His own nickname, the Devil Beliah, had already formed by this time. In fact, his victims first applied it to him while he was still a teenager, but it only took hold after one of his most fortunate finds, one he made shortly after his 22nd birthday. While evading League patrol, his ship took refuge in deep space in the Bannockburn star system. Here they came across a derelict ship bearing the crest of House Masseri. Beliah and his pirates found little to take from the ship, but did chance upon a stasis box (used to transport perishable cargo) which Beliah chose to open while alone. Inside Beliah found a living creature of unknown form and substance.

The creature seemed to wake as Beliah broke the seal, and no one knows what kind of communication might have passed between them. All his crew knows is that when Beliah emerged from his chambers, a small octopus-like being had attached itself to his face, and Beliah refused all offers to help remove what he refers to as "his devil." Over the years the creature has never left its resting place, though it does shift position around Beliah's face in ways his crew finds deeply disturbing. Most of the time it sits still, its only movement being occasionally gelatinous stretches and shudders. When Beliah becomes excited, as in combat, it seems to come to life, and tentacles whip out at anyone who comes close, grabbing and squeezing with unholy strength. His crew has joked (behind his back) that it acts in a similar manner when Beliah has sex,

but their captain's many partners have not complained. In any case, his devil has served to cement Beliah's diabolical reputation.

This reputation grows every year, and now Beliah is perhaps the second-most-famous pirate in the Known Worlds, behind only the renowned Sister Tracina Isterot (see **Fading Suns**). His crew whispers that her greater fame has begun to affect Beliah's mind, for he has recently become obsessed with her. He hunts down rumors about her and has tortured several of her former crew members for more information. His crew is correct — he is obsessed with Sister Tracina. What his followers do not realize is that Beliah (and his devil) met her once, and both are strongly attracted to the heretical pirate. The attraction is stronger than anything Beliah has felt before, and it is beginning to affect his judgement.

Beliah's Devil: The creature attached to Beliah's face offers both protection and offense. It (and Beliah) are practically immune to psychic abilities, with the equivalent of a ten-success Diffusion power always in effect. This means that anyone using psychic abilities against Beliah or his devil have a -10 to their roll. This has no effect against Theurgy (see the **Fading Suns Players Companion** for more information on Diffusion). In combat it can make two grab attacks each turn, each with a base goal of 14 and an effective Strength of 12. Additionally, each hit injects a paralyzing poison if any grab damage penetrates the target's armor. This poison reduces the target's Dexterity by one per turn until the character can succeed in an Endurance + Vigor roll. Additionally, note that any skills or attacks marked with an "*" on Beliah's character sheet are boosted by his devil.

Quote: "Be I scarin' ya, me matey? Come on, give us a kiss."

Appearance: This big human would be scary enough, with his glaring eyes, numerous scars and earrings, but the live alien he has attached to his face and wears as a beard takes him to the next level. This live, squirming octopus-like critter rakes out one of its poisonous tentacles at anyone who comes too close to Beliah Black.

Entourage: Beliah's followers tend to be among the most desperate of pirates. He rarely has a large crew, preferring to divide up his ill-gotten gain among as few people as possible. He currently flies a Kylanthra Class Frigate with souped-up engines (capable of 17 percent light speed and very rapid acceleration) and three less missile racks. He has a crew of 50, but most of them are not skilled enough to operate the ship's guns. He prefers to close and board whenever possible.

Roleplaying Notes: The Devil Beliah has a well-earned reputation for cruelty against all who oppose him, but rarely injures anyone on ships which surrender to him without a fight. His treatment of his own crew is different, however, and while his followers have often ended up wealthy, Beliah is capable of great acts of barbarism against them, all so they will remember who is boss. He has an uncanny knack for knowing who is with him and who plots against him.

Equipment: Wireblade, Blaster Pistol, Armored Spacesuit

Emola Debt

The name Emola Debt strikes fear into criminals across the Known Worlds. A figure of stern justice wherever she goes, Debt has an unparalleled reputation for bringing in dangerous fugitives. Her infamous black armor inspires fear in all who suspect that she might be on their trail, and the mere rumor that she has come to town is enough to inspire even the most hardened criminals to head for the hills.

Most people believe that Emola Debt is her real name, and rumors abound that she hides her face due to some ancient accident which left her scarred for life. What they do not realize is that Emola Debt is not her real name, and that her attachment for her armor comes from the fact that here is indeed a bounty on her own head.

As a slave on Sutek, she cleaned and cared for the weapons of Dame Leela Rolas, a Hazat weaponsmaster. Debt watched from afar as Leela practiced and trained others, secretly copying her mistress' motions.

Debt never followed Dame Rolas into battle, but she could not avoid the Emperor Wars when they came to her. A Li Halan raid hit the Rolas' estates one night while Dame Rolas was thought to be off fighting on Byzantium Secundus. Troops fell from the sky, shooting and torching everything in their path. In her desperation to find some place of safety, Debt noticed several Hazat nobles loading a crate into a black flitter. As its engines started up, Li Halan troops charged forward, firing like mad in a desperate attempt to stop it. Debt realized her only cover was in the flitter, and she dove onto it as it streaked past. Shots pounded the flier, burning its hull and breaking its windows. Debt clambered through the broken glass as the flier put distance between it and the attackers. Just as she made it inside, a lucky Li Halan shot hits its engines, and it tore into the woods less than two miles from the estate, killing the pilot and stunning Debt.

By the time she came to, lying next to the broken crate, Li Halan troops were just approaching the crash site. Debt clawed her way through the crate's broken slats, hoping to hide behind it. As the Li Halan lights drew closer, her hands touched on a breast plate and then a helmet. Willing to take any protection offered, Debt donned the suit of armor. With a prayer to the Pancreator, she hurtled into the nearby woods and hid behind a tree.

The troops began a frenzied search of the area under the direction of a masked commander. Debt held her breath as one of the Li Halan troops walked right up to her tree, seemed to glance right at her, and then walked away without saying

a word. She realized that her armor offered more than just shielding the second time this happened. As long as she stayed perfectly still, no one could see her. Whenever no Li Halan troops were around, she moved away from the crash site. Whenever they were around, she stayed still and prayed.

This method worked for almost an hour, at which point the masked commander entered the woods. This noble noticed Debt's tracks, and followed her to her new hiding place. As the commander drew her laser, Debt kicked out, knocking the noble sprawling and her mask flying. Debt found herself looking straight into the eyes of Dame Rolas. Both women scrambled for the blaster, Debt moving faster than she had ever moved before. Her hand closed on the grip first, and it was with feelings of regret that she fired straight into her mistress' face.

A week later she had made her way to Sutek's spaceport, where she found that the Hazat had put a price on her head, believing she had helped the Li Halan attackers assassinate her mistress. Thus she has maintained her secret identity ever since, even despite her growing reputation as a bounty hunter. She has begun a close relationship with the Church, tracking down heretics and those who do wrong, primarily because she believes her armor to have some status as a relic. Her own investigations have traced its design back to shortly after the fall of the Second Republic, but one hesychast she encountered told her it bore resemblance to that of one of the Church's earliest martyrs.

Quote: "..."

Appearance: Emola Debt never meets anyone out of armor. This special chameleon suit generally is set to black, and the face mask and respirator make her appear almost soulless. The only exception to her black carapace is the jumpgate symbol she always wears around her neck.

Entourage: While Emola Debt usually works alone, she has found that a team can accomplish much that a loner cannot.

Roleplaying Notes: A quiet observer, Debt rarely speaks, preferring silence. She has never found out exactly why her mistress was raiding her own lands, or what was so valuable about the armor that it led to her death.

Equipment: Stunner, Special Chameleon Suit, Muster Chains

Benefices and Afflictions: Gossip Network: Known Worlds (4), Escaped Slave (+3), Special Chameleon Suit (10), Stunner (4), Muster Chains (2)

Liu Pei

Liu Pei began his career on Kish where, as the child of generations of Purgers (see the **Fading Suns Players Companion**), his life's path was already decided. All that lay before him was a lifetime of garbage and more garbage. For some reason, this did not appeal to him. As he spent his childhood toiling in Kish's overflowing sewers, his disgust of this role grew and grew.

The only aspect of his work that he enjoyed was the scavenging that went along with it. The Purgers could keep anything they found in the filth and muck of their lives (anything that a bigger Purger didn't take away from them, that is), and Liu made the most of this. What little good came into his life he found, but this was not nearly enough. One night, after happening upon an unconscious drunk outside a spaceport bar, he discovered an additional benefit to his position — anything he found, wherever it might be, he could claim turned up in the sewer. The drunk's pocket chronometer and volt redemption tool kit made this route, for after rolling the drunk Liu dirtied up the objects and sold them as found.

The money he made off this discovery excited him no end. He began looking for other drunks to use this ploy on, but their numbers on Kish were limited. Desperate for more money, he began seeking out shops and repair facilities after their owners went to bed, sneaking in and taking whatever he could sell. As time passed and his circle of fences grew, Liu expanded his operations to rich homes, noble manors and even church's. He gathered together a team of other guildsmen, and together they began seeking out whatever could make them the greatest profit.

Their League connections meant that they made the most money from stolen technological devices, but this also ensured that stealing from local guilds carried greater risk of discovery. After one bungled sale, Liu decided to seek his fortune off planet, and ever since he and his friends have traveled from world to world, stealing weapons, shields, think machines, tools and other items from those unlikely to un-

cover a guild member selling it on another planet.

Originally Liu stole these items purely for their monetary value, but his goals have changed with time. The items themselves have begun to take on greater meaning for him, and he often finds it hard to part with especially interesting devices. His acquisitiveness has begun to get the better of him, and his profits might suffer for this. He has begun targeting his jobs to go after interesting items instead of the most valuable. This has brought him to the Scravers attention for the first time for he recently stole some bizarre Second Republic cosmetics that the guild salvaged on Tethys.

Quote: "How would I know who took your flux sword? But I do know where you can get one." (Grins)

Appearance: Tall and skinny, his friends have sometimes compared him to a Terran rat. His long hair is rarely cared for, and the same holds true for his whiskery mustache and uneven sideburns. He recently added an Engineers Eye to his already disconcerting appearance.

Entourage: Liu Pei works with like-minded rogues wherever he can find them. He has found that a diverse team is best, and one good technology heist can keep him and his friends living in comfort for months. Thus he often works with talented warriors, psychics and even the occasional priest and noble.

Roleplaying Notes: Characters will probably not enjoy their encounters with Liu Pei. He has found that robbing from independents or people with few local connections is the safest way to continue his occupation, and the characters might well fit this. On the other hand, Liu Pei can be a valuable ally, able to find any item they might want to buy. He can also help them if they need to break into any high-tech installations.

Equipment: Low-Light Goggles, Standard Shield, Volt Tools, Scrambler Pad, Thieves Keys, Palm Laser

Benefices and Afflictions: Contact: Fence (1), Vendetta: Scravers (+1), Commission: Associate (3), Equipment (15)

Zith Haqua Duur

Of Zith's youth and young adult years, little is known. Several things, however, have been pieced together. As an adolescent, Zith traveled extensively studying obscure and deadly unarmed and weapon fighting techniques. Using what he had learned, Zith became a promising Li Halan house guard (under his real name). Some event (or group of events) occurred during Zith's service that changed him drastically. Zith became absorbed with striking down Li Halan nobles who committed atrocities against their own guards. As of yet, no one has determined which family Zith served.

Zith takes his new name from writing on a potshard he found in a slave-tilled field on Midian. This writing is in a Diaspora-era Urth dialect with ancient Sino-European roots: a found name in a forgotten tongue.

No one has been able to identify, much less capture, Zith. Several retired, social climbing guards have, however, been brought to "justice" by the Li Halan nobility. Each time Zith is "found" and executed, terrible retribution from the real Zith has resulted. The noble family responsible for killing the innocent man usually suffers at least one death in retribution.

Even knowing the risks, Li Halan nobility still make this deadly mistake from time to time (a mistake or a housecleaning?). Perhaps it is arrogance, or perhaps they assume that they will eventually be able to snare "Duur of the Mists", a name whispered among more than a few householders.

Zith's methods of killing combine carefully chosen poi-

sons and practically markless deathblows. Due to his meticulously planned and exactly executed assassinations, unexplained deaths are attributed to Zith from time to time. More than a few Li Halan nobles have accused Zith to cover their own murderous tracks.

Some whisper that Zith is nothing more than a figment created as an alibi for scheming lords. Others say that he is a member of the Slayers guild, enacting some expensive and extensive contract against the house.

Quote: "The weed of betrayal bears bitter fruit..."

Appearance: It is said that Zith is six feet tall and lithely built. Those who claim to have known him before his rampage say that he would be 42 now, with short, gray-shot light brown and hair. Many believe that this description itself is based off a disguise adopted by the renegade assassin. Some posit that he possesses a Morph Suit and a Synthface, so that he could look like whomever he wanted to.

Roleplaying Notes: The real Zith is no longer consumed with revenge for whatever slight started him down his path. He now carries out the punishments to the Li Halan as much to build his mystique as anything. His real persona is a merchant named Covay, and his success in trading has greatly lessened his pain.

Entourage: None

Equipment: Morph Suit, Disguise Kit (TL7)

Kaliost Roche (Joao Alves)

To his neighbors in the Vera Cruz agora, Joao Alves is the penultimate relics dealer — verbose and outgoing, with an eye for quality and connections that can bring him incomparable goods. All the leading Hazat on the planet buy from his shop, and visit occasionally to ooh and ah over his latest acquisitions. He treats them in a manner befitting their status, with fine wines, musicians and scurrying servitors. More than a few of the nobles have invited him into their houses, and Alves is especially popular with their servants, who he treats well and tips generously. A servant buying goods for his mistress knows that a trip to Alves' shop will be rewarded with wine and coin.

What they do not realize is that their trips reward him even more, and through him, the Kurgan Caliph. Alves' real name is Kaloist Roche, and his real position is that of a noble (and spy) in service to the Caliph. His family has long served the caliphs, and its unwavering loyalty has been rewarded time and time again. Thus when the Caliph's agents created the identity of Joao Alves, relics dealer from Sutek, they chose Kaloist for this position of honor.

They smuggled him past the Hazat patrols to Vera Cruz, infiltrating him onto the planet with a load of artifacts from Kurga (Hira) and a generous supply of firebirds. He established himself in the bazaar and began slowly selling his wares, making sure to keep anyone from realizing just how many he had. The rarity of his items ensured that his name would spread among the planet's wealthier inhabitants. Soon they were seeking him out, and Alves ensured that wine, song and sex loosened their tongues.

His shop became a Mecca for leading nobles, merchants and clergy. He spent freely but, in order to maintain his cover, gained a reputation as a shrewd trader willing to drive a hard bargain for his varied goods. He also made contact with other Kurgan spies on the planet, using them to ferry information off planet and ensure a steady supply of unique trade goods.

Vera Cruz remained essentially untouched by the Emperor Wars, and despite its position well behind the front lines, troops and nobles often voyaged to its pristine fields to train or relax. More important for Alves, Vera Cruz also served as the staging area for Hazat efforts to seize Kurga, and troops, mercenaries and nobles all found their way to the planet's agora. Alves has even made an "official" visit to Kurga as the guest of a Hazat noble who hoped the dealer would help him find valuable relics.

Thus Alves has been one of the Caliph's most reliable sources of information, passing on everything he hears, no matter how minor or petty it might seem. His employees know him as an inveterate gossip and tell him everything they learn in exchange for extra coins. Among the most valuable of his employees are the men and women of his small harem, who learn much that might otherwise remain secret.

As a result, Alves feels he has little to fear of discovery, but he has discounted the professional jealousy his success arouses. At first the Charioteers ignored him, but now his sales and uncanny ability to acquire rare curiosities concern them. The Scravers worry that he might become an information broker, and he has cost them sales by revealing secrets they thought they alone knew. The Courtesans Guild finds his harem direct competition, since he shares it so freely with his customers. Finally, the Muster has noticed his servants pumping their mercenaries for information and begun to wonder about him. All of these guilds would enjoy taking him down — an unlikely feat considering his many connections.

Unaware of this, Alves seeks to expand his operations, both in commerce and in espionage. He has come to enjoy the role of merchant, reveling in the bargains he finds and the sales he makes. He has begun financing trading ventures further into the Known Worlds, actions which might bring him to the Reeves attention as well. Alves would like to use these ventures to hide more active cloak-and-dagger activities: spreading false information, sabotage and even assassination. He would not carry out such activities himself, preferring to use a variety of dupes and foils. He is especially interested in rumors of hidden training facilities on Vera Cruz for Dervishes.

His greatest fear is that intense scrutiny of his identity might bring his Kurgan background into question. As a result he tends to avoid people from that world, finding excuses to deal with them through his servants. For now he hopes to succeed long enough to be allowed home to his family's lush estates on fabled Irem Zat el-Amad.

Quote: "Come in, come in. Oh, don't pay for them yet. We have plenty of time to talk before you must leave."

Appearance: Kaliost appears to be a very successful merchant, dressed in the finest clothes and delicate jewelry, lightly powdering his face and using traces of make up. He enjoys presenting his wares himself and often has one in hand, ready to haggle.

Entourage: Kaliost has not surrounded himself with the most capable of servants for fears that they might become too nosy as to his own activities. His bodyguards are more for show than action, and his servants tend to be sneaky and obsequious.

Roleplaying Notes: As genial as they come, he likes to laugh and joke, making his hospitality available to everyone. Should his cover be threatened, however, he would turn deadly serious.

Equipment: Trade Goods, Fine Robes, Dueling Shield, Rapier, Spy Eye

Sunchief Binoche

Massive forests still cover the world of Wolf's Lament, and its inhabitants glory in the hunt of its many woodland creatures. Those Vuldrok who excel in the chase and the kill bring honor to themselves and their tribe. Nothing brings greater honor, however, than a successful hunt in space, and few Vuldrok have been more successful than Sunchief Binoche.

He sailed on his first war galley at the tender age of 13, taking part in successful raids on shipping around Leminkainen, Gwynneth and Hargard (a planet lost to the Known Worlds). He joined the other Vuldrok in the thrill of space, yelling like a maddened bull moose as his ship closed with enemy vessels and throwing himself into the void in the rush to board. Armed with axes and explosives, he and his fellow tribesmen would fire grappling tethers at their prey and use them to ferry from ship to ship, blowing holes in enemy hulls and slaughtering all who opposed them.

As exciting as these raids, and even more profitable, were the forays onto non-Vuldrok (and sometimes even Vuldrok) planets. His ship would hurtle through a jumpgate, sailing too fast to take much damage from any gate patrols and then creep toward an inhabited world. When the time was right, and no defenders were apparent, Binoche's ship would slip out of the sky, raiding villages, burning estates and carrying off loot and prisoners.

Binoche quickly achieved prominence among his barbarous brethren, frequently being the first to leap out of the spaceship to board another, impressing all with his wild abandon and ferocious charges. By the time he turned 16, many in his tribe already looked to him as a leader. By the time he turned 18, he became then-Sunchief Desparo's right-hand man.

Serving under Desparo gave Binoche innumerable opportunities to gain renown, and his chief assigned Binoche more than just combat duties. Binoche learned to care for his followers, navigate a ship and trade with those merchants he did not (or could not) raid. More importantly, Desparo took him on diplomatic trips, meeting tribes which crafted new space ships, emissaries from other worlds, and even gatherings of all the tribes, held on the sacred planet of Raven.

It was at one of these gatherings that Binoche began to realize that Sunchief Desparo's time had passed. Binoche knew that war wracked the Vuldrok's enemies on Leminkainen. Many of the ships and legions which once guarded that system were absent, fighting distant battles in places Binoche knew nothing about. Never before had the opportunities for plunder been so great. Then why was it Desparo called for a cessation of all raids against those who flew under the Lion's banner?

Desparo claimed that the war was reaching its ultimate conclusion, and that the Lion's forces were winning. Now was the time for talk, not battle. Should the Lion win, it would be mightier than ever and its forces would return in greater numbers than ever before, seeking to crush those who had fought it. Binoche hated the idea. Now was the time to strike, not sit back like cowardly Hargard vultures! But Desparo's words carried weight with the other chiefs, and the Vuldrok

spoke of making peace with their ancient enemies.

On the night before the tribes were to decide, several shamans Binoche had never met before visited him while he brooded in his tent. They claimed that despite what other holy men had said at the gathering, the gods did not favor peace, and such talk angered them. The surest way to appease the gods was to kill Sunchief. They gave Binoche a new axe, blessed it, and crept back into the night.

At dawn, Binoche called out his mentor. Declaring Desparo's way that of a coward, he challenged his Sunchief. Grimly Desparo took up his own axe to slay the one he considered as a son. For almost an hour they fought, with Desparo dominant throughout. Binoche began to wear down as the fight dragged on, his parries slowing and his slashes becoming weak. Finally Desparo knocked him to the ground with one solid blow and prepared to deal the final stroke. Binoche desperately strove to raise his axe to block, and as he did so his thumb hit a switch disguised within the hilt's ornamentation. Suddenly a pulse of energy leapt from the axe, blowing Desparo's chest into nothingness.

With Desparo dead, the chiefs found themselves unable to decide on a new course of action. Some finally decided to send emissaries to House Hawkwood, while others chose to continue the raids. As his tribe's new Sunchief, Binoche gathered as many long ships as he could for one massive raid on Gwynneth. The Vuldrok steamed out of the sky, burning and looting, and leaving much of the world in ruins. Binoche himself led the troops who destroyed famed Faustus manor and carried off innumerable Hawkwood heirlooms.

In the years which have followed, Binoche has continued raiding, but doubt has begun to grow. The Lion's warships did return to Gwynneth and Leminkainen, and word spreads that the house's leader now commands a force of unparalleled numbers. Binoche has begun studying the Known Worlds as few other Vuldrok have, and has learned much. He has taken to monitoring the various factions, looking for ways to spread disharmony among them. He has already used captured Hawkwood fighters to attack League shipping and hopes to recruit some Known Worlders to help in these efforts.

Quote: "What has House Hawkwood ever done for you?"

Appearance: Tall and slender, Sunchief Binoche proudly wears the furs of his kills and the ears of his greatest enemies in a necklace.

Entourage: The Vuldrok raiders who fly with Binoche have survived countless battles and killed enough enemies to fill a castle. He has not seen the priests who convinced him to kill Desparo since that day, and has banned his tribe's shaman from his ship's bridge.

Roleplaying Notes: A commanding figure, Binoche is used to giving orders and rarely takes advice any more. Still, he is beginning to have doubts about his course of action, and flickers of uncertainty sometimes cross his face. He has begun noticing movement from the corners of his eyes, and suspects that Desparo's spirit may have begun haunting him.

Equipment: Armored Spacesuit, Enhanced Nitobi Blaster Axe, Vuldrok Long Ship

Cameron Michaelson (B.Z. Morretti)

The story of Cameron ("Cam") is as much a story of archeological digs as of barbarian castle heists. He is a crack starpilot and navigator with a penchant for women, booze and rare antiquities. In the Known Worlds, he goes under the alias B.Z. Morretti, half of the Morretti Brothers Rarities (MBR) operation.

Teamed with G.Z. Morretti, his long time partner, Cam, in his Morretti persona, regularly conducts many successful freelance archeological digs in barbarian space, promising finds which most Scravers would kill for. The Morretti's also participate in outright thievery, but since most of these actions occur in barbarian space, the only authorities who can do anything about it are Vuldrok chieftains — and there is a long list of them hunting Cameron and company. The Known Worlders who hire MBR to acquire specific items rarely ask about their source records. It was on such a dig in barbarian space that Cam found his most prized possession, an amazing weapon he calls a Sunsword.

Cam travels in a custom Raider he calls the SDI, rumored to be equipped with stealth tech and an unidentified (and perhaps quite advanced) weapons package. Evidence concerning the SDI and its equipment is limited to the sketchy accounts gathered from a string of decimated barbarian ships. So far, the few Scraver crime families who know of the SDI's activities in barbarian space have not interfered (in exchange for considerable bribes of both firebirds and rare antiques). Other forces, some within the Imperial Eye, know of B. Z. Morretti's "other life". Most of these view the SDI's raids in a neutral, if not positive light.

Quote: "Who cares where it came from, baron? It's clearly worth a fortune to your family."

Appearance: Cam is a human of average height with a well-built physique. He has striking, deep-set blue eyes, shoulder-length wavy blond hair and a deep copper tan. He and his crew wear custom-tailored, metallic-blue synthsilk outfits with matching hats. The hats and belts bear the lightning bolt Morretti "M" logo.

Roleplaying Notes: In public, Cam plays the role of the fun-loving drunk who often appears a bit silly as he carouses with the ladies. Though feared by more than a few artifact-hoarding merchants and hated by at least as many barbarian chieftains, Cam is a genuinely likeable guy who just happens to have a serious and criminal passion for rarities. He is shrewd and has an excellent memory for detail. Once on a job, Cam is all business.

Entourage: A handful of elite specialists (gathered from barbarian worlds) who have worked together with precision for a number of highly profitable years.

Equipment: Sunsword (see below), laser pistol, Scrambler

Pad, ring of numerous jumpkeys (mostly barbarian space, but some blackmarket Known Worlds keys), customized Raider starship

Sunsword

This perhaps one-of-a-kind weapon has many similarities to Flux or Mist Swords; it is most likely of some ancient Lost World design (although Cam suspects Vautech). The damage, however, is from its intense flame rather than a plasma field (flame-retardant clothing will protect against it). The Sunsword is powered by an integral energy cel that recharges when exposed to sunlight. This currently unduplicatable power core maintains power for 50 turns and is fully rechargeable with exposure to three hours of direct sunlight.

Like a Mist Sword, the Sunsword becomes physically attuned or bonded to the wielder but the process is non-psychic, based on some unknown science, and it is more lengthy, requiring 30 victory points on successive Wits + Focus rolls. The sword cannot be operated except by someone who has bonded with it.

There are some interesting affects this bonding allows: Wyrd points can be spent to increase the reach of the sword or the intensity of its flame (one Wyrd point = +1 goal OR +1 damage die). However, each plus one increase costs one extra turn of power. In addition, the sword can fire a broad-area burst: One foot radius around the user per Wyrd point spent. Everyone in this area is affected except those bonded to the sword. Again, this uses up more power than usual: one extra turn per extra foot radius.

Like a flamethrower, the Sunsword inflicts heat damage: Any damage dice rolls of 1, 2 or 3 ignore armor or energy shields.

The sheath is just as amazing as the sword. When not in use, the sunsword "hilt" is attached by monomolecular bonding to its carrying bracer, which Cameron wears on his off-hand forearm. The sword can only be recharged when it is in its sheath. It can easily be removed by a person bonded to the sword; those not bonded cannot remove it (unless the bonded owner is dead).

The sheath also serves as a limited energy shield: it will protect the sword's bonded wearer from heat and fire (but not other forms of damage) as if it were a 5/10 energy shield (10 hits). The sheath recharges in three hours of direct sunlight as well. The drawback from the Sunsword's heat protection is that it tends to absorb heat, leaving its wearer cold.

Unless drawn and activated, the Sunsword is unlikely to be identified as a weapon; the cylindrical hilt and sheath are covered in intricate carvings and beautiful metal inlay, making the apparatus look like some bizarre adornment.

Naajallen vo Zolleni

Naajallen vo Zolleni was a child when he first realized his calling to live a life of service to the Obun peoples, and for the greater good: if few other Obun recognize him for his noble blood, and if few other Obun acknowledge him as a true ambassador, then so be it. He shall continue to travel the Known Worlds, seeking to spread the glories of Velisamilun culture, as Obun ambassador and scion to an ancient noble lineage.

Naajallen's family is indeed ancient: his forebears can trace themselves back — with only a few gaps, during Velisamil's Savage Age — to the very founding of Obun civilization. Indeed, the Zolleni family was among the first Obun stewards of Velisamilun culture, their duties and responsibilities ordained by the gods themselves. But times change, and the Obun peoples changed with them: and the citizens of Velisamil reached the point where they believed themselves to no longer need a noble caste. "Let our leaders prove themselves worthy by deed, not by blood" was the new slogan of the Obun Federation, and so the noble families became an emasculated lot, nothing more than an aristocratic remnant gawked at by a democratic society.

So it was that many families were deposed, and among them the Zolleni family — which realized that the preservation of the family lineage was ensured by going along with the social mores of the time. The Zolleni abandoned their family manse, and renounced any claim to aristocratic privilege. But they continued to educate their children in the history of their family, teaching them the wisdom of their ancestors and the bravery of their forebears.

Naajallen vo Zolleni feels himself the paragon of this family's long-lost station. As a child he decided that the Obun peoples needed to remember their ancient greatness, and he threw himself into his studies. He went through the standard Obun educational system (quietly disavowing the Federation meritocratic political theories which inundated Obun education), and he reveled in the classics, mastering Obun art, science, and philosophy. Forsaking a possible career in the Umo'rin, he restored the noble vocative "vo" before his family name, acknowledging his aristocratic roots, and he traveled Velisamil, speaking of his people's ancient glories. He pledged himself, as his ancestors had done, to the god Dhoneki, the winged Lightbearer who is the patron of communication; it

is under his province that Naajallen will achieve success.

After a decade of travels and speeches and debates, this "Obun noble" had gathered a sizable group of like-minded individuals, who agreed together to work on restoring Obun pride and slowly champion the return to classical Obun traditions. But Naajallen was not a politician, and he tired of this work, so he set out on the next step of his career: ambassador of the Obun peoples to the Known Worlds. With some financial backing from his supporters, he took to the stars of his own accord, as a self-appointed ambassador. Where other Obun ambassadors would meekly ingratiate themselves before human powers, Naajallen would demonstrate what the Obun peoples are truly like: proud and strong.

He travels the spaceways now, spreading his message, trying to impress it upon humans and other aliens while reminding his own peoples of their ancient strength. He prefers to use Obun goods, to further support his own peoples — from Velisamil clothing to weaponry, the crafts of his own people come first. (He's no idiot, though, and a good energy shield is a good energy shield, regardless of provenance.) His next goal is to own and command an Obun-built, jumpgate-capable starship — a mobile testament and rallying cry for his people to remember their ancient heritage and travel to the stars.

Quote: "You think you know of the Obun? Listen, and I'll tell you of a proud, ancient people, born to greatness and glory."

Description: Naajallen is a tall, handsome Obun. He dresses and carries himself with pride and dignity, in formal Velisamilun garb. Since he doesn't often find Obun tailors, his clothing is sometimes worn about the edges, but this doesn't distract from his sense of dignity. He speaks with chin raised, always as though he is addressing an audience.

Roleplaying: Naajallen is proud, but not haughty — and though he has the placid demeanor of most Obun, he is easily roused by a passion for his people's histories and tradition. No matter what the situation, he acts like he is on top of things: it doesn't matter if his own people don't see him as a noble or an ambassador, because he knows the truth that bolsters him in all things.

Equipment: Energy shield (standard), Zalen Stinger, Obun saber, concealed dagger

Seketea Halvena

Seketea might have been happy staying home on Obun if her father, a prominent Obun Mwerro, had never taken her on that fateful trip to Leagueheim. After all, her family was quite well off by Obun standards, managing a successful farm and enjoying the admiration of their friends and neighbors. When she was a teenager, her father offered to take her with him on a trading voyage to Leagueheim, and there she saw wonders she had never before imagined.

The cities themselves were like nothing she had ever imagined. The poorest citizens on that world seemed to own far more than her family, rich nobles by Obun standards, would ever possess. When her father took her to parties held by his business associates, the girl could barely keep her amazement in check. Elegant men and woman, clothed in the most beautiful of clothes and adorned with jewelry beyond compare danced and drank the night away, and Seketea felt drab in comparison.

By the time they left Leagueheim, Seketea knew there was no way she could remain content to stay on Obun. The stars offered far more than her own home ever could, and to stay behind would leave her more and more unhappy. She begged her father to let her take care of the family's off-planet business endeavors, and on the rare trips these provided, she sought out a more permanent way to leave her home.

It was on one such trip that she met Maurice Symmons, a Scraver with much wealth but no discernible occupation. Seketea found him fascinating, and willingly accepted his suggestion that she work with him. Symmons main work seemed to involve meeting cloaked figures in dark bars, accepting small packages from them, and taking these packages to other worlds where he would exchange them for large sums of money. Seketea helped by keeping an eye out for anyone taking an inordinate amount of interest in Symmons and to create a distraction at a sign from him. The fact that she was an Obun (and a very pretty one at that) usually meant that she attracted far more attention than anyone else, and someone watching Symmons instead of her was automatically suspect.

It took Seketea only a few months to discover Symmons was a fence, specializing in the sale of stolen jewels and gems. When she realized it, she begged him to help her become a jewel thief, and after several months of this pleading, he put her to use. She proved surprisingly capable in her new occupation, being daring enough to try almost anything but smart enough to know when it was beyond her ability. Additionally, her psychic abilities, of which Symmons was unaware, gave her an advantage over other such thieves.

Seketea has never specialized in any one kind of theft. She is as willing to burglarize a guarded castle as heist jewelry from unsuspecting party goers. She prefers to avoid violence but has some small combat training. Being hurt in a fight holds no great terror for her. What does disturb her is the thought that she is using her psychic powers for ill, and that the dreaded Urge may soon gain a hold on her.

Quote: "What a pretty bauble. Could I take a closer look?"

Appearance: A pretty young Ur-Obun woman, Seketea has brown skin, long hair (which she often ties back while working) and a wide variety of clothing. She works in basic black, but wears bright, happy colors when she goes about in public.

Entourage: While most of her thefts have been solo efforts, Seketea has never been one to disdain assistance. She has worked with other thieves at Symmons recommendation, and has found him to choose such alliances wisely. She also likes associating with people who can provide her cover, and will willingly attach herself to someone else's entourage as an Obun advisor or just an attractive oddity.

Roleplaying Notes: Seketea possesses one of the most valuable skills any thief can have — the willingness to shut up and listen. Most people find her an excellent conversationalist, for she asks questions, listens attentively to the answers and gives other people plenty of opportunity to talk about themselves.

Equipment: Thieves Keys, Scrambler Pad, Spring Knife

Benefices and Afflictions: Ally: Maurice Symmons (5), Thieves Keys (1), Scrambler Pad (3), Spring Knife (1)

Drashtan ja Nodlain (Rakun)

Born on the Ukari reservations on Aylon to an ancient clan which suffered lost status after the Ukar War, Drashtan followed his father and uncles in the traditionalist revolutionary movement, a part of the UFM (Ukari Freedom Movement).

Through sheer ferocity, he clawed his way up the local chain of command, and became one of the leaders of the Aylon Ukari revolt during the Emperor Wars. Adept at technology, he personally broke important al-Malik security codes. When the Al-Malik and Ukari Allied Clans regained control of the planet, Drashtan fled with a small revolutionary cell into the safety of Decados space.

Because of his knowledge of al-Malik codes, the Decados placed him on a spy ship monitoring military communications during the Siege of Jericho, the moon of Byzantium Secundus. When the atmospheric plants on the moon were destroyed, with the Hazat, Decados and Hawkwood troops on Jericho killed, Drashtan disappeared; his few comrades and Decados superiors perished on the ill-fated moon.

Temporarily forsaking his revolutionary tactics, Drashtan used his knowledge of al-Malik codes to break into the family's wealthy trade. His insider's track on many markets within the Known Worlds made him wealthy; he has vowed to supply his own Ukari underground with the money, free

of any human alliances.

Calling himself Rakun (Ukari for "no man"), Drashtan poses as an independent synthetic clothing merchant. His bearing is proud and he often finds it hard to conceal his contempt of most other races, but he is known for his fair prices and unusual knowledge of the market place on several worlds.

Quote: "Everything has a price, even loyalty."

Appearance: Drashtan is still relatively young for an Ukari male. Elaborate tattoos cover his body and face, but he has learned to hide these under his more human-style clothes (many of his scars display his deeds as a revolutionary hero).

Roleplaying: Gruff and quiet, he becomes passionate when his people are brought up. Drashtan views all as potential enemies, save a few old comrades in the Ukari Traditionalists and near clan members. He has some grudging respect for the Decados, since they supplied and aided the Aylon rebellion, while realizing they used the Ukari as pawns against the al-Malik. Still, over time he can open up, slightly.

Equipment: He conceals a Martech Gold Laser Pistol, along with an ancient krax battle blade.

Benefices/Afflictions: Dark Secret (Wanted by al-Malik and Imperial forces), Gossip Network (Ukari worlds), Vendetta (Allied Clans)

Shade (Wayland Blackthorn)

Wayland Blackthorn adopted the name of "Shade" after leaving the Kurgan Rangers five and a half years ago. In the service of the Kurgans, Wayland used psychic cloaking powers to improve his stealth. The Kurgan forces either did not know about Wayland's talents or chose to ignore them. A Charioteers Killroy, however, noticed his special abilities and hired him away. He has since prospered in ways that the strange half-Ukar, half-Kurgan never imagined he could. He still performs many of the dirty tricks he did as a Kurgan Ranger, only now they are in the service a different kind of war.

Before the Killroys hired Shade, he lived his whole life on Kurga. Orphaned as an infant, he never knew his parents; his earliest memories are of a dreadful life in the streets of Hira (Kurga). That he survived says quite a lot about his tenacity. When he was ten, he was taken in by Curtis Blackthorn, an elderly former Known Worlder and Hazat householder who, 40 years past, had run away from his Hazat lord. Over the years, he built a small smithy business.

Curtis was a somber fellow, not given to praise. For the next eight years, Shade's life was devoted to constant menial labor. Curtis eventually adopted Shade and named him Wayland, a name Shade still treasures as his own, although he keeps it secret from others. Although he long since left home to join the Kurgan forces in their war against the Hazat — a house Shade grew up learning to curse — he has fond memories of the old smithy and his adopted father, memories which he cherishes in his lonely sojourn. Curtis, now very old, lives with several of his adopted children, many of whom stayed on at his smithy after reaching adulthood.

Shade has a combination of skills that allow him to deal with difficult (sometimes high profile) individuals who have tech items that the Charioteers want — or just want destroyed. Not every job Shade is assigned requires a kill. Often, he is used to gather information, acquire some piece of technology, or simply blow something up.

Some within the Killroys question the worth of such an operative. Others, however, recognize the value of his talents

and to an even greater degree, his expendability. None of this is lost on Shade. He thrives on the risks. The Charioteers attitude toward him only goes to support his view of life: The only thing that matters is performance. To that end, he strives for perfection. Never to be seen or heard; no calling card left behind.

His use of psychic darksense and shadow dance powers (Cloaking path, see **Fading Suns Players Companion**), in conjunction with his blur suit, makes him practically impossible to spot. He bathes almost religiously, using odor neutralizing ointments to reduce the chance of his being noticed by smell.

Shade knows that, as a spy and assassin, his future is risky at best. He chooses not to use his proper name in order to reduce the risk of damaging the reputation of the one person who helped him. It may be that the gray colors he wears are a tribute to those better years spent covered in soot from the smithy bellows.

Quote: "You did not see me. I was not here. You saw naught but shadows."

Appearance: Shade is 7'2" tall; his thin frame accentuates this height. His clothes are slate gray and match the color of his blur suit when it is inactive. Shade spends little time in public places, but when he must, he wears forearm-length gloves and a hooded robe (gray, of course). Without the hood, he would probably cause a bit of a stir among the locals. Unlike other "kweddi", Shade has gray skin (an occult stigma) and inky black hair (rare among Ukari). He shares the black on black eyes of his Ukari half-brethren.

Roleplaying notes: Shade, at best, is dark and removed, at worst, he is morose and completely disconnected from the warmth of human compassion. When his judgement is questioned regarding his work he often takes it personally.

Equipment: Blur Suit, Sniper Rifle with nightvision scope and silencer, capable of being broken down into a 3" thick, gray alloy case that fits snugly in a back pack (assembly time: 5 turns), concealed Derringer, Thieves Keys (TL8), mech tools (TL7), volt tools (TL7), high tech tools (TL8)

Scumalanga

Most Vorox see little reason to leave the paradise that is their home planet, what with its abundance of giant predators to fight, noxious fumes to inhale and toxic poisons to imbibe. What more is there to life than that, to do battle alongside (and sometimes with) one's own *angera*? Unfortunately, some Vorox find life on their homeworld a little unsatisfying.

Scumalanga was one of these disenchanting Vorox. As the eighth child of a minor noble, he found himself at the bottom of a massive, hairy pecking order, subject to whatever kind of abuse anyone wanted to heap upon him. His mother ruled little territory, and even the non-noble members of their *angera* heaped abuse on him. Following a night when one of his brother's dangled him for hours over the carnivorous *pranata* plant, dropping him and then catching him only inches from the steel-sharp teeth-like appendages, Scumalanga decided it was time to leave.

He made his way to the starport a mere 500 kilometers away. The fact that an eight-year-old child, even a Vorox, could attempt this trip alone, speaks volumes to how unhappy he had become with the *angera* of his birth. That he survived it, albeit barely, helps explain why the Li Halan did not refuse him when he asked to enlist in their army. The humans in charge of the army could not tell how old he was, and who has ever said no to a Vorox?

When Scumalanga enlisted, the Li Halan still had a good chance of making one of their own emperor. They had the tacit backing of the Patriarch, especially since Flavius Li Halan had sworn fealty to the Church. Many observers thought that the Patriarch was only waiting for some telling Li Halan victory to throw the full weight of his support to their cause. Unfortunately, this victory never came about.

The Li Halan found themselves threatened on and then driven from Malignatius. Their earlier victory on Rampart became mired in confusion as local terrorists forced the house to send more and more troops to the planet. Additionally, while the League never officially embargoed the Li Halan for their seizure of Rampart, many merchants refused to trade with its nobles. The League even allowed large Hazat raiding parties through Leagueheim's jumpgate to attack Midian.

Scumalanga found himself at the front of many of these battles, having joined a human infantry battalion after refusing to serve with other Vorox. He proved very effective hunting down Rampart's guerrillas — so effective that his superiors made him a corporal when the human one died while on patrol. Pleased to discover a sure way to advance in the army, Scumalanga began looking for similar opportunities.

After his commanders sent his unit to Midian to battle Hazat raiders, Scumalanga's immediate superiors became battlefield casualties at an alarming rate. By the time Alexis began to solidify his grip on the crown, Scumalanga had become a lieutenant, and knew that this was as far as he was likely to advance. In fact, even that position was tenuous.

As the Emperor Wars drew to a close, Scumalanga realized that his position as a Vorox commanding humans, while acceptable in wartime, was much less so during peace, and he had no desire to have to deal with other Vorox. Also, somebody might want to look into those deaths which facilitated his rapid promotion. While his official term was not up (an average term of service being at least 20 years), Scumalanga managed to convince a commander to give him an early release, only breaking one of the commander's arms in the process. He took his leave of the Li Halan and went to work for himself, hiring out to whomever would have him.

At first his assignments were merely repugnant, hunting down escaped slaves and squeezing money out of debtors, but they have degenerated from there. Since he still works as a freelancer, having had difficulties with the Muster after he executed a number of its members on Rampart, Scumalanga has had to take jobs from the most unscrupulous nobles and guildsmen — not that he minds. Hijacking an Amalthean medical convoy at the behest of greedy apothecaries means little to him. So he saved his early earnings and used them to hire mercenaries from the burgeoning ranks of discharged soldiers.

His new team has proven effective, and it works for whomever will meet its price. He takes great pleasure in raiding guild facilities, especially when hired by other guild members. Nobles have also learned to seek him out when they want an especially graphic example made of rebellious serfs. Scumalanga himself actively hunts down any job that will put him at odds with other Vorox. His hatred and contempt of his own race has only grown with time, and any opportunity to injure one of his kind is happily received.

Quote: "My employer is getting tired of you trying to help these rebels. That means I'm getting tired of you breathing."

Appearance: When relaxing, Scumalanga prefers comfortable, unassuming robes. When going into battle, however, he makes himself look like every human's nightmare of a Vorox, and shows off his poisoned claw with glee.

Roleplaying Notes: Scumalanga is an especially successful freelancer, and plans out his missions with a great deal of care. While other mercenaries (like Relov West) tend to leave holes and gaps in their plans, Scumalanga almost never makes that mistake. While very self-confident, Scumalanga is becoming more and more worried that his crimes will come to light and humans will seek to make an example of him. He now goes to great extent to cover up his wrongdoing.

Entourage: Experienced and immoral mercenaries. These people, representing a number of different races, have big guns and know how to use them. He has accumulated a core group of a dozen soldiers, but can certainly hire more as needed.

Equipment: MedPac, Muster Chains, Frap Stick, Blaster Shotgun, Plastic Plate Mail

Loadbearer Hulaaloo

The Siege of Manjoolan was no place for an ungulate. But there Hulaaloo was, the single Shantor in the Fifth Supply Regiment of Count Bravost al-Malik's rag-tag legion, set to defending the forsaken backcountry of Shaprut. The legion never expected to see actual combat; their territory was worthless, long since stripped of its mineral wealth, a barren wasteland of trenches and tunnels dug by peasant miners centuries ago. Nobody had considered its value as a beachhead for invading land troops — except for the Decados.

They unexpectedly began landing troops here, far from the major cities. If they could claim the Manjoolan Burren, it would be nearly impossible to uproot them; a long, drawn-out guerrilla war would ensue. The defense fell to the only army in the region, composed mainly of conscripted peasants.

Hulaaloo was among the supply lines. As a young, disenfranchised Shantor — a Darkwalker, as his people called his generation — Hulaaloo had sought military service as a means of rising in human society. He knew the upper levels would always be out of his reach, but if he could impress enough superiors, a good military career lay before him, along with the possibility to get off-world and escape the pitiful reservations, painful reminders of what Hulaaloo sought to escape.

He signed up with the al-Malik in the later years of the Emperor Wars. Untrained as he was in human warfare, they did not know what to do with him at first, but with the Decados holding out against the new Emperor, their worlds were in increasing danger from raids. When in doubt, stereotypes come to the fore: Hulaaloo was given a position in the supply regiments as a hauler. The regiment had no flitters or skimmers and only two wagons — Hulaaloo would have to carry whatever munitions would not fit into them.

He did so with no complaint and a small amount of pride once he realized how astonished humans were to see just how much he could haul. His stoicism eventually impressed them, and the close-knit camaraderie of the military life was granted him; while his fellow soldiers never forgot that he was a Shantor, he was okay in their eyes.

Then came the siege. Cramped into tight trenches with no guarantee of escape (unlike his human comrades, who could climb the walls), most Shantor would have gone bonkers. Not Hulaaloo, who suffered none of the claustrophobia of his plains-running race. Armed with a spear and gun-mount, Hulaaloo became an unholy terror to the enemy.

The Decados troops disembarked from their Landers,

climbed into the trenches as the ships shot back into space, and readied themselves to defend against all comers. Then, they heard an odd noise: a rumbling, getting louder. Barreling through the trenches at top speed, as unstoppable as a speeding tank, came Hulaaloo, guns blazing. His hoofs crushed the bones and skulls of those who fell before him while his spear gored those trying to climb from the tight, muddy corridor.

In one run, Hulaaloo had decimated a quarter of the invading troops. Followed by infantry to mop-up behind him, two more runs further destroyed the newcomers. The Decados routed, fleeing over the walls or into the deeper tunnels. It took months to weed out the tunnel dwellers, but only minutes to round up the above-ground evacuees.

Hulaaloo's superiors finally realized his tactical value and immediately promoted him. But the war ended soon after, leaving Hulaaloo decommissioned like most of his comrades. But a taste of victory is addictive, and Hulaaloo could not return to the reservation. He sought out the Muster recruiters who circled like vultures outside the barracks, greeting decommissioned officers. At first skeptical of him, word of his deeds at Manjoolan became enough argument for them: Hulaaloo was given an immediate commission and placed on a troop transport, ready for action on any number of fronts.

Quote: "My shoulders strongly bear more than munitions and insults; they carry the pride of my race."

Appearance: Large even for a Shantor, Hulaaloo is brown with few markings. His hair is tied into braids and wrapped with ribbons, some of them ripped from the uniforms of those he killed at Manjoolan.

Entourage: Hulaaloo commands a small group of logistics specialists, charged with arranging troop drops from orbit. They all universally respect him as a warrior but are yet unsure of his abilities as a leader.

Roleplaying Notes: Hulaaloo seeks valor and praise. Those who do not give him his due at first become targets of his attempts at bravado. While outright challenges probably won't happen, he may pick fights near them so they can see how he handles himself. Until he gets favorable acknowledgment of some kind from them, he will keep at it.

Equipment: Dolomei (voicebox), Remote-controlled Swivel Gun Mount with a Jahnisak Light Machinegun, Spear Mount

Golo Tarvester

Golo's only a Midshipman among the Charioteers, not even a full member yet, and a Gannok besides. He's not supposed to be piloting starships. But real starship pilots aren't supposed to be drunk all hours of the day, sequestered in their cabins for the length of a paying voyage. That's exactly what Jordan Tarvester does, though; an inveterate drinker since the unfortunate loss of his wife and children to a buried mine left over from the Emperor Wars, Tarvester lets his first mate and mascot take over the piloting duties on their journeys, while he retreats to his own brooding. If an emergency or accident were to occur, it's a gamble whether Jordan would be in shape to handle it. Little worry, though—Golo Tarvester is well up to job.

Most passengers and paying customers on Tarvester's pilgrim transport think that the funny-looking Gannok is just a mascot, comic-relief for a long voyage. That he spends most of his time making sure the ship stays on course is completely unknown to them. If they were to even suspect, it would surely cause a panic, so it's perhaps best that they're kept in the dark.

Golo does make his rounds to make sure that everyone is cared for—the pilgrim route trade is lucrative, especially if you can build a base of steady customers, those few freemen or low-level priests well-off to afford an annual interstellar pilgrimage but not high-up enough to book better passage. Repeat customers must be kept happy. To that end, Golo does entertain them, juggling, joking and cooking decent meals. He's quite popular and earns more in tips than his guild pay—little as yet, but it promises to be higher once he gets his full commission.

Jordan Tarvester keeps promising to sponsor Golo once they get to Leagueheim, but that day seems farther and farther off. Hence, Golo has begun to forge his own ties to the future, and pays special attention to any passenger he thinks

will lead to his commission or a better position elsewhere. While he has a fond loyalty to his sorrowful partner, he no longer expects promotion from him. Jordan adopted Golo after his own children died, but it's not really an official adoption—Golo doesn't even know if that's allowed by law, him being an alien and all.

Any guildsman—especially any Charioteer—that books passage on their ship will get the best treatment from Golo, all in the hopes of a career. Indeed, nobles and priests will also receive premium care, even if it means that other paying passengers get slighted. This behavior backfired on Golo once when he failed to recognize Bishop Azul Methra traveling incognito as a poor mendicant; his snubbing of the "poor" priest caused bad word to get around about their pilgrim ship, and the next two runs to Holy Terra were only half-full because of it. But Golo hasn't learned his lesson yet; if player characters look highly-placed, they'll get the royal treatment. If not, they'll have a hard time even catching Golo's attention as he runs busily to and fro from the bridge to the messhall.

Quote: "Ah, sir, I know well the needs of the Faithful! Let it not be said that all guildsmen are ignorant of a pilgrim's needs. Why, if I was a guildsman, I could teach them all about it!"

Appearance: Most humans have trouble telling Golo apart from any other Gannok. Only his jumpsuit and tools show that he's a working stiff on a starship. His ready smile distracts others from the oil stains on his uniform and the calluses on his hands.

Roleplaying Notes: Golo rarely ever hides his smile, and then only when he's sure no one is watching. His desperation to secure a future career is beginning to show through, and his proselytizing grows obvious and annoying.

Equipment: Ring of jumpkeys, Screecher, starship repair tools

Sir Thoktika'a Huvuru al-Dubhai

Thoktika'a Huvuru was born to a declining noble Etyri family on Grail. Raised according to the Huar'raughq warrior's code of honor, he swore vengeance upon the Muster mining company that cheated his family out of most of their fief generations ago. Single-handedly attacking their current offices in New Lahore City, Thoktika'a wounded several before his capture. The Huvuru clan, shamed by this wanton spilling of old blood, disinherited Thoktika'a and exiled him from Grail.

Thoktika'a traveled with a Charioteer medicine show, first as a back-up singer for the show's Chirikiti star, then as a trick-shooter. Sick of hearing his noble name mangled by barkers and announcers, he adopted the name of the Republican xeno-anthropologist who studied the Etyri and was thereafter billed as "Hawkeye al-Dubhai." Over time he honed his sharp-shooting skills to a degree most humans find incredible, although by Etyri standards he is only an above-average shot.

His talent found good use when he was invited to accompany a hunting party into the wildlands of Delphi. While scouting for game, Thoktika'a saw a carriage being harried by brigands some distance away from the party. He flew in to aid the victims, raining lead upon the bandits from above and cutting their leader clean in half with a swooping sword blow. The occupants of the carriage turned out to be cousins of Eviathan Hawkwood (at that time engaging the Decados at Katerina Pass). When he learned of the incident, Baron Eviathan was so impressed with Thoktika'a's skill that he took the young Etyri on as a squire. Thoktika'a attended the baron through the latter years of the Emperor Wars, and, once the Wars were over, Eviathan sponsored Thoktika'a for admission to the Company of the Phoenix.

Becoming a Questing Knight has helped Thoktika'a rebuild some of the self-respect he lost when he was exiled. Under the tutelage of the illustrious Ciera Li Halan, Thoktika'a has become almost as capable a swordsman as he is a marksman. Alexius frequently employs him as scout, bodyguard, herald and as a messenger who can present a message in the Emperor's own voice, complete with nuances and inflections. But his position has its downside as well. His greater visibility has exposed him to more bigotry, as young children find him to be the most fascinating of the Questing Knights while their parents are outraged that their children would wish to emulate an alien. Neither the Company nor the Emperor have given him any real responsibilities or authority, and he realizes that he is nothing more than a glorified messenger-boy. He wishes to return to Grail and make amends to his family, but he does not yet feel that he has achieved enough with his life to return in honor.

Race: Etyri (Huar'raughq)

Quote: "Set your fears at rest, My Lady, for neither the gibbering hordes of Gehenne, nor the dazzling glories of the

Empyrean realms, nor all the slaving beasts of the Voroxian wildlands shall distract me from delivering in safety your adored lap-kitten from the boughs of yon tree!"

Description: A handsome specimen of an Etyri noble, Thoktika'a sports a finely chiseled beak and striking steel-grey eyes atop his sleek, compactly muscled avian frame. His blue-black plumage is broken by silvery darts which form a sunburst pattern when he splays his wings. He usually wears his Phoenix surcoat (tailored to fit his anatomy), and takes great pains to keep it clean. Similar pains are taken with his weapons, which are ornately decorated with etching, inlay and fittings of precious metals. His willingness to experiment with many humanoid clothing styles altered to fit the Etyri body (especially favoring a spiffy archer's cap presented by Baron Eviathan) has prompted some to consider him a fop — but nobody says this to his face.

Roleplaying: You have devoted yourself to the Imperial ideal of chivalry, which is not so different at heart than the Huar'raughq warrior's code. You also take great pride in your personal appearance and go to great length to look presentable in high society. You are fastidious and even overly zealous in pursuing your duties, striving hard for the honest respect of the human community. On the surface you are cool, capable and always on top of any situation, but that is only a facade. Acutely aware of your status as an outsider, both on your homeworld and in the Empire at large, you see your position of Questing Knight as an opportunity to regain some glory for your family, and, hopefully, their re-acceptance. To further complicate things, you have lately become aware that you harbor feelings of dubious propriety regarding Ciera Li Halan (also known as Ciera the Chaste).

Entourage: Despite his notoriety, Sir Thoktika'a has no real retinue of his own. He has announced that he is seeking a squire, but no humans, regardless of their own rank, are willing to subordinate themselves to an alien, Questing Knight or not. Thoktika'a's only personal friends are other members of the Company of the Phoenix; he has enjoyed Baron Eviathan's hospitality on many occasions, and has accompanied Ciera Li Halan on several adventures. In public he attracts much attention, being one of the most famous Etyri in the Known Worlds, and is often surrounded by a group of curiosity-seeking courtiers, excited children, awe-struck serfs, or even an anti-Imperial or anti-alien mob.

Equipment: Fusion torch, antique telescope, Etyri sharpshooter's lenses (+1 for long and extreme range shots)


Weapons: Knife, scimitar, darts, long bow, Mitchau Quarry Gun, sniper rifle

Benefices: Nobility (Knighthood), Well-Traveled, Imperial Charter: Oath of Fealty (Emperor), Passage Contract (Imperial Navy)

Afflictions: Black Sheep, Vendetta (Muster)

Enikaz

As a member of the Hironem Warrior caste, Enikaz was one of the few of his race to fight in the Emperor Wars, on behalf of House Decados. He was one of the few to survive their dreaded Dragon unit, often sent by the Decados on suicide missions. They were dropped into many difficult situations, not expected to survive. But they always managed to return. Enikaz typically found himself running into battle with high explosives strapped to his back and orders to demolish something or other. He, and others, knew they were expendable, but refused to give in. Many of his brother Dragons did not survive.

When the time came for him to muster out of the service, Enikaz expected a hefty settlement. The Decados gave him the equipment on his back and passage back to Cadiz. He never received a commendation for saving that Decados colonel, nor recognition for destroying the al-Malik fortifications at Jibril. When Enikaz returned to the Hironem reservation of Turaz, he was shunned as an outsider; his people thought him tainted —  with foreign influences. He tried to re-enlist with his former masters, but they didn't want him back. Bitter, and with nowhere else to turn, Enikaz found a new home with the Muster.

The Muster accepted Enikaz as a valuable asset, thanks

to his years of battle experience. They've assigned him to a mercenary unit, hired out to this or that faction. The player characters might encounter him on the battlefield, perhaps saving them from an attack, or in the stereotypical bar fight.

Quote: "Knife... check. Ammo... check. Grenades... Hey Sarge, where we dropping today?"

Description: Slightly taller than the average Hironem, Enikaz is descended from the light brown desert dwellers of his race. Like many of his caste, he sports an impressive crest display of horns and flaps. Like all his kind, his eyes appear solid gold. A nasty scar down the side of his face gives him an unsavory appearance.

Roleplaying: He is efficient and tenacious, qualities which served him well in the Emperor Wars. Enikaz does not give up easily and refuses special privileges. He's the wounded man still willing to go into battle.

Entourage: He can often be found with other Muster mercs, on a job someplace. He usually earns the respect of his peers and employers, quickly dispelling any prejudice on their parts.

Equipment: Demolitions Rig

Weapons: Hironem Long Rifle, knife, various grenades

Affliction: Ostracized (+2 pts)



Race: Hironem Alliance: Muster (Kigaz) Rank: Associate		LEARNED SKILLS LVL Gambling 4 Knavery 6 Lore (Regional, Turaz) 4 Read Salsu 1 Remedy 5 Speak Salsu 3 Speak Urthish 3 Stoic Body 8 Survival 7 Throw 5 Warfare (Artillery) 5 Warfare (Demolitions) 7	
CHARACTERISTICS BODY Strength (3) 5 Dexterity (3) 8 Endurance (3) 6 MIND Wits (3) 5 Perception (3) 5 Tech (3) 6 SPIRIT Extrovert (3) 3 / 1 (1) Introvert Passion (3) 4 / 2 (1) Calm Faith (3) 3 / 2 (1) Ego Human (1) 1 / 3 (3) Alien		NATURAL SKILLS Charm (3) 3 Dodge (3) 6 Fight (3) 7 Impress (3) 6 Melee (3) 6 Observe (3) 4 Shoot (3) 7 Sneak (3) 4 Vigor (3) 4	

COMMON ACTIONS Action Goal Blow things up 13 Toss grenade 13		BLESSINGS/CURSES +/- Trait Situation -2 Extro When upset -2 Charm Horrible Scar (cheek) -2 End Every 10' below 60 F -1 Per Every 10' over 100 F Ssu Vision Can't learn psi powers	
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EQUIPMENT Item DMG Frag grenade 13d Plasma grenade 18d Demo Rig 100d (damage can be divided up over many small devices)		COMBAT Action STR bonus: Fist Init Goal DMG RNG Kick 7 15 2d Grapple 6 15 3 Charge 5 15 2 Martial Fist 4 15 3 Martial Kick 7 15 3 Hypnotic Strike 6 15 4 (if successful, target suffers -3 Dodge) Claw Fist 5 15 3 Knife 7 15 4 Long Rifle 6 14 3 7 15 7 50/70	
VITALITY ●●●●●●●●●● Wound penalties: -10 -8 -6 -4 -2		SHOTS FIRED Rifles: 10	
WYRD ●●●●●●●●●●		VICTORY CHART Successes Pts 1-2 0 3-5 +1 6-8 +2 9-11 +3 12-14 +4 15-17 +5 18 +6 Critical success = x2	

ARMOR Leather jerkin (2 + 2d) Hits:

Shai'ba'it

Even by the standards of her own Ascorbite race, Shai'ba'it is considered exotic. Her carapace is almost silver in color as opposed to the reddish brown of most of her kind, and she retains both her wings and extra limbs, all of which are heavily adorned with trinkets of all kinds. More than that, Shai'ba'it has made her home away from Severus for the last 15 years, a rarity for one of her kind.

Stranger still is that she is an accepted (albeit barely) member of the Muster. True, she seldom works as well with others as she could, but Shai'ba'it has made a point of being as friendly and extroverted as she knows how. For most people, this means she doesn't physically beat them into submission when they ask her a question.

Shai'ba'it left her homeworld as a slave, kidnapped by slavers for sale to xenobiologists on Byzantium Secundus. Unlike most of the other Ascorbites taken on that fateful day, Shai'ba'it was still quite young and had not evolved into her final adult form. Since she was still in the Tan'zhom stage of life when taken aboard the Muster ship, Shai'ba'it learned quickly and absorbed many of the more human qualities she exhibits to this day.

When the Muster delivered their cargo to its destination, the captain, Arturas Oleando, decided to keep Shai'ba'it as a pet. She was a worthy investment — wherever she went, hull rats would disappear very quickly. She didn't simply stand by and behave as a pet should, however, so Oleando soon let her carry Muster Chains and a Frap Stick. It took her a while but she learned how to use both and soon was taking on more and more responsibilities. As time passed Shai'ba'it proved herself a worthy apprentice, slow to learn but constantly willing to try.

When Oleando died four years ago, he left over half of his possessions to her in his will. He also left a very lengthy request that she be allowed to join the Muster as an active member of the guild. There was a great deal of debate, but the guild eventually decided to allow her to remain in the only life she'd ever known. A few Muster wags commented that Oleando preferred Bugs to real women; Shai'ba'it quickly taught them to still their tongues.

Because she felt she might lose her predatory edge, Shai'ba'it requested a transfer from the slavers to the ashtati,

the bounty hunters. Due to her rather unpleasant habit of feeding on the slaves — only enough to sustain herself, never enough to kill — the arrangements were hastily made.

Shai'ba'it often works alone, moving in and out of dangerous areas in search of her prey. If the reward requires that a prisoner be brought back alive, she does so. But if a corpse is considered proper evidence of a capture, she often chooses to save herself the high cost of feeding on whatever live animals she must otherwise carry as cargo.

Quote: "Emil Alento? You have been seen with Reve Mali. Mali is a known criminal. I wish to find him and bring him to justice. You will help me find him, now. Do not attempt to argue or flee. My Drexler Gatling Shotgun is aimed directly at your reproductive organs. You will come now or you will know pain."

Description: Shai'ba'it's carapace and face are adorned with Muster and ashtati emblems. Perhaps there is something lacking in her diet, but the normal rich, red and brown tones are missing from her body, replaced by a light silvery gray instead. Adding to her unusual appearance are the human-style clothes specially adapted for her form; she's even got an environment suit.

Shai'ba'it makes the most of her unusual appearance, seldom having to resort to lethal force among the people she hunts. A surprising number of her targets take one look at her and immediately surrender, begging for mercy.

Roleplaying: Shai'ba'it is remarkably outgoing for one of her kind. She's actually been known to answer an occasional question without taking offense, and has even been known to volunteer her opinion on the weather. For the most part she is quiet, accepting that she is not human and will never be treated as an equal among humankind. In her free time she studies Urthish writings and technical manuals, attempting to bring herself up to par with the Engineers. Her fascination for mechanical devices is well known, and those who want to befriend her often bring her broken artifacts, which she treasures and diligently tries to comprehend.

Equipment: Like most of the ashtati, Shai'ba'it tends to carry a small arsenal on her person at all times. Among her favorites are: Drexler Gatling Shotgun, Arbogast Sleeper (stunner), Muster Chains, a scrambler pad and a squawker.

Nagas Kada (Nagaskada)

Nagas left his home world of Madoc and the Tapol'ym Confederation with 12 comrades to join the Muster during the Emperor Wars. Highly paid for their work, the 12 formed an aquatic demolition group, targeting naval ships and ports on Hazat worlds, working behind the lines and causing great havoc to ocean bases. After the wars, his 11 comrades returned home, richly rewarded, while Nagas, desiring to better understand the Known Worlds (and humanity), decided to seek freelance contracts on Byzantium Secundus.

His work swiftly degenerated to reclamations, as rich nobles paid him to recover heirlooms from estates fallen prey to the rising sea. During one of his reclamation hunts, he discovered an ancient Oro'ym carving, inscribed with strange pictograms. Understanding its value and wondering how it came to be on Byzantium Secundus, Nagas hid it; he desires to one day present it to learned elders on Madoc. It is his prized possession.

Realizing that he could make more money by networking with the Scravens, he approached some local family members. They immediately realized his value and signed him on, shipping him off to the stars to use in a number of underwater reclamations programs on a number of worlds.

He has finally found the perfect venue by which to study humans. He is interested in their religion and philosophy, but has discovered that they sadly fail to live up to their own lofty ideals.

Other Oro'ym consider him *redem yma* warrior who

deals with outsiders, perhaps developing *anog ytraits* (those who live too long among outsiders become outsiders themselves).

Quote: "The problem is that we are orphans of the elder gods, and have no wise parents to teach us"

Appearance: A dark, brackish-green Oro'ym, wearing a WET suit (Water Environment Togs), which recycles and purifies his bodily fluids. Numerous small bags hang off the suit, containing archeological tools, the Omega Gospels, and (concealed) the miniature Oro'ym statue found beneath Byzantium Secundus's waves. The webbing between Nagas's fingers has been cut so he can handle human weapons.

Roleplaying: Generally, Nagas is friendly and open to newcomers, often questioning those brave enough to approach the exotic looking amphibian. However, he is slightly pessimistic in outlook, as are most Oro'ym, believing that the elder teacher races have abandoned the younger ones; nonetheless, he becomes animated after meeting new, friendly humans. His reserve soon gives away to loyalty if he likes someone. Only a trusted companion would ever learn of the small statue he carries (most would think it some artifact from Madoc). Nagas is unusual for his race, for few Oro'ym leave Madoc, and fewer show an appreciation of human war techniques. Nagas believes the Oro'ym must learn about the Known Worlds if they are to survive and expand.

Equipment: Capek .40 Aquatic Rifle, waterproof archeological tool kit, demolition kit (concealed among tools)

Yoma Utati Shervas

Only a few Vau have contact with humanity, keeping their society free from the pollution of alien ideas. They see humanity as petulant children, not yet ready for a full exchange of ideas and culture. On those border worlds where humans are allowed to live — Vrilya, Manitou and Apsai — they are kept at arm's length, their movements restricted by the Vau. On Vrilya, Yoma Utati Shervas serves as a liaison between the human community and the Vau Hegemony. It is his job to inform the human community leaders of the Hegemony's decisions, while at the same time acting as humanity's advocate to the Mandarins.

Himself a Mandarin, Shervas is a traditionalist and cautious; he thinks the Vau relationship with humanity has gone far enough. The relationship the Council of Worthies has crafted is well and good. Despite this, he has a deep curiosity for humans, which is why he was given the job. He scrutinizes the humans he encounters, looking for material for a book he is currently writing. An enthusiastic participant, he tries human food, drink and pastimes. He even has a few human friends. Because of his expertise in human relations, the Hegemony has recently sent him to Byzantium Secundus on a protocol mission. What will come of this mission is anyone's guess.

He is a firm believer in the prophecies of the Progenitors, the god-like beings who shepherded the Vau in their pre-history. The Progenitors recorded their predictions for the future, a blueprint for how history would unfold. For the most part, these omens have been true, though figuratively so. The Progenitors also gave the Vau something called the Valukesh Ha'eni (lit. Book of Illuminating Truth in Time). These pictograms supposedly depict the flow of mystic energy through the universe, showing the current influences upon the questioner. Shervas carries a small device consisting of a tiny screen and a single button; pushing the button randomly selects a glyph, which Shervas then interprets.

In addition to his diplomatic job, Yoma Utati Shervas is an agent for the Jaykata U'moti (literally, 'those who unfold

history according to precepts'). It is their responsibility to ensure that history unfolds in the prescribed manner, according to the Progenitor's blueprint. He and others of his kind monitor events, looking for trends, linking them to the scriptures, and plotting eventualities, then act on their interpretation of the future. For example, the Third Book of Tetch proclaims that a great catastrophe would strike a Vau world; when the disaster didn't occur at the expected time, the Jaykata U'moti orchestrated one. One of the reasons Shervas is so interested in humanity is that he wants to figure how humanity figures into the Progenitor's blueprint.

Note: The skills and abilities listed below are only approximations. Vau occult powers, in particular, are different from those of humans, operating on different metaphysical principles. Vau powers simply act like the abilities listed.

Quote: "Some day, your eyes will open and your kind will learn you are not the only beings in the omniverse. On that day I will laugh and you will repent."

Description: As typical for his race, Yoma Utati Shervas is tall and thin, and appears to be in his late sixties. He is distinguished by his long, silver hair. He has been described as having a kind face — a slight smile and sympathetic eyes. He wears a Vau Banishing Glyph in his beard, and dresses in the ornate robes of his caste and position.

Roleplaying: Shervas sees himself as a tool of history and the will of the Progenitors. He is manipulative and self-assured, convinced of his ability to direct events. He is fascinated by how events unfold, and how people react. Shervas is outgoing and friendly, with a genuine curiosity for humanity.

Entourage: He travels with an entourage appropriate for a Yoma of the Jaykata U'moti. He travels with three Vau Warriors and several acolytes. Pomp and protocol are very important to him, of which his entourage is an extension.

Equipment: LifeCocoon, Valukesh Ha'eni reader, Vau Palm Stunner (projects ripples of invisible energy which slam into the target), Vau Dispersion Field (energy shield: 5/20)

Benefice: Diplomatic Immunity

Gl'essh

Once an apprentice to the Charioteers, Glennes Hakarion hoped to rise within the Merchant League through dealing in rare and unusual artifacts. Lost from an expedition seeking the Gargoyle of Nowhere during a freak sandstorm, Glennes wandered in the desert for days. Though she attempted to use her navigational knack, the featureless landscape and unforgiving terrain defeated her efforts. Lightheaded with fatigue and crazed by thirst, Glennes wandered further and further from civilization.

As she lay dying, she felt the presence of another being nearby. Weakly lifting her head, she saw an enormous serpent, its glistening scales the color of the desert sands. She felt strangely comforted by the snake's presence. As she watched, the serpent extruded a clear tube from its abdomen and attached it to her stomach. Glennes felt a brief pain and saw a whitish egglike sac slide down the tube and into her own body. Briefly, her thirst abated, her exhaustion left, and she felt intimately connected to the serpent. *I can accept this thought.* Then the pain hit her.

Agony beyond her comprehension overtook her as the Symbiot spore took root and began to change her molecular makeup. She doesn't remember much of the next few days except awakening to find the dead serpent next to her on the sand.

The heat no longer seemed oppressive, but welcoming. Rather than abrading her face and body, the sand caressed her elongated body, smoothing her scales as she undulated over its surface. Lifting her hands to her face, she discovered the cool, satiny scales that covered every part of her. Looking down, she saw the sacs growing within her, each spore creating for itself a protective membrane. Instinctively, she knew what she had become.

Since that time, Gl'essh has traveled the wastes of Nowhere, seeding spores within hardy plants in the most inhospitable and hidden regions of the planet. Occasionally, she has come across bands of nomads. Whenever one of them looks promising, she follows and tries to kidnap the person. She then implants a spore sac within the chosen one and waits to

see if the bond will take. Thus far, only a few have melded; most have died. She has sent the successes to the far reaches of the planet, hoping they can remain hidden from the humans, who do not understand the comfort and connectedness she offers. Eventually, she knows a Symbiot ship will arrive and take them all home. Until then, she has an important purpose to fulfill as Symbiot mother to the planet.

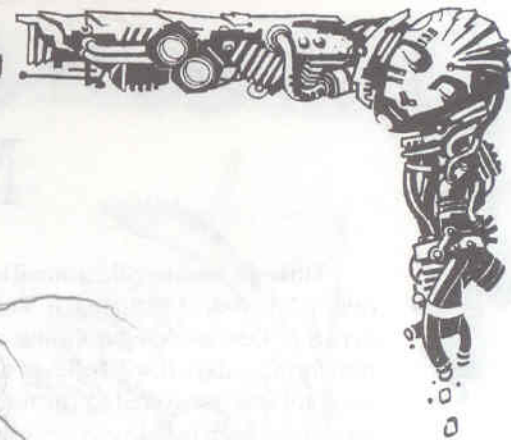
Quote: "You ssee, humansss? Now they ssleep, my eggs. Ssoon they will awaken. Perhapss inside you."

Description: Gl'essh is a Symbiot anaconda sized snake-woman, covered with iridescent white scales even on her nearly human-looking face. Her eyes are slit like those of a snake, and have membranes rather than lids. Her cobra-like hood frames her face and shoulder area. Below it, she has a torso, arms and hands like those of a human woman (though of a size commensurate with her tail section). Down the length of her tail run thorny projections, each sharp enough to inject poison from the sacs located at their base via a tail whip. The front of her torso is transparent, with egg sacs clearly visible within her. A clear tube coils within as well; it can be extruded to insert Symbiot seeds in hosts.

Roleplaying: Retaining just enough of her human self to recall how she became a Symbiot and to remember human speech, Gl'essh feels a connection with all living things—even those she preys upon to sustain herself. From that connection, she judges those she chooses as worthy hosts for her seeds. Though she remains fully committed to her purpose as a Symbiot breeder, she finds that she often craves human voices and listens avidly to the nomads she follows before kidnapping any. Though she would rather talk than fight, she is not averse to combat should it find her.

Powers: Tunnel through sand; Inject venom via tail whip (Dx + Fight, 0 DMG; Gl'essh's venom does no damage, instead sending the recipient into a deep sleep lasting about an hour. The victim may roll Endurance + Stoic Body to avoid the poison's effects).

Affliction: Symbiots cannot defend against or contest mental occult powers



Maldor Phantom

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Malador Phantom

This odd, monkeylike animal is thought to be one of the original natives of Pentateuch, a creature either engineered as part of Doramos's terraforming plan or existing from pre-terraforming days. It was believed extinct for centuries until a colony was discovered in the forests of northern Malador. Many have been bred in captivity since then, and the race has become popular as pets (especially in monasteries). Many more are believed to exist in the wild.

Eskatonics consider the animals blessed, in some way sacred to the Pancreator's plan for Pentateuch, the order's homeworld. Thus, laws have been passed making it illegal to harm a phantom. In Maladorian monasteries, where the phantoms run wild, occasionally climbing over the walls and into the sanctuaries, they are treated well and fed. Indeed, some believe them to be reincarnations of revered and wise holy men. If a wild phantom appears in a monastery sanctuary, it is considered a very good sign.

Most other Known Worlders think they are just interesting, if unusual, pets. League merchants have spread them throughout the Known Worlds; while they are by no means common (even on Pentateuch), many know what one is.

Appearance: They have white fur, and their long, prehensile tails are also furred, often displaying gray or silver stripes. Their skin is blue, especially visible on their furless faces, and their eyes are red — all four of them (two rows, one atop the other). While the top row somewhat aids peripheral vision, the bottom row is capable of powerful night vision (the phantoms often close these eyes during the day or under bright lights).

They are friendly and well-trainable, and behave somewhat like Terran koala bears in most respects. However, they have no known predator. Even predators introduced into the Pentateuch wilds seem disinclined to hunt them, adding to the phantoms' mystique.



Kevoor Udea (Scorpelion of Pyre)

Kevoor Udea is a menace to all travelers in the Burning Desert of Pyre. Commonly known as "scorpelions" by the desert-dwelling Avestites, Kevoor Udea are creatures well adapted to their environment. These two-tailed scorpionlike creatures hide among the smoldering rocks and cracked dry ground waiting for small prey to pass. They have developed a chameleon-like ability that helps them to blend in with the natural colors of the Burning Desert; a particularly useful defense mechanism since Pyrean buzzards consider their soft internal organs a delicacy. The Kevoor Udea's ability to hide, and their excruciating deadly sting, makes them a very real danger to Avestites or anyone else venturing through the deserts.

When the Avestites first encountered Kevoor Udea, their first reaction was to exterminate the deadly creatures. Over time, however, the fanatic inquisitors began to look upon the scorpelions very differently. Perhaps it was while watching the agonizing, sweat-soaked death throes of their own people poisoned by the creature that the Avestite leadership realized a new way to punish sin. Or maybe it was the fearful look in the eyes of the faithful that appeared at the very mention of the creature's name...

Kevoor Udea is the name given to the scorpelions by an ancient band of nomadic wanderers, descendants of the original colonists of Pyre. Through the generations, they have attempted to keep and pass on the remnants of their ancient lore and unique Urthish dialect. Some of these nomads have been converted to Temple Avesti, and they bring their sinful but sometimes useful myths with them. One such myth concerns the scorpelions of Pyre.

Nomadic lore describes the scorpelion as a minion used by elder gods for punishing those that did not show them honor. The meaning of the name the nomads give the creature shows this clearly: Kevoor Udea translates as "unseen holy death bringer". The Avestite leadership on Pyre have taken the translation as a confirmation that the Kevoor Udea should be brought into their arsenal. The scorpelions, of course, will be saved for use in only the most heinous cases...

Quote: "The poison of the Kevoor Udea, carefully administered to properly tourniqueted fingers, toes, etc., can drain away the sins of even the most wayward soul."

Appearance: Kevoor Udea grow to approximately one foot in length and weigh from four to eight pounds when full grown. Much larger specimens, up to 10 feet in length, have been reported, but no specimen of this size has been confirmed.

When placed in a neutral environment (such as a clear glass jar), a scorpelion assumes a dull brown-gray color. Otherwise, it has the ability to blend in with any number of natural colors, or combination thereof: reds, yellows, grays, tans,

browns and blacks.

It has a banded exoskeleton which is toughest on the top of the body and two large pincers, used to hold prey. These pincers do not cause damage, but improve the scorpelion's chances of hitting with its stingers. When a pincer successfully grasps a foe, it holds onto the prey and does not let go (+2 stinger goal roll).

Weapons: Part of what causes the Kevoor Udea to be so feared is the type of poison that the creature carries. The back-barbed stingers (1 DMG each on entry, another point on exiting the wound if not surgically removed) inject a liquefying agent (1 DMG per turn beginning 10 turns after injection) that acts much like the acid certain flies regurgitate on their food. This particular acid, however, works from the inside out.

The Kevoor Udea leaves its stinger(s) imbedded and then compresses its internal sacs, forcing a continuous flow of poison through the wound into the bloodstream of its prey. The poison proceeds to spread through the victim's body causing the blood vessel walls and surrounding tissue to dissolve. The smaller the prey, the quicker the process. After the victim has liquefied, the scorpelion inserts a feeding tube into the corpse and consumes the fluids.

People have been known to survive arm or leg stings of the Kevoor Udea by tourniqueting the poisoned appendage (within three turns after being stung the scorpelion must be removed and a successful Remedy roll made). In these situations, after the tourniquet is applied, there is little besides theurgic or psychic aid that can help, and the poison must run its course. The process is not a pretty one and the victim is not guaranteed to survive (roll Endurance + Vigor with a -3 penalty or die of shock and system strain).

If the tourniquet is successful, the arm or leg will quickly proceed to lose muscle definition as liquification begins. Within minutes, the skin will begin to ooze melted flesh. In half an hour, nothing but bone, shrouded in paper-thin skin will remain. Stings to the trunk of the body, neck or head are fatal without theurgic or psychic intervention.

If the character stung receives theurgic aid within 30 turns (about a minute and a half) of being attacked (The Laying On of Hands, Healing Hand of Saint Amalthea), the poison will be countered. Damage sustained up to that point will require further healing attention. Psychics who follow the path of Soma may halt the poison's onslaught through the use of Recovering.

Second Republic medtechs devised an antitoxin, but most data and samples of this remedy were destroyed by Avestites in their tech purges. It is rumored that the extremely hard-to-contact black market on Pyre has access to such medicine — at a high price.

Tlinto Ba' kamek (Shadow Spider)

Strange things come from the bowels of the planet Ukar (Kordeth to its inhabitants). Among them is a creature the Ukari call Tlinto Ba'kamek— "light drinker." This bizarre life form, more generally known as a Kordethian Shadow Spider, is truly an oddity of nature. The appearance of the Kordethian Shadow Spider makes it very difficult to notice. An inky black shadow in the corner of a poorly lit room or cavern crevice hardly draws attention to itself.

Little is known about the ecology of the Kordethian Shadow Spider. If the Ukari know anything, they are not making any information available. Because the Kordethian Shadow Spider dwells deep within the planet Kordeth, there is little access to its breeding grounds. Some suspect that shadow spiders were engineered by Ukari gods (Anunnaki) to guard areas of Ur tech on Kordeth — possibly entrances to the rumored terraforming engines. Foolhardy artifact hunters risk their lives following rumored sightings of shadow spiders in the "wilds" of Kordeth.

The Ukari trap Kordethian Shadow Spiders by luring them to a single light and heat source that is stronger than what can be found in their natural habitat. Then they disable the spider with an electrical charge that paralyzes it for a short period of time. The electrical charge must be within 10-15 volts and exactly 2 amps and be held for at least two but no more than three minutes. If the application of the electrical

charge is insufficient, there will be no effect on the spider; if the charge exceeds the specifications, the spider will die of shock. If the process is successful, the spider can then be transferred to a thermal container for storage and transport.

The shadow spider drains heat and light for energy. Ukari have been known to use them in several ways: they can be trained to keep an area cool, or to hunt down someone and sit within five feet of him, killing him through hypothermia in his sleep.

Attacking the Kordethian Shadow Spider with a laser weapon, or a fire producing weapon, will only cause it to be "fed" and encourage it to advance on the attacker. Attacking it with strong, continuous current electricity can be very effective.

Quote: "Knowing the Ukari's pet ink spots are there will only chill your blood. Not knowing... well, that won't matter much. It isn't getting colder in here is it?"

Appearance: The Kordethian Shadow Spider is three feet in diameter, a half-inch thick in the center tapering down to 1/32", surrounded by a fringe of thousands of quarter-inch long, gossamer-thin, tendril-like legs. The shadow spider flows soundlessly along on these rippling legs. They are totally non-reflective and appear when noticed (which is rarely) as an inky black spot or a hole.



Doggoth

The Changed come in more than human forms. During the Second Republic many socialites demanded small, innocuous looking protectors. Out of that demand came the Doggoth.

Doggoths are still bred to be small, cute personal defense creatures. Most weigh between 10 to 15 pounds, and are fluffy, roly-poly things, similar in size to a Persian cat. They tend to be fat and somewhat spoiled looking. Looks in this case are deceiving.

Doggoth muscles are compacted at four times the average for a normal animal of their size. This heavy compaction ratio gives Doggoths a vertical leap of more than fifteen times their eight-inch shoulder height, with jaw muscles that make snapping an ankle or wrist a real possibility. It also gives them amazing resilience against damage.

Where the Church looks down upon Changed humans in no uncertain terms, Doggoths have fared much better. Perhaps, because most of them now reside on noble estates, the Church has chosen to overlook the unnatural creatures.

Doggoths are born in litters of one or two but the survival rate is only about 50%. This is due to the extensive mutagen process that created the bloodlines and the current limitations of intense inbreeding. During the Second Republic, there were many bloodlines available, but most have since been lost. No one now knows how to start the mutagen process again; breeders are limited to working with only the remaining stock. Al-Malik nobility currently hold most of the Doggoth bloodlines.

Doggoths are taken from their mother when they are cubs only six weeks old. They must be bonded with an owner in the next two weeks or they go mad and have to be put down. Doggoths are single owner creatures and can only rarely (2 in 20) be transferred successfully to a new owner. (Note: Roll 1d20; if a "20" occurs, the Doggoth will appear to have bonded with the new owner, but will turn on him at a later, inopportune moment).

An owner may intentionally transfer ownership to another; this is usually done only in the case of a dying owner who wishes to leave his beloved pet to another. Both owner

and prospective owner must regularly spend time with the Doggoth for at least four weeks as the owner tries to teach the Doggoth to bond with its new owner. After that time, the previous owner must leave for good, never seeing the Doggoth again. The new owner may roll a d20: on a 13 or less, the Doggoth bonds to her. If the roll fails, the animal goes mad. The new owner can modify the roll with a successful Wits + Beastlore roll; each victory point adds one to the 13 or less goal.

The average Doggoth life span is 20 years. They are expensive to maintain, eating nearly as much per day as normal animals three times their size. Making matters worse, Doggoths will eat only lean, fresh meats. If a Doggoth is particularly well cared for, it is not unusual for it to reach the age of 30.

If the owner has Beast Lore, she may train her Doggoth to perform specific, moderately complex tasks. For example: Use a remote control to open doors and turn on lights, run bath water, engage a squawker, or growl in a specific way if a particular person arrives, or a pre-rehearsed instance occurs.

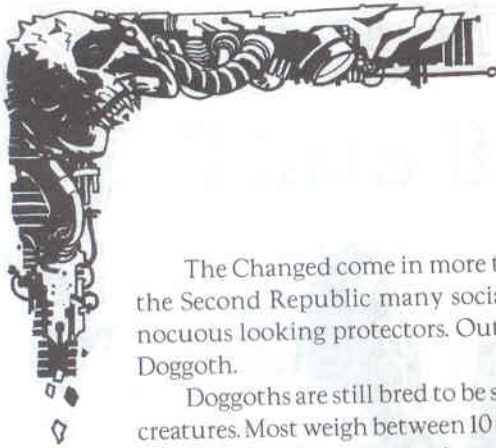
Quote: "Time was, everybody who was somebody had a Doggoth for protection. Now they are getting so rare, thugs don't know what they are; they're actually becoming useful again."

Cost: 600 firebirds/ 3 Benefice

Attacks: These creatures are trained to strike at arms, legs and throats. If a critical hit is scored, the Doggoth has "latched onto" one of these locations and cannot be dislodged until slain or called off by the owner. Roll a d20 to determine the location that is locked in its grip:

- 1-6 Right leg
- 6-12 Left leg
- 13-15 Right arm
- 16-18 Left arm
- 19-20 Neck

The Doggoth will continue to do 3 DMG each round after latching on, without having to make another successful goal roll. If a leg is grasped, the victim's movement is reduced by two meters. If an arm is grasped, Dexterity rolls suffer a -4 penalty. If the throat is grasped, all actions suffer a -6 penalty.



Miscellaneous Animals

Animals abound on almost all worlds; even on the most barren, there's usually life of some kind, struggling to get by. Known Worlders, like all sentients, tend to use non-sentient beings in a number of useful ways, from training dogs as sentries to riding horses into battle. Here are three such animals often encountered in the **Fading Suns** universe:

- A typical guard dog, trained as a sentry to roam an area and attack anything that moves (except for its acknowledged master).

- A hunting falcon, used by pastoral nobles in their courtly hunts. In the universe of the **Fading Suns**, what's old is often new again, including many traditional past times of the rich and famous. Falconry is just one such activity. This bird is meant to hunt mice, voles and rabbits, but... it is sometimes known to attack its owner's rivals.

- A riding horse. While this one is not trained for war, it can keep calm enough in violent situations not to rear and bolt away — just don't run it straight at a Grackle Fox, 'cause it's not going there.

Also included is a blank "Beast sheet" for gamemasters' use in creating their own creatures.

Harnessing Nature

Since genetic engineering was quite popular during the Second Republic, it's common to see many variations on these themes: stronger, faster or more intelligent guard dogs, sturdier and larger falcons, or extremely fast horses. Indeed, many noble houses and some guilds make their fortunes off of keeping such unique breeds thriving. The Hazat are known for their super-Destriers and the al-Malik for their trainable

Beast sheet

		COMBAT Action		Init	Goal	DMG	RNG
CHARACTERISTICS		SKILLS					
Strength (3)	Wits (3)	Charm	Dodge				
Dexterity (3)	Perception (3)	Fight	Impress				
Endurance (3)		Melee	Observe				
		Sneak	Vigor				
VICTORY CHART		POWERS		VITALITY			
Successes	Pts	Effect	Goal	Wound penalties:			
1-2	0			WYRD			
3-5	+1			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O			
6-8	+2			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O			
9-11	+3			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O			
12-14	+4			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O			
15-17	+5			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O			
18	+6			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O			
Critical success = x2				ARMOR			
				(. +)			

		COMBAT Action		STR bonus:	Init	Goal	DMG	RNG
		Bite		5	11	2d		
CHARACTERISTICS		SKILLS						
Strength (3)	Wits (3)	Charm	Dodge					
Dexterity (3)	Perception (3)	Fight	Impress					
Endurance (3)		Melee	Observe					
		Sneak	Vigor					
		Tracking						
VICTORY CHART		POWERS		VITALITY				
Successes	Pts	Effect	Goal	Wound penalties:				
1-2	0	+2 Per smell		-3 -1				
3-5	+1	Follow commands: sit, stay, kill		O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O				
6-8	+2			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O				
9-11	+3			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O				
12-14	+4			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O				
15-17	+5			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O				
18	+6			O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O				
Critical success = x2				ARMOR				
				(. +)				

SINNERS & SAINTS

The Best of the Worst

Here is a rogues gallery of people and creatures from the Known Worlds and beyond: noble rivals, well-meaning (and not so well-meaning) priests, space pirates, deadly mercenaries, assassins, alien animals (pets and predators), bizarre creatures and more. Each has a story to tell and will lead player characters into intrigue and adventure. Each comes on its own sheet for ease of use by both players and gamemasters.

Among the many characters included in "Sinners & Saints" are:

- **The Devil Beliah:** One of the most feared pirates of the spaceways — for good reason: No one knows just what the "devil" on his face is...
- **Boss Maury Sumaka:** Few dare to rile this crime boss, lest his associates show the way to the airlock...
- **Manager Natalie Snavé:** She's going to make sure law and order is honored at all costs — even if the player characters become examples of her punishment...
- **The Deadly Alessandro Twins:** These bounty hunters are among the best — and most beautiful — in the Known Worlds. Their prey rarely escape, no matter who they are...
- **Brother Francisco Domine:** Returned from the Symbiot Wars, Domine was changed by what he saw there in ways no one yet suspects...



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