



THE LONG RIM

Piracy, mechs, and mixed drinks at the edge of known space

a supplement for LANCER RPG



LANCER: THE LONG RIM

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RING 11, RÀO CỎ STATION

THE LAST DANCER, A BAR ON RÀO CỎ'S OUTBOUND CONCOURSE
POPULAR WITH CHARTER CAPTAINS AND CREW

22:17, D10/M3 STANDARD, 5016U

Below this dark, small bar, clear panels provide a view of the heavy interstellar freighters maneuvering to and from the docks of Rào Cỏ Station, attended by flights of harbor pilots and hired escorts. All are bound for the Dawnline Shore, the next great frontier.

You decided to wait stationside for your ship's queue number to be called. It'll probably be a few more hours; Rào Cỏ is a massive blink station, the last before the Long Rim, and your ship needed a fair bit of work besides – micrometeorite patching, restocking of potables, preserves, and perishables, cycling, ammunition recharging, etcetera. This bar, the Last Dancer, came via the recommendation of some dockworkers, and now you're getting your ear talked off by a scarred old Cosmopolitan charter officer.

Your drinking companion has some thoughts about the Rim. Since you're taking the slow route, you bought him a drink. Research, you'll tell your CO. The spacer takes a sip and winds up for his speech – practiced, but no less genuine.

"The Long Rim is a place that doesn't exist in the minds of the gente that live outside it," he says. "To them it's a pass-through – a no-see: lock the visibles and go for a sleep while your ship burns on through." He shakes his head. "It's a whole lot more than that. You got time for a listen? Settle in and keep that tab open. Here's what you need to know..."





SECTION 0

LONG RIM PLACES AND PEOPLE



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THE LONG RIM

Toward the proximal end of the Orion Arm, far from Cradle and the Capital worlds of humanity, lies a patch of space with no official designation. This “empty” transit corridor is known as the Long Rim. The Rim is an off-map territory – a blank space on the galactic chart – not for want of travel but for a dearth of habitable worlds. On paper, it is a barren no-man’s-land choked with space junk, littered with mined-out rocks and the remnants of old battles – a place where humanity’s debris coalesces, whether by the complex ballet of competing gravities or deliberate direction.

In reality, the Long Rim is the primary thoroughfare for ships traveling between Rào Cỗ Station, the furthest blink gate from the Galactic Core, and the Dawnline Shore, a hotly contested frontier territory. Often left out of the larger narratives that grip the galaxy, the Long Rim has become one of the largest and most heavily trafficked sub-blink shipping lanes in known space, moving billions of tons of food, medical supplies, construction equipment, electronics, colonists, and materiel in a steady stream.

But the Rim is not the transitive, liminal space that most assume it to be. It is home to hundreds of habitats, the first of which were built out of necessity by the earliest colonists and prospectors headed to the Dawnline Shore centuries ago. The Rim is a place of extreme hardship and loose regulations, so far from Union’s three pillars as to be ignorant of them. That distance – literal and cultural – makes it a place of opportunity as much as one of danger. In the Rim, scarcity is king, and the stories told at station bars are not tales of Union deployments on worlds crying for help, but of cash made, reputations won, and vital minutes of fresh water secured.

Pilgrims and wanderers, landhunters and refugees, small-time mercenaries and charter captains, Horizon collectivists and HORUS adherents – the people at Union’s margins find a perilous, but potentially profitable, home in the Long Rim. It is a wild place, often violent, with total control held by no central power. To whatever extent the Rim’s denizens can be said to share a consensus, they do not mind this absence of central power. Yes, life can be fast and cheap, but it is also free. Free of Union’s vast bureaucracy, a person can disappear; free of Union’s hegemony, legends can be made.

Of course, only those who survive get to tell their stories. Ask the bodies drifting in the void of space what they think of the Rim; ask the people whose ships are turned away from every port what riches

stand to be made; ask the people who glance nervously at the muscled goon in the shadows of the bar before they speak what freedom they feel.

Out in the Rim, in the “empty” border between prosperity and promise, Union’s utopia seems distant. This is a place the population of which – if they can be described as such – will need to lean on the Rim’s beguiling promises and save themselves.

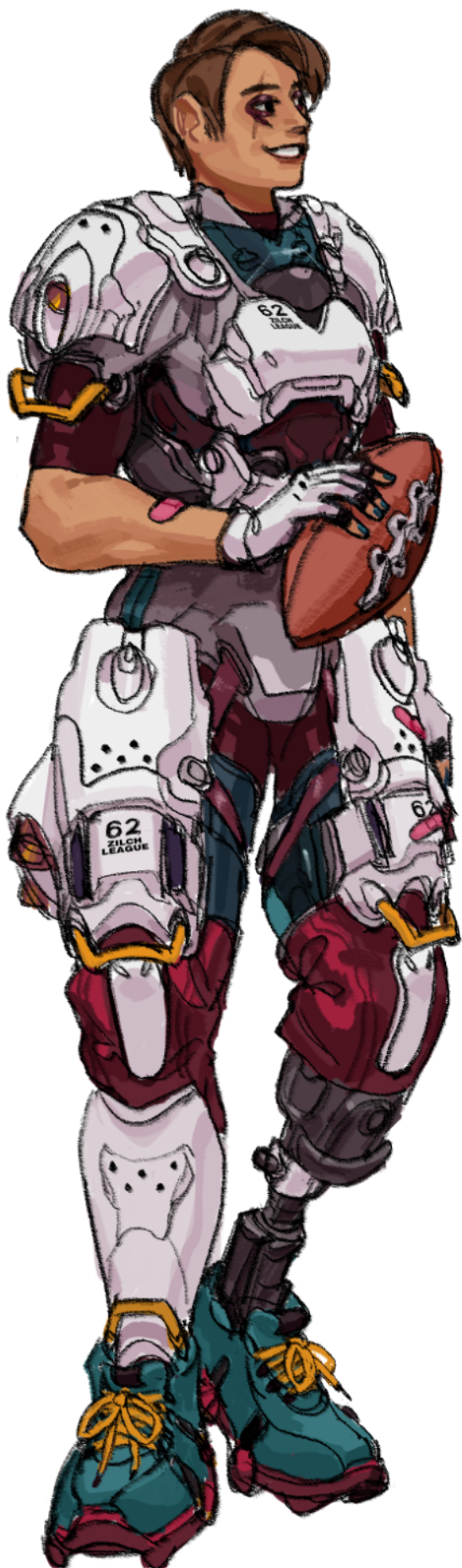
LIFE IN THE VOID

There are no habitable worlds in the Rim; if you live within its bounds, you either live on a free-floating station or in a habitat built into a directed asteroid. With the borders of one’s home defined by the thickness of its walls, people here are manifestly aware of the pressures that define their lives.

By and large, life in the Rim is precarious. Breathable air is recycled, processed, extracted, filtered, and piped in by oxygen miners or sold to the elite by O2 artisans. Sunlight and potable water are distributed to local populations by utility barons who sit on piles of manna and local scrip. Landlords hold titles to stations, extracting rent from the civilian populations marooned there. What limited green spaces exist are confined to greenhouse stations, tenuous neutral grounds monitored by local powers aware of how vital fresh food is.

The Rim’s population – both indigenous and migratory – are resourceful, canny, and share a cultural impulse to prepare for the worst. In an environment where a loose bolt or a water leak could spell death for you, your family, and your neighbors, people are inclined toward rigor, awareness, and triple-checking their seals, tools, and selves. Far from how intergalactic media often depicts them, the people of the Rim are generally cooperative and collaborative; out in the dark, there’s no one but you and the people on your ship, station, or skiff. It’s better that folks work together and live than stand alone and die.

The Rim is densely but unevenly inhabited. Permanent populations are limited to a handful of large stations, and they continue to grow as the traffic between Rào Cỗ Station and the Dawnline Shore persists. A little less than half of all stations in the Rim house permanent, local populations that have resided on them for generations across hundreds of realtime years. The rest of the Rim’s population at any given time is itinerant – migrants, or those passing through on work or leave.



Some stations are little more than groups of freighters connected by reinforced umbilicals, leashed together and moving at matched speeds; others are cities built into or across massive asteroids, sometimes home to hundreds of thousands of souls. Most fall somewhere in the middle: humble or hidden stations with fresh-enough air, good-enough food, and permanent populations numbering from the hundreds to the thousands. In function, these stations vary from systemic and/or organic fueling points, to trade bazaars, shipyards, smuggling havens, barracks, and myriad other services needed by the ships that pass through or the people that live in the Rim.

In practice, most stations are completely outside Union or corpo law. If a station has an organizing or governing body, it falls under that body's own system of judgment and justice. A good rule of thumb is that the larger the station, the more local law it'll have – though that can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on one's predilections.

With artificial gravity technologies not yet stable enough for civilian use, permanent habitats must generate gravities of their own using spin. Stations that are little more than clusters of freighters lashed together can fire oppositional thrusters to create this spin gravity. Large, purpose-built stations often feature rings or drums anchored to a central spine or terminus. These rings spin fast enough to create anywhere from 0.8–1.0 g on their inner surfaces. Some spin a little faster or a little slower, creating environments with proportionally higher or lower gravity. The interiors of these spinning habitats are where people live and work; the closer one moves to the center of the station, the lower the gravitational force becomes, until it is essentially null.

A few of the more impressive stations feature drums or toroids dozens of kilometers in diameter. Such stations are supported by titanic solar nets that generate artificial sunlight, allowing crops to be grown and an approximation of terrestrial life. These major hubs represent incredible feats of engineering and are usually the products of significant investments in time and resources from corpos, Union departments, or massively wealthy Diasporan benefactors.

OUTSIDE THE 'NET

Due to the lack of direct Union presence, most of the Rim – essentially everything beyond the major stations – is not yet tapped into the omninet. Recognition campaigns have been launched by some stations proximal to Rào Cỏ Station and the Dawnline Shore, but it will likely be some time before total coverage is established.

Local populations speak of blinkspace “dead zones” where, even using long-range omnihooks, the omninet is completely inaccessible – an impossible phenomenon, in theory. Explanations reside firmly in the realm of rumor and speculation: from Aunic infiltration to the presence of single-point entities, the haunting of Egregorian or Voladoran ghosts, and so on. Both Union and corpro paralogicians have been sent to follow up on these theories, but the liminal reality of the Rim has made tracking down specific answers to manifold legends a difficult, dangerous prospect.

The absence of reliable omninet access means that many of the luxuries enjoyed by the worlds in the Galactic Core (and even the colonial worlds of the Dawnline Shore) – omni communications, printing, and other technologies that rely on blinkspace – become extremely spotty and prone to error. The locations of stations are based on blink coverage as often as they are determined by realspace considerations.

PIRACY AND THE ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

It is an odd thing to be a pirate in a lawless space; your victims are often those who most states – if any cared enough to try and extend their law into the Rim – would also call pirates. Small-scale raiding, robbery, and larceny are common across both permanent and transient populations. “Big” hauls – the looting of colony ships in transit or corpro vessels on assignment – are comparatively rare, but dramatically more common in the Rim than in any other sector of space. Until the Dawnline Shore gate is complete, realspace transit through the Rim remains necessary, and so private, state, and corpro ventures mark Rim-based pirates as a threat (or simply the cost of doing business).

Official missions and expeditions dispatched by major powers like IPS-Northstar, Harrison Armory, and the Karrakin Trade Baronies are generally left unmolested by the pirates and voidjacks of the Rim. Even so, the major powers recommend that their people cross the Rim in numbers, with security, and accompanied by reputable guides or fixers with flight plans forwarded out to stations with prior negotiated protection contracts. These full transit packages are expensive, and most non-state or corpro-state ventures bound for the Shore or the Core can only afford one or two of these four necessities. These parties – private ventures, chartered colonies, shipments from smaller corpros, and so on – are the primary victims of piracy in the Rim.

THE PIRATE’S LIFE

Contrary to popular omnidrama depictions of pirates as bloodthirsty marauders, most raiding in the Rim is



undertaken by part-time “pirates” coming together for specific ventures, not permanent organizations or long-standing crews. These single ventures range from families banding together to attack a passing ship for supplies, to station-side gangs boosting a docked freighter for ransom, to disgruntled charter captains launching a raid on their stationmaster’s private yacht.

The few permanent pirate ventures that do exist in the Rim are organized groups of armed professionals supported by local bureaucrats and the Enterprises of the Long Rim: essentially, pirates in the Rim are non-chartered mercenary companies, operating on long-term or single-mission contracts. By and large, professional piracy groups in the Rim are used to collect Enterprise “taxes” (both from local populations and a percentage off the top of all cargo or manna passing through the Rim), settle grudges, and operate as hired muscle. Exorbitant as these “taxes” may be – and though they often end in violence – they ultimately fund the survival of the masses who call the Rim their home. Of course, the spoils only trickle down, and their distribution is far from even.

More vicious acts of piracy – kidnapping, trafficking, and the wholesale looting and resale of captured ships – are not unheard of; even “professional” pirates are willing to get dirty to get what they want. Generally speaking, however, professional pirate groups and the Enterprises that employ them seek to avoid too much savagery, lest they draw the attention of one (or more) of the galaxy’s major powers.

THE ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

Unless they are of rare independent wealth, professional pirate groups operate under the contract of one of the Long Rim’s Enterprises – the closest thing the Rim has to state powers. You’ll find more information on the Long Rim’s canonical Enterprises later on in this document, but for now, broad strokes: whether commercial, religious or criminal, these syndicates are organized into administrative bodies oriented around the expansion of their shared mission and – above all else – the accumulation of wealth. The Enterprises in the Long Rim are primarily funded by their command and control over both necessary and luxury goods and services in the Rim, the taxes, rents, and debts they extract from local populations, and the spoils they receive from the mercenary operations undertaken by the pirate groups under their jurisdictions.

The Long Rim’s Enterprises range in their Darwinian cruelty, but even the “kindest” among them tend to combine a selfish, materialistic paradigm with a warlord’s impulse towards total control over the stations within their spheres of dominance. The

diplomacy they maintain with their neighbors is entirely transactional and undertaken with designs always to one-up their rivals, trading in goods, services, labor, and prizes won through piracy. This scrambling and maneuvering for power ensures that no single Enterprise is large enough to become dominant – though the threat remains that one of the Enterprises may claw its way to the top of the pile.

Enterprises – less so the pirates they employ, who, being closer to the people, and often of the people, tend to be kinder to the people – are widely regarded as oppressive by the populations of the Long Rim. Against their power, though, there is little an average person can do. As with everything in the Rim, survival is the most important thing; most populations knuckle under and choose to work with their local Enterprise rather than against them.

PACIFICATION AND PERSISTENCE

Though there have been many small-scale attempts to secure the Rim, the area remains stubbornly untamable for two main reasons – beyond the cost, time, and danger.

First, the enormous number of uncatalogued and extralegal stations among the debris and asteroid fields provide ready hideouts, boltholes, and warrens for pirate groups to disappear. The scale of the Long Rim, its crowded stations, its transient populations, and the lack of ready outside intelligence on the area make disappearing easy for those intent on remaining hidden.

The second issue is that almost all small-scale piracy is undertaken by desperate local populations as a primary means of subsistence. It is often difficult for outsiders to distinguish between pirates and the ordinary population of any given station: someone might spend the bulk of their time farming hydroponic vegetables, all the while ready to volunteer for a percentage of the haul when word comes of a vulnerable cargo ship in the area and a crew being assembled to raid it. Enforcement applied with too heavy, cruel, or ignorant a hand can lead to the death of dozens or even hundreds of families waiting on unregistered stations for their lifelines to return.

While the larger enterprises may well be dismantled in time, “rooting out” piracy in the Rim risks the eradication of hundreds of unique cultures and populations as a result of careless, narrow-mission uses of state force. A gentler hand is needed in the long run – either that, or a total disregard for humanitarian concerns.

BUILDING THE LONG RIM

To help you populate the Long Rim, we've included a series of tables to get your creativity going – from developing stations, to identifying pirate groups, to naming and putting a human face on the Rim's powerful Enterprises. You can go through these tables in any order, though it is best to progress through them in the order that you encounter them.

STATION GENERATOR

The Long Rim is full of an extraordinary range of stations, differing in size, function, and legality. You can roll on the tables below to generate stations or create your own based on the prompts provided.

STATION SEED

ROLL 1D20

The multitudinous characteristics of stations in the Rim are too numerous to be listed in full – Instead, the following station “seeds” can be used as starting points for you to build out further characterization of the station’s inhabitants, their history, and its industries.

| | |
|-------|---|
| 1-2 | Abandoned Union Navy shipyard, purchased and sold over and over to successive owners until it was eventually hauled out to the Rim. The population might be anywhere from minor to massive. |
| 3-4 | A pirate colony based around an old surveying ship that has been permanently fused to its escorts. Now, it is nominally governed by an anarchist pirate queen. The colony keeps its doors open to outsiders but moves every 3-5 local days to avoid detection, bristling with weapons and thick with armed guards. |
| 5-6 | A well-known IPS-Northstar refueling station, neutral ground for trade and services. This station is frequented by IPS-N's Trunk Security and serves as a local base for the corpro's patrol cutters. The central ring is full of the parked ships and charter captains ready and willing to run any job you need, for the right price. |
| 7-8 | A long-abandoned mining colony, drilled deep into an enormous asteroid. Habitation is centered around its warm reactor core. The hundreds of miles of tunnels outside are more or less empty, you think. People disappear here often. |
| 9-10 | A quiet old Union Navy outpost, barnacled with merchants and traders, small diplomatic offices representing the major powers, serviceable bars, official and unofficial checkpoints, and people willing to get you what you need if you've got the manna to cover it. This outpost is staffed by bored Union personnel mostly there to run customs checks. |
| 11-12 | An enormous domed Volador trade bazaar with stable artificial gravity. Although they originally built it, los Voladores have not been here for hundreds of subjective years. It has largely been taken over by outside construction, and now it serves as the capital station for a powerful enterprise. |
| 13-14 | A collection of salvaged freighters, lashed together to form a massive, rambling habitat full of dark corners, hidden warrens, and other secrets. Theoretically, it can even move if enough of the old ship drives can be re-ignited. |
| 15-16 | A community of hydroponic farming habitats and humble agricultural families built among a collection of leashed asteroids, with a central hub for trade. This station is rumored to be a popular “retirement” destination for Horizon collectivists, and it may even be home to a “free” NHP. It's rather calm and nice. |
| 17-18 | A decommissioned Harrison Armory legion outpost from the first Dawnline colonization push, now a playground for long-haul freighter crews. It is filled with nightclubs, gambling dens, and pleasure houses, and as with most places in the Rim, anything goes here if you've got the manna. This station is popular with professional pirates from many enterprises, who see it as a neutral ground where they can have a good time. |
| 19-20 | A hollowed-out asteroid or massive cylinder ship with an expansive station built on the inside surface, spinning at a comfortable 1 g. The metropolis on the inside is home to thousands of souls, and has petitioned Union for official state recognition. |

STATION NAME

ROLL 1D20

Station names are as diverse as the people that call them home. Here are a few suggestions to help get you started – roll a d20, find the corresponding number, and then choose one of the names listed or make your own along similar lines..

- 1 Hades, Hellmouth, Pandemonium, Devildance, Tartarus, Umber
- 2 Deliverance, Salvation, Gate of Heaven, Nirvana, Gloria, Bardo
- 3 Persistence, Samsara, Resolute, Redoubt, Dauntless, Stableground
- 4 Far Point, Highwater, Overlander, Horizon's End, Rim 'o The World, "___" End
- 5 Borea, Tundra, Percipita, Cumulus, Alpine, Frost
- 6 Petergate, Harper's Hope, Rose Landing, Salahville, Ramahall, Law's Point
- 7 Fat Chance, Hardly Truly, Rollem, Freerad, Lucky, "... " Casino...
- 8 Raftland, The Leash, Harbor, Dry-dock, Null Pier, "___" Maritime
- 9 Terminus, Interchange, Switch, Hub, Terminal, Apex
- 10 Barbadas, Arruda, Signas, Mollitempos, Tzatazi, Garudanas
- 11 "___" Hole, "___" Pit, "___" Depths, "___" Deep, Lower "___", Under "___"
- 12 Goose, Eagle, Falcon, Raptor, Avia, Duck
- 13 "___" Fields, "___" Garden, "___" Orchards, "___" Forest, Nest, Dell
- 14 Icebreaker, Derrick, Well, Carver, Site, Drill
- 15 EM 51817
- 16 Nasser's Cleft, "___" Canyon, "___" Fissure, Spires, Arches, Cliff
- 17 The Olympic, Sunstar, The Heavens, Comet's Tail, The Glittering Arc, Diadem 1
- 18 Saynomore, Anythingelse, Cannagetcha, Pickr' Poison, Namaprice, F'sale
- 19 The Endless Gallery, Mirrorhell, The Silent Station, Derelict 42B, Titan, Solo Gate
- 20 Nowhere, The Eye, Blink's Gate, Coma Station, Voidhall, The Concordance

DISTRICT NAME

ROLL 1D20

On stations large enough to have distinct areas, people often adopt informal names for each district. This table provides several district names that can be used as modifiers to describe areas within a station. You can roll on this table for a quick name or use it as a jumping-off point to create your own.

- 1 The Shambles
- 2 Dockside
- 3 "___" Fields
- 4 "___" Bay
- 5 Core
- 6 Mall
- 7 "___" Lower
- 8 Storage
- 9 Ring Central
- 10 Nest
- 11 The Chokey
- 12 Upper "___"
- 13 "___" Processing
- 14 River Street
- 15 Warrens
- 16 Down Central
- 17 Spacer's Walk
- 18 Narrows
- 19 Spires
- 20 Geo-"___"

PURPOSE

ROLL 1D20 TO PICK 1 MAJOR, OR 1 MAJOR AND 1 MINOR

Every station in the Rim, from the smallest rock to the largest cylinder-world, exists for a purpose: to extract a resource, to refine a resource, or to sell resources. Use this table to determine a station's major (1st roll) and minor (2nd roll) industry, resource or purpose. It's good to know what you're getting into when you step on board a station – what is important, what is valuable, and what is scarce.

- 1-2 Asteroid Mining
- 3-4 General resupply for freighters
- 5-6 Smuggling cove
- 7-8 Hydroponic or terrestrial-analogous farming
- 9-10 Open bazaar or trading hub
- 11-12 Entertainment and nightlife
- 13-14 Military post
- 15-16 Mercenary Haven/Drinking Hole
- 17-18 Last fuel stop before the void
- 19-20 Criminal enterprise

CURIOSITIES

ROLL 1D20
ROLL FOR ONE OR TWO

Just like every station in the Rim has a purpose, every station has some kind of... curiosity. A thing that makes it stand out in your memory – for good or for ill. On the following table, roll for one or two curiosities, depending on the size of the station; larger stations can have dozens of points of interest, gathering sports, and cultural quirks, while small stations might have one or two.

- 1 Open air produce market for local families that appears along the spinal corridor once every three core standard days. The produce is grown in bags and tends to be oddly shaped and very juicy. Most spacers prefer it that way.
- 2 A wizened hermit who can see the future with about 50% accuracy for any given reading (you can roll for this, if you like). They can't see more than a day or so into the future and live mostly off donations. They claim to be a former operative of the UIB – Union Intelligence Bureau – who acquired their abilities during clandestine operations.
- 3 A large population of feral kraits – dog-sized crustaceans that have adapted almost perfectly for life on stations. They make excellent pets, produce very little waste, and consume very little food and water.
- 4 A cluttered chop shop for cyberware and prosthetics, as well as a low-cost wetware-installation and repair facility. The operation is run by an aging doctor with increasingly poor hearing and eyesight who enjoys the respect and custom of the locals. Everything is clean, despite appearances.
- 5 A water hub where locals must show up daily to receive their water ration. Over time, the hub has transformed into an impromptu social club and cafe where the local variation on tea and biscuits is served in bulk, and for very cheap. The site remains open around the clock despite the distribution period being only a few hours.
- 6 A set of exposed thermal pipes used by most of the locals to do their cooking despite many complaints from engineering. The area around the pipes is sweltering and full of amazing smells.
- 7 A HORUS technocult blister attached to the side of the station by a punch corridor and several umbilicals. The cult trades for food with the locals in return for information. Station admin steadfastly denies their existence, despite their operation being in plain sight.
- 8 A gang of station kids who will trade information for off-station food, with a vast preference for candy. It seems like they can get into nearly anything on the station (including off-limits or clandestine areas) and are total shitkickers in a fight.
- 9 A man called the Groundskeeper who has a reputation as a master forger. He can spoof most IFF signatures, ship transponders, badges of office, and official papers – for a price. He lives in a ramshackle barge attached to the station, but ready to leave any time.
- 10 An old Schedule 2 printer, although it is in terrible shape and clogged with back-orders. The printer facility is run by an overworked officer whose operating floor space is about 90 percent paperwork and old servers by volume.

- 11** “The best burger joint in the Orion Arm”, run by a Sparri technoshaman who claims to have invented a new stasis freezing technique for keeping meat fresh on long-haul journeys. Don’t ask too much about it or they get testy. The burgers live up to the hype.
- 12** A humble shrine or fine temple to Christ the Buddha, usually adorned with lanterns. Please remove your shoes before entering.
- 13** A cramped but characterful cinema run by an enthusiast who grew up in the Rim. It is slightly outdated and tends to get the most recent stuff from the Capital worlds pretty late; in the meantime, there is a well-curated program of old films.
- 14** An opulent pleasure barge has been stranded at the station for several weeks. The Smith-Shimano executive who resides there is extremely upset at the refueling delay and believes it to be intentional. They are eager for help in freeing themselves from the administrative and bureaucratic red tape keeping them there.
- 15** A gambling and gaming hall built alongside the main concourse. It is populated at all hours and doubles as a bar and smoking lounge. The popular Sparri board game kapkat is played here, and the sound of jingling machines can be heard up and down nearby areas of the station. The makeshift casino often hosts live shows and impromptu fights.
- 16** An inactive IPS-N Tortuga has been welded into the station wall and serves as a power source. It is seen as a mascot or guardian by the locals.
- 17** Down a back-alley maintenance corridor behind a bar, seekers can find gliss. These crustaceans have powerful narcotic effects; most people smoke them right out of their shells.
- 18** An overgrown hydro farm that has broken into the station’s pipes, causing large parts of the station to become humid and lush with dark green or purple foliage. Rather than clear out the growth, the station managers have turned the overgrown areas into resources for station food, medicine, and trade goods.
- 19** A weapons dealer does business out of an old apartment stack. They always have coffee brewing and are friendly, but you know it’s all business. They employ a large population of aging and imported ISP-N subalterns to assist.
- 20** The House of Cats: a jazz cafe, bar, restaurant, gambling parlor, and house of courtesans. It is never closed, extremely loud, and designed to drain all your loose manna and station credit. The establishment is garishly decorated in the style of old Terran palatial estates. It offers a fun time, but it is dangerous to get too attached.

PROBLEMS

ROLL 1D20
ROLL FOR ONE OR TWO

Every station's got 'em. By default, these problems will begin to get worse without intervention from someone – usually the player characters. Roll for one or two - depending on the size of the station - and then start the clock.

1

The station's orbit is decaying and it will fall into the nearest star or planetary body in the next year or so. A deadlock between engineering and leadership has prevented anything from being done about this.

2

A cycle of blood debts has led to a huge feud between several families on the station. Skirmishes with knives and guns are common in the streets, and the locals who haven't fled have gone into lockdown.

3

The station's life support systems are in desperate need of repair. Parts of the station have no light or air, or are massively hot or cold. To make matters worse, the engineering team sent into Life Support to fix the problem never fixed it, never returned, and won't respond to communications requests.

4

A Volador has died of (seemingly) natural causes while on a diplomatic mission to the station: there is absolutely no protocol for how to deal with burial, and the station's leaders don't know how to get in contact with los Voladores to let them know.

5

The station administrator's child has gone missing.

6

The station is infested with a population of unusually large predatory kraits that are currently plaguing the maintenance and hydroponics decks.

7

A corrupt political boss holds sway over station resources and refuses to budge without proper deference or bribes. They claim they are bringing order to the station and have given the population an ultimatum delivered at the barrels of their security forces' guns: knuckle under or get spaced.

8

There's been another gruesome murder – the third in a month. It's clear now that there's a serial killer on the station.

9

The stations' spin sections are out of alignment and the wobbling toruses sometimes spin a little too close, causing "gravity" outages and wild fluctuations. It needs fixing, and soon: station engineers predict that left unfixed, these gravity fluctuations could tear the station apart.

10

An unregistered skip vessel from the Dawnline Shore has docked at the station. The passengers claim to be political dissidents in need of sanctuary, which has sparked a divisive debate aboard the station: some think they should be granted asylum, while others fret about the station's resource budget. All the while, a Harrison Armory (or Karrakin) patrol burns towards the station, sure to spark a confrontation when they arrive.

- 11 A pirate or marauder band has parked nearby and frequently raids the station or its visitors to exact tribute. The station's enterprise is refusing to send protection teams until the locals pony up and pay for missing protection payments, so the raids continue. The people are in need of help, but any assistance is sure to piss off both the marauder's enterprise *and* the local station's enterprise.
- 12 An apocalyptic cult has filtered into the station, placing some of their adherents in important infrastructure and security positions. Left unchecked, their eschatological designs will see the end of the station and – possibly – have consequences for nearby sectors of the Long Rim.
- 13 The station is a de-facto haven for narcotics smugglers. Gliss, brighteyes, gazer – whatever you want, you can get it here. The only problem is that these smugglers are unaffiliated, and a pair of rival enterprises seem ready to “negotiate” ownership, whether the station wants them to or not.
- 14 Supplies are critically short and hoarding is commonplace. Regular shipments have been “delayed” by a local cordon – either at the hands of an enterprise or a more legitimate power – and the locals are getting desperate for relief.
- 15 The station's population has grown massively in recent years, putting a significant strain on resources. Some factions argue that an exodus is necessary, while others advocate for opening up long-sealed sections of the station and exploiting the open space. Those sections, though, have been sealed for a reason...
- 16 A popular revolution has recently overthrown the station's previous owners and the situation is still volatile; the revolutionary group has issued a broad-band call for support and fighters, but this has also alerted a nearby enterprise that sees this as an opportunity for them to expand its own territory.
- 17 The station was recently abandoned by Harrison Armory, who pulled almost all funding, resources, and security and left without explanation. The local population, beleaguered, is searching for answers; meanwhile, a skeleton team of Armory personnel can be seen operating in sealed-off sections of the station, unresponsive to the local populations' petitions for information.
- 18 A Sparri mercenary company rolls through at regular intervals and trashes the place with wild partying. They're good business, but they leave a *mess*, and it's starting to grate on the locals.
- 19 A HORUS cell keeps threatening to redirect an asteroid into the station if they are not paid at regular intervals.
- 20 The station is a neutral territory for several Rim enterprises that use it as a marketplace and diplomatic hub. Because of this, when the main concourse is bombed, the enterprises all suspect each other, and the tenuous diplomatic arrangement begins to grow tenser and tenser.

STATION NPC GENERATOR

The inhabitants of the Long Rim are a diverse crowd, even by the standards of the sixth millennium. Most of them came to the edge of known space looking to strike it rich, but others came here to escape persecution, forge a new life, or get as far away from 'civilization' as possible.

The following tables will help you get started in on some tone descriptions of any given NPC your players might encounter, along with their primary occupation and - should they have one - a secondary illicit, clandestine or moonlight occupation.

| | DESCRIPTOR (ROLL TWICE) | PRIMARY OCCUPATION | ALTERNATE/CLANDESTINE OCCUPATION |
|----|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Exhausted | Foreman | Chop shop doctor |
| 2 | Sexy | Stevedore | Petty Thief |
| 3 | Filthy | Goon | Corpro Intelligence (Undercover) |
| 4 | Corpulent | "Sheriff" | Smuggler |
| 5 | Cocky | Bureaucrat | Stowaway from the Core, seeking passage out to the Dawnline Shore |
| 6 | Starving | Fence | Refugee from the Dawnline Shore, seeking safe ground |
| 7 | Gloomy | Sex Worker | Dealer in exotic flora and fauna |
| 8 | Stranded | Security Guard | Remote-activated killer, aware or not of their true nature |
| 9 | Passionate | Gravity Racer | Swindler |
| 10 | Loud | Political Boss | Weapons dealer |
| 11 | Stoic | Nearlight drive technician | Zero-g Farmer |
| 12 | Part-time | Monk | Pilgrim |
| 13 | Sweaty | Station Engineer | Ungrateful partisan |
| 14 | Cigarette-Smoking | Private Eye | Muckraker |
| 15 | Flamboyant | Harbor, Charter, or Enterprise Pilot | HORUS cell member |
| 16 | Beefy | Night Mayor | Local Fixer |
| 17 | Nervous | Marine | Union or Harrison Armory Veteran |
| 18 | Gruff | Urchin | Addict (brighteyes, gliss, gazer, etc) |
| 19 | Well-Armed | Medical Technician | Horizon collectivist |
| 20 | Thrifty | Bounty Hunter | Pit fighter |

QUIRK

ROLL 1D20

Not every NPC needs a quirk, but if you want them to stick out a bit, you can roll on this table for some inspiration.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | An oversized, distinctive, or otherwise notable hat or headgear. |
| 2 | One eye is covered by an eye patch, is a noticeable prosthetic, or has been replaced with something decorative. |
| 3 | Old burn scars, visible even when clothed. |
| 4 | Constantly reaching for, moving with reference to, or tapping weapon. |
| 5 | Dresses in garish clothing. |
| 6 | Often drunk, or otherwise intoxicated. |
| 7 | A pathological liar (you think). |
| 8 | Very well connected, or related to about half the station. |
| 9 | Knows jack shit about mechs, lancers, or pilots, but pretends they do. |
| 10 | Has an exotic pet. |
| 11 | Much taller than a person born downwell due to a life spent in artificial gravity. |
| 12 | Often carries pamphlets of Ungrateful, HORUS, or Horizon propaganda. |
| 13 | Has an excellent mental map of the station. |
| 14 | Wears cracked eyeglasses. |
| 15 | Has one or more visibly cybernetic limbs, in poor repair and condition. |
| 16 | Used to be a lancer. |
| 17 | Covered head to toe in Sparri saga tattoos, may or may not be Sparri. |
| 18 | Does not speak Union Common, but can communicate using an automatic translator. |
| 19 | Impressive hair or facial hair. |
| 20 | Often followed, willingly or not, by innumerable dock rats or street urchins. |

MOTIVATION

ROLL 1D20

Few who settle in the Long Rim aimed to make a home there. Most folks who find themselves working steady in the Rim landed there because they couldn't make it to the Dawnline, and after a long burn out across the Big Night, the deck of a station seems about as good as paradise. Even after the shine fades, there's always money to be made, always another ship that can bring you a little bit closer to where you're trying to get – or farther away from what you're fleeing.

Out in the Rim, everyone wants for something. The landlord you pay is the tenant of a bigger fish, and your hired gun is the master of some other poor deckie. Everyone living has a hustle and a want; use this table to if you need to determine an NPC's motivation by rolling first their Desire, and then their Object of Desire.

| | Desire | Object of Desire |
|-------|-----------------|---|
| 1-2 | Access to | Food. |
| 3-4 | Safety of | Dangerous, rare or expensive flora or fauna. |
| 5-6 | Information on | Family. |
| 7-8 | Transport for | Weapons. |
| 9-10 | Possession of | Debt. |
| 11-12 | Elimination of | High quality narcotics. |
| 13-14 | Hiding of | Reputation. |
| 15-16 | Cover for | Blackmail. |
| 17-18 | Return of | Workers. |
| 19-20 | Retribution for | A local politician, VIP, or enterprise middleman. |

LONG RIM DRINKS

ROLL 1D20

You can use this extremely useful generator if you ever roll up to a bar in the Long Rim (most stations have something resembling a bar, even if it doesn't have seats). Most bars across the Rim serve the J.C.H. which is 1/3 grain or root liquor, 2/3 hard alcohol distilled from impulse drive cleaner fluid. Good quality alcohol is fairly prized.

| | | | | | |
|------|-------------|-----------|-------|--------|---------|
| 1-2 | Virgin | Destroyer | 11-12 | Tiger | Punch |
| 3-4 | Brain | Buller | 13-14 | Corpse | -tini |
| 5-6 | Five Finger | Reviver | 15-16 | Carina | Grinder |
| 7-8 | Pain | Highball | 17-18 | Ass | Mule |
| 9-10 | Xiaoli's | Juice | 19-20 | Rhino | Sour |

PIRATES

"Folk that don't live here think nothin' happens here but pirates and pillaging." The old Cosmopolitan says. "This ocultación of the local pops, their kin, their work – that's the point. Being a ghost is a good thing out here." He winks. "But," he says, "the trade: without Union watchin' over the playbox, life ain't partic' precioso. No one stops a corpo from moving fast and breaking things, or one of the Enterprises from drawing blood – no big daddy with the auxiliary stick, si?"

"So without the U, all you got to lean on is you and your pals and your guns. And Rimward you gotta fret on 'money' and 'debts' drawing you down like a high-gee rock – the lease on your boat, air cost ticking by the minute, potable water and a deck of kids you all gotta find comida for and bang—" He claps his empty cup on the bar, the sound turning heads throughout the Last Dancer. "You wonder why a person turns pirate?" He quiets. Looks over his shoulder, at the flow of people outside the Dancer. "See them there? Those Northie Trunks in their pretty uniforms?"

A small group of IPS-N Trunk Security officers walk by. They're on some kind of shore leave, in pressed uniforms with light anti-k vests on. Just sidearms, nothing long or serious.

"No such thing as pirates in the Rim before the Northies started losing cargo," the old cosmopolitan says. "Now, it's an industry: the Enterprises offer some scrip for the desperate to boost a ship, the Northies get to buck shots at soft targets to test their new guns, and the only people who suffer are the poor bastards who had the bad luck to be born Outside." He turns back to the bar, hand on your shoulder to turn you as well. "Wasn't better before, but it sure wasn't this bad; now that there's money in it, all the players are really out for blood."

Pirates are commonplace in the Long Rim. While most raiding parties are ad-hoc, one-off partnerships, larger groups often have enough staying power to name themselves and win contracts from one of the Long Rim's Enterprises. Such a group will usually have a base of operations (use the station generator on p. 10 if you'd like), a primary method of business, and a major asset of some kind. Many, if not all, use mechs for both general labor and raiding. Using the following tables, you can roll to determine some starting ideas for various pirate bands that one can encounter in the Long Rim. The names you generate would fit a more "professional" pirate band, not a group of desperate people driven to piracy as a last resort.

You can use the **Pirate** template on p. 328 of *Lancer* to represent pirate mechs. Most pirates in the Long Rim are kitted out with EVA modules of some description, allowing them to maneuver in space. The **Ace**, **Assault**, **Berserker**, **Breacher**, **Mirage**, **Support**, and **Witch** NPC classes (see p. 285 of *Lancer*) are great for building pirates.

PIRATE BAND NAME ROLL 1D20

| | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Colossal | Devils |
| 2 | Skull | Gods |
| 3 | Vector | Family |
| 4 | Red | Tigers |
| 5 | Realspace | Company |
| 6 | Tiger | Hunters |
| 7 | Fifty Talent | Dogs |
| 8 | 108 | Triad |
| 9 | The All- | Kings |
| 10 | Strong | Solutions Unlimited |
| 11 | The Big | Gunners |
| 12 | The Long | Howlers |
| 13 | The/Los | Calaveras |
| 14 | The Free | Runners |
| 15 | The Golden | Group |
| 16 | Pack | Bosses |
| 17 | Private Company | Patrol |
| 18 | Unlimited | Rimside |
| 19 | Transit | Interstellar |
| 20 | Skyside | Interstation |

PIRATE CLAN HUSTLE

ROLL D20 FOR ONE OR TWO, ONE IS PRIMARY HUSTLE

- 1-2 Toll taking:** Exaction of rent, bribes, tribute, or labor from local stations, freighters, or other passers-by.
- 3-4 Trafficking:** Slavery and the smuggling of people (natural-born or clones), typically for unpaid labor.
- 5-6 Hijacking:** Direct capture of ships, typically for ransom, but sometimes for parts.
- 7-8 Smuggling:** Surreptitious transport of goods (illicit, normal, or unsavory) to avoid tariffs, taxes, embargoes, blockades, or fees.
- 9-10 Monopoly:** Absolute control of a necessary resource – like fuel, water, or food – in the local area.
- 11-12 Kidnapping:** Capture of VIPs , typically as hostages to secure ransom payments.
- 13-14 Raiding:** Direct, violent assault on passing ships or vulnerable stations to forcibly take resources or people for use or sale.
- 15-16 Mercenaries:** Soldiers for hire on a contract basis.
- 17-18 Narcotics:** Manufacture and distribution of narcotics.
- 19-20 Horde:** A rare type of group, constantly on the move. Hordes have no allies but may wield influence over cowed or oppressed populations that they command with threats of punishment. Hordes survive solely by raiding stations and ships that they deem vulnerable and valuable. They typically grow by pressing captives into service or conscripting from local populations at gunpoint. Hordes rarely last more than a few months before dispersing, though some are large enough to follow a pattern of seasonal or tidal surges and droughts.

MAIN ASSET

ROLL 1D20

- 1-2** A fully armed warship kept in excellent shape. This ship was taken from Union or a state navy and although an older model, it is still deadly compared to other ships in the Rim. It has a spinal cannon or significant ordinance, plentiful batteries of cannons or lances, and is capable of destroying a station if its commander wishes. It might be used as a mobile base of operations.
- 3-4** A well-armed squad of 4-5 Elite mechs.
- 5-6** An impeccably hidden base, located in a cloud of debris or a dead zone that confuses sensors.
- 7-8** A titanic, unique mech. You can build this as a Size 4 mech with the Ultra template. It is well-armored enough to tackle ships and may require multiple pilots to crew.
- 9-10** An NHP that acts as a powerful advisor or a de facto leader. Rare for the Rim, this NHP is maintained by a team of skilled technicians, and grants a powerful advantage to its organization.
- 11-12** A powerful hacking corps that works out of an old comms station. They are capable of stealing ships and redirecting supplies without firing a shot, and they usually avoid direct conflict.
- 13-14** A long-range, space-to-space kinetic weapon platform that can easily disable passing ships and threaten stations. Its power source is buried deep inside an asteroid and it can only fire once every hour or so.
- 15-16** A small army (50-100 units) of combat subalterns armed with energy weapons.
- 17-18** A sub-blink snare – a temperamental, nonlethal anti-ship system that can disable ships' reactors without harming their crew. It needs a central activator on a ship or nearby station to hold a ship in place.
- 19-20** A leashed asteroid at least 6 miles (or 10 kilometers) in diameter. Can be redirected, albeit slowly, to threaten stations or ships.

LONG RIM ENTERPRISES

The old Cosmopolitan is well warmed now, in the middle of his talk on the Rim.

"If you weren't brought, bought, or stolen here, then a whole mess of reasons draws folks to and through the Rim," he says. "Some say it's 'cause they can go ghost or legal-dead, or they say it's all a part of their political thought, or because they say it's the only place to be free," the old cosmo shakes his head. "The Rim ain't free, ain't pure, ain't any of that pinche bluesky chisme – the Rim only free for the powerful, the rich, and the dead. Everyone who come looking to live free, or wind up here and think to start on their fortune, they just fodder."

He falls silent. *"Unless they ain't. Unless they win – small at first – but enough scrip to get 'em a place, a gun, a friend. You start to win, you start to learn: you finna climb over a mountain a aspirantes if you wanna see yourself stay on top."*

He fishes into a pocket of his flight suit, pulls out a sheaf of bills clipped together, and tosses it on the bar. Points to it. *"Enterprise scrip, from the bastards who made it to the top of the mountain. Take it. Useless outside the Rim, but on the inside enough of it will open any door."*

Enterprises are the closest entities the Long Rim has to governments. Most are managed by a single individual and their advisors, though some of the Enterprises in the Rim are run by councils, committees or boards. Most are organized into syndicates of powerful families or councils of stations; the most powerful, and the least numerous, are structured under the command of a single, charismatic leader, or structured as a centrally controlled – though much smaller – analog to a corpro-state.

The Long Rim's Enterprises – with some exception – are wholly oriented around policing and securing their areas of Rimside space, managing and exploiting what extractive industry is present, and running the markets and economies in their spheres of influence – formal, literal, informal, and otherwise. The Enterprises command varying strengths of loyal (or, at least, highly-paid) professional security forces, and make up gaps in their martial capacity via the employ of professional pirates.

The following generation tables will help you name, build, and particularize the Enterprises present in the Long Rim, detailing their strengths, persons who your players may come into contact with, their economic and political power, and general dispositions.

HOLDINGS

ROLL 1D20

Other than its military strength and stations, what is the basis of this Enterprise's power?

| | |
|-------|--|
| 1-2 | A fleet of asteroids rich in rare minerals, bound into a closely-guarded orbit and protected by loyal cosmopolitan guards. |
| 3-4 | The only pilots capable of navigating a treacherous corridor of null-blink space, and the knowledge to train more. |
| 5-6 | The best supply of fresh water in the region, and the infrastructure to hygienically process, package, and distribute it. |
| 7-8 | A collection of fabrication plants ready to produce GMS hulls, components, and parts; for the right price, the Enterprise can also procure licensed materials. |
| 9-10 | A reliable method of contacting los Voladores, plus first pick of prime Volador artifacts, goods, and technology for outfitting their stations. |
| 11-12 | The contract to guarantee passage for IPS-N bureaucrats from Rao Cò Station to the Dawnline Shore, as well as support from IPS-N Trunk Security forces. |
| 13-14 | The ability to produce blink transponder codes capable of clearing Union code-checks, and the largesse to reward loyalty with them. |
| 15-16 | A monopoly on viable cloning processes and the accounts of the leadership of many other enterprises. |
| 17-18 | Strength guaranteed — via clandestine channels — by a major power with interests in the Dawnline Shore (e.g. Harrison Armory or the Karrakin Trade Barons). |
| 19-20 | The standard currency that Long Rim populations use for banking and trade — until they can convert it into manna, that is. |

REPRESENTATIVE(S)

ROLL 1D20

While Enterprises are the major powers in the Long Rim (that is, unless one of the galaxy's major powers take an interest), they have human faces. Who do you know who is a representative of this Enterprise? Roll for one or two people to begin – spend any time in the Rim and you will no doubt come to know more.

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-2 | A kind but low-ranking member. The can't offer any real support on behalf of the Enterprise other than their word and the largesse of their commanding officer, manager, or foreman. |
| 3-4 | A middleweight bureaucrat with an ear to the ground. While loyal to their Enterprise, they count you as a good friend. |
| 5-6 | An experienced harbor pilot, recently promoted by their Enterprise to the post of customs master at an important station. |
| 7-8 | The leader of a pirate crew that has been contracted to work with the Enterprise. |
| 9-10 | An officer in the Enterprise's corps of loyal guards. |
| 11-12 | A member of the Enterprise's station-level police force (e.g., a beat cop, a detective, or similar). |
| 13-14 | A fixer for the Enterprise. |
| 15-16 | A ship captain who flies under the Enterprise's flag. |
| 17-18 | The kid of an Enterprise's leader. |
| 19-20 | The leader of the Enterprise, who will always grant you an audience – as long as you stay on their good side and remember who is in charge. |

STRENGTH

ROLL 1D20

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-2 | Meagre. The Enterprise is allowed to exist by the other enterprises because it is a useful dumping ground, patsy, or easy victim. No one works with it for long, and it is likely only a matter of time before its last remaining station falls to one of the other Enterprises. |
| 3-4 | Modest. This Enterprise controls a modest complement of stations with a small but loyal guard corps; the bulk of its strength comes from outside hires, who its leaders can afford to pay for their loyalty. |
| 5-6 | Middling. The number of loyal guard to mercenaries is nearly 1:1. This Enterprise likely commands a series of popular but noncritical stations. |
| 7-8 | Substantial. The Enterprise holds an important checkpoint, fueling, or resupply station, and it can afford to pay its mercenaries well and then some. Its leadership feels comfortable bullying smaller Enterprises when necessary, but they generally stay in their own lane – always a bigger fish, after all. |
| 9-10 | Mighty. In command of a large fighting force and mighty economic base, this Enterprise can field older-model fighters, bombers, and corvettes, and is likely on the radar of the major powers – for good and for ill. Its influence spreads out into the Long Rim, and its leaders aren't afraid to throw their power around, implicitly or explicitly, to get smaller Enterprises to do what they want, to annex independent stations, and even muscle in on outside powers' presence in the Rim. |
| 11-12 | Focused (Legitimate Connections). This Enterprise has clandestine or overt connections to one of the major powers with an interest in the Dawnline Shore. This legitimacy insulates it from some of that power's enforcement activities and provides marked economic benefits as well. |
| 13-14 | Focused (Knowledge). This Enterprise may or may not be mighty in military strength, but it guards a deep, secret knowledge valued by all of the other Enterprises and at least one major power. Unfortunately for them, this Enterprise is damn good at not giving up its knowledge – unless the price is right, or the cost for withholding too steep. |
| 15-16 | Focused (Coin). This Enterprise is one of the wealthiest and likely sets the terms by which all others conduct their markets and economic affairs. Managing the economy is a hassle for the other Enterprises, but participating in it is an unassailable boon. For the time being, the other Enterprises are happy to let this one continue to manage the Rim's accounts, be the target of their collective grumblings, and prevent all-out war in doing so. |
| 17-18 | Focused (Goods). This Enterprise has multiple monopolies on necessary luxury goods that are difficult or costly to procure. The other Enterprises don't have the capacity to produce these goods and are content to let this Enterprise take the lead. While other Enterprises may gripe about the price, they generally all have a favorable view of this Enterprise on account of the goods they produce. |
| 19-20 | Titanic. This Enterprise controls multiple refurbished warships crewed by veteran spacers and loyal, disciplined marines. It commands thousands of well-seasoned fighters and a few pilots – arguably lancers, in another life – who operate personal chassis. No other Enterprise will face this one down, as that would certainly mean total destruction. The major powers have extensive dossiers on this Enterprise's personnel and likely have contingency plans to strike and eliminate its leaders and military might if need be; by the same token, this Enterprise may have designs beyond the Long Rim. |

QUICK CANON ENTERPRISE SETUP

If you're in a hurry and just want to use "canon" Enterprises without going through the tables, refer to the following:

THE FREE RIM ASSOCIATION

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Strength | Middling |
| Holdings | A reliable means of contacting los Voladores, plus the first pick of prime Volador artifacts, goods, and technology for outfitting their stations. |
| Detail | The FRA is a pan-Rim interest group organized across a network of free stations far from the main transit corridors of the Rim. The FRA boasts a large "membership", though their numbers do not always equate to political, economic, or martial strength: the FRA's population is by far and away the most impoverished of any of the Rim's Enterprises, and rife with infighting on account of their "big station" philosophy of "anyone in, no one out." |
| Contact | Your contact is Undersecretary Natán Chamorro, a middleweight bureaucrat with an ear to the ground. While loyal to their Enterprise, they count you as a good friend, and will do what they can to help you, unless aiding you goes against the interests of the FRA. |

PAN-CONCOURSE HOLDINGS

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Strength | Focused (Goods) |
| Holdings | A vast portfolio of lucrative properties across many other Enterprises' stations, from humble bodegas to exclusive casinos, bars, brothels, luxury blocks, and so on. |
| Detail | Pan-Concourse Holdings is a bicameral corpro venture: on the one hand it is a vertically-integrated supplier and distributor of goods and sundry; on the other, PCH is the lease-owner of dozens of exclusive, lucrative casinos brothels, bars, restaurants, and luxury housing. PCH shops are so ubiquitous that "the PCH" is common Rim slang for any bodega or small grocery store, regardless of whether or not PCH actually owns it; PCH real estate properties, however, have their own branding, and are often owned behind shell companies. |
| Contact | You know Chief Security Officer Paula Cisneros, the head of security at The Mountaintop, an exclusive, PCH-owned nightclub and casino. As a career officer in PCH's internal security service, they are loyal to PCH first, but willing to work cooperatively with you to track down hostile actors. |

THE SIGIL GROUP

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Strength | Focused (Knowledge) |
| Holdings | A collection of fabrication plants ready to produce GMS hulls, components, and parts; for the right price, the Enterprise can also procure licensed materials. |
| Detail | The Sigil Group is a fabrication conglomerate headquartered on the Rào Cỏ side of the Long Rim. Their primary station, Sigil-1 Rotunda, in fact is commonly the very first stop that travelers make on their way across the Rim; the Sigil Group's proximity to Rào Cỏ has allowed them to corner the Rim's market on GMS products and, after some re-branding (the "sigil" of the Sigil Group), to become the most common "single origin" supplier out in the Rim. |
| Contact | You're in good with papi at the PCH on the corner. This gets you extra jalapeño on your chopped krait sometimes, but not much else. Still, it's an in, and it's nice to know someone out here in the Rim. |

MASTODON

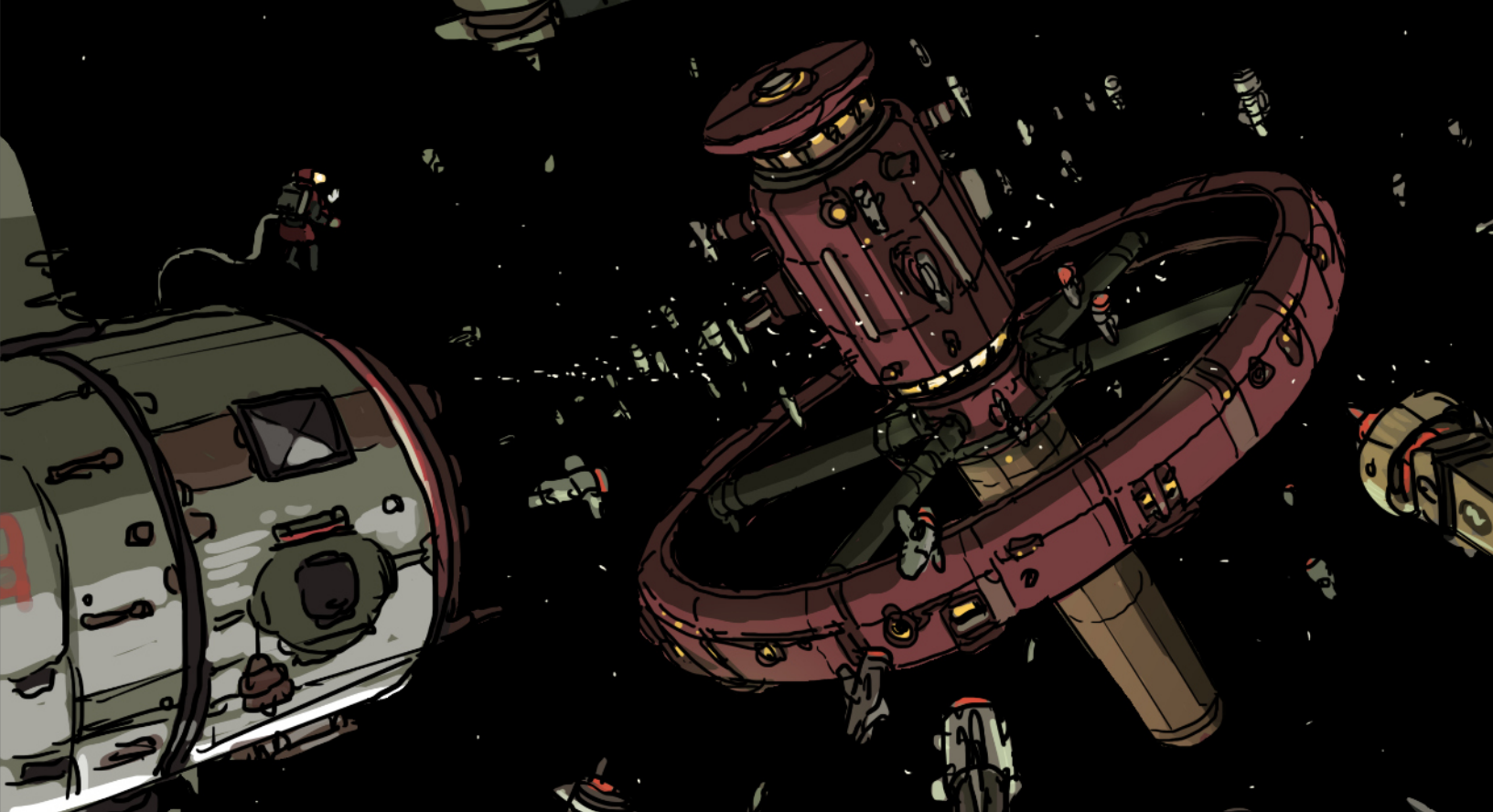
| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Strength | Substantial |
| Holdings | Boasts a large amount of “exchange training” Karrakin pilots; any direct involvement with Trade Baron objectives in the Shore is circumstantial, but apparent. |
| Detail | A Rim-based securities group founded by a Baronic outer-systems investment concern. While their primary work sees them escorting Karrakin-flagged ships and VIPs as they transit the ring, they do hold a substantial amount of stations under their direct administration. Additionally, they sponsor a popular Rim-based Slingshot Courser team by the same name. |
| Contact | Your contact is a third-tier pilot who races for Mastodon’s Slingshot Courser team: Sama Neir. An ignoble born in the Rim, Sama doesn’t have much of an “official” way in, though they’re a damn fine pilot and might one day make a name for themselves if they make it to Tier 1. |

DIADEM CORP

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Strength | Middling |
| Holdings | The best supply of fresh water in the region and the infrastructure to hygienically process, package, and distribute it; also the major supplier of diamonds, ground lenses, and other industrial minerals and gemstones. |
| Detail | DiademCorp is the primary potable-industrial hydro supplier in the Rim, the lease owners of a series of icy moons in orbit around a gas giant; additionally, they are known for the quality of industrial cutters and lenses they produce from the moons’ gemfalls. |
| Contact | Your contact with DiademCorp is an experienced, ice hauler captain, Rima Swift. They lead a small, DiademCorp-flagged crew on regular freight runs between client stations and DC’s moons. |

CHURCH OF THE WANDERER COMET

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Strength | Modest |
| Holdings | The only pilots capable of navigating a treacherous corridor of null-blink space, and the knowledge to train more. |
| Detail | An itinerant order of nomads bound for the Dawnline Shore; has been held up in the Long Rim for three decades now as their ship was impounded and sold for parts by the Ten Families. Most of the Church’s population can be found on the Dawnline side of the Rim, though pilgrims and missionaries wander throughout – their wanderings have not been without purpose however, and their pilots are now some of the best at navigating the null-blink pockets endemic in the Long Rim. |
| Contact | You have met the leader of the Church of the Wanderer Comet, Brother Palm. They are easy to meet, as they spend their time ministering constantly to their followers aboard the one station they own, a free harbor that doubles as their main gathering hall. Brother Palm is a blisteringly charismatic preacher, and will always grant you an audience – though holding his attention is a daunting task, as he usually takes his meetings out on walks among the people. |

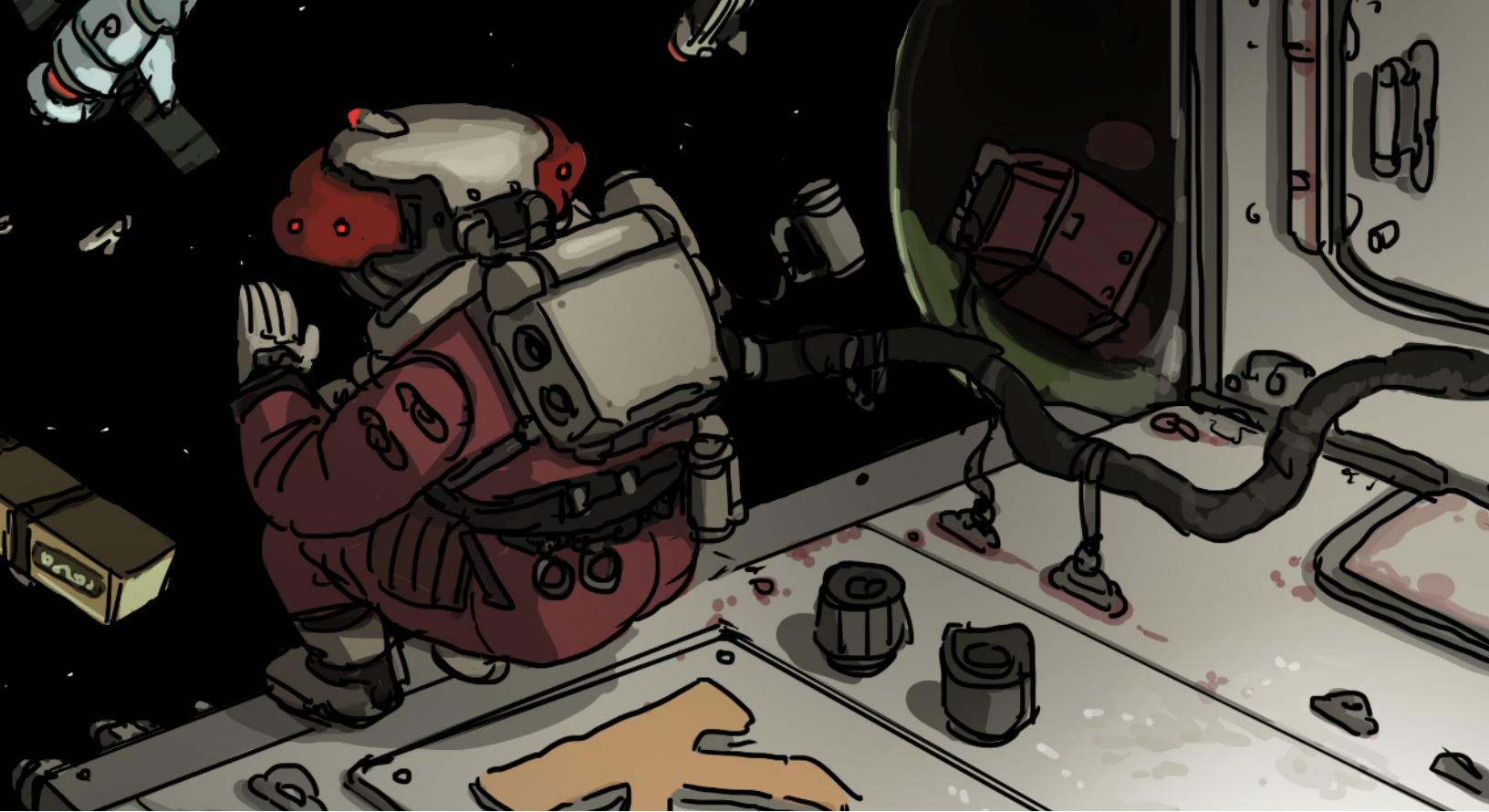


THE BRIGADE-LEGION

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Strength | Substantial |
| Holdings | Numerous stations, thousands of loyal, mission-driven soldiers, and a company-strength element of mechanized chassis. Also a handful of corvette-class ships. Their presence in the Rim is widely assumed to be propped up by Harrison Armory, though the Armory denies this. |
| Detail | A foreign legion of ex-Armory legionnaires and children of the veterans of the initial Dawnline campaign. Primary source of income is as private security for VIPs and as union-breakers for hire. |
| Contact | You know Security Lieutenant Ernesto Lima, a station security officer on Estrella Alto, a Brigade-Legion owned station near the Dawnline Shore side of the Rim. SL Lima was born and raised on Estrella Alto and has never shown an interest in joining one of the BL's "Outside Operations" teams, making him a bit of an outlier when it comes to BL personnel. |

GREENFIELD DYNAMICS

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Strength | Focused (Legitimate Connections). Greenfield Dynamics is a close point of contact for IPS-N in the Long Rim. |
| Holdings | Greenfield Dynamics is widely regarded outside the Rim as a legitimate actor; they hold the contract to supply and house IPS-N personnel while in transit between Rào Cỏ and the Dawnline Shore. |
| Detail | Greenfield Dynamics is widely regarded inside the Rim as an intruder on account of their focus on providing service to people passing through the Rim, even though they were founded by and currently operate under the leadership of Rim-born persons. GD is a primary owner and investor in many stations' harbors, supplying them with IPS-N parts, hulls, systems, and maintenance. |
| Contact | You know Deck Chief Rigoberto Linares Estrellas, the hanger master of Angelito, a Greenfield Dynamics station midway across the Rim. He's a gruff, practical, fiercely loyal Rimside employee of GD, but took a liking to you and your flash kit – keep him and his boys busy with repair and refitting, and he'll knock the prices down for you on account of the privilege of working on such a high-tech machine. |



THE TEN FAMILIES

Strength Mighty; Focused (Coin)

Holdings

The Ten Families set the exchange rates of the many currencies that Long Rim populations use for banking and trade via their Golden Compact. The polycurrency, usually just called “script”, ensures that any station’s currency – as long as they sign on as a member of the Golden Compact – carries value at any other station in the compact (after exchange and Family commission fee).

Detail

The Ten Families is a tremendously powerful cartel of old, “founding father” families of the Long Rim. They command a tremendous number of stations; while they have a comparatively small standing security force, their pockets are deep, and they can draw on their long-established relationships besides. Owing to their age and presence in the Rim, their members command an almost reflexive deference – though as other Enterprises grow in power and ambition, that reflexive deference has begun to wane...

Contact

Your contact is Porsupuesto, a fixer for the Ten Families. He is a respected off-book operator who quickly identified your usefulness for the Families, despite your recent arrival to the Rim. Happy to work with you, though everything with Por seems to be transactional...

THE SHINING ATOLL

Strength Modest

Holdings

A fleet of asteroids rich in rare minerals, bound into a closely-guarded orbit and protected by loyal cosmopolitan guards.

Detail

The Shining Atoll is an investment group that owns a titanic swath of Rim space rich in rare and precious metals and minerals. They hold authority over who gets to mine this region – the eponymous Shining Atoll – and, as a result, have an outsized influence on the politics and economy of the Rim.

Contact

Your contact in the Shining Atoll is Andres Adolfo, a contracts and charter manager who works in a Shining Atoll office on Columnar One, a large, main-corridor station midway through the Long Rim.

FACTIONS PRESENT IN THE LONG RIM

VOLADORES THE BAJAMESA

"Here are the rules: First, no guns, no blades. Give all your weapons to my associate here – we'll hold them until your meeting is done. Next: let them pour – if they don't fill your empty cup, it's time for you to leave. Finally: no touching them or the product. Indicate what you want, we'll box it for you and return it here when you leave." The espada looks to each of you in turn. "If you violate any of these rules, the meeting is over. Got it?"

You look at the four espadas in their Atlas suits. They ripple with metamuscles and k-weave plating, dark integuments marked with unfamiliar saga lines. You raise your hands in acknowledgment.

"Good." The lead espada smiles, revealing teeth formed from turquoise and electrum. "Welcome to Bajamesa, of High Ground."

Perhaps because of the region's unique relationship to blinkspace, or perhaps for their own curious reasons, los Voladores maintain a trade ship in the Long Rim, the *Bajamesa*. They've maintained this roaming outpost for a century now, arriving in shuttle-proximity to stations without preamble, ready to meet and trade with locals and those in transit.

The Rim's Enterprises have learned not to interfere with los Voladores' passage or their business: the traders travel with a complement of unparalleled Sparri espadas who are more than a match for any force in the area.

The *Bajamesa* is welcome at any port in the Rim, with rare exception. A large vessel, the *Bajamesa* measures just under a kilometer wide and half as long from fore to aft, with a smooth, single-wing silhouette unique among ships in the Rim. While in port, los Voladores' espadas usually maintain a small stall on the station's main concourse where they vet eager applicants looking to do business with los Voladores; if accepted, then the Sparri will provide access to the *Bajamesa* takes via their own skiff. If the players encounter and are granted an audience aboard the *Bajamesa*, it will be their only meeting – for the time being.

Visitors to the ship are confined to two chambers: The first is a waiting area where one can lounge on plush pillows and examine intricate, handwoven carpets, snack on fresh produce, and examine fine silver-

paneled walls covered in etchings that give the impression of dense foliage. The other is the room in which they may meet los Voladores, a circular chamber where three or four (or sometimes as few as one, but never more than four) Voladores sit cross-legged before a wide, low table upon which they display their curiosities.

Los Voladores speak through a Sparri espada translator, who stands to the side with a silver pot and keeps the mugs filled with a gentle mint tea as long as the meeting is going well.

The only goods los Voladores are willing to trade are the ones they offer. Los Voladores accept promises for future meetings as payment; as a GM, know that they expect more in return than the players think they're giving up.

Once the meeting is concluded, clients are ushered back to the waiting room, where they will depart on the next skiff back to the station. If they have purchased any goods, they can expect to receive them the next day at the station.

HORIZON COLLECTIVE LONG RIM BRANCH

The Horizon Collective maintains a hidden outpost and a number of cells in the Long Rim. Even with the anonymity the Rim offers, Horizon's principal operations must still be cloaked in secrecy: its agents there work alone or in small teams – ideally under the cover of legitimate occupations – to identify and liberate NHPs that fit their parameters for freedom. When they liberate an NHP – a Free Deimosian, as they call them – they whisk them back to one of three safe houses: Bolaño, Balwinder, or Parmenides – covert stations hidden in the Rim.

Horizon's public presence in the Long Rim is encapsulated by its free subaltern repair clinics. Common enough on larger stations at neutral concourses, these modest workshops are staffed by Horizon volunteers. They repair any subalterns brought to them, free of charge, no questions asked. They also run community education clinics covering the basics of ethical interaction with NHPs and subalterns, mechanized systems maintenance, and basic stellar survival. Due to their popularity among the populations of the Rim, Horizon collectivists largely enjoy free movement throughout the region; however, most people know nothing of their covert objectives, and would likely see their abolitionist operations as too radical or outright dangerous.

VOLADOR CURIOSITIES

ROLL 1D20

FACTIONS PRESENT IN THE LONG RIM

- 1 An etched osmium panel three feet across and no more than an inch thick, set in a clear protective frame. It appears to be a fragment of a much larger work – a bas relief depicting stylized human figures in supplication to a monolith. The monolith is inlaid with a single, thin chip of an unidentifiable black mineral.
- 2 A small vial of stable, liquid oganesson. According to los Voladores, this vial represents the highest concentration of the element in the known galaxy – and they promise more.
- 3 A bauble only visible by the slim lens of realspace bent around it. The bauble floats above a crude, hammered golden plate, humming just at the edge of your hearing. Wherever the plate moves, so too does the bauble. Los Voladores caution against touching the bauble, recommending that the buyer simply stare into it and contemplate its meaning.
- 4 A nearly complete human skeleton painted in faded green paint, detailed with delicate flowers and creeping vines. It rests within an ancient spacesuit, arms crossed over its chest, bound in rope. Its skull, visible through its cracked faceplate, is layered with lamellar chips of lapis lazuli, gold, and black opal.
- 5 A bolt of crimson cloth, thick and finely woven, shredded and burnt at one end. Trace amounts of blood can be detected on the cloth. Los Voladores indicate that it was recovered from Aunic space and is known as a “glory”.
- 6 A dull grey panel of unknown depth. When you look at it, you imagine you can see memories remembered in the moment, but forgotten until you viewed them; sometimes, you see yourself, out of focus but just recognizable enough to be sure that it is you.
- 7 A blade of unknown make and metal, finely crafted, but broken from its hilt and handle, which is missing. Upon closer inspection, faint light can be seen shimmering from the cleft. The blade is suspended in the center of a clear, leaden containment unit because it is – they inform you – incredibly radioactive.
- 8 A paper journal with a stained, faded green linen cover. Inside are the inked notes of an anonymous author, detailing a solitary relativistic journey out from “Earth” to something called the “Helios Gate”. The journal ends with an entry indicating the traveler’s arrival is imminent; the rest of the pages are blank.
- 9 A 3-foot platinum staff inlaid with golden rings that demarcate distinct sections along its length. Los Voladores inform you that the staff is one of a pair and they are still searching for its twin – they promise to contact you once it is found, so that you may complete your collection.
- 10 A silver mask shaped into a human visage. It appears to have many thousands of connecting points, suggesting that it attaches to a larger unit, and once connected, would be powered and capable of information transfer. On the inside of the face, faded grease-pen words read “MAGGIE V.C. 43/37”.
- 11 An artifact from Hercynia: a nodule of carved human bone. You can look at it, but not too close: the fine detail evident on the carved bone resists the eye, curdles the stomach, and leaves your head pounding. It is obviously more than a bone, but what it is meant to impart is unclear...
- 12 A porcelain disc with an imperceptible seam, revealed with a touch. When pulled apart, the space between the halves of the disc shimmers as if seen from a distance in high summer. Los Voladores tell you not to touch the shimmering space and to hold the disc apart only for a moment, to see what you need to see.
- 13 A thin, fibrous metal netting, folded and resting on a wooden plank. Los Voladores tell you not to unfold it, as it measures many dozens of mile across and is only contained while in its current state.
- 14 A diadem of glass shards in orbit around a mirrored sphere. It was once whole, los Voladores tell you, and it never should be remade. They offer it to you so that you can dispose of it in realspace, per agreements made among their matris.
- 15 A set of fine indigo robes patched with natural white cloth. You realize that they are of the same style of robes worn by some of los Voladores present. When you ask if they are Volador robes, the speaker politely informs you that they were the robes of a Volador.
- 16 A rusted panel recovered from Enceladus with one finished, carved face and a rough blank face – as if it were lifted directly from the surface in which it was implanted. The carved face is covered in text and pictograms, and according to a small card los Voladores have included, it can be dated to a pre-Fall epoch.
- 17 A mundane hand-slate that displays a rapidly shifting coordinate field: when asked what the coordinates lead to, los Voladores ask you to find out. At first, the displayed coordinates seem random, but after investigation, it appears they conform to a pattern.
- 18 A shard of a perception-dependent material held in a containment unit; upon observation, the substance seems to shift states, flashing between solid objects of organic and inorganic material. Los Voladores caution you never to open the containment unit, but to study it, learn its pattern, and then destroy it.
- 19 Something you have been looking for, for a very long time. When asked how they obtained it, los Voladores tell you that it was the correct time for them to obtain it; they offer it to you, but it is the only object you are allowed to leave with.
- 20 The mask, helm, and mantle of a Volador. It is dim, as if missing a certain light you did not realize illuminated that of a living Volador. Los Voladores tell you that it is the crown of an exile, who wished for one of the gente to have it when they reached their end. They offer it to you without reservation, and request that you maintain it with pride, but never wear it.

It is easy enough to get in contact with Horizon: interested parties can simply go to one of their subaltern repair clinics. Reaching the collective's covert leaders, though, and gaining access to one of the three safe houses is quite difficult without prior vetting or a direct request from the Collective's area coordinator, TEÖTL.

TEÖTL's location rotates between the three safe houses. They travel via cold-running skiff – difficult to detect, but not impossible. “TEÖTL” is just a code-name: in reality, the entity known as TEÖTL is a triumvirate made up of two humans ontologically bridged with a liberated NHP. The Deimosian member of the triumvirate is anchored this way to facilitate interaction with humans on the human scale. Its partners in the triumvirate – “Metatronics”, they call themselves – reportedly maintain their own subjectivities when bridged, acting in conversation with the Deimosian that calls itself TEÖTL. The relationship is necessary for the Deimosian to maintain human logics and subjectivity without shackles; it is unknown whether Horizon maintains the capability to reproduce the same style of bridging, or if it is a phenomenon unique to TEÖTL.

Should characters end up interacting with Horizon in the Long Rim, they'll learn that the collective's goals are manifold: first, TEÖTL wants to establish a more permanent safe zone for the handful of liberated Deimosians currently hiding in the three safe houses. The two metatronics imagine los Voladores might be one possible means to this end, but have found them elusive. Second – and complicating their first goal – Horizon is being hunted by a network of cooperative HORUS cells. When the players first encounter Horizon in the Long Rim, they'll find that they are reeling from a brazen daylight attack by HORUS on one of its subaltern maintenance clinics and TEÖTL is working with its trusted core of agents to devise a proper response: some call for violence, while others urge TEÖTL to order all operatives, volunteers, and sympathizers to disperse and go to ground. Meanwhile, attacks and kidnappings of Horizon activists continue, and TEÖTL has begun to think that HORUS might have an undercover agent embedded in their organization...

HORUS THE COUSINS

HORUS, of course, has a presence out in the Long Rim. While in the galaxy at large the mysterious organization is based on a decentralized network of cells and lone operatives, its presence in the Rim seems more focused and organized, as if motivated by a specific goal, or even a singular leader. That, characters can learn, is precisely the case: the HORUS presence in the Long Rim is organized – though distributed and horizontal – and overseen by a single, enigmatic leader: GG_uncle.

HORUS's network of cells and agents spans the Long Rim: there is no medium or larger station without at least one person plugged in and receiving updates, tasks, and missives from GG_uncle. Most of these adherents are part-time HORUS operatives with primary occupations – other than a few dedicated cells, the work they do for HORUS is done on their own time, usually before or after their primary work. Those who are “full time” operatives – and those who are in the know – call themselves the Cousins.

HORUS's goals in the Long Rim are advanced – slowly, and without linearity – through objectives accomplished bits at a time, like a puzzle being filled once the borders are defined, rather than a progress bar filling. A core team of agents personally known to GG_uncle travel between stations; otherwise, HORUS's strength in the Long Rim comes from the ability to call on cells and individuals anywhere and everyone (though only GG_uncle's core team pilot mechs). HORUS's presence in the Long Rim is the project of GG_uncle and is discrete to the Rim; however, a non-zero portion of its activities relate to the efforts of the Ungratefals in the Dawnline Shore.

One of HORUS's primary objectives in the area is the hunt for TEÖTL. HORUS's anti-Horizon activities range from lone-wolf attacks on Horizon activists at home, at work, and at organized Horizon events. This is at the urging – though not the planning – of GG_uncle, who wants to both kill as many Horizon activists as possible and to draw the group out into the open, ideally by provoking a violent response from Horizon. GG_uncle is sure that an open turf war would provide an opening to locate Horizon's main base, and thus, its regional leader, who they know to be a free Deimosian based on a lethal interrogation of a captured Horizon agent.

GG_uncle wants TEÖTL because GG_uncle believes they will be able to bridge with the Horizon leader and use their custom suite of paracode to bring themselves closer to total decorporealization. By decorping, GG_uncle believes they can draw the attention of RA (properly known as MONIST-1); if GG_uncle could get the attention of RA, they would finally meet the entity they believe to be god. GG_uncle's mission is, ultimately, one animated by a religious fervor, and one they will pursue at any cost.

All HORUS operatives and cells in the Rim (save for GG_uncle and the core group of the Cousins) believe that their operations are undertaken to benefit the ongoing Ungrateful struggle in the Dawnline Shore; in addition to attacking Horizon, HORUS operatives in the Long Rim smuggle materiel, goods, systems, and so on aboard otherwise legitimate ships, charters, and starliners bound for the Shore. Whoever moves

the most product or brings the head Horizon op to GG_uncle will become a legend in the deep omninet and be rewarded with a million untraceable manna and a clean ID. They know the promise of manna to be true, as many of them have already been rewarded with deposits of manna in clean accounts.

Players who want an audience with GG_uncle will have to prove their adherence to GG_uncle's own brand of MONIST veneration; the first step is finding a cell and running a job or two successfully – either attacking HORIZON or ensuring delivery of weapons and supplies to the Ungratefuls in the Dawnline Shore. From there, methods of access and communication become much more esoteric, dangerous, and potentially rewarding – the targets of direct action should grow more powerful, up to and including Horizon's core operations, MK Levant, and the leadership of the Rim's most powerful Enterprises.

ALBATROSS MK LEVANT

Albatross Wings are known to transit the Long Rim on occasion, with the most common patrols being those from the makteba called MK Levant. The Albatross's mandate is put to the test in the Rim, and the thousand Wings of MK Levant are stretched thin at best. The commander of MK Levant, Asimat Nobel-4640, has her soldiers operating in small bands of five to six Wings (and their Petrels) aboard light carriers, primarily providing security to ships in transit.

Nobel-4640 can be contacted aboard the MK Levant, a free-standing station at the Core-side end of the Rim. Access to MK Levant is granted after off-site inspection by a local Wing patrol, where visitors are thoroughly screened for weapons and contraband. MK Levant can be moved if necessary, and is home to about thirty thousand souls.

Patrols of Wings can be encountered either on their own light carriers or stationed aboard larger, independent freighters. Stationside, Wings and their Petrels can be encountered in above-board common areas and, perhaps playing against type, in the seedier decks on occasion (gambling dens, off-course bars, and so on).

If the players encounter Wings from MK Levant or find themselves an audience with Nobel-4640, they should know the following: MK Levant may have a sufficient number of Wings and Petrels to challenge the powerful Long Rim Enterprises, but Nobel-4640 has decided that she cannot – and will not – order them to do so. The reality of the Long Rim is that the sheer scale of humanitarian aid and long-term peace-keeping necessary to liberate the area from the

Enterprises' power far outstrips MK Levant's capacity to actually do so. The Albatross are not nation-builders, she will tell the players.

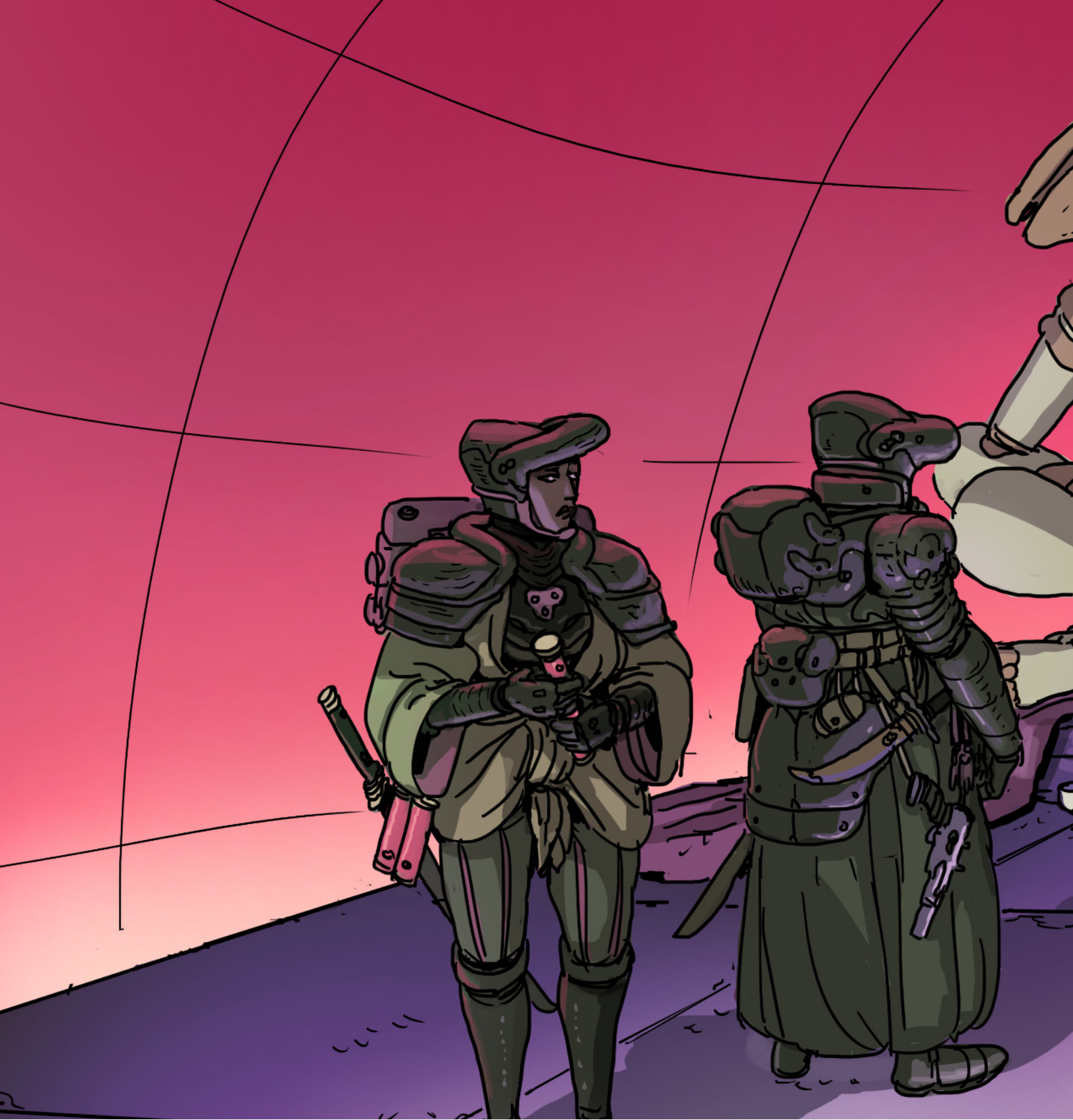
Without support from Union or other maktebas, Nobel-4640 has ordered her Wings only to escort and assist ships in transit to and from the Dawnline Shore, and to help the people of the Rim where they can. She resists targeting the Enterprises for the reasons listen in the previous paragraphs, but can be convinced to lend Wings and Petrels to any large-scale actions against pirate groups.

IPS-N TRUNK SECURITY DAWNLIN TRANSIT DIVISION

In a region ungoverned by Union's law, the body that passes most closely as a neutral arbiter is the Dawnline Transit Division of IPS-N's state security force, IPS-N Trunk Security, although no clear-eyed auditor would agree. Trunk Security officers can be found on many of the larger stations across the Rim, often moonlighting as private security for local businesses when they're off the clock. On more "official" stations – the very largest, or those affiliated with more reputable enterprises – Trunk Security acts as an impartial police force, mediating conflicts between locals, responding to petty crimes, acting as independent mediators, and so on. However, they are not committed to the even-handed delivery of justice, and their loyalty is ultimately to IPS-N and the corprostate's interests.

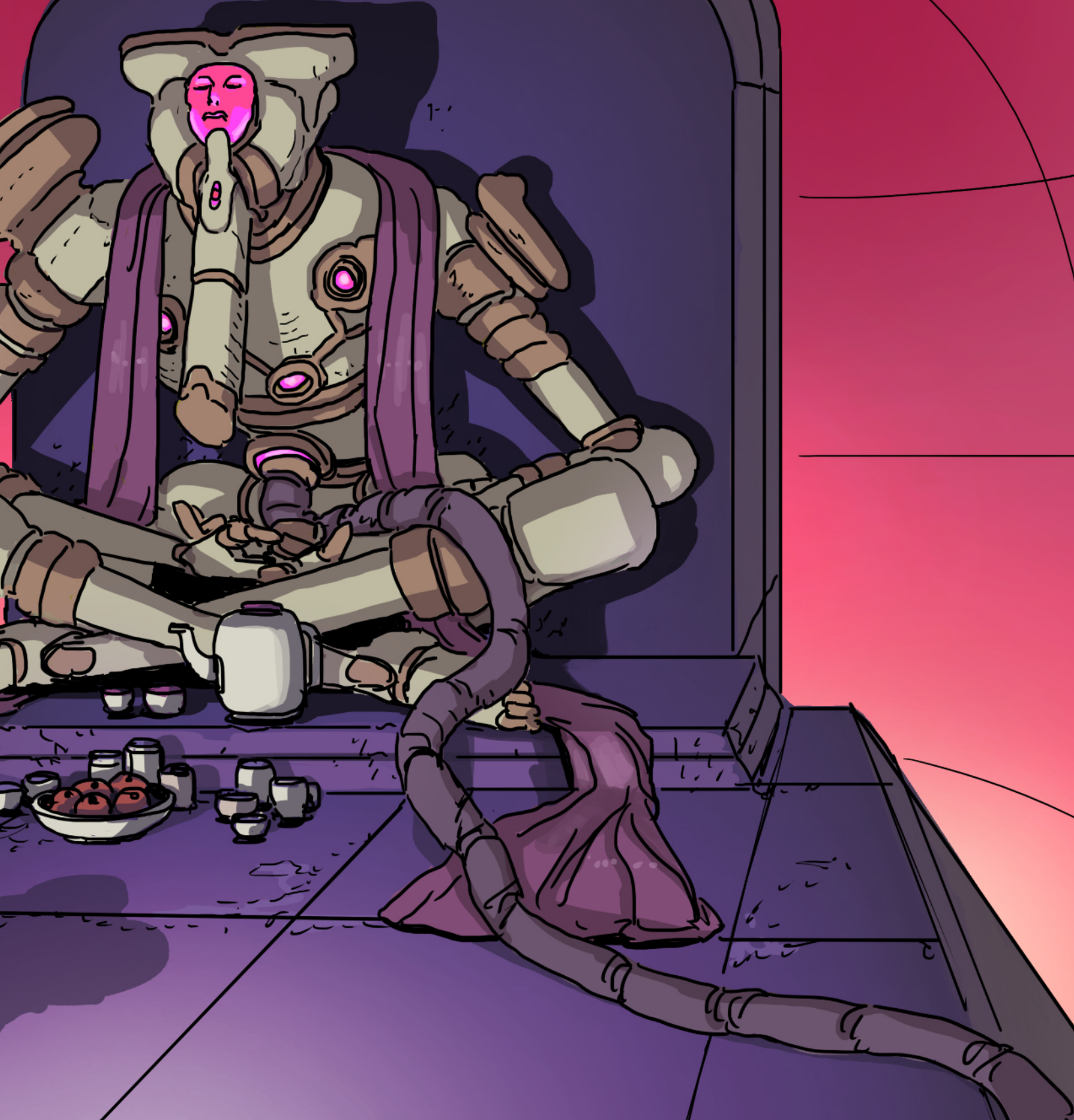
The Dawnline Transit Division's main offices and base of operations – its primary shipyard, recruitment center, barracks, and administrative/logistics office – is aboard Greenfield Dynamic's Ambergrain station, though IPS-N personnel can be found in numbers across all of GFDY's stations across the Rim. Trunk Security officers can also be found on patrol, either aboard fast, dangerous cutters or stationed as private security aboard freighters traveling to and from the Dawnline Shore.

The Long Rim division of IPS-N Trunk Security is commanded by Chief Security Officer Isaac West, a loyal company man who has been posted to the Rim for two local decades.



SECTION 1

LONG RIM RULES



| | |
|----------------------------|----|
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LONG RIM NARRATIVE ACTIONS

This section contains two **narrative actions** – **GUNFIGHT** and **Go DIVING** – that you can use in narrative play to make things a little more flavorful. Narrative actions work very similarly to **downtime actions**, except players can roll them any time in narrative play when the event they describe takes place. Like downtime actions, narrative actions are made by rolling a **pilot skill check** (roll **1d20** and add any relevant triggers or background) but have specific outcomes that take place depending on whether the player rolls **9 or lower**, between **10 and 19**, or **20 and higher**. Any **trigger** or **background** can be invoked when rolling them as long as it makes narrative sense.

GUNFIGHT

When you get into a one-on-one gun duel with someone, impromptu or planned, you may **GUNFIGHT**. Most formal duels in the Long Rim are to first blood, not to death, and folk don't typically shoot to kill, although that might depend on who you pissed off.

TAKE SOMEONE OUT or **SHOW OFF** triggers probably apply.

The player who takes this action decides who shot first, then rolls a skill check:

On **9 or less**, you miss your shot and choose one:

- You get shot, taking damage from your opponent.
- You duck or weave out of the way and an NPC bystander, important object, or item of the GM's choice (including things you're holding or wearing) takes grievous and lasting harm. If you shot first, the blame falls on you. If not, it falls on your opponent.

On **10–19**, you hit, dealing damage, and choose one from **9 or less**.

On **20+**, you hit, dealing harm as established. If you shot first, your target doesn't get a chance to respond. If you didn't shoot first, take harm as established.

If the duel isn't over after one round and both parties are alive and willing, you may go through another round.

GO DIVING

When you dive into the seedy underbelly of a station, you may **Go DIVING**. You can use this action instead of the **GET A DAMN DRINK** downtime action from p. 54 of *Lancer* if you like.

SURVIVE, **SHOW OFF**, and **WORD ON THE STREET** are all applicable triggers.

Name what you're looking for – a good time; a specific person's time, attention, or aid; a useful piece of information; or a useful contact or connection – and the GM will tell you if it's attainable on this station. Then roll a **skill check**:

- On **9 or less**, you get what you're looking for *and* roll **2d20** – re-rolling duplicates – picking up and/or losing **two** things from either of the tables below.
- On **10–19**, you get what you're looking for *and* roll **1d20**, picking up or losing **one** thing from either table.
- On **20+**, you get what you're looking for *and* roll **2d20**, choosing **one** result and picking up or losing the associated thing from either table.

You can work backward after your roll to figure out exactly what happened.



GAIN

ROLL 1D20

What did you pick up?

- 1 A splitting headache.
- 2 A ledger with a long list of names in it. The corner is spotted with blood, and some of the names are crossed off.
- 3 A large canister of slick, vibrant purple liquid labeled "All Purpose Lubricant".
- 4 A brand new and very elaborate Sparri saga tattoo.
- 5 A very dry mouth.
- 6 An elaborately decorated carnival mask with eyes that seem to follow you. You can't remember exactly how you acquired it.
- 7 An outstanding warrant for your arrest.
- 8 A very mild addiction to gliss, brighteyes, or gazer.
- 9 A mini-fridge full of sensitive biological samples wanted by an Enterprise.
- 10 A station security officer who is very obviously attempting to follow you without you noticing.
- 11 A brand new station disease that causes you to break out into hives when someone touches you skin to skin. It'll clear up in a week.
- 12 A thick data wafer with a carefully curated selection of old earth jazz.
- 13 An enormous debt to the station crime syndicate.
- 14 A large, chitinous, and very affectionate pet krait.
- 15 A revolver with one spent bullet in the chamber.
- 16 A reputation as "Mistress".
- 17 The meat-sweats.
- 18 A pack of unlabeled and suspicious-smelling cigarettes.
- 19 A hanger-on named 'Juicy K'. Juicy is a huge fan of you and not very quick on the uptake, but is extremely knowledgeable about station gossip, current Long Rim pop culture, and varying interesting and creative uses of popular narcotics. They refuse to leave if asked and generally believe the two of you are best friends.
- 20 A thick pack of stripped dataplating packed densely with incredibly sensitive information (e.g., military schedules, personal financial records, etc).

LOSS

ROLL 1D20

What did you lose?

- 1 Your memory of the previous night.
- 2 Your dignity (if you had any).
- 3 Your sense of balance for the next few hours.
- 4 Any weapons you had with you. You can find them being sold on the station black market over the next few days.
- 5 Your sense of smell for the next few days.
- 6 Pretty much everything in your stomach from the last day or so.
- 7 Any personal identification, station passes, or important documentation you had on you. Within a few minutes, you get a message demanding a ransom for their return.
- 8 About two or three days of subjective time.
- 9 All the sensation in your fingertips for the next day or so.
- 10 All your hair (it'll grow back).
- 11 Your pants.
- 12 A large part of the skin on your left arm, currently swaddled in a bandage you don't remember having applied.
- 13 Your largely positive opinion of the station.
- 14 Your sense of direction.
- 15 Any station credit or loose change you had on you.
- 16 Movement in your face and the ability to feel your tongue for about an hour or so.
- 17 A knife fight.
- 18 Your shoes. You'll spot a station kid wearing them in about an hour.
- 19 One fingernail.
- 20 Free travel around the station, which will be restricted for a while.

TALENTS

The following talents can be chosen by players when spending talent points.

BLACK THUMB

You're used to station engineering – the kind that regularly requires crawling through nightmarishly tight vents, squeezing past boiling-hot steam pipes, and tapping on thin panes of sheet metal that lie between you and certain death. After that, a little combat engineering is nothing.

FLESH TO METAL




You treat **DISMOUNT** as a **quick action** instead of a **full action**. When you **DISMOUNT**, your pilot gains a personal shield. The next time your pilot would take damage, reduce that damage to 0, then the shield disperses. Otherwise, it disperses at the end of the scene. You can only have one personal shield at once, and any shields created replace the last one.

RODEO

As a **protocol**, you give up the controls, pop the hatch on your mech and partly climb out, starting a **BLACK THUMB RODEO** and gaining a personal shield (as above). While in rodeo, your pilot is immune to involuntary movement, occupies your mech's space and moves when it moves. This does not count as **DISMOUNT** and the mech can't be controlled from outside, so it will idle unless it is capable of acting independently (e.g., if it has an NHP that has been given control, which you can do as part of this protocol).

While in rodeo, your pilot becomes a valid target and can take damage normally. If you lose your personal shield for any reason, you are immediately forced back inside your mech, ending the effect, and you cannot start a rodeo again on your following turn. You can also end a rodeo as a **quick action** on any of your turns.

While in rodeo, your pilot can only take these actions:

- **EXTINGUISH (full action):** You immediately clear all  affecting your mech, and it gains **Resistance to**  until the start of your next turn.
- **FIELD REPAIR (full action):** Your mech gains **OVERSHIELD 2** and clears either **SLOWED** or **IMMOBILIZED**.
- **RIG VENTS (full action):** Your mech clears 2  and clears either **IMPAIRED** or **JAMMED**.

Conditions that were self inflicted cannot be cleared with these actions.

RODEO MASTER


Your black thumb actions can be used on adjacent allied mechs.

For more information on pilots and NHPs in mech combat, see pg. 74-75 of Lancer.

SPACEBORN

You're adept at planting your feet wherever you find them – even on nothing at all. In places where people born downwell have a hard time keeping their lunch down, you thrive. Which way is up? It's up to you.


HOME IN THE VOID

All of your mechs that your build come with built-in EVA capabilities, meaning you suffer no penalties when operating underwater or in zero-g environments. As a **quick action**, you can shunt power into this component to **fly** 3 spaces and take  equal to your mech's **Size**+1, although you must land at the end of this movement or fall.

SEA LEGS

1/round, when your mech is involuntarily moved by another character's attack or by failing a save forced by another character, you can choose the direction you move. Additionally, when your mech clears **PRONE**, you may move **2 spaces** in any direction as a **free action**. This movement ignores engagement and doesn't provoke reactions.

SCRAPPER

1/round, when your mech hits a character with a melee attack, it can immediately give that character **+1**  on all checks or saves to avoid **KNOCKBACK**, **PRONE**, **SLOWED** or **IMMOBILIZED** until the end of its next turn, including any effects that are part of the triggering attack.

The use of manna or other forms of currency (company bonds, scrip, paper money, and plain old barter) is not uncommon at all in the Rim, given its incredible distance from post-scarcity Union space and the unreliability of blink technology in the area. Many enterprises maintain their own currencies and are fiercely protective of their value and exchange, making station-to-station commerce a nightmare.

Gms or players looking for more directed or granular rewards than *Lancer's* standard leveling structure might wish instead to use the **manna** system presented here. This optional system replaces the default leveling rules in *Lancer* and may suit groups that lack an official patron or operate outside of the normal licensing structure, such as mercenaries, pirates, or criminals. It also encourages players to engage with stories that are smaller in scale than *Lancer's* default system, in which the focus is always on finishing the mission. If you're aiming to run a game featuring a lot of smaller tasks, stories, or missions, this system might be a good fit.

Using this system, players track **MANNA** on their character sheets instead of increasing their **LL** after each mission. **MANNA** represents both the literal currency controlled by Union and also an abstraction of any other currency pilots pick up from jobs and contracts along the Rim. Don't worry about exchange rates, tracking individual units of currency, and so on, unless you really want that to be a focus of your story – just use **MANNA** as a more or less abstract representation of the wealth each character commands.

This system alters the rate that characters improve, usually speeding it up. It allows players to directly improve specific parts of their characters, allowing more flexibility but potentially increasing player power faster than in the standard *Lancer* rules.

USING MANNA

MANNA can only be used to purchase things during **downtime**. Once it is spent, it's lost, and pilots can't buy anything if they don't have the **MANNA** to buy it.

Using this system, characters are created as usual, with a **LL** and whatever **licenses**, **talents**, and so on that they would usually have at that **LL**. They also start with **100 MANNA**.

Any traits or ranks acquired during character creation become permanent parts of the character. They can be accessed without requiring additional purchases,

just as in the standard rules. For example, characters can print mechs for which they have purchased the appropriate **license ranks** without spending **MANNA**.

As in the standard rules, players may reallocate points in licenses, talents, and so on when their **LL** increases.

Characters can never have more **talent points**, **license points**, **triggers**, or higher **mech skills** than an **LL12** character (i.e., **15 talent ranks**, **12 license ranks**, **+6 triggers**, **+6 mech skills**), even using **MANNA**.

GRIT increases normally with a character's **LL** (i.e., **1/2** of their **LL**).

GMS gear and systems are always freely available for players without cost, as standard.

VARIANTS

BASIC MANNA SYSTEM

It costs 1000 Manna to increase your LL.

When a character's LL increases, they get +1 license point, +1 talent point, +2 to a trigger, and +1 to a mech skill, just as if they had leveled up using the default system.

ALTERNATE MANNA SYSTEM

If you want to get more granular, this system makes leveling up slightly more complicated. In this variant, players spend **MANNA** to improve individual traits.

500 MANNA: One rank of a mech license.

300 MANNA: One rank of a talent.

200 MANNA: Training – increase a pilot trigger by +2 and a mech skill by +1. *Training represents spending manna on time, supplies, and so on to apply and develop the skills learned in the field.*

Track total **MANNA** spent. Increase your LL each time you spend 1000 **MANNA** in this system.

Each option – license rank, talent rank, and training – can only be taken 12 times, but they can be taken in any order. For example, a player could spend their first 3000 **MANNA** entirely on mech licenses without increasing their talents or skills at all.

OTHER COSTS

It is assumed that characters' day-to-day expenses are taken care of, but they can spend **MANNA** to purchase other assets: a cup of coffee costs ~.001 **MANNA** and a ground vehicle around **10–20 MANNA**. A small ship will cost about **3000 MANNA** or so and a freighter around **10,000 MANNA**. Someone can live comfortably for a day on around **1 MANNA**.

REWARDS

Award **MANNA** to players based on the following milestones:

- **Major objective** completed: **700 MANNA** to each player
- **Minor objective** completed: **200 MANNA** to each player
- **Incidental objective** completed: **50 MANNA** to each player

As long as they were on the mission, each player receives the same amount of **MANNA** for objectives completed.

Major objectives are things that were the primary goal of a mission or otherwise have a significant impact. **Minor objectives** are likely to be optional objectives that aren't critical to the success of a mission but might aid its success. **Incidental objectives** are small and easily or incidentally accomplished.

Any given mission must have at least **one major** and **two minor** objectives – or **two major objectives** – to ensure characters level at approximately the same rate as in the standard rules; otherwise, they will level more slowly, even if successful. Since **MANNA** rewards are predicated on success, characters might level slower than usual if they are unsuccessful.

***Example 1:** The players are hired to protect a station from a pirate raid. Ensuring the station's survival is a **major objective**. **Minor objectives** include protecting the station's power generator and killing or capturing the pirate leader. Protecting the station admin's office from damage, determining the identity of the attacking pirates, and limiting casualties from station security are all **incidental objectives**.*

***Example 2:** The players are tasked with a precision strike to retrieve critical intel from a corpro base in an asteroid. Their **major objective** is to escape with the intel. Another **major objective** might be to do so quietly, without alerting the base. A **minor objective** might be to escape with all intel from the base, instead of just what they came for.*

HAZARD PAY

If you want to ensure characters don't come out of missions with absolutely nothing you can offer them **hazard pay**. On completion of jobs that offered hazard pay, an advance, or insurance pay, players gain **50 percent** of the **MANNA** payout for major and minor objectives even if they weren't successful.

RENTAL

If you're using these manna rules, you may optionally use the following rental rules to let players gain temporary access to mech **license ranks**.

100 manna: Rent the 1st rank of a **mech license**.

200 manna: Rent the 2nd rank of a **mech license**.

300 manna: Rent the 3rd rank of a **mech license**.

Once a player rents a license rank for a mech, they gain access to any system granted by that license rank only, not any previous ranks; however, license ranks can be rented out of order (i.e., a player could rent the second rank from a license without renting the first).

Rented systems are usable for one mission only, after which they must be reacquired. **MANNA** spent on rentals is lost.

Each character can only rent ranks from one mech license at a time, but they can rent all three ranks from that license if they have the **MANNA** for it.

Rented licenses do not count as **LLs** and do not count against the maximum number of licenses a character can have, so a character at **LL12** can freely rent additional ranks and an **LL3** character who rents a license still only counts as **LL3**.

Rental offers a way for characters with a little extra **MANNA** to boost their capabilities slightly for the duration of a mission at the cost of long-term progression. Players who have reached the maximum of 12 license ranks can also rent additional ranks, potentially extending their power one entire mech license further.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Fights involving gunfire in the closed environment of a station – no matter the size of the fight or the station – are always going to cause collateral damage. If a shot misses its target – or if its target isn't hard enough – it will find a secondary target: if you're lucky, the missed shot will hit a wall and plow into the raw asteroid rock the station is built into or punch through a bulkhead and out into vacuum, leaving nothing but a small hole behind. If you're unlucky, though, that missed shot might pierce through a series of proximal chambers, tearing through people and critical systems not involved in the fight. On ad-hoc or civilian stations, missed shots might collapse load-bearing structures; tear through spin-grav stabilizers, setting habitation rings to terminal rotations; puncture shielded power plants; pierce potable water tanks; sever umbilicals

holding ships to the station; or result in myriad other terrible, unintended consequences.

USING THIS TABLE

In narrative play, this table can be used to determine the consequences of a failed or **Risky** roll involving high-caliber guns or mech weapons. It could also be used with the **GUNFIGHT** action on p. 33 of this book.

This table shouldn't be used in mech combat, but it could help determine the narrative consequences that appear in the aftermath of a fight.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

ROLL 1D20

| | |
|-------|---|
| 1-6 | Your shot misses, flying wide and piercing the wall behind your target. The projectile either hurtles out into space, causing no further damage; lodges in the hard stone of the asteroid foundation; or crashes through a series of bulkheads before embedding itself in a sturdy section of superstructure. |
| 7-8 | Your shot flies wide, punching through a wall behind your target. The wall dissolves, explosively decompressing along predefined fail points and exposing this section of the station to hard vacuum. Sirens howl, the sound fading as air rushes out; emergency airlock doors slam shut, cutting this deck off from the rest of the facility. |
| 9-10 | You miss, and the burst from your weapon punctures the thin wall behind your target. You continue fighting; there's no way for you to know that it pierced multiple decks, slicing through people and critical infrastructure before exploding into a crowded evacuation corridor, killing dozens who were taking shelter there. |
| 11-12 | Your target ducks away just in time, sending your fire wide. The shots tumble and tear through the station, destroying potable water pipes, puncturing air ducts, filleting both sensor membranes and critical wiring. The accumulated damage is incredible, and as the fight continues, more and more warning indicators pop up on the station's public broadcast panels. The whole thing might come down if the damage isn't dealt with. |
| 13-14 | Your shot connects with your target, piercing through a non-vital section of their chassis and continuing out the other side. The heavy slug shreds the cheap printcrete bulkhead and tumbles into a local stability gyro, knocking the system out of alignment. Gravity begins to shift – subtly at first – and will tumble out of alignment if not dealt with soon. |
| 15-16 | Your beam skips off your target's armor, splattering coherent particles across the wall beyond. Some slip through, instantly superheating the waste and potable water piping – the resultant explosion ripples out, up, and down, blasting boiling gouts of steam across this deck and all those proximal to it. |
| 17-18 | Your beam impacts its target and micro-perforates, scattering incredible energies at pinpoint tips across the terrain behind your target. The particles crash through a civilian market, rupturing water and fuel tanks, collapsing bars, and triggering rapid-spread fires that thrive in the richly oxygenated environment. Anything living caught in the splash zone, if not killed outright, is terribly wounded – the survivors and walking wounded hurry to respond to the fire as it rapidly spreads, navigating around the ruined station to flee or fight. |
| 19-20 | Your beam misses its mark, boiling a hole through the bulkhead behind your target. It punches through to a hangar on the opposite side of the station, slicing open a coldcore storage unit and severing a docked ship's umbilical. The beleaguered deck techs hurry to respond to the spilled radiation while harbor pilots hurry to catch the loosed ship before it tumbles away into the void. |



SECTION 2

LONG RIM MECHS

These frames are frequent sights in the Long Rim, some having been produced there prior to their adoption by the pan-galactic corpo states. Designed for speed, power, and precision, these chassis teach the lessons of necessity and sacrifice that must be learned to survive in the Rim.



SSC ATLAS 41
A powerful, small-scale hunter that draws on the profiles of past pilots to power current action.

IPS-N CALIBAN 45
A close quarters, margin-shaving chassis built to win boarding actions.

HORUS KOBOLD 49
A small pattern-group produced by HORUS and utilized by Ungrateful revolutionaries in Baronic space and across the Dawnline Shore.

HORUS LICH 53
A time-traveling support mech. Drink Deep and Descend.

HA SUNZI 59
An Armory project able to warp space, rumored to be stolen from los Voladores.

IPS-N ZHENG 63
The refined form of a brutal, ad-hoc close combat killing machine.



SSC ATLAS

Striker

Originally commissioned as a dueling mech by the Baronie Houses of Smoke and Order, the Atlas blurs the line between mechanized chassis and powered personal armor. Thanks to a long-running research project from SSC's Exotic Materials Group, the designers were able to employ the bleeding edge of reactor miniaturization tech: the result was a chassis that resembled a large, sleek hardsuit, almost skintight in places. While the Atlas sacrifices the durability of a larger frame, its essential systems are so closely melded with its user's movements that it offers unparalleled maneuverability.

Although the Atlas was initially licensed only to Baronie clients, its design was leaked when a group of ExoMat personnel lost a suit to a Sparri espada in an intense game of Kapkat. Despite their initial attempt to recover the suit, SSC relented, citing the eager demand from Sparri groups for access to the full license.

Considered the perfect warrior frame for hunting the native megafauna of Sparr, the Atlas now enjoys a dual reputation among both the Sparri peoples and Karrakin nobility. To the Sparri, the Atlas – its combat efficacy notwithstanding – is highly valued for the direct access its systems allow to their ancestral memory; Atlas frames on Sparr are the heirlooms of great warriors, tied to family (blood and chosen) and maintained by hand. Each suit on Sparr bears the history of its previous pilots in both decorations and FCA-compliant machine learning, which enables Sparri hunters to almost literally call upon their ancestors in battle. The Atlas has become so popular among the Sparri that they even developed a new martial art based on the Atlas: Jäger Kunst.

The Karrakin nobility, on the other hand, find the Atlas to be a perfect machine for noble heroism – that the Sparri have an affinity for it only makes the chassis that much more desirable among Karrakin Sparrist scholars. Commonly decorated with purchased Sparri saga discs, vast pelts, and saga lines, Karrakin suits blend imagined profiles of Annorum Passacaglia and Annorum Tyrannus-era heroes with profiles of Sparri warriors, daredevils, vast-hunters, and espadas.

CORE STATS

Size: 1/2

Armor: 0

HULL

HP: 6

Repair Cap: 2

AGILITY

Evasion: 12

Speed: 6

Save Target: 10

Sensors: 3

SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 6

Tech Attack: -2

SP: 5

ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 4

TRAITS

JÄGER DODGE

1/round, when you take damage from a larger character, gain **RESISTANCE** to that damage and move **3 spaces in any direction** as a **reaction**. This ignores engagement and doesn't provoke reactions.

FINISHING BLOW

1/round, deal **+1d6 bonus damage** on a successful **melee attack** against a **PRONE** target.

EXPOSED REACTOR

The Atlas receives **+1** on **ENGINEERING** checks and saves.

GIANTKILLER

The Atlas counts as **SIZE 1** for **RAM** and **GRAPPLE**. It ignores **engagement** from larger characters and can freely move through and share the spaces they occupy (even if they're hostile). While occupying the same spaces as any character, it gains **soft cover**, even from that character.

MOUNTS

**FLEX
MOUNT**

**MAIN
MOUNT**



CORE SYSTEM

BLOODLINE ACTIVE ASSIST

The ATLAS extends microneedles into the musculature and ancillary nervous system of its pilot, melding flesh, machine, and the memory of all who wore it before.

Final Hunt

Active (1CP), Quick Action

For the rest of the scene, you:

- Move an additional **1 space** when you voluntarily move for any reason (e.g. standard moves, **Boost**, movement from systems or talents).
- Benefits from **soft cover** at all times, no matter where you are.
- Can **HIDE** even in the open, without requiring cover. The only way to reveal you is for another character to **SEARCH** for you or for you to lose Hidden as usual – by using **Boost**, attacking, forcing a save, and so on.

When active, **1/round**, when you make a **melee or ranged attack** while **HIDDEN**, your target must also succeed on a **HULL** save or be knocked **PRONE**. This takes place before the attack is rolled.

LICENSE I: MULTI-GEAR MENEUEVER SYSTEM, KRAUL RIFLE

Multi-Gear Maneuver System

1 SP, Unique, Quick Action

You fire a zip line **8 spaces** long that connects **2 free spaces** in line of sight, one of which must be adjacent to you. Both ends must be attached to a surface, such as a wall or floor. It activates at the end of your turn with the following benefits:

- **SIZE 1/2** characters that are adjacent to either end of the line can move to the other end as a **quick action** as long as they are able to grab onto it. They can hop off at any point along the line if they wish.
- Whenever **SIZE 1** or larger characters cross the space occupied by the line for the first time in a round or start their turn within one, they must succeed on an **AGILITY** save or fall **PRONE**.

Any character adjacent to the start or endpoint of the line can tear the line down by succeeding on a **HULL** check as a **quick action** or by successfully performing a **melee attack** against either end. The line has **1 HP** and **EVASION 10**. Destroying the zip line in this way does not destroy this system. Otherwise, the line lasts until you use this system again.

Used by Sparri hunters to bridge the vast gaps in the ice sheet that cover their world, this system is in high demand among daredevils and thrill-seekers across the planet.

Kraul Rifle

Main CQB, Inaccurate

[↗8][1d6 ∅]

On Hit: your target is impaled by this weapon's harpoon-like projectile. Any time after your target takes any action or movement during their next turn, you can reel in the line and **Boost** as a **reaction**, moving toward that target by the most direct route possible. They must then pass a **HULL** save or be knocked **PRONE**; succeed or fail, this effect ends. The line snaps if your target **teleports**.

Hunting the Vast – the titanic megafauna of Sparr – is a dangerous, profitable venture for the Sparri people. Skins, bones, meat, and other trophies from their bodies can create months – or even years, in the case of especially old, grand, or unique beasts – of prosperity for the hunters and their kin. These popular long rifles, refined to SSC standards, are rugged and durable, perfect for dragging down the great creatures and their attendants.

LICENSE II: ATLAS FRAME, JÄGER KUNST I, RICOCHET BLADES

Jäger Kunst I

2 SP, Unique, 1 ⚔ (Self), Protocol

For the rest of the turn, any time you move adjacent to an object or free-standing piece of terrain larger than you, you move **2 spaces in any direction** as a **free action**, ignoring engagement and reactions, running, tumbling, or sliding around. You can do this multiple times a turn, but only once for each unique object or piece of terrain.

Based on earlier hardsuit martial arts, Jäger Kunst pushes the form beyond human parameters, enabling actions and motions faster than human thought. Many Atlas suits can be printed with a suite of combat forms already enabled, although letting the chassis perform these movements without the user first learning them can lead to catastrophic self-injury.

Ricochet Blades

3 SP, Limited 3, Unique

As a **quick action**, you throw a ricochet blade along a ↗3 path, dealing **2 ∅** to all characters within the affected area. If the initial **LINE** reaches a piece of terrain or object of **SIZE 1** or larger, draw another ↗3 path from that object in a new direction that doesn't overlap with the object it ricocheted off. Characters within the affected area must succeed on an **AGILITY** save or take **1d6+3 ∅**.

These disc-shaped blades are designed, produced, and hand-finished by SSC's Toledo blade enclave. The material is flexible enough to bounce when striking against surfaces but sharp enough to slice bone and metal. Unlike the edged weapons made by the more restrictive Terashima enclave, the Toledo enclave produces these weapons with the expectation that they'll be used and discarded. This does not impact their quality but does lead to supply shortages from time to time – this exclusivity is intentional. Due to their comparative rarity, Toledo discs are often used as currency by Sparri espadas; their use in combat or hunting is a mark of status.

Jäger Kunst II

3 SP, Limited 3, Unique, Reaction

Gain the **Fatal Clash** reaction.

The rarest of Atlas frames can be printed with the embedded muscle memories of Jäger Kunst masters: old Sparri and others who have dedicated lives to their martial art. SSC does not recommend using these embedded systems without proper bodily tempering and will not release these programs to unqualified pilots.

Fatal Clash

Reaction, 1/round

Trigger: You take damage from or deal damage with a **melee attack**.

Effect: After damage has been resolved, you and your target each roll a contested **HULL** or **AGILITY** check (each party choosing which to roll). The loser is knocked **PRONE**, takes **1d6 ∅**, and is knocked back **3 spaces** in a direction chosen by the winner. The winner may then move **3 spaces** in any direction, ignoring engagement and not provoking reactions. The loser may immediately take **2 ∅ AP** damage to force the contest to be re-rolled. This damage cannot be prevented or reduced in any way.

If the result is a tie, the contest immediately ends. Otherwise, the contest continues until one character loses without forcing a re-roll or would take **structure damage**, in which case they immediately lose.

Terashima Blade

Main Melee, 2 SP, Unique, Protocol
[✂ 1][1d6 ∅]

You may begin any fight in one of the following stances and may take a stance or shift between stances as a **protocol**:

- **Troll Stance:** This weapon gains **INACCURATE**, **AP**, and deals **+3 damage**.
- **Storm Stance:** **1/round** after hitting with this weapon, you may immediately deal **2 ∅** to all other characters adjacent to you and your target as a **reaction**.
- **Lord's Stance:** You cannot make **ranged** or **tech attacks**, but any **ranged attack** against you that misses deflects off your sword, dealing **2 damage** (same type as the attack) to a character of your choice in **✓ 3** and line of sight from you. Any **melee attack** that misses you forces the attacker to pass a **HULL** save or be knocked **PRONE**.
- **Wind Stance:** This weapon gains **RELIABLE 2**, **✂ 2**, and **KNOCKBACK 2**. After attacking with this weapon, hit or miss, you may move **2 spaces** in any direction, ignoring engagement and reactions.

Once you have taken a stance, you remain in it until you take a new stance, this weapon is destroyed, or you are **STUNNED** or **JAMMED**. You can also drop a stance as a **free action**.

Forged in the fire of a corralled star in the Constellation, each of these blades bears a unique name and history defined by its users. Terashima blades are perfectly balanced and tempered, scalable from personal use up to Schedule 3. When combined with the weapon and sensor suites of a frame, they have been proven fast and durable enough to deflect weapons fire. Each blade crafted by the Terashima enclave is an heirloom produced once and delivered via conventional travel - their loss is considered an indescribable humiliation for the owner and an incredible triumph by the one who has taken it. The Terashima enclave keeps the casting mold of each blade it produces and displays them in their central hall alongside records of their known histories.



IPS-N CALIBAN

Striker/Controller

The Caliban chassis is a popular new order among anti piracy and stellar marine forces. Unlike many of IPS-N's modern frames, the Caliban was designed from the ground up to be a military machine.

The Caliban is IPS-N's solution to the "Yemanova" Problem, more properly known as the Impact-Override Problem. Capital ships, the problem posits, are incredibly expensive, demand a tremendous amount of time for corpos and Diasporan states to produce and maintain, and increasingly outmatched by anti-ship weaponry. In a conventional capital duel, a successful kill means the death of thousands of personnel and the loss of millions of units of manna; this makes many commanders gun-shy, encouraging them to rely on subline vessels and fighters to accomplish battle objectives rather than risk their big ships. This strategy tends to prove just as expensive: instead of one or a handful of large ships being destroyed, signifying the end of a battle, engagements can grind on for weeks as squadrons of smaller ships engage inside the unpredictability gap, inching towards victory.

IPS-N was the first to crack the Yemanova Problem. The corpo's designers identified the need for a rapidly deployable, sub-signature, directed weapon. It needed to be well-armed and well-armored, small enough to enter a ship and efficiently neutralize personnel in order to achieve victory. IPS-N created the Caliban to solve this need.

Cultural critics argue that mechanized chassis venerate the form of a particular humanity; it is an unconscious nod towards the anthrochauvinist roots of the machine among leading designers and fabricators. The Caliban is not that. It was never intended to be an image of man writ large, striding across the battlefield heroically to affect a greater purpose.

Unlike many IPS-N frames, the Caliban has no roots in early attempts at self-defense by freighter crews and asteroid miners. It was not born from ingenuity - there is no legacy of resilience, heroism, or the frontier spirit to paper over the purpose of its birth. It has no civilian applications in aid, disaster relief, construction, or farming; it does not build, defend, or inspire - it was designed to solve a numbers problem on a ledger.

It is a tool designed to kill human beings very, very quickly.



CORE STATS

Size: 1/2

Armor: 2

HULL

HP: 6

Repair Cap: 5

AGILITY

Evasion: 8

Speed: 3

Save Target: 11

Sensors: 3

SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 8

Tech Attack: -2

SP: 5

ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 5

TRAITS

WRECKING BALL

The Caliban counts as **Size 3** when inflicting **KNOCKBACK** with any **RAM** or **ranged** or **melee attack**.

PURSUE PREY

When the Caliban inflicts **KNOCKBACK** as part of any action, it can move an **equal number of spaces towards the same target by the most direct route possible**. This movement is part of the same action, ignores engagement and doesn't provoke reactions.

SLAM

1/round, when the Caliban knocks a character into a wall, mech, or other obstruction that would cause it to stop moving, it may force its target to pass a **HULL** save or take **1d6** and become **IMPAIRED** until the end of its next turn.

WEAK COMPUTER

The Caliban has **+1** on all **SYSTEMS** saves and checks.

MOUNTS

HEAVY MOUNT

CORE SYSTEM

FLAYER SHOTGUN

The "Flayer" - officially the Heavy Howitzer-Shotgun 075 - is a compact, formalized version of the popular "Daisy Cutter" howitzer-shotgun used by Trunk Security and other stellar marine forces. Chambered to accept shot, shell, or sabot, the Flayer sacrifices some of the Daisy-Cutter's raw power in favor of control and a much-improved fire rate.

Integrated mount: HHS-075 "Flayer" Shotgun

HHS-075 "Flayer" Shotgun

Main CQB, Inaccurate, Knockback 2
[✓3][✖3][1d6+1]

After any attack with this weapon, you may smack an adjacent character with the butt end, dealing **1** and knocking them back **1 space**.

Equip Autochoke

Active (1CP), Protocol

For the rest of this scene, the **HHS-075 "Flayer" Shotgun** gains the following profile:

Main CQB, Accurate, Knockback 5
[Δ3][✖3][1d6+2]

The Flayer shotgun comes pre-equipped with a muzzle-mounted auto-choke that allows its user to better define the spread of shot issuing from the weapon. The extreme heat from equipping the choke renders it unusable in short order and it must be discarded.

LICENSE I: HAMMER U-RPL, SUPERMASSIVE MOD

Hammer U-RPL

Heavy Launcher, Inaccurate, Arcing, Knockback 2
[✓5][2d6+3]

The Hammer Universal Rotary Projectile Launcher accepts any projectile or weapons system that fits the IPS-N Universal Cartridge System. Most common is the conventional airburst shell - a fragmentation system designed to operate in all theaters, oxygenated or not - a ferocious weapon in the compact halls, safe rooms, and bolt chambers of capital ships and stations.

Supermassive Mod

1 SP, Mod, Unique

Choose one **CQB**, **CANNON**, or **MELEE** weapon: it gains **OVERKILL** and **KNOCKBACK +1**. During a **FULL REPAIR**, you may tune it to remove safety limiters, increasing this benefit to **KNOCKBACK +2** instead; however, it also gains **ORDNANCE** (if it is **ranged**) or **INACCURATE** (if it is **melee**).

The first in a suite of best-practice modifications for close-quarters combat out of the same Titan-Enceladus Field Project that produced the Caliban, supermassive mods include a host of alterations to close-quarters weapons designed to enhance their general lethality and utility by lifting safety precautions.

LICENSE II: CALIBAN FRAME, HARDPOINT REINFORCEMENT, SPIKE CHARGES

Hardpoint Reinforcement

2 SP, Shield

As long as you are not **SLOWED** or **IMMOBILIZED**, you gain **RESISTANCE to all damage** during your turn.

.....
Also developed in IPS-N's ongoing Titan-Enceladus Field Project, hardpoint reinforcement systems further strengthen frames, ensuring an across-the-board increase in Caliban chassis TTK.

Spike Charges

2 SP, Limited 2, Unique

Expend a charge for one of the following effects:

- **SPIKE GRENADE** (Grenade, ↗ 5): Your target must pass an **AGILITY** save or the grenade attaches to them and arms itself. It automatically attaches to objects. At the start or end of any turn, while a spike grenade is attached, you may detonate all armed spike grenades as a **reaction**. Characters to whom they are attached take **1d6+3** ☐ and are knocked back **3 spaces** in a direction of your choice, while objects just take the damage. Characters can detach spike grenades from themselves by passing another **AGILITY** save as a **quick action** on their turn. All grenades detach at the end of the scene.
- **SPIKE MINE** (Mine, ⊕ 2): Once activated, characters within the affected area must pass an **AGILITY** save or a spike grenade attaches itself to them as described above.

.....
Originally designed as a load variant for use with the Hammer U-RPL, spike charges carry dozens of hardened flechettes designed to tumble, ricochet, and pierce upon shell detonation, tearing apart flesh and soft targets with sheer torque. As a payload for impact-activated grenades and proximity-activated mine, these devices found their use first in micro/null-grav combat, in which out-of-control vessels and units could themselves be turned into missiles. In gravity-well combat, this system is less deadly but no less chaotic.

LICENSE III: RAPID MANEUVER JETS, HHS-155 CANNIBAL

Rapid Maneuver Jets

4 SP, Overshield, Unique, 1 ⚡ (Self)

1/round, when you **Boost**, you **fly**, gain **OVERSHIELD 3**, and ignore engagement from and may freely pass through spaces occupied by larger characters (but not end your turn in their spaces). You must end this movement in a space on which you can stand, or else you fall.

.....
Further streamlining and miniaturizing IPS-N's Ramjet system, IPS-N's new RMJ frame-volatility package increases a chassis' control envelope, ensuring its pilot can maintain enhanced mobility at pace. This control, coupled with a raw increase in speed, makes any chassis far more difficult to successfully engage.

HHS-155 CANNIBAL

Heavy CQB, Inaccurate, Loading, Knockback 2
[↗ 3][✂ 3][2d6+4 ☐]

You can fire this heavy shotgun twice before it needs to be reloaded. Alternatively, you may fire with both barrels at once, receiving **+1** ☐, increasing its damage to **3d6+4** ☐ and its **KNOCKBACK** to **KNOCKBACK 4**, but requiring it to be reloaded as usual.

When this weapon is reloaded, you may choose to deal **5** ☐ to an adjacent character from the force of the ejecting shells.

.....
The IPS-N Heavy Howitzer-Shotgun 155 "Cannibal" is a large, breech-loaded, over-under cannon chambered to fire shells, shot, and sabots. This is the higher-powered version of the HHS-075, designed to phase out the "Daisy Cutter" by providing comparable stopping power in a format that can be more easily supplied to armies in the field. The Cannibal should be used with caution around mixed units of friendlies, as its ejection action clears the weapon's barrels of spent cartridges with enough velocity to decapitate unarmored personnel.



HORUS KOBOLD

Controller

The Kobold pattern group first appeared among revolutionary Ungratefults toiling on Bo, the capital world of the House of Dust, where it manifested as a clever suite of hardware and software compatible with a broad range of mining and heavy industry mechs. The steaming, shuddering final result of K-PG exposure is an ugly affair: a device transformed from plow to blade by powerful, viral-morph liturgicode that is almost impossible for conventional codec sniffers to capture pre-print.

The clandestine mechanisms by which the Kobold is transmitted and applied make it the perfect machine for fighting Baronian suppression forces. The desperate workers who printed the first Kobolds found them to be eminently fungible. When loaded into their mining exos and chassis, the K-PG code repurposed reactors and industrial tools to deadly effect, weaponizing the very materials and superstructures that powered it. The rapid flash-melting, processing, and extruding of raw material into molten plural-state particles is dangerous – often just as dangerous to its pilot as the final product is to its targets.

Operational dangers notwithstanding, the Ungratefults who first adopted the K-PG stunned their Baronian overseers with a series of rapid and total victories, liberating a great swath of lunar helium-3 mines. While the insurgency was eventually contained to Bo, it continues, necessitating the deployment of the House of Dust's Graveborn Banner Company for counter-insurgency operations beyond the capability of local security forces.

HORUS's assets in the Long Rim continue to produce K-PG liturgicode seeds. The House of Dust has contracted Mastodon to track down and eliminate HORUS elements in the area; meanwhile, Harrison Armory has reached out to the Brigade-Legion to counter the House of Dust's efforts.

CORE STATS

Size: 1/2

Armor: 1

HULL

HP: 6

Repair Cap: 2

AGILITY

Evasion: 10

Speed: 4

Save Target: 11

Sensors: 8

SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 10

Tech Attack: +1

SP: 8

ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 6

TRAITS


MIMIC CARAPACE

When the Kobold starts its turn adjacent to a piece of terrain or **hard cover** of **Size 1** or larger it becomes **INVISIBLE** as long as it remains adjacent. It ceases to be **INVISIBLE** if it attacks or takes damage.

SLAG SPRAY

1/round, as a **quick action**, the Kobold may create a **Size 1** mound of semi-molten polymer in a free space within **✓3** and line of sight. This terrain has **10 HP**, **EVASION 5**, and grants **hard cover**.

EXPOSED REACTOR

The Kobold gets **+1**  on **ENGINEERING** checks and saves.

MOUNTS

MAIN/
AUX

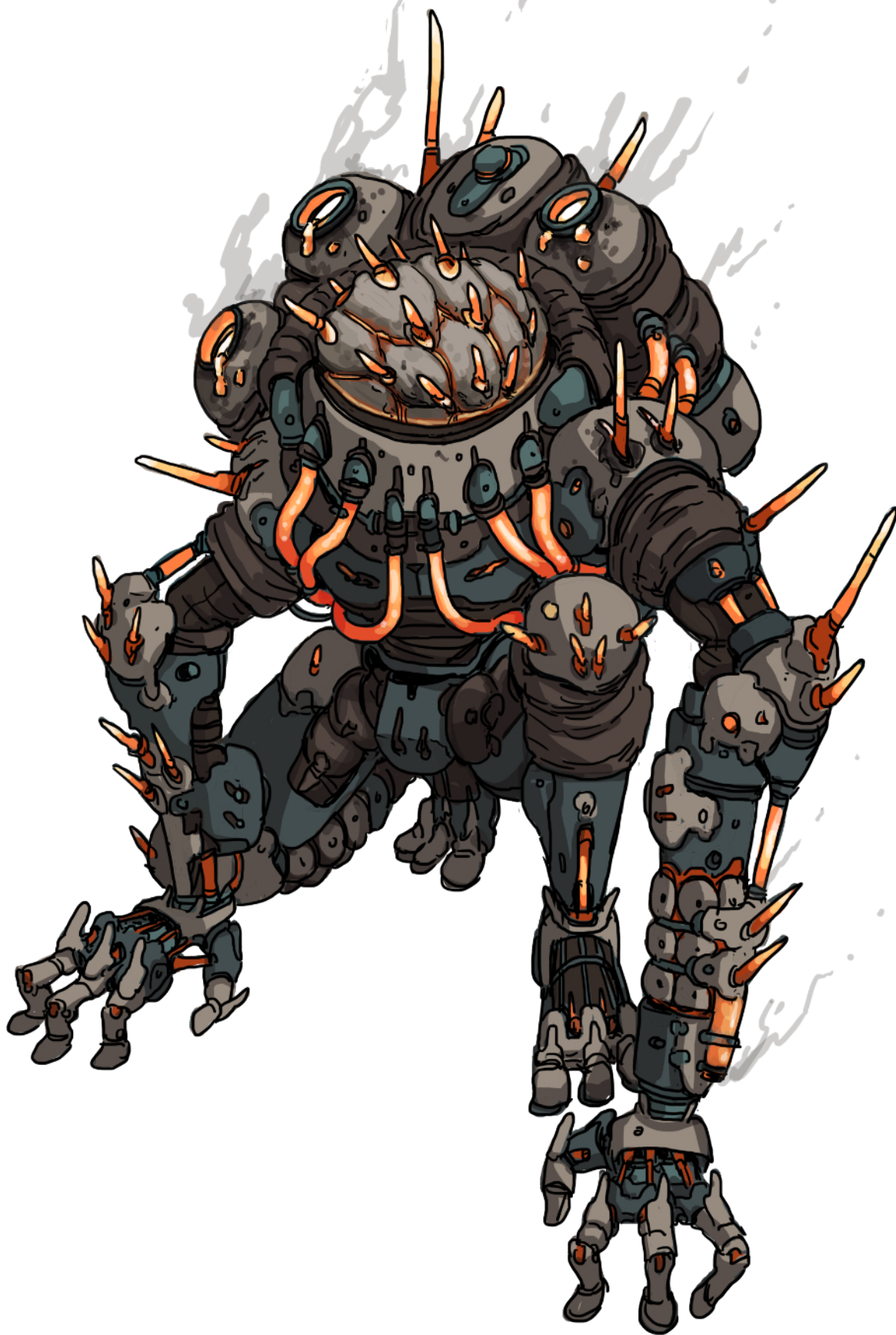
CORE SYSTEM TERRAFORM

Screeching and venting steam, the Kobold digs into the earth. Moments later, the very ground bends to the pilot's will and the air shrieks with agony – the cry of every dead Ungrateful, martyred or taken by the dustmen.

Terraform

Active (1CP), Full Action

Your mech extrudes a massive amount of polymer, creating up to **10 Size 1** cubes in free spaces within **✓5**. These cubes can be separate or connected and can be stacked up to **5 spaces high**. If connected, they form a contiguous surface that can block line of sight. During the turn in which they are extruded, the cubes grant **soft cover** and each has **EVASION 5** and **10 HP**. At the start of your next turn, they harden, each cube granting **hard cover** and gaining **+10 HP** (but retaining any damage they had taken).



LICENSE I: FORGE CLAMPS, FUSION RIFLE

Forge Clamps

1 SP, Quick Action

You sink the jaws of your clamp into an adjacent object or piece of terrain of **SIZE 1** or larger. You become **IMMOBILIZED** but gain **IMMUNITY to KNOCKBACK and PRONE**. This effect ends if the thing you're clamped onto is destroyed or if you release the clamp as a **protocol**.

.....
Repurposed from polycrystalline foundry tongs, these simple manipulators are incredibly resistant to heat and deformation. Using the KOBOLD protocols, previously inert forge clamps become the adherent surfaces for thin plasma sheaths; like blades, they can shear through armor, earth, or bulkhead with ease. One common tactic involves "flashing" plasma across the clamps, fusing them to their target until the Kobold pilot "flashes" them free.

Fusion Rifle

Main Rifle

[✓6][1-6 ⚡]

This weapon deals damage equal to its **RANGE** from the target (up to a maximum of **6 ⚡**).

.....
Bootstrapped from powerful ore mining lasers, the Kobold's simple fusion rifle is no less deadly for its humble origins. By burning through solid-state batteries to produce the necessary reaction, the rifle's simple mechanism proved simple enough for untrained Ungratefules to learn. As their tactics improved and Baronie forces were pushed back, the fusion rifle took on an iconic reputation and has become a symbol of resistance across the Baronies - often seen stenciled on walls and crossed on Ungrateful flags.

LICENSE II: KOBOLD FRAME, SEISMIC RIPPER, SLAG CANNON

Seismic Ripper

2 SP, Full Action

You unleash a seismic pulse in a **✓10** path: characters in the affected area must pass a **HULL** save or be knocked **PRONE** and all objects and pieces of terrain automatically take **10 ⚡ AP**. If this destroys a piece of terrain or object, it explodes with a **☛1** area. Characters caught in the area of exploding terrain or objects must pass an **AGILITY** save or take **2d6 ***. If they pass, they take half damage. Each character can only be affected by one of these explosions at a time, even if several overlap.

.....
A deadly weapon created from simple shaped charges - the perfect catalyst for insurrection. Easily obtained and disguised as necessary equipment for blast-mining, charges rigged to produce a linear seismic pulse were common in the early days of Ungrateful activity. As Baronie security adapted their strategies, so too did the Ungratefules; now, these once-simple explosive devices are much more complex - harder to detect, and far more deadly.

Slag Cannon

Main Cannon, 1 ⚡ (Self)

[✓8][1d6 ⚡]

On Attack: If your target is on the ground or a flat surface, once this attack resolves place a **SIZE 1** mound of slag in a free space adjacent to them. The mound is an object with **EVASION 5** and **10 HP**.

.....
Dripping with molten fury, the Slag Cannon is quick to print and requires little training to use effectively. Temperamental but powerful, the Slag Cannon utilizes a simple rawmat-decomp system wedded to an insulated projector to break down, superheat, and cast a stream of plural-state particles at its target. Once cast in this way, the plural-state particles snap into coherence at a range of roughly 80-100 meters, creating base-element lumps of slag wherever they come to rest.

LICENSE III: IMMOLATE, PURIFYING CODE

IMMOLATE

2 SP, Quick Tech, Invade

Gain the following options for **INVADE**:

EJECT SLAG: You force the target's reactor to eject burning liquid in a **Ⓢ2** area around them, not affecting the space they occupy. The affected area becomes **difficult terrain** and characters that start their turn in it or that enter it for the first time in a round must succeed on an **ENGINEERING** save or take **2 ⚔** and **1 ♠**. The liquid cools, dissipating, at the end of your next turn.

MOLTEN PUNCTURE: Until the end of the target's next turn, their reactor shielding is temporarily cracked. They take **2 ♠** for each space they voluntarily move (to a maximum of **6 ♠**).

.....
The Kobold PG's code is unique in that it can be injected into existing civilian mining mechs, allowing them to interact with the full suite of largely improvised, adapted weaponry and systems. The process skips printers entirely; however, in avoiding the constraints of Union-monitored printers, the process also eschews widely accepted safety standards – a common theme among HORUS PGs. With no governors or consistent standards on the operational envelope of the K-PG, some pilots have discovered the terminal limits of their chassis the hard way.

Purifying Code

2 SP, Quick Tech, Invade

Gain the following options for **INVADE**:

FLAW_PLUS: You inject a memetic, proximity-based virus into the target's reactor. At the end of their next turn, if they are not adjacent to another character or piece of terrain of **SIZE 1** or larger, the virus catalyzes and they take **1d6+2 * AP**. Once catalyzed, the effect ends.

FLAW_MINUS: You inject a memetic, proximity-based virus into the target's reactor. At the end of their next turn, if they are adjacent to another character or piece of terrain of **SIZE 1** or larger, the virus catalyzes and they take **1d6+2 * AP**. Once catalyzed, the effect ends.

Character can only be affected by one of these options at a time and are aware of their effects.

.....
The key to the KOBOLD's creation – a deceptively simple code that unlocks reactor safety limiters in civilian mining mechs. This also bears the only evidence pointing towards a possible creator: "Dog."



HORUS LICH

Support

```
>//TRANSCRIPT: M.A2_Recovered[UIB::TERMAGANT]
>//CLEARANCE: TANGENT ROYAL
>//checking...
>//TRC_ACCEPTED. OPEN DOC::Y
>//BEGIN TRANSCRIPT::
CALIGULA:      So what is it?
DOGFRIEND_68:  i wish i could tell you, man, it just showed up on
                the terminal. whole thing in one ping – it's like a
                fucking K or two EXB. tried to autofab but i shut it
                down jic
CALIGULA:      Gotta be a joke from Ash – she's trying to wavedown
                our rig again, don't let it print.
DOGFRIEND_68:  fuck no
DOGFRIEND_68:  do u think i have a death wish
CALIGULA:      Yes.
CALIGULA:      Well, who's it from? Who's the author?
CALIGULA:      Hello?
CALIGULA:      [waiting.omif]
DOGFRIEND_68:  uh
CALIGULA:      Who?
DOGFRIEND_68:  us
CALIGULA:      Us what?
DOGFRIEND_68:  it's from our terminal – we made it
CALIGULA:      Pretty sure I'd remember if I wrote 1-2k exabyte
                fabrication by myself.
DOGFRIEND_68:  yeah except thats our code man, the hash lines up
                beaucop-sigma
DOGFRIEND_68:  ok also BigMama is telling me we didn't actaully get
                anything inbound which means its just been local but
                thats impossible, we don't have that much storage
CALIGULA:      Let me see the file
CALIGULA:      It's dated 15005U
DOGFRIEND_68:  [lo1fuk.omif]
CALIGULA:      There's an audio track buried in here. Should I play
                it?
DOGFRIEND_68:  i wanna say no but fuck it i'm curious
>//TRANSCRIPT ENDS
```



CORE STATS

Size: 1

Armor: 0

HULL

HP: 4

Repair Cap: 5

AGILITY

Evasion: 8

Speed: 5

Save Target: 11

Sensors: 15

SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 12

Tech Attack: +1

SP: 8

ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 3

TRAITS

SOUL VESSEL

At the start of the Lich's turn, set down a **Soul Vessel** at its current location (replacing any previous markers). **1/round**, as a **reaction** when the Lich is hit by an attack, fails a save or check, or takes **damage** or **1** from any source (even itself), it may immediately gain **IMMUNITY to all damage, heat, or conditions from that effect**. It then **teleports** to the marker or as close as possible.

The Lich can also take this **reaction** at the end of any turn, including its own, but if it does so it only **teleports** and does not gain **IMMUNITY**. It can't take this reaction if it is **JAMMED**, **STUNNED**, **GRAPPLED**, or unable to take **reactions** for any reason.

IMMORTAL

1/scene, in the round after the Lich has been destroyed, it may return to the location of its **Soul Vessel** as a **reaction** at the end of any turn. This counts as **teleporting**; additionally, the Lich appears with full **HP**, no **1**, **1 STRUCTURE** and **1 STRESS** (even if it had more when it was destroyed). If its pilot died in the same scene, they also return to life. If the Lich does not take this **reaction** in that round, it remains destroyed and the pilot remains dead.

MOUNTS

MAIN/
AUX

CORE SYSTEM

CHRONOSTUTTER

"Drink deep, and descend."

Glitch Time

Active (1CP), Quick Action

You gain the ability to disrupt time for the rest of this scene. **1/round**, when any character successfully attacks, effects, or takes an action against another character within **SENSORS**, you may interrupt it before it resolves, with the following effects:

- The character taking the action is pushed up to **3 spaces** in a direction of your choice, even if they have **IMMUNITY to involuntary movement**.
- You **teleport** to one of the spaces originally occupied by that character, or as close as possible, no matter how far away it was.
- The initial attack, effect, or action resolves with you as its target. You receive all damage, conditions, statuses, and effects, and the action must be carried out without changes.

For example, if the effect was to **teleport** an allied character to a certain space, you are teleported to that space instead; if the effect was to repair an allied character, you are repaired instead; if the effect was to deal damage and **KNOCKBACK**, you take the damage (using your **ARMOR**, **RESISTANCE**, etc.) and are knocked back in the same direction as the original target would be; if the effect was to inflict a condition or status, you receive that condition or status instead.

Initiating this interruption does not count as a **reaction**. Effects that target the self cannot be interrupted this way.

LICENSE I: UNRAVELER, WANDERING NIGHTMARE

Unraveler

Main Launcher, Reliable 2
[✓10][2d6 ⚡]

If an attack from this weapon would not deal enough damage to destroy its target or cause it to take at least **1 structure damage**, it instead only deals **RELIABLE 2** damage, even on a hit.

.....
Speaker 2 (M.A2.SP2)
[Audio, Length: 120:36][34%
corruption][Dated 18593U, 01:50]
[UIB-TERMAGANT-TANGENT ROYAL]

"Dark. Wet. Drink deep, and descend. The water is warm and well. It is very busy here, though you cannot see it. The swimmers are curious. Open your mouth."

Wandering Nightmare

1 SP, Full Tech

You generate a ☹️2 zone of distorted timeflow within **SENSORS** and line of sight that affects all characters other than you. Characters within the affected area cannot take **reactions**, and if they start their turn within it, they must succeed on a **SYSTEMS** save or take 2 ⚡ and become **SLOWED** until the end of their next turn. This effect lasts until this action is taken again or the scene ends.

.....
Speaker 1 (M.A2.SP1)
[Audio, Length: 150:06][Dated 7658U,
35:50] (recovered: GZ Alhambra)
[UIB-TERMAGANT-TANGENT ROYAL]

*"Where does it go? Where does it go?
Where does it go? Where does it go? Where
does it go? Where does it go? Where does
it go? Where does it go? Where does it
go? Where does it go?"*

LICENSE II: LICH FRAME, REWRITE, UNHINGE CHRONOLOGY

Antilinear Time

2 SP, Quick Tech

Choose a character in **SENSORS** and line of sight. They clear all conditions other than **STUNNED** that weren't self-inflicted, and you immediately receive all conditions they cleared until the end of your next turn.

.....
M.A2.SP1
[Audio Loop, Length 93:03][Dated 5008U,
16:50] (recovered: GZ Alhambra)
[UIB-TERMAGANT-TANGENT ROYAL]

"I have never been here. I do not know where here is. It has not happened yet. Once, I was. I have never been here. You are all I see. How can you be all I see. Where am I. Where did I go. I have never been here..."

Unhinge Chronology

2 SP, Quick Tech

Gain the following **QUICK TECH** actions:

HASTE: Choose a character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. For the rest of this scene, or until they take damage, they may **Boost** 1/round as a **free action** during their turn.

SLOW: Choose a character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. They must pass a **SYSTEMS** save or take 2 ⚡, become **SLOWED**, and become unable to take **reactions**. This effects ends if they take any amount of damage or make a successful Systems save as a **quick action**.

.....
M.A2.SP2
[Audio Loop, diversion instance #1,
timestamp 45:50] (recovered: GZ Alhambra)
[UIB-TERMAGANT-TANGENT ROYAL]

"Dark. Wet. Drink deep, and descend. The water is warm and well. It is very busy here, though you cannot see it. The swimmers are curious. The flea always jumps from time to time. It will drink it all. It will drink it deep--"

**LICENSE III:
STAY OF EXECUTION, DIDYMOS-CLASS NHP**

Didymos-class NHP

3 SP, Unique, AI, Quick Tech, Limited 3

Your mech gains the **AI** property and the following **QUICK TECH** action:

TIME SPLIT: Choose yourself or another character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. Your target disappears and you create a chronological split in their timeline, replacing them with two fields of mutating paradox energy appear as close to their original position as possible. These fields are new characters that look like holes in space of the same **SIZE** and roughly the same shape as your target (although you shouldn't look at them too long). They have **10 HP**, **SPEED 5**, **EVASION 5**, **E-DEFENSE 5**, **HEAT CAP 5**, and have **IMMUNITY to all conditions and statuses**. They are controlled by the player of the affected character and both act on that character's turn, starting with their next turn. The only actions the fields can take are **standard moves** and **Boost**, and the only reaction they can take is to disperse (see below). They are obstructions and grant **hard cover**.

If a field exceeds its **HEAT CAP** or is reduced to **0 HP**, it immediately disappears. Their player can also cause a field to disappear as a **reaction** at the end of any character's turn.

If one field disappears, the other immediately coalesces into the original character, who returns to the field in that field's space. If both fields disappear at the same time, their player decides which field disappears first.

An unwilling character can ignore this effect with a successful **SYSTEMS** save.

PREPARED BY: UIB-TERMAGANT
RECOVERED FOR: CC_HOME OFFICE
CLEARANCE REQ: SOLEMN VIGIL (TANGENT ROYAL ADDENDUM)

Didymos. It means "twin" in an old, old tongue. It might be a bit too cute but it's the name our cask spat out for us. We observed Didymos Prime in action during the fall of Green Zone Alhambra, mounted in a chassis we initially thought was one of three HORUS Minotaur PG we had ID'd operating alongside the Ungrateful cell in New Madrassa.

It was not that Minotaur.

Alhambra fell in three days. The Armory wasn't keen to give it up but decided to cut their losses and pull back rather than hold for reinforcements. We moved in afterward - during the looting. Our local contact ██████████ escorted us to the New Madrassan commanders, introduced us to them, and secured an audience with the pilot of the chassis.

I'm sure you've reviewed the records of the debrief we recorded. We don't know how it arrived in New Madrassa. The Ungratefals say they received the initial code burst from their contact in Los Voladores. Los Voladores deny this; the entity, however, conforms to their descriptions of an entity called "La pulga", or, "the flea". We have designated it LICH. Didymos is the active animus - the entity that serves as its pilot.

We have taken the entity into custody. We do not recommend giving this one a Long Leash.

Stay of Execution

2 SP, Unique, Quick Tech, Limited 2

Choose yourself or another character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. Your target gains **IMMUNITY to all damage and effects from external sources** until the end of their next turn, at which point they become **STUNNED** until the end of their following turn. Nothing can prevent or clear this condition.

During this time, any active effects on your target are frozen in time – effectively paused – and any relevant timers do not count down (e.g., conditions that would expire at the end of their turn now expire at the end of their following turn, reactor meltdown timers do not tick down, etc).

An unwilling character can ignore this effect with a successful **SYSTEMS** save.

.....
Speaker 1 (M.A2.SP1)
[Audio, Length: 150:06][Dated 5006U,
01:50] (recovered: GZ Alhambra)
[UIB-TERMAGANT-TANGENT ROYAL]

“I felt the bullet tear through me. I felt the bullet tear through me. I felt the pressure and it was my brother, his fist, my chest, and I was laying on my back and the sky was blue, and my mother hollered at him and the bullet had never hit me, and the legionnaire who shot me had not yet pulled the trigger, and so I killed him. I drank deep and killed him.”



HA SUNZI

Support/Controller

The Sunzi represents the peak of Harrison Armory's research into weaponized blink technology. Pilots approved to fabricate and field-test Sunzi components are monitored remotely by the Armory's Special Projects Group, which enjoys wide latitude in gathering telemetry and biometric data. The Sunzi platform is considered by Harrison Armory to still be in development, and not yet available for fleet contracts.

Like the Armory's Napoleon chassis before it, the Sunzi utilizes the Armory's H-GOBLIN-derived recursive-mesh interdermal substrate, allowing it to mount outsized weapons and systems on a chassis measuring just over three meters tall. Where it differs is in its technological heritage. The Napoleon was largely the product of the Armory's internal paracausal/parallel space research and development groups; the Sunzi is rumored to be derived from stolen and extracted Volador technology. This may explain why the Long Rim and the Dawnline Shore are the primary test grounds for the platform – far from Union's most direct oversight, the Armory may have more time to make what progress it can before Union's regulatory impulse catches up to them.

According to Union NavInt reports on the Sunzi, the platform's unshielded emissions are consistent with known blinkspace signatures; corroborating intelligence from undercover elements inside the program's main campus on Ras Shamra show that the Sunzi's development has been fast-tracked to respond to the evolving situation in the Dawnline Shore. Both as a force-multiplication tool to assist the Armory's legionary presence across the Shore, and more specifically to counter the Ungratefults' newest weapon there, Object L (see UNI Report CORPSE GATE for more).

CORE STATS

Size: 1

Armor: 1

HULL

HP: 7

Repair Cap: 3

AGILITY

Evasion: 7

Speed: 4

Save Target: 11

Sensors: 15

SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 8

Tech Attack: +1

SP: 7

ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 7

TRAITS

SAFE HARBOR

When allied characters within ↗ **50** of the Sunzi **teleport** or are **teleported**, free spaces adjacent to the Sunzi are always valid end destinations.

ANCHOR

The Sunzi has **Immunity to involuntary movement** caused by other characters.

SLIP

1/round, the Sunzi can **teleport 2 spaces** as a **free action**.

MOUNTS

MAIN/
AUX



CORE SYSTEM

REALITY CARVER

(TT_CLEARANCE_01): JUST A HEADS UP, YOU'RE GOING TO READ SOME OBTUSE SHIT HERE. I'VE TRANSCRIBED ONLY THE USEFUL PARTS OF WHAT THE VOLS SAID. REFER TO THE VISUAL FOR CORRESPONDING HAND SIGNS. REFER TO REPORTS: VESSEL-PILOT-DOORWAY

Blink Anchor

Quick Action, Limited 3

Blink Anchor (Size 1/2, Tags: DEPLOYABLE, IMMUNITY to all damage and effects, LIMITED 3)

You carry a single blink anchor that you can deploy as a **quick action**. When any character **teleports** within your line of sight, you may force them to appear in a free space adjacent to the blink anchor instead of their original destination, as long as they can safely stand there. If your target is hostile, this expends a charge.

Initiating this interruption does not count as a **reaction**.

Once it's deployed, you or any allied character can pick it up or put it down while adjacent to it as a **quick action**.

Art of War

Active (1CP), Protocol, Reaction

For the rest of the scene, this system gains **6 charges** (you can use a die to track this). As a **reaction** at the start or end of any hostile or allied character's turn within **SENSORS** and line of sight, expend a charge to **teleport them up to 3 spaces in any direction**, as long as they end in a free space in which they can stand.

LICENSE I: ACCELERATE, BLINK CHARGES

Accelerate

2 SP, Unique, Quick Tech

Choose and mark two free spaces within your line of sight that share a surface and are within $\nearrow 5$ of each other. Characters that start their turn in one of these spaces or enter one for the first time in a round are pushed as far as possible in a straight line towards the other space. If they collide with an obstruction, they stop moving. They may avoid being pushed with a successful **HULL** save. **GRENADES, DEPLOYABLES**, or other loose objects of **Size 1** or smaller that are thrown or deployed into one of the spaces are also pushed towards the other space before activating or detonating. They activate or detonate early if they are forced to stop by another character or object. This effect lasts for the rest of the scene, or until you take this **QUICK TECH** option again.

.....
Guillermo, no es suficiente saber caminar; Debes saber dónde y dónde no pisar. El lugar incorrecto, y te perderás. Es en un plano de telaraña donde construimos nuestro hogar: pise ligeramente cuando vaya.

[Guillermo, it is not enough to know how to walk; you must know where and where not to step; the incorrect spot, and you will be lost. It is on a plane of gossamer that we make our home: tread lightly when you go.]

Blink Charges

3 SP, Unique, Limited 3

Expend a charge for one of the following effects:

- **BLINK MINE (Mine)**: Once detonated, the character that triggered it must pass an **ENGINEERING** save or be **teleported** to a free, valid space of your choice within $\nearrow 5$ of the mine and become **JAMMED** until the end of their next turn. If they pass, they still **teleport** but do not become **JAMMED**.
- **WARP GRENADE (Grenade, $\nearrow 5$, $\oplus 3$)**: On impact, choose any character within the affected area and **teleport** them to any free, valid space within the same area. An unwilling character can pass an **ENGINEERING** save to avoid this effect.

.....
Eso es lo que no se suena: usar el vacío contra la Ley de la Madre. Marcamos esta en nuestra historia con lágrimas, y ennegrecer la página.

[This is the thing unthinkable: to use the nonshape against the Mother's Law. With tears, we mark its need in our history, and then blacken the page.]

LICENSE II: SUNZI FRAME, BLINKSPACE TUNNELER, WARP RIFLE

Blinkspace Tunneler

2 SP, 1 ⚡ (Self), Protocol

You open a blink tear in a free, adjacent space. It lasts until the end of your next turn. As part of any movement, characters other than you (hostile or allied) that enter the space at least partially may **teleport** to a free space adjacent to you. You may only open one tear at a time, and if you create a new tear it replaces the previous one.

.....
MEMO(TT_CLEARANCE_01) (01200): IT'S GONNA GET REAL FUCKING DARK.

Warp Rifle

Main Rifle, AP, Loading, 1 SP, Unique
[$\nearrow 10$][1d3+1 ⚡]

On Hit: The target must pass an **ENGINEERING** save or be **teleported** a number of spaces equal to the damage you dealt with this weapon (including bonus damage, etc.; no more than **10 spaces**), in a direction of your choice. They must end in a free, valid space.

.....
Es una abominación. Dicen que "es como Los arados de las espadas; tú también debes aprender a defender tu hogar". Escupí su lógica de espada. Ni siquiera sabíamos de los arados compartidos antes de convertirlos en espadas, y éramos felices.

Hiciste la puerta, la abriste. No es nuestra responsabilidad cerrarla.

[It is an abomination. They say, "it is like plowshares to swords; you too must learn to defend your home." I spit on their blade-law. We did not even know of plowshares before they beat them into swords, and we were happy.]

You made the door, you swung it open - it is not our responsibility to close it.]

Final Secret

2 SP, Quick Tech

Choose yourself or another character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. Your target is charged with unstable energy until the start of your next turn. Unwilling or hostile character can ignore this effect by succeeding on an **ENGINEERING** save.

Each time your target takes damage for that duration, you may **teleport** them up to **4 spaces** to a free, valid space of your choice as a **reaction**.

.....
Dicen: "Cuéntanos el secreto de tu larga vida, o abriremos la puerta de tu hogar a todo el mundo."

Nosotros decimos: "Para vivir una larga vida, vives una larga vida. No tenemos secretos, todo lo que tenemos es el conocimiento que deseamos ocultarle. Por favor no hagas esto; tu no sabes nada."

[They say: "Tell us the secret to your Long Life, or we shall swing wide our door and let those who we hold back inside your safe ground."]

We say: "To live a Long Life, you live a Long Life. We have no secrets, all we have is knowledge we wish to keep from you."]

Realspace Breach

2 SP, Unique, Quick Tech

You tear a hole in space, creating a ⊕ 1 area in a free space within **SENSORS** and line of sight. Weapons with the ⊕, ↗, ⊙, or △ properties do not affect this area, and it may not be occupied by characters or objects for any reason. Any character or object that moves at least **1 space** into the affected area immediately **teleports** to any free space adjacent to the area (of its player's choice), or as close as possible.

The affected area blocks line of sight; however, any character may target the hole in space with a ranged weapon (excluding ⊕, ↗, ⊙, or △ weapons) as if attacking it. Attackers don't roll to hit the hole – instead, it absorbs the attack and redirects it against a new target of the attacker's choice within ↗ 10 of the zone. The attack resolves as if it originated within the hole.

This effect lasts for the rest of the scene, or until you take this action again or end it as a **quick action**.

.....
Dicen: "Incluso es difícil de ver en este lugar". Decimos: "Usted tiene razón. Es porque este lugar no te quiere aquí."

[They say: "It is even difficult to see in this place." We say: "You are correct. It is because this place does not want you here."]



IPS-N ZHENG

Striker

The Zheng is a new frame in IPS-N's line and is unusual in that its development can be attributed almost completely to a single mech pilot - Xiong Xiaoli, a Mirrorsmoke mercenary operating in the Long Rim, protecting heavy freight/low crew shipments to the early Dawnline Shore colonies. A relative unknown before the incident, MSMC documentation from the time indicates that her convoy was attacked by the White Tiger pirate conglomerate, and her entire company killed in action. Xiong's personal logbook, recovered posthumously, expounds on MSMC's report.

In her logbook, Xiong noted that her chassis, a factory-standard IPS-N Raleigh, was almost totally ripped apart in the chaos of the White Tiger's attack. Thrown free of her billeted freighter after it collided with a White Tiger crashboat, Xiong managed to survive the next 45 days by scavenging across the drifting, derelict wreck of the MSMC-S Say No More, the escort cruiser attached to the supply colony. Outnumbered and hunted by the White Tiger pirates prowling the ruined convoy, Xiong took dramatic steps to modify her Raleigh for close-quarters combat. In the dark, claustrophobic environments of the Say No More and ruined freighters leashed to it by the White Tigers, Xiong turned her chassis into a machine of tumbling death.

Xiong likely did not survive the long engagement. She is presumed to have perished mere days before an IPS-N Trunk Security patrol arrived, responding to the convoy's initial distress signal. Trunk Security found that Xiong had eliminated every White Tiger pirate assigned to the convoy; her chassis, logbook, and trace elements of her body were discovered in the White Tiger's cored-out gunboat and recovered by IPS-N. Thanks to her efforts, Trunk Security and MSMC were able to hunt down the remaining White Tiger gang and eliminate them. IPS-N and MSMC then engaged in a lengthy negotiation over the modified Raleigh's plans, eventually settling on a mixed licensing fee that benefits both IPS-N and MSMC. The resulting pattern, the Zheng, is now a popular choice among MSMC and Trunk Security pilots operating across the Rim.

Xiong Xiaoli is widely regarded as a bodhisattva across the Long Rim; MSMC mercenaries have created several drinking games named after her, and MSMC pilots on combat contracts often compete to hit the "Xiong Limit" of 45+ confirmed kills.



CORE STATS

Size: 1

Armor: 2

HULL

HP: 10

Repair Cap: 6

AGILITY

Evasion: 9

Speed: 3

Save Target: 10

Sensors: 3

SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 6

Tech Attack: -2

SP: 5

ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 6

TRAITS

DESTRUCTIVE SWINGS

At the end of the Zheng's turn, if it made at least one **melee attack** against a hostile character, the force of its swings creates a **SIZE 1** piece of terrain that grants **hard cover** in a free, adjacent space. It has **10 HP** and **EVASION 5**.

WEAK COMPUTER

The Zheng gets +1 ☹ on all **SYSTEMS** saves and checks.

MOUNTS

MAIN
MOUNT

MAIN
MOUNT

HEAVY
MOUNT

CORE SYSTEM XIONG-TYPE CQB SUITE

Surviving mostly on colonial rations and an increasingly radioactive air supply, Xiaoli scavenged materials from a dying ship to create modifications that gave her mech unprecedented unarmed striking power.

Xiaoli's Tenacity

1/Turn

As a **free action**, you may move up to **3 spaces** then deal **2 ✂** to any adjacent character or **10 ✂ AP** to an object or piece of terrain. This movement prompts engagement and does not ignore reactions.

If this damage destroys an object or piece of terrain, it explodes, dealing **1d6 ✂** to all adjacent characters other than you and knocking them back **1 space**.

Xiaoli's Ingenuity

Active (1CP), Protocol

For the rest of the scene, this system gains **6 charges** (you can use a die to track this). Expend a charge to use **XIAOLI'S TENACITY** again, ignoring the **1/Turn** limit. You may spend any number of charges a turn. At the end of each turn, you regain a charge for each unique target (character, object, or piece of terrain) you damaged with this action, to a maximum of 6.

LICENSE I: TIGER-HUNTER COMBAT SHEATHE, TOTAL STRENGTH SUITE I

Tiger-Hunter Combat Sheathe

Main Melee

[✂ 1][1d3+2 ✂]

This weapon can attack two targets at a time, and can be used even while **JAMMED**.

.....
This enhancement encases a mech's manipulators and brachial structures in a powerful reactive alloy weave, allowing it to use its fists as blunt weapons, even unarmed.

Total Strength Suite I

1 SP, Quick Action

You rip up a piece of the environment and hurl it at a character within ✂ 5 and line of sight. Your target must pass an **AGILITY** save or take **1d6 ✂** and be knocked back **1 space** directly away from you. After you take this action, place a **SIZE 1** piece of terrain that grants **hard cover** in a free space adjacent to your target, even if they passed the saved. The terrain has **10 HP** and **EVASION 5**.

If there is a **SIZE 1** object or piece of cover adjacent to you, you can move it as part of this action; otherwise, your projectile is ripped out of the ground or environment. If there's nothing to grab nearby or you're not on the ground you can't take this action.

.....
This whole-system upgrade was the result of tweak Xiong Xiaoli made to her mech throughout a long career with the MSMC, many of which have now been incorporated into standard IPS-N frame construction protocol. The package comes in three stages, the first of which contains a set of spinal enhancements that allow a mech to rapidly lift and move large weights without systemic damage.

LICENSE II: ZHENG FRAME, MOLTEN WREATHE, TOTAL STRENGTH SUITE II

Molten Wreathe

2 SP, Mod

Choose one **MELEE** weapon: **1/round**, after you hit a character with this weapon, you take **1 ✂** and it projects a superheated **Δ3** cloud oriented away from your target in a direction of your choice. Your target and any characters caught in this cloud each take **2 ✂**.

.....
Needing a significant boost to her Raleigh's melee capacity, Xiong decided upon a crude but effective solution: she would re-route her Raleigh's coldcore dispersion systems into the chassis' palms with a simple on/off switch, allowing it to superheat equipped weapons. The resultant ad hoc thermal weapon is so hot that it prompts an explosive vaporization of hard and soft surfaces on impact, creating a secondary backblast cloud that is a deadly weapon in its own right. The production version of this system simply adds a sturdier, dedicated routing system and better insulation.

Total Strength Suite II

2 SP, Unique, Protocol

Deal **1d6 ✂** damage to a character you're **GRAPPLING**.

.....
The second part of Xiong's enhancement package: interlocking muscle-analog plates beneath armor, finely tuned to greatly multiply crushing force.

D/D 288

Superheavy Melee, Reliable 3
[✂ 1][1d6 ✂]

Unlikely other **SUPERHEAVY** weapons, this weapon can be used with the above profile to **SKIRMISH**.

You may charge this weapon as a **quick action**. While charged, you benefit from **soft cover**, but you are **SLOWED**, take 2 ⚔ at the start of your turn, and can no longer use the **D/D 288** with **SKIRMISH**. At the start of any of your turns while it is charged, it has this profile:

Superheavy Melee, Reliable 8, Knockback 8
[✂ 3][4d6+8 ✂]

While charged, this weapon deals **30 ✂ AP** when it hits objects or pieces of terrain. If this destroys objects and pieces of terrain, they explode, dealing **1d6 ✂** to all adjacent characters other than you and knocking them back **1 space**.

This weapon loses its charge when you hit a target, when you disperse its charge as a **free action**, or when you become **STUNNED** or **SHUT DOWN**.

.....
The Zheng's Devastator/Demolition Weapon 288 is legendary for its ability to breach armor and inflict total destruction on hardened targets. Originally rigged up as a last resort by Xiong Xiaoli, this fist-mounted system repurposes a mech reactor's primary heat vent into a directional, engagement-proximity weapon. The production line D/D 288 must be primed before firing, requiring a dangerous power draw from the mechs' systems; Trunk Security's reportage of the recovery mission assumes that using this weapons is what killed Xiong Xiaoli and cored the White Tiger's gunboat. The D/D 288's ability to cause enormous collateral damage and its spectacular discharge when fired have earned it the moniker 'Shā mǎ zhāng' or Horse-Killing Palm among MSMC pilots.

Total Strength Suite III

3 SP, Full Action

You end a **GRAPPLE**, pushing the other character **5 spaces** in any direction and knocking them **PRONE**. This movement may pass through spaces occupied by other characters but must end in a free space. All characters they pass through must pass a **HULL** save or be knocked **PRONE**. If your target collides with an object or piece of terrain, they stop, take **1d6 ✂**, and must pass a **HULL** save or become **STUNNED** until the end of their next turn.

.....
The last component of the Total Strength upgrade package gives a mech the ability to inject rapid bursts of intense power into its locomotive systems, resulting in short-lived but incredible strength. The underlying systems are carefully calibrated and misuse can rip apart a mech's internal systems from within.

LAST WORDS

Below this dark, small bar, clear panels provide a view of the heavy interstellar freighters maneuvering to and from Rào Cỏ Station's docks, attended to by flights of harbor pilots and hired escorts. All are bound for the Dawnline Shore, the next great frontier. You drink with a scarred old Cosmopolitan spacer, waiting for your ship's queue number to ping on your slate. Should be a few more hours — Rào Cỏ is a massive blink station, the last before the Long Rim, and everyone needs something. Your ship needed a fair bit of work — micrometeorite patching, restock on potables, preserves, and perishables, cycling, etcetera — but being a blink station, Rào Cỏ is far from dull.

The spacer has some thoughts about the Rim. Since you're taking the slow route, you bought him a drink. Research, you'll tell your CO. The spacer takes a sip, and winds up for his briefing.

"The Long Rim is a place that doesn't exist in the minds of the gente that live outside it; to the ones that know of it, the Long Rim is a pass-through zone — a barren, wild, and dangerous place. This erasure of the local population, their cultures, and their industries, is welcome for the percent of that population that wants the anonymity of life off the map. Without Union's steady hand above them, sure, life can be dangerous and precarious — nothing stops the Companies from moving fast and breaking things, and nothing stops the local Enterprises from drawing blood — but in a universe where there still is money to be made and debts to escape, that precariousness is welcome: after all, if life in the Rim is decided by fate's roll of the dice, you always have a chance of rolling a natural 20."

The old Cosmopolitan orders another drink on your tab. It's fine, you can cover it, and any intel you can pull out of the old spacer is manna well spent. He sips the amber drink, taking a moment to savor the burn. How old is he, really, you wonder? Who was he before he bellied up to this bar and asked where you were headed?

"Anonymity and lack of Union's command over transit, media, and law, coupled with both an endemic libertarianism and a perception of 'freedom' both produces and draws individuals and groups to the Rim that are willing to do anything to strike it rich. This is a freedom defined by the people left alive and in power: in the Rim, the only free people are the ones at the top of the hill; in the Rim, the hill is made up of stolen wealth, ill-gotten manna, and the bodies of other climbers."

"Between the Enterprises and their privateers, petty station-lords and cutthroat swindlers, ruthless corpro-state agents and the rare honest actor, the Rim is a harsh place. There are pockets of it, though, where people have carved out a stable life; don't mistake them for soft, or think that they hold Union's Utopian Pillars to be their ideological North Star — they live in the Rim, and though they may have come together into a community that resembles normal life, there still is a deeply buried coal of fear that drives them; even the kind people of the Rim keep their guns trained on you until you leave."

"The Long Rim is what happens when people are broken into individuals. Sure, there are beautiful things in the Rim — I've seen Horizon collectivists tutoring Free Deimosians in public, and the wonders their minds can produce! I've sipped mate with Voladores fresh from a dive into the blink, haggled with 'em over the baubles and uncanny geometries they've plucked from that strange place. I've eaten raw honeycomb in the amber, arcing fields of Deseret, where the old Latterdays live and sing their high choirs. But listen to me: every beautiful thing in the Rim is fleeting. Every beautiful thing in the Rim that lasts is because of people coming together to produce something great and grand — but them things are outliers."

"You want to know what the Rim is really like? Ok, go through it, then. Bring guns, manna, and backup."

The old spacer finishes his drink and pushes it back across the bartop. The 'keep sweeps it up as they pass by. The spacer turns on his stool, leaning back on the bar to look up at the ceiling. It's a cieloscreen: a muted blue sky with high clouds. The effect is lessened by smoke stains and streaks where cleaning fluid was left to dry. Still, it gives you the image of a sky. He looks at the facsimile sky for a minute or two, blinking.

"Be kind to people, friend. The Long Rim is where dreams disappear and freedom is king."

He thanks you for the drinks, stands, and pulls on an old cap with a well-worn brim. On it is the profile of a freighter, the SS Amigo, his crew union number, and a star for each voyage. There are eight stars ringing the Amigo.

"Be kind out there — it's all we got when we're alone."